

UN-SPIDER July 2009 Updates

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1. Togo: Successful UN-SPIDER Technical Advisory Mission

From 13 to 17 July 2009, UN-SPIDER conducted a technical advisory mission to Togo upon the official request of the Togolese Government to assess the existing use of space-based technology and information for disaster management and emergency response in the country. Following Burkina Faso, Ghana and Namibia this was the fourth UN-SPIDER advisory mission to Africa. The mission was successful in connecting various organizations involved in disaster management within the country and also within the region and to generate awareness amongst these organizations to undertake collective efforts towards the incorporation of space-based information to support disaster management activities. It also pointed out the need to update national disaster management plans and boosted efforts to establish a National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) in Togo. In addition to UN-SPIDER staff members, a number of different regional and international institutions delegated experts to this mission, which guaranteed a high quality of technical advice and an excellent base for ensuring partnerships and cooperation which will help the country in developing capacity building plans and in benefiting from advisory support from these regional organizations in the long-term.

For more information >> [UN-SPIDER](#)

2. Afghanistan: UN-SPIDER Co-Chairs Inter-Agency Briefing

On June 22nd, an inter-agency briefing with UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER took place in Kabul to determine how best to make use of spatial data/mapping tools to support disaster risk reduction and emergency response activities in Afghanistan. After an introduction of the UN-SPIDER programme, the experts discussed new directions especially on giving access to remote sensing (RS) data relevant for disaster preparedness planning and emergency response. The important role of RS in humanitarian response and planning was underlined by various examples from OCHA and recent floodings. In open discussion after the initial presentations, a wide range of interests and expectations were raised and a real need for RS data and its use was being honed. UNOOSA has pledged additional technical expertise to support both the Government and UNCT to ensure this forum is closely linked to available resources.

For more information, contact Mr. Shirish Ravan ([shirish.ravan\[at\]unoosa.org](mailto:shirish.ravan[at]unoosa.org))

3. Guatemala: UN-SPIDER present in CONVERCIENCIA 2009

UN-SPIDER was invited by the Guatemalan Council of Science and Technology to participate in CONVERCIENCIA 2009, which forms part of a strategy to promote the development of science, technology and innovation within Guatemala. On an annual basis, Guatemalan scientists working abroad are invited to conduct outreach activities in the country, network with local scientists and practitioners, deliver presentation to the general public and provide advice to the National Secretariat for Science and Technology. As an outcome of this mission to Guatemala, a project was outlined to be conducted with the support of UN-SPIDER to investigate the dynamics of the problem of sedimentation which arises when torrential rainfall transports extreme amounts of sand from the

foothills of active volcanoes to deltas and floodplains. The project will aim at providing municipal and regional governments with policy-relevant advice regarding how to cope with such sedimentation processes through land-use planning norms. UN-SPIDER's role is foreseen in assisting Guatemalan scientists to access satellite imagery to assess the sedimentation process in recent decades.

For more information, contact Mr. Juan-Carlos Villagrán de Leon (juan-carlos.villagranfat@unoosa.org)

4. [CALL FOR PROJECTS] Planet Action – Fighting the Climate Crisis

Planet Action provides satellite imagery, geographic information and technology support to local projects that investigate and assess climate change issues focusing on human issues, drought & desertification, water resources, forestry, biodiversity, oceans, ice, and awareness. This year, Planet Action will support additional projects while following up on current projects and their results on the ground. Join them in fighting the climate crisis! Project submission deadline: September 30, 2009.

For more information >> [Planet Action](#)

5. Cooperation Countering Wildfires in South Africa by Testing ICT System

The Advancing Information and Communication Technology for Disaster Risk Management in Africa (AIDA) project aims at sharing knowledge about affordable ICT solutions in support of DRM in Africa. In the framework of this project, the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) is disseminating a series of products to mitigate the effects of the fire season which begins in June in South Africa. As part of the trial, the Forest Fire Association (FFA) in Nelspruit, South Africa, will use wildfire alarms developed by the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in its operational activities to fight wildfires. If successful, this scheme could be extended to countries neighbouring South Africa. (Source: EUMETSAT)

For more information >> [EUMETSAT](#); [AIDA](#)

6. SSTL successfully launch two further satellites

With the successful launch of the UK-DMC2 and Deimos-1 satellites on 29th July 2009, SSTL has expanded the capability of the world's leading space-based Disaster Monitoring Constellation (DMC). Both satellites will bring significant enhancements to the DMC, which provides Earth observation imagery for a range of commercial and environmental applications as well as to the International Charter: Space and Major Disasters. The new satellites will enhance DMC satellite daily imaging capacity for applications such as deforestation mapping, urban planning, natural resource management, security, agriculture and disaster relief operations. (Source: SSTL)

For more information >> [SSTL](#)

7. Scientists find Tsunami 'Shadow' visible from Space

NOAA scientists have demonstrated that tsunamis in the open ocean can change sea surface texture in a way that can be measured by satellite-borne radars. The finding could one day help save lives through improved detection and forecasting of tsunami intensity and direction at the ocean surface. The new research challenges the traditional belief that tsunamis are too subtle in the open ocean to be seen at the surface.

For more information >> [NOAA](#)

8. Pacific Disaster Net

The Pacific Disaster Net is the 'Virtual Centre of Excellence' for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the Pacific Region. It is a live collection and growing DRM information resource for government agencies, regional bodies, non-government organizations and international agencies. It also supports National Action Planning, Decision Making and provides in-country information for distribution within the region. The website offers multiple access entries with a range of retrieval and display options. Inexperienced and expert users can access their information and documents without difficulty and within a range of formats.

For more information >> [Pacific Disaster Net](#)

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>

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

This conference will be hosted by the Kyrgyz State University for Construction, Transportation & Architecture and supported by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA); the conference will bring together practitioners from Central Asian countries. Topics to be discussed include GIS for Environmental Management, Emergency Management, and Health; New Trends and Technologies in GIS&T; Spatial Data Infrastructures; and Educational Programmes.

For more information >> [Austria-Central Asia Centre for GIScience](#)

AfricaGIS 2009: "Geo-spatial Information and Sustainable Development in Africa" in Kampala, Uganda, 26-30 October 2009

The "AfricaGIS 2009" International Conference is one of the leading geospatial conferences in Africa and provides a platform where geo-information professionals from Africa and around the world come together to learn and interact about geo-information technology and its applications. *For more information >> [Conference website](#)*

Eurisy Workshop, 19-20 November 2009, Athens, Greece – First Announcement

"Eurisy" is announcing a workshop for local and regional authorities using satellite services to understand, mitigate and adapt to climate change on 19-20 November 2009, Athens, Greece. Satellites have had a unique and substantial contribution to identifying and recognising climate change. Today, they offer unrivalled, innovative tools for climate change mitigation and adaptation on a local level. This workshop will inform local and regional authorities, SMEs and other potential users of satellite information and services of how they can better tackle climate change by using these tools. Good practice presentations will be the starting point of discussions about how such actors can finance and implement these innovative tools.

For more information >> [eurisy](#)

Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference 2009, in Suva, Fiji, 1-4 December 2009

The above conference will take place from 1 - 4 December 2009 at the University of South Pacific, Lower Campus, Faculty of Islands and Oceans, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. UN-SPIDER will be supporting this event and encourages all experts interested in joining the leading geospatial conference in the Pacific region to attend and contribute.

For more information >> [PACINET](#)

GI4DM 2010 Conference, 2-4 February 2010, Torino, Italy, Announcement and Call for Papers

Conference Theme: Remote Sensing And Geo-Information For Environmental Emergencies. Geomatics technologies are able to support management and recovery in the aftermath of manmade and natural disasters. However, disaster management also poses big challenges in all aspects of the geo-information cycle, from data acquisition, processing, management and delivery. For the sixth time, the International Symposium on Geo-information for Disaster Management (GI4DM) will bring together researchers, developers, data providers and users from all over the world to discuss these challenges.

For more information >> [GI4DM](#)

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>

UN-SPIDER Regional Workshop: "Space Applications for Disaster Risk Management and Emergency Response in Latin America", in Quito, Ecuador, 29 September - 2 October 2009

Third United Nations International UN-SPIDER Bonn Workshop: "From Concepts to Application", in Bonn, Germany, 21-23 October 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, October 2009 (Organized by UN-SPIDER/GEOSS/CONAE/CRECTEALC)

AfricaGIS 2009: "Geo-spatial Information and Sustainable Development in Africa" in Kampala, Uganda, 26-30 October 2009

Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference 2009, in Suva, Fiji, 1-4 December 2009

GI4DM 2010 Conference, 2-4 February 2010, Torino, Italy

*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.*