



UN-SPIDER October 2009 Updates

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1. Importance of UN-SPIDER highlighted at the United Nations General Assembly

The merits of UN-SPIDER were repeatedly highlighted during the 14th Meeting of the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. Representatives from **Sweden, Syria, Sudan, the Philippines, Libya, Indonesia, I. R. Iran, Malaysia, Burkina Faso, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine** emphasized the value of the contributions of UN-SPIDER to the support of disaster management from outer space. The I. R. Iran, host of one of the UN-SPIDER Regional Support Offices, recognized the “considerable merit of the UN-SPIDER programme”. Malaysia is willing to contribute to supporting the UN-SPIDER initiatives in the equatorial belt region by sharing with the respective countries in that region its remote-sensing satellite data. The Russian Federation highlighted the inestimable value of outer space technology and drew attention to the role of UN-SPIDER as one example of putting this technology to good use. Also, Ukraine underlined its support to the programme and confirmed its offer to host a regional support office in Kyiv. The Philippines referring to the recent sequence of disasters expressed its appreciation for the valuable assistance of UN-SPIDER during the typhoons, and the special effort made by the UN-SPIDER team to consolidate satellite data on the typhoon and its impact, including post-disaster imagery to support the response effort. Finally, the urgent need to make space services available for all countries, especially developing countries, was stressed by Burkina Faso. *For more information >>[United Nations](#)*

2. UN-SPIDER to support Samoa, Fiji, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic

The Government of Austria has provided funds to UN-SPIDER to specifically build upon the work already being developed in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions by carrying out technical advisory missions to Jamaica and the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean region and to Fiji and Samoa in the Pacific region. The Technical Advisory Missions will be carried out during the first 2 weeks of December and the last 2 weeks of January 2010 (for the Dominican Republic). Technical Advisory Missions provide an opportunity for interested experts from partner institutions to join the UN-SPIDER team during the mission and contribute to helping the relevant national institutions to learn how to access and use space-based information to support disaster risk management and emergency response. In particular the mission to Samoa will evaluate how effective the international community has been in supporting the response efforts to the recent tsunami. So far support missions have been carried out to Burkina Faso, Namibia, Togo, Kenya, Uganda and Ghana in Africa, Ecuador in Latin America, and Afghanistan in Asia. If you wish to learn more about these technical advisory missions please contact Mr. Shirish Ravan (shirish.ravan (at) unoosa.org).

3. UN-SPIDER takes a leading role in supporting the response efforts in the Philippines

The Philippines has been repeatedly battered by tropical cyclones: first Ketsana, then Parma, the Lupit and currently Mirinae. UN-SPIDER has worked closely with the emergency response teams,

satellite operators and other key players to ensure the wide availability of both space-based information and airborne imagery. Key players include: OCHA, WFP, the World Bank, Google, [MapAction](#), [PAGASA](#), and the Philippine National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC). PAGASA is the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration and UNOOSA is finalising an agreement with this institution for them to become a UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office, whereas the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) is the UN-SPIDER National Focal Point for the Philippines. Recently the Philippines' ambassador to the United Nations, His Excellency Hilario Davide Jr, highlighted the important role space-based technology can play in helping countries prone to natural disasters prepare effective responses to calamities. Speaking before the 4th Committee of the UN General Assembly, he said the country benefited from space-based technology during the back-to-back storms that hit the country recently. He specifically "expressed the Philippines' appreciation of the "valuable" assistance it received when the storms were buffeting the country from the UN Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-Spider) of the Vienna-based UN Office for Outer Space (UNOOSA)."

For further info > [News](#)

4. 3rd International UN-SPIDER Bonn Workshop

This year's UN-SPIDER Workshop took place from 21 to 23 October and focused on the ways in which concepts could be implemented as projects and actual applications. Climate change and desertification received particular attention during the workshop seeing that they pose special challenges to the disaster management community. Some considerable weight was also placed on the use of space applications in the health sector. The Workshop was inaugurated with speeches by the Ambassador of Germany to the United Nations in Vienna, **His Excellency Rüdiger Lüdeking**, by the Ambassador of Namibia to Germany, **His Excellency Neville Gertze**, by **Ms. Margitta Wülker-Mirbach** of the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, and by **Mr. David Stevens** Programme Coordinator of the UN-SPIDER Programme. The role of UN-SPIDER as a bridge between the satellite technology and the disaster management communities was acknowledged by all keynote speakers. Ambassador Lüdeking highlighted the importance of the exploration and use of outer space to the benefit of all countries and populations worldwide. He further confirmed the commitment of the German government to space-based approaches, including the work of UN-SPIDER and its continuity. Ambassador Gertze acknowledged the support of UN-SPIDER to his country, which has been repeatedly affected by floods in recent years and which has established a close cooperation with the UN-SPIDER programme. Ms. Margitta Wülker-Mirbach expressed the appreciation of the German government for the progress made by UN-SPIDER since its inception and emphasized Germany's commitment to a multilateral approach to bring together space-based information and disaster management.

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

5. UN-SPIDER carries out first Technical Advisory Mission to Latin America, in Ecuador

UN-SPIDER successfully conducted its Technical Advisory Mission to Ecuador between 29 September and 8 October. The mission was conducted with the support of experts from the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) of Brazil, the National Commission on Space Activities (CONAE) of Argentina, as well as two staff members from UN-SPIDER. It was coordinated at the national level with the National Secretariat for Risk Management, the Pro-Tempore Secretariat of the V Space Conference of the Americas, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador. The Mission benefited from the regional workshop conducted by UN-SPIDER a week earlier, as during the workshop many Ecuadorian agencies made presentations displaying how they were using space-based information for a variety of purposes targeting all phases of the disaster management cycle.

Additional information >> UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal: www.un-spider.org

6. UN-SPIDER makes headway at the regional workshop in Ecuador

UN-SPIDER conducted its regional workshop “Aplicaciones Espaciales en la Gestión para la Reducción del Riesgo y para la Respuesta en caso de Desastres” in Quito, Ecuador, from 29 September – 2 October 2009 with the presence of more than 60 participants from 17 countries. The event benefited considerably from the support provided by different agencies in Ecuador and the significant technical and financial support from the Government of Spain. The workshop was inaugurated by representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Integration; the Ambassador of Spain; the Lady Director of the National Secretariat for Risk Management; the Commander of the Air Force of Ecuador, and the representative from UN-SPIDER. The purpose of the workshop was to gather inputs to draft a plan of action for the region, and to establish a regional thematic partnership on the use of space-based information to support the full disaster management cycle. The event included plenary presentations where experts provided examples of recent advances in the use of space-based information for disaster-risk management and emergency response and group sessions where participants discussed various issues related to the use of such information.

Workshop report will be available on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal: www.un-spider.org

7. International Day for Disaster Reduction

On October 14, 2009, the International Day for Disaster Reduction was used to illustrate the role of UN-SPIDER in a concrete case, namely the recent Tropical Cyclones in the Philippines. At the VIC Rotunda in Vienna, a presentation was given on that particular example. After a welcome address by Niklas Hedman (Chief Committee Services and Research Section, UNOOSA) and introductory remarks on space and disaster management by Juan Carlos Villagran (UN-SPIDER, UNOOSA), Mr. Manangan, Minister at the Permanent Mission of the Philippines, presented his observations on the recent disaster and its management process. Ms. Gerardo, Chair of the VIC Club Filipino, expressed her gratitude for the help extended to the people of the Philippines. Michael Leitgab (UN-SPIDER, UNOOSA) then explained the role that UN-SPIDER played in the case of the recent Tropical Cyclone, with Niklas Hedman giving the concluding remarks, bringing the day to a successful end.

8. UN-Day on Bonn’s market square

Under the motto “8-0 Victory for Development”, this year’s United Nations Day took place on Bonn’s Market Square on Saturday, 24 October. Together with many other Bonn-based United Nations agencies and other institutions like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), UN-SPIDER staff used the opportunity to familiarize the citizens of Bonn with their work. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. many questions were answered and potential interns and volunteers were informed about opportunities to work with UN-SPIDER. The newly elected Lord Mayor Mr. Juergen Nimptsch also stopped by the stand, where UN-SPIDER staff were quick to point him out their collaborative work with the city of Bonn, and emphasized that the City’s support was indeed essential to UN-SPIDER and very much appreciated.

9. UN-SPIDER Team to participate in relevant upcoming events

UN-SPIDER experts will be participating in the following upcoming events and meetings: West Africa Sub-Regional Training Workshop on Risk Assessment, Dakar, Senegal, 25-27 November 2009, the Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference 2009, in Suva, Fiji, 1- 4 December 2009, the Fourth Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management - Montego Bay, Jamaica 7 - 11 December 2009, and the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2010, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, 17-19 January 2010. If you will be attending please do let us know so we can make sure we meet and discuss activities and possibilities for 2010.

10. InWEnt Blended-Learning Course on Geodata for Environmental Statistics: UN-SPIDER informs African course participants on its mandate and Knowledge Portal

On 9 October, the UN-SPIDER Bonn Office hosted a meeting with 25 participants from 13 African countries participating in the newly developed blended-learning course “Geodata for Measuring Environmental Change in Sub-Saharan Africa”. The course of the German InWEnt Centre for

Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics addresses issues of monitoring ecological, economic and social change by means of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and consists of a 6-week web-based training using the InWEnt platform Global Campus 21® (www.gc21.de), as well as a 2-week classroom session in the InWEnt Centre Bonn, Germany. The 25 course participants were high ranking decision-makers representing ministries and national agencies in charge of environmental and developmental issues in their respective countries in Africa. Natalie Epler and Robert Backhaus from the UN-SPIDER Bonn Office presented the UN-SPIDER programme and Knowledge Portal, with particular reference to the Technical Advisory Support activities in Africa. The extensive discussion revealed a vivid interest in the UN-SPIDER mission

11. DigitalGlobe unveils first Worldview-2 images

On 20 October, DigitalGlobe, a leading global provider of commercial high-resolution world-imagery products and services released the first images from WorldView-2, the company's most recent satellite. WorldView-2 was successfully launched on October 8, 2009, and is currently completing its routine calibration and check-out period. DigitalGlobe expects the satellite to be fully operational by early 2010.

For more information >> [DigitalGlobe](#):

12. ASTRIUM inks two-satellite deal with Kazakhstan

PARIS - Space hardware and services supplier Astrium, furthering its partnership with the government of Kazakhstan, will build and launch two Earth observation satellites, and provide a satellite integration and test center in Kazakhstan, in a contract valued at 230 million Euros (\$336 million) and concluded on 6 October during a state visit to Kazakhstan by French President Nicolas Sarkozy. "This new space system will provide the Republic of Kazakhstan with a wide range of civil applications, including surveillance of natural resources and agriculture, mapping and support for natural-disaster response," Francois Auque, president of Astrium, said in a statement following the contract signature.

For more information: [SpaceNews](#)

13. Satellite data instrumental in combating desertification

With land degradation in dryland regions continuing to worsen, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has agreed on scientist-recommended indicators for monitoring and assessing desertification that signatory countries must report on. Satellite technologies were recognized as playing an important role in monitoring areas most at risk. The landmark agreement was reached after two weeks of negotiations involving hundreds of scientists and government ministers attending the 9th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 21 September to 2 October.

For more information: [ESA](#)

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=h1a93vb3rk6ud1tvrequjsfk8s%40group.calendar.google.com>

Joint International Workshop of ISPRS WG IV/1, WG VIII/1, and WG IV/3, on "Geospatial Data Cyber Infrastructure and Real-time Services with special emphasis on Disaster Management", Hyderabad, India, 25-27 November 2009

The workshop aims at bringing together international state-of-the-art research and future trends in the

field of geospatial spatial data cyber-infrastructure and real-time services with special emphasis on disaster management. The workshop is also meant to be an interdisciplinary forum for leading researchers to present the latest developments and applications, to discuss cutting edge technology, to exchange research ideas and to promote international collaboration in the related areas.

For more information and registration: [INCOIS](#)

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](#)

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

The purpose of this Conference, organised by the Algerian Space Agency and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, is to sensitise the African leaders on the importance of science and space technology for the sustainable socio-economic development of Africa. It will provide a regular forum for the information exchange and will promote the inter-African co-operation in the development and the application of space technology.

For more information >> [ASAL](#)

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

This Conference, organized by The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) in association with its Partners, provides the platform for reflection and dialogue on initiatives and issues to advance the CDM Agenda and measuring progress in the region within the context of the Enhanced CDM Strategy and Programming Framework 2007-2012.

For more information >> [Conference website](#)

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 achievement of the implementation of the priority actions of 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.

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

While 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](#)

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

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](#)

Spatial assessment and analysis of vulnerability, 6 – 7 July, 2010 - Salzburg, Austria - Workshop within the GI_Forum 2010 - First Special Call for Papers

Focusing on GIScience applied in the interdisciplinary domain of hazard and climate change research. This theme is expected to highlight different developed and currently investigated methodologies to spatially assess vulnerability. It will specifically address the issue of vulnerability assessment, independent from conceptual discussions. The focus will be on the review and discussion of different methods of GIScience employed to assess, quantify and represent vulnerability as integrated spatial phenomena. Within a workshop session, current achievements and future research challenges will be identified and formulated.

For more information >> [GI FORUM](#)

Upcoming UN-SPIDER Outreach Activities:

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

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



Participants of the Third United Nations International UN-SPIDER Bonn Workshop – 21-23 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.*