



UN-SPIDER November 2009 Updates

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1. UN-SPIDER mission to Kenya raises awareness of UN-SPIDER Programme

From 21 to 25 October, UN-SPIDER staff visited Kenya with the aim of raising awareness of the UN-SPIDER Programme. On that account, UN-SPIDER gave a presentation on its activities to the Kenya Humanitarian Forum, which was attended by over 45 United Nations staff members and Government officials who had gathered to discuss contingency planning topics. This visit generated a greater awareness of the UN-SPIDER activities and of its contribution to African states, and strengthened the link with local United Nations offices with the purpose of helping implement further UN-SPIDER activities, such as Technical Advisory Missions, and for the provision of support during crisis response situations. UN-SPIDER staff also met with representatives of the Rift Valley provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Platform in Nakuru City, an office which is in charge of 68 landslide- and drought-prone districts of the Rift Valley. The meeting strongly highlighted the need to connect with provincial authorities to extend the benefits of the UN-SPIDER Programme at the provincial level, and stressed the importance of holding Technical Advisory Missions (TAM) that include provincial DRR platforms as well.

2. UN-SPIDER chairs session on Disaster Management during AfricaGIS 2009, Uganda

AfricaGIS, the premier international conference focusing on geo-information technologies and applications in Africa, was held this year from 26-30 October, in Kampala, Uganda. UN-SPIDER delivered a keynote address and also chaired the special session on Space-based Information for Disaster Management. The conference programme also included a presentation of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters and the showcasing of the latest DMC (Disaster Monitoring Constellation) international initiatives in Africa. An expert from Zimbabwe and another one from Lesotho were sponsored by UN-SPIDER to attend and present case studies demonstrating the use of remote sensing and GIS for flood monitoring. Moreover, a formal meeting between UN-SPIDER and Ms. Rose Nakabugo Bwenvu, the Focal Point for the Disaster Risk Reduction Platform in Uganda (located at the Department of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Office of the Prime Minister) was held, to generate awareness about UN-SPIDER activities at the Governmental level and to introduce the UN-SPIDER Programme.

3. UN-SPIDER partakes of UNRCC AP and the 23rd CEOS Plenary in Thailand

UN-SPIDER actively participated in the 18th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Asia-Pacific Region (UNRCC-AP) in Bangkok, Thailand, held from 25 to 27 October at the UNESCAP premises. One of the conference focus areas was disaster management and geospatial data availability. The conference this year also heard an important and timely keynote on "Spatial Enablement and the Response to Climate Change and the Millennium Development Goals". Seeing that it addressed the ways in which spatial information could contribute to addressing current major challenges, UN-SPIDER was bound to assume a weighty role. First of all, it was requested in the adopted resolutions to support capacity building efforts in the Asia-Pacific region, by providing specific training in the use of space technologies, space-based information and geospatial data for disaster management activities. It was furthermore compelled to invest efforts in acquiring and widely

distributing space-based data such as satellite imagery for disaster management purposes, in a timely and effective manner.

For more information on the Conference >> <http://unstats.un.org>

Following the UNRCC-AP, UN-SPIDER staff participated in the 23rd Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) Plenary hosted by the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISTDA) in Phuket, Thailand. Discussions covered the various CEOS activities supporting GEO, the Virtual Constellations progress, work planning and various other equally important topics. The Working Group on Information Systems and Services (WGISS) Chair highlighted in her presentation the newly-established Disaster Response Interest Group which is led by UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER.

For the Plenary presentations and more info >> <http://conference.gistda.or.th>

4. UN-SPIDER hosts GMES workshop to bridge United Nations offices with European geospatial communities

On 12 November the “Global Monitoring for Environment and Security” (GMES) workshop was held at the United Nations Campus in Bonn. Organised by Bridge2Geo - European Geoinformation Network, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the City of Bonn, its purpose was to strengthen cooperation between the geospatial community and the United Nations. The Workshop was attended by members of six Bonn-based United Nations organizations who sought to establish and deepen working relations with experts from the geospatial industry and research institutions.

For more information >> www.un-spider.org

5. United Nations and Google explore partnership prospects during New York Workshop

A United Nations-Google Workshop was held in New York from 19 to 20 November. UN-SPIDER staff (on behalf of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group, UNGIWG as well) helped co-organize the event in collaboration with Google. This event brought together over 80 United Nations staff members from various organizations, as well as about 15 Google staff members. Google Vice-President Alfred Spector inaugurated the workshop, followed by a welcome note from Assistant Secretary General and Chief Information Technology Officer for the United Nations Secretariat, Mr. Choi Soon-hong. A number of interesting presentations set the tone for the afternoon breakouts and discussions, as well as the summarizing panel. Important announcements were also made, such as the availability to the United Nations and for non-profit use of much of the South-East Asia Google MapMaker GIS data. The second day consisted of a more technical workshop where United Nations staff members were able to bring up questions or concrete technology problems and then identify solutions together with Google experts. Overall, the workshop proved to be a great success, and especially the informal and practical setting was appreciated by most participants. Suggestions to hold similar events in Geneva and Vienna were also made by United Nations staff who could not participate in New York.

For more information >> <http://sitescontent.google.com>

6. UN-SPIDER hosts the 10th Forum on Disaster Reduction

From 23 to 24 November UN-SPIDER hosted the 10th Forum on Disaster Reduction in Bonn, Germany, which was organized under the auspices of the German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV). The Forum was titled “Disasters – Data Background and Information” and brought together more than 170 participants from disaster management authorities, technical services, industry, and research and development sectors. UN-SPIDER presented its mission and co-chaired two sessions, one on Data and Information Collection in Emergency Situations and the other on Advances in Remote Sensing. Further sessions were dedicated to Risk Mapping, Long Term Data Safeguard, and Data Collection in the Cultural and Social Sciences.

For more information >> [DKKV](http://www.dkkv.de)

7. UN-SPIDER gives keynote address during EARSeL Workshop

The Third Workshop of the EARSeL Special Interest Group on Land Use and Land Cover was held in Bonn, Germany, from 25 to 27 November. The European Association of Remote Sensing Laboratories (EARSeL) and the Center for Remote Sensing of Land Surfaces (ZFL) at the University of Bonn organized this biannual workshop which covered the following topics: land use and land cover mapping (LULC), land use cover change (LUCC), ecological aspects of LULC/LUCC, land degradation and desertification, integration of LULC products into modeling, and multi-sensor approaches, just to name a few. UN-SPIDER was invited to give a keynote during the opening session of the workshop. Under the title “Space-based solutions in support of impact assessment and global disasters management: the UN-SPIDER Programme” the work of UN-SPIDER was presented to the participants.

For more information >> www.zfl.uni-bonn.de

8. UN-SPIDER funds trainers of West Africa Sub-regional Training Workshop on Risk Assessment in Dakar, Senegal

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction Recovery (GFDRR) and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) held a three-day training workshop, from 25 to 27 November, on mitigating disaster risk to improve the resilience of West African states against disasters. Seeing that West African countries have become highly vulnerable to the increase of disasters triggered by natural and man-made hazards over the last decades, this training was meant to help government officials and practitioners from civil society and the private sector to better understand the role of hazard assessment, risk analysis and vulnerability mapping in reducing the impact of disasters.

The workshop on disaster risk reduction brought together more than 40 participants from ECOWAS Member States, sub-regional organization, United Nations agencies, international organizations, donor countries, scientific sectors and civil society institutions. UN-SPIDER contributed to this training by funding two trainers from the Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys (RECTAS) who were tasked with giving lectures on space-based information for disaster management. The training contributed to facilitating cooperation between different stake-holders within the sub-region, enhancing the exchange of regional information, data and knowledge on natural hazards and trans-boundary issues, and encouraging risk identification, assessment, early warning and preparedness.

For more information >> www.preventionweb.net

9. SpaceAid in Action: UN-SPIDER offers ample support to Philippines and El Salvador

In the wake of the El Salvador and the Philippines floods, two major disasters that cost many lives and displaced even more during the month of November, UN-SPIDER was again active in providing expert assistance, confirming the utility of the SpaceAid framework now being developed. All throughout, UN-SPIDER played a major role in connecting the space data providers with the users on the ground, and its work was especially recognized by the Government of Philippines during the United Nations 4th Committee meetings in New York, as well as in the national press. Other resources from within the United Nations system, including system contracts for imagery acquisition, were brought to use as part of the support, in strong collaboration with a number of United Nations agencies involved in the response, as the situation demanded. The subsequent deployment of an aerial survey team from Geovantage to the Philippines, with support from Google, was constantly backed up and supported by the UN-SPIDER staff. It is also worth mentioning at this point that the Knowledge Portal was providing constant updates on the availability of space-based imagery and other resources that were of relevance to the response process.

