



UNITED NATIONS
Office for Outer Space Affairs

INFORMATION NOTE

United Nations/Germany Expert Meeting on Space Technologies for flood and drought risk reduction

Organized by

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs / UN-SPIDER

and the

German Aerospace Center DLR

In cooperation with

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy BMWi

and

Secure World Foundation

Bonn, Germany, 05-06 June 2014

1. Introduction and background

In its resolution 61/110 of 14 December 2006 the United Nations General Assembly established the “**United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response – UN-SPIDER**”, as a programme of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, to provide universal access to all countries and all relevant international and regional organizations to all types of space-based information and services relevant to disaster management to support the full disaster management cycle.

In recent years, UN-SPIDER has put a stronger focus on enhancing the access to and use of space-based information for disaster risk reduction. The usefulness of space-based information for disaster risk management has long been recognized by the United Nations. With its resolution 66/288 entitled “The future we want”; the UN General Assembly recognizes the importance of space-technology-based data for environmental monitoring. The Post-2015 UNTT report “Realizing the future we want for all” makes explicit reference to the importance of scientific understanding and knowledge sharing on natural hazards and the space environment for effective policy-making. More concretely the report calls for improved access to geographical information and geospatial data to use scientific information in areas such as disaster risk reduction to allow for more informed decision-making at all levels. The 2013 UN Inter Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities focussed on space and disaster risk reduction. UN-SPIDER’s expert meeting in Bonn in 2013 dealt with space technologies for early warning systems. With its work in the area of access and use of space based information for disaster risk reduction, UN-SPIDER is also aiming to feed into the ongoing international discussions on the Post 2015 process, including the processes on the framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA-2) and the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs).

This year's **United Nations/Germany Expert Meeting on the Use of Space-based Information for flood and drought risk reduction** will focus on the use of space technologies to improve disaster risk reduction. Floods and droughts have affected countries around the globe regularly. Recent examples are the UK floods in February 2014, floods in Central Europe in June 2013, the floods following super typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in November 2013, or the droughts in Eastern Africa 2011 and droughts in Bolivia in 2013.

In its *Current Situation and Outlook* issued in January 2014, WMO suggested an enhanced possibility of the development of a weak El Niño around the middle of 2014. Its effects on floods and droughts need to be taken into account in national plans targeting disaster risk reduction. A recent article in Nature stated that El Niño events may start coming once every decade, doubling their frequency.

Effective disaