



UN-SPIDER October 2008 Updates

Please forward this **UN-SPIDER Updates** to colleagues who might benefit from receiving the information.

If you would like to subscribe to this list please visit the following website:

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

1. UN-SPIDER International Workshop in Bonn/Germany

From 13-15 October 2008, over a hundred international experts and decision-makers from over forty countries gathered at the UN Campus in Bonn to participate in the **Second United Nations International UN-SPIDER Bonn Workshop: "Disaster Management and Space Technology - Bridging the Gap."** Workshop participants were enthusiastic with the first preview of the **UN-SPIDER "Knowledge Portal"**, a web-based platform for knowledge exchange and communication. The workshop also featured sessions on vulnerability and risk assessment, early warning systems, and health aspects in the context of disasters.

Full story at:

<http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/unspider/index.html>

2. United Nations Activates International Charter for Floods in Yemen

UNOOSA triggered the International Charter on 28 October at the request of the **OCHA Regional Office for the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia - (ROMENACA)**. On 24-25 October, most districts of the Hadramout and Al-Mahara governorates in the eastern part of Yemen were affected by storms and torrential rains causing severe flooding. The Project Manager for this Charter call is Mr. Tobias Schneiderman from the **German Aerospace Center (DLR)**.

Further information can be obtained from the following websites:

http://www.disasterscharter.org/disasters/CALLID_230_e.html

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc108?OpenForm&emid=FL-2008-000201-YEM&rc=3>

3. Mr. Lorant Czarán Joins UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER as Head of the UN-SPIDER Bonn Office

We are pleased to inform the UN-SPIDER Network about the appointment of Mr. Lorant Czarán (Romania) as Head of the UN-SPIDER Bonn Office. He is well known within the UN community, the international humanitarian community and also the geospatial community for his commitment to making available innovative geo-spatial solutions to support the work of the UN. He has a long career in the UN having first joined UNEP/GRID-Arendal in 1996, the UN Cartographic Section in 2002, then transferring to UN DPKO (Department of Peacekeeping Operations) when the Cartographic Section was absorbed by DPKO, and afterwards with the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights in 2005/2006. Most recently he has served as the Map Centre Manager for ReliefWeb within UN OCHA. Mr. Czarán has already taken up his new duties on 30 October 2008.

Mr. Lorant Czarán can be contacted at his new e-mail address:

Lorant.Czarán@unoosa.org

4. United Nations Agencies Confirm UNOOSA's role as Cooperating Body to the International Charter

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) convened the **"5th UN-wide Meeting on the Use of Space Technologies for Emergency Response and Humanitarian Assistance,"** which was held in Bonn, Germany on 16-17 October 2008. Thirty-one representatives from 25 UN agencies and partner institutions attended this two-day meeting which focused on understanding the current evolving operational environment and the need for closer coordination among the UN community. UN representatives updated the Common Vision to reflect the discussion points raised

during the meeting. All UN representatives confirmed UNOOSA's role as Cooperating Body and agreed that all requests for Charter activations should be sent by UNOOSA only.

5. 2005 Kashmir Earthquake: The Role of Information Technology in Relief Activities

An article in CIO Pakistan examines what went right, and what didn't, with regards to ICT and information sharing after the 2005 Kashmir Earthquake. In addition to the poor terrain, a lack of information was one of the biggest hurdles that relief coordinating agencies faced. Stronger communication may have helped to better align the quality of the relief efforts. The article notes the satellite mapping and telemedicine efforts that took place.

Full story at:

<http://ciopakistan.com/2008/10/disaster-management-what-are-we-doing/>

6. The Past and Future of Crisis Mapping – A Personal Account

Patrick Meier, Doctoral Research Fellow at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and PhD Candidate at the Fletcher School, reflects on the recent evolution of crisis mapping and suggests what he would like to see happen over the coming years. He argues that maps should not be seen simply as dynamic tools for improving situational awareness but also as communication tools. He also suggests that RSS feeds need to be an integral part of mapping platforms, and that new ways of ensuring mobile data security and connectivity need to be developed.

Full story at:

<http://irevolution.wordpress.com/2008/10/18/future-of-crisis-mapping/>

7. Third COSMO-SkyMed Satellite Launched from California

A rocket carrying an Italian earth-observation satellite blasted off on 24 October 2008 from the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The payload was the third part of the four-satellite system COSMO-SkyMed. With the first two satellites in orbit, COSMO-SkyMed successfully passed all initial tests and became fully operational on August 1, 2008. It has already supplied images of natural and environmental disasters such as Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, the earthquake in China in spring 2008, and Hurricanes Hannah and Ike over Haiti in September 2008. With the launching of the third satellite, COSMO-SkyMed will further increase its image acquisition and production capacity, to 1,350 images per day from the current capacity of 900 images. The orbital position of the third satellite will allow it to operate in tandem with another satellite, in order to develop interferometry-based applications.

Full story at:

http://www.telespazio.it/docs/PR_post_eng.pdf

8. Satellite Data Reveals Extreme Summer Snowmelt in Northern Greenland

The northern part of the Greenland ice sheet experienced extreme snowmelt during the summer of 2008, with large portions of the area subject to record melting days, according to Dr. Marco Tedesco, Assistant Professor of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences at The City College of New York (CCNY), and colleagues. Their conclusion is based on an analysis of microwave brightness temperature recorded by the Special Sensor Microwave Imager (SSM/I) onboard the F13 satellite. "Having such extreme melting so far north, where it is usually colder than the southern regions is extremely interesting," said Professor Tedesco.

Full story at:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/10/081008114518.htm>

9. CALL FOR PAPERS: The International Journal of Applied Earth Observation and Geoinformation – Special Issue on Geospatial Technologies for Disaster Management

To provide an up-to-date review of advances in recent development on the utilization of earth observation and geoinformation for disaster management, a special issue of the International Journal of Applied Earth Observation and Geoinformation dedicated to both theoretical and practical issues will be published in Vol. 11, No. 4, 2009. The deadline for submission of manuscripts is June 30, 2009.

For more information:

http://www.elsevier.com/framework_products/promis_misc/cfp_disastermanagement1008.pdf

10. CALL FOR ABSTRACTS: Thematic Session on Disaster Communication Systems at the India Disaster Management Congress 2009

Interested scientists, scholars, researchers and practitioners are invited to submit the abstracts of their papers for presentation at the Congress for the Thematic Session "Disaster Communication Systems." The deadline for submission of abstracts is November 31, 2008.

Disaster Management Congress: <http://nidm.gov.in/idmc2/sessions.asp>

Thematic Session on Disaster Communication Systems: <http://www.ekgaon.com/dcs-idmc09/>

Abstract Submission: DCS-IDMC09@ekgaon.com

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>

"9th Plenary Meeting of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG)" in Vienna, Austria, 5-7 November 2008

Formed in 2000, UNGIWG is a network of UN professionals working in the fields of cartography and geospatial information management science to address issues of common concern. Since its inception, UNGIWG has been laying the foundations for a United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure (UNSDI). All UNGIWG members are encouraged to attend the full three days. UNGIWG Partners (i.e. non-UN) are encouraged to attend the full day plenary on Thursday the 6th, and the morning session of the following day.

For more information:

<http://sites.google.com/a/ungiwgsec.org/ungiwg9>

"Use of Remote Sensing Techniques for Monitoring Volcanoes and Seismogenic Areas - USEReST 2008" in Naples, Italy, 11-13 November 2008

The focus will be on the operational use of Earth Observation data in real monitoring scenarios rather than on new scientific results. The user community is called to indicate the technological gaps that may limit the full exploitation of EO data in everyday monitoring practice; the developer community is expected to indicate the new operational features likely attainable in the near future.

For more information:

<http://www.userest.org/>

"International Symposium GeoTunis 2008 – 3rd Edition" in Tunis, Tunisia, 26-30 November 2008

The theme of the conference is: "Natural resource management and study of the impact of climate change with geographic information systems, science and space technologies."

For more information:

http://www.geotunis.org/version_ang/index.php

"Second International Conference on Geoinformation Technology for Natural Disaster Management and Rehabilitation" in Bangkok, Thailand, 1-2 December 2008

The symposium will focus on the use of geoinformatics for natural disaster preparedness such as earthquake, flood, typhoon and tsunami etc., and for rehabilitation and risk management by exploring the various causative factors. There will also be deliberations on how to use GIS for better planning of risk areas.

For more information:

<http://e-geoinfo.net/git4ndm.html>

“Cartography and Geoinformatics for Early Warning and Emergency Management: Towards Better Solutions” in Prague, Czech Republic, 19-22 January 2009

This Symposium will tackle topics related to Early Warning and Emergency Management considering technology, user requirements for geo-information, and information providers (data and standards).

For more information:

<http://c4c.geogr.muni.cz>

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>

We have already carried out all planned Outreach Activities for 2008. We have organised four workshops this year, including a regional workshop for the Caribbean region which was held in Barbados, and one for the Pacific Region which was held in Fiji. We are now planning for workshops to be held in 2009, which will include a regional workshop for Latin America to be held in Ecuador in May 2009, one for Africa to be held in Addis Ababa in the second half of 2009, and two international workshops to be held in Bonn and Vienna. We will soon provide more details on these planned workshops.

UN-SPIDER Regional Workshops/Activities Supported by UNOOSA

“L'Outil Spatial au Service de la Gestion des Catastrophes et des Situations d'Urgence en Afrique” – Rabat, Morocco, 10-12 November 2008.

Organized by the Centre Régional Africain des Sciences et Technologies de l'Espace en Langue Française (CRASTE-LF, Rabat, Maroc).

For more information: <http://www.enssup.gov.ma/craste/>

Contact: Mr. Abdelhaq Trache: trache@emi.ac.ma

*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.*