10. UN-SPIDER National Focal Points: Nominations received from more Member States

The number of UN-SPIDER National Focal Points (NFP) has expanded to *thirty-nine* countries. The latest countries to nominate NFPs are Burkina Faso, Croatia, Tajikistan and Cote d'Ivoire. NFPs are the gateway that UN-SPIDER needs and uses to reach out to the countries and initiate joint activities as needed for their own benefit.

11. WorldView-2 First Images

It is now possible to view the spectacular first images from WorldView-2, the first eight-band, high-resolution commercial satellite, beginning with images taken over Texas on October 19, 2009 just 11 days after its successful launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

For more information >> [Digital Globe](#)

12. DigitalGlobe & eMap launch Disaster-related collection of high-resolution imagery

In conjunction with its business partner DigitalGlobe, eMap International announced disaster-related collection events around the globe. DigitalGlobe has a proven track record of collecting high resolution imagery after disasters and promises to invest every effort to capture useful high-resolution satellite imagery of most prominent crises. (e.g. Hurricane Katrina, the Southern California Wildfires and 9/11 recovery efforts).

For more information >> [eMapInternational](#)

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>

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2010, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, 17-19 January 2010

The Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2010 (ACDR 2010) to be held in January 2010 will provide a good opportunity to review the progress made and achievements of the implementation of the priority actions of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA) and clarify specific issues and challenges in achieving its goals in the remaining 5 years in Asia. Accordingly, the ACDR 2010 is expected to contribute to encouraging the strengthening of efforts and commitment for disaster risk reduction by each country in Asia. Furthermore, it aims at sharing good practices and common challenges for disaster risk reduction and building a more solid foundation of regional cooperation in Asia which will facilitate the realization of the societies which convey the experiences and lessons learned from past disasters, strengthen systems to be prepared for future disasters, and foster a "Culture of Disaster Prevention".

For more information and registration >> [ADRC](#)

The 16th Session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF-16), Phuket, Thailand, 26-29 January 2010

The APRSAF is designed to serve as an active forum to promote concrete cooperative activities to address common issues at the regional level with the aim to contribute toward solving problems not only of the Asia-Pacific region but also of the entire world, as well as to exploit space technology development and utilization for sustainable development of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. As usual, the APRSAF-16 is going to have the plenary session and sessions of the four working groups (WGs): Earth Observation (EO) WG, Communication Satellite Applications (CSA) WG, Space Education and Awareness (SEA) WG and Space Environment Utilization (SEU) WG.

For more information and registration >> [APRSAF](#)

"International Training Course on Application of Space Technology for Disaster Management Support with Emphasis on Geological Risk Management".

The course will take place from 12 April until 7 May, the venue is the Indian Institute for Remote Sensing, Dehradun, India. It is organized by the UN-affiliated CSSTEAP, the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, and ITC.

For more information >> [CSSTEAP](#)

Fourth Central Asia GIS Conference - GISCA 2010: Water: Life, Risk, Energy and Landuse - May 27-28, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

Call for Papers: The conference committee is inviting all those interested to submit scientific papers on the stated conference themes with a focus on the Central Asian Region by 1 March 2010. UNOOSA supported the previous GIS Conference in 2009 and will again provide support in 2010 recognising this event as the major Geospatial Conference in Central Asia. It will be an opportunity to meet with experts interested in working together in Central Asia.

For more information and registration >> [GISCA10](#)

Upcoming UN-SPIDER Outreach Activities:

Information on upcoming events planned or supported by UN-SPIDER can be obtained from the outreach activities section of the UN-SPIDER webpage:

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

UN-SPIDER will be present at COP15 in Copenhagen, Denmark, 7-18 December.

Upcoming UN-SPIDER Events

UN-SPIDER Regional Workshop "Building Upon Regional Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response for Africa", in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 2010

Upcoming Events Supported by UN-SPIDER

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

The Third African Leadership Conference on Space Science and Technology for Sustainable Development ALC-2009, Algiers, Algeria 7-9 December 2009

The Fourth Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management, Montego Bay, Jamaica 7-11 December 2009

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2010, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, 17-19 January 2010

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

Fourth Central Asia GIS Conference - GISCA 2010: Water: Life, Risk, Energy and Landuse, May 27-28, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

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.