



UN-SPIDER February 2009 Updates

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<http://www.ungiwg.org/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/unspider>

UN-SPIDER News:

1. UN-SPIDER conducts Technical Advisory Mission and training in Namibia

Following a request of the Government of Namibia, UN-SPIDER fielded a mission of three experts from UN-SPIDER and the German Aerospace Center's crisis information team (DLR/ZKI) to Windhoek to provide technical advice and train local experts in remote sensing techniques for flood mapping. A two day kick-off workshop on 29-30 January 2009 brought together relevant disaster management stakeholders to evaluate past experiences and lessons learnt. A field visit to flood-prone regions enabled local disaster managers to gain on-the-field experience with GPS devices. Afterwards, the mission team provided a week-long technical hands-on training on utilizing earth observation data for water and flood mapping. The Mission was funded by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

Full Story: <http://www.unspider.org>

2. United Nations COPUOS S&T Subcommittee satisfied with UN-SPIDER 2008 progress and 2010-2011 workplan

During the recent 46th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), the Committee members noted with satisfaction the progress that UN-SPIDER had made in 2008 and also agreed on the proposed workplan for the biennium 2010-2011. This workplan will now be taken into consideration by COPUOS during its meeting in June and then by the United Nations General Assembly. Also highlighted in the session was the need to strengthen the UN-SPIDER Network of Regional Support Offices. Accordingly, UN-SPIDER worked with Algeria, Iran and Nigeria in defining the workplan for the three Regional Support Offices currently being set up in those countries. In addition, UN-SPIDER received offers to host Regional Support Offices from Romania, South Africa and Ukraine. UN-SPIDER has also been officially informed recently by the Government of Pakistan that it wishes to host a Regional Support Office.

3. "Map World Forum" in Hyderabad, India, 10-13 February 2009

The Map World Forum in Hyderabad, India attracted an estimated 1780 delegates and 560 visitors from 48 countries during its proceedings from 10-13 February 2009. The conference, opened by the Vice President of India, was organized by GIS Development, a geospatial media company based in India, under the theme: "Geospatial Technology for Sustainable Planet Earth". Map World Forum brought together geospatial professionals and users of geospatial data from various industries, such as finance, management, technology, the environment and government. UN-SPIDER, as an Institutional Partner to the Forum, was represented by Senior Expert Dr. Jörg Szarzynski, who attended as a speaker within the seminar on "Coastal Zone Mapping for Disaster Management". The discussions after the UN-SPIDER presentation focused on data availability in case of natural hazards, legal frameworks and data policy, and further activities of the UN-SPIDER programme.

Full Story: <http://www.unspider.org>

For more information: <http://www.mapworldforum.org>

4. “First Session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Reduction in the Americas”

UN-SPIDER will co-organize a special session on space-based technologies for disaster risk reduction at the “First Session of the Regional Platform for Disaster Reduction in the Americas”, on 17-19 March 2009 at Panama City. UN-SPIDER will be represented at the session by Dr. Juan Carlos Villagran. People who are planning to attend the session are invited to send an email to Dr. Villagran ([juan-carlos.villagran \(at\) unoosa.org](mailto:juan-carlos.villagran@unoosa.org)).

For more information: <http://www.eird.org/regional-platform/index.html>

5. “Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction”, First Session, in Bangkok, Thailand, 25-27 March 2009

UN-SPIDER will be present at the first session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR) which will be held on 25-27 March 2009 at Bangkok, Thailand. The event is organized by the Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). UNOOSA and ESCAP have been working together to help countries in the Asia and the Pacific region access and use space-based information for disaster management. UN-SPIDER Programme Coordinator David Stevens will be at the event. People who are planning to attend the session are invited to send an email to Mr. Stevens at ([david.stevens \(at\) unoosa.org](mailto:david.stevens@unoosa.org)).

For more information: <http://www.unescap.org/icstd/cdr/2009/>

6. UN-SPIDER contributes to GEO 2009-2011 Workplan

UN-SPIDER has confirmed with the Secretariat of GEO (Group on Earth Observations) that it will be co-leading four GEOSS tasks for 2009-2011.

- DA-09-03d: “Global DEM” (Lorant Czaran)
- CB-09-02c: “UN-SPIDER/GEO Summer Schools on Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response” (Juan Carlos Villagran)
- DI-06-09: “Use of Satellites for Risk Management” (Lorant Czaran)
- DI-09-02b: “Regional End-to-End Disaster Management Applications” (Shirish Ravan).

Additionally, UNOOSA experts will be participating and contributing to 22 other GEO tasks and sub-tasks.

For more information: <http://www.earthobservations.org/>

7. CALL FOR ABSTRACTS: “JBGIS Best Practices Booklet on Geo-information for Risk and Disaster Management”

The Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies (JBGIS, <http://www.fig.net/jbgis/>) and UN-SPIDER jointly invite you to contribute to a “Best Practices Booklet on Geo-information for Risk and Disaster Management” that will create a decision support forum based on the knowledge and experience of experts, and outline the potential uses of the Geo-Information Technologies to governmental, institutional and operative decision makers. The Booklet is intended to cover all regions of the world and all phases of the disaster management cycle. The Abstracts should not exceed 400 words and should outline a successful application, including data acquisition, information extraction and dissemination, and a clear statement of the benefits and further potential of the practice described as compared to classical methods. The deadline for submitting the abstracts is 30 April 2009 and the deadline for submission of the selected full papers is 30 September 2009. Publication and worldwide announcement of the “Best Practices Booklet” is planned for 2 July 2010 in Vienna at UN-SPIDER. Please submit the abstracts to Prof. Piero Boccardo ([piero.boccardo \(at\) polito.it](mailto:piero.boccardo@polito.it)).

News from the Space & Disaster Management Community:

1. World Bank installs early warning system at Lake Suarez, Tajikistan

Special equipment for monitoring the situation around Lake Suarez in eastern Tajikistan is now being installed by a World Bank project working on risk mitigation in the area, a step to ensure early warning for the vulnerable population in the region. A special satellite monitoring and early warning system worth around US\$1.5 million will be installed in the area.

Full Story: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=24473>

2. NOAA satellites helped rescue 283 people in 2008

NOAA satellites were key factors in the rescues of 283 people throughout the United States and its surrounding waters in 2008. In each incident, NOAA satellites detected and located a distress signal from an emergency beacon on board aircraft and boats and from handheld personal locator beacons and relayed the information to first responders and its Rescue Coordination Center on the ground.

Full Story: http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2009/20090128_satellite.html

3. NASA study predicted outbreak of deadly virus

An early warning system, more than a decade in development, successfully predicted the 2006-2007 outbreak of the deadly Rift Valley fever in northeast Africa, according to a new study led by NASA scientists. Using a blend of NASA and NOAA measurements of sea surface temperatures, precipitation, and vegetation cover, the system is able to predict when and where an outbreak would occur. The final product, a Rift Valley fever "risk map", gave public health officials in East Africa up to six weeks of warning for the 2006-2007 outbreak, providing time to lessen human impact.

Full Story: http://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/features/riftvalley_fever.html

4. Irish government to receive satellite detection service in handling oil spill

The Irish government has asked the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) for assistance in responding to combat an oil spill initially detected by EMSA's CleanSeaNet service 50 miles (80 km) southeast of Fastnet Rock off the West Cork coast. EMSA says it will continue utilising its CleanSeaNet European satellite oil slick detection service to monitor the pollution in the affected area. Emergency satellite images have been ordered to provide additional information on the behaviour of the spill at sea.

Full Story: <http://www.mglobal.com/news/dailystorydetails.cfm?storyid=9659&type=2>

5. Satellite built by Indian university to be launched in ISRO's next flight

For the first time in the history of Indian space research, a satellite developed by a university in India will be launched by Indian Space Research Institute (ISRO) during the next flight of the polar satellite launch vehicle. The high-resolution pictures and data obtained from the satellites are used for various applications such as drought monitoring, wetland management, urban planning, mineralogical mapping, flood-risk management and in the National Natural Resources Management System (NNRMS), among others.

Full Story: <http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/satellite-built-by-indian-university-to-be-launched-in-isro8217s-next-flight/16/02/349521/>

6. China plans to launch third ocean survey satellite in 2010

China plans to launch a third ocean survey satellite in 2010 to upgrade its capacity for maritime weather forecasting and disaster relief. The satellite, Haiyang-2A, an ocean dynamic environmental satellite, will be used to monitor ocean wind fields, sea levels and temperatures. This is part of a plan to develop a system consisting of ocean color remote sensing satellites, ocean dynamic environment satellites, and ocean surveillance satellites in China.

Full Story: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-02/18/content_10839651.htm

7. Improving emergency response through interoperable mobile satellite communications

To prepare for future emergencies, hospitals and EMS crews in the U.S have begun utilizing mobile satellite services — a redundant system that is immune to terrestrial congestion and

destruction. Examples include implementing a backup communications system between all hospitals and federally qualified health centers and clinics across the state and setting up national satellite mutual aid radio talk groups.

Full Story: <http://www.gsnmagazine.com/cms/industry-sectors/disaster-preparedness/1433.html>

8. Satellite images show devastation from Australian fires and floods

NASA satellites have captured images of the raging fires, burned vegetation, and the widespread floods that Australia has been battling over the past month. Deadly bushfires and massive flooding have plagued different parts of the country, and bushfires in Victoria, Australia, have flared up again during the last week of February 2009.

Full Story: <http://www.universetoday.com/2009/02/24/satellite-images-show-devastation-from-fire-and-floods-in-australia/>

9. Scots raise funds for fire suppression from space

Glasgow-based Clyde Space is working on acquiring funding to develop a satellite that could help track and prevent the spread of forest fires. It will adapt some of its pipeline technology to provide early warning of wildfire outbreaks from space so that they can be stopped before they take hold.

Full Story: <http://www.satnews.com/cgi-bin/story.cgi?number=113804994>

10. Google Earth fills its watery gaps

Ocean scientists and Google software engineers working over the last two years to pull together vast data sets and fill an enormous data gap, have finally succeeded in adding the two-thirds of the globe that is covered by water in reality, but was virtually blue and empty, online.

Full Story: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/03/science/earth/03oceans.html>

11. United Nations Secretary General to receive satellite phone call on climate change observations from Mt. Kilimanjaro climbers

The Secretary-General has asked a youth group climbing Africa's highest mountain this weekend to call him on a satellite telephone from the summit and brief him on the melting glaciers and the impact climate change is having on Mount Kilimanjaro. This Kilimanjaro Initiative project provides an opportunity for youth from slums to climb the highest mountain, and has recently attracted the attention of the UN Secretariat as it "champions the issue of climate change, which is affecting the global economy and contributing to the food crisis and an increase in environmental refugees."

For more information: <http://www.un.int/wcm/content/lang/en/pid/8822>

Conferences and Workshops:

We maintain a Calendar of Events with upcoming Conferences, Meetings and Events relevant to the area of space-based solutions for disaster management and emergency response. The Calendar can be viewed at:

<http://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=h1a93vb3rk6ud1tvrequisfk8s%40group.calendar.google.com>

“16th World Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WCDEM)” in Victoria, Canada, 12-15 May 2009

The 16th WCDEM is a biannual event convened by the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM). This Congress is devoted to equipping health professionals to prepare for and respond to disasters and health emergencies around the world. It is the premier event for the discussion of disaster and emergency health.

For more information: <http://www.wcdem2009.org>

“5th GRSS/ISPRS Workshop on Data Fusion and Remote Sensing over Urban Areas (URBAN 2009)” in Shanghai, China, 20-22 May 2009

This workshop on urban remote sensing is jointly sponsored by ISPRS (International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing) and IEEE GRSS (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society).

For more information: <http://www.urban-remote-sensing-2009.org.cn>

“First International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) Regional Meeting/Symposium” in Yaounde, Cameroon, 22-23 May 2009

The title of the symposium is “Space Application for the Users Community for Disaster Management and Sustainable Development in Africa”. The symposium will be held in collaboration with the Global Centre for Compliance, Hazards and Disaster Management, GLOCECOHADIM CAMEROON Office of Outer Space Application and Emergency Response, Africa.

For more information: <http://www.iaaweb.org>

“Second Regional Workshop of the GEOSS Support for Decision-Making in the Coastal Zone” in Accra, Ghana, 2-7 August 2009

The Second Regional Workshop in the Workshop Series of the GEO Coastal Zone Community of Practice (CZCP) and the Integrated Global Observing System (IGOS) Coastal Theme will be organized in partnership with GOOS, GTOS, UNESCO, IOC, the African Association for Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE), Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME), Benguela Current Commission (BCC), and the Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystem (SCLME). It will focus on the specific needs, challenges and capabilities in the coastal zones of the African region.

For more information: <http://www.czcp.org/workshops/Accra>

CALL FOR PAPERS: 3rd Central Asia GIS Conference - GISCA'09, “GIScience for Environmental and Emergency Management in Central Asia”, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 27-28 August 2009

The GISCA series of conferences aims at building a Central Asian network of GIS professionals supporting the sustained development of this region into an environmentally friendly, secure, and prosperous society. Major themes of this conference will cover GIS for Disaster and Emergency Management in Central Asia, Health GIS, Educational programmes in Geoinformatics, Development of Spatial Data Infrastructures, and more.

For more information: <http://www.aca-giscience.org/gisca09>

Upcoming UN-SPIDER Outreach Activities:

Further information on the following planned workshops can be obtained from the outreach activities section of the UN-SPIDER webpage: <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/unspider/workshops.html>

United Nations International UN-SPIDER Workshop: "Promoting the Use of Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response", in Vienna, Austria, 2 to 4 June 2009

Third United Nations International UN-SPIDER Bonn Workshop: "From Concepts to Application", in Bonn, Germany, 21 to 23 October 2009

"6th UN-wide Meeting on the Use of Space Technologies for Emergency Response and Humanitarian Assistance", in New York, USA (second half of 2009)

UN-SPIDER Regional Workshop "Promoting the Use of Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response in Latin America", Ecuador (second half of 2009)

UN-SPIDER Regional Workshop "Building Upon Regional Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response for Africa", Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (December 2009)

Upcoming Events Supported by UN-SPIDER

3rd Central Asia GIS Conference - GISCA'09, "GIScience for Environmental and Emergency Management in Central Asia" in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 27-28 August 2009

II Escuela de Primavera sobre Soluciones Espaciales para el Manejo de Desastres Naturales y Respuestas de Emergencias (UN-SPIDER/GEOSS Spring School), Argentina (Organized by UN-SPIDER/GEOSS/CONAE/CRECTEALC (October 2009)

*The **United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)** implements the decisions of the General Assembly and of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Subcommittees, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. The Office is responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and assisting developing countries in using space science and technology. Headquartered in Vienna, Austria, UNOOSA maintains a website at <http://www.unoosa.org>.*

*In its resolution 61/110 of 14 December 2006 the United Nations General Assembly agreed to establish the "**United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response - UN-SPIDER**" as a programme within UNOOSA. UN-SPIDER focuses on the need to ensure access to and use of space-based solutions during all phases of the disaster management cycle.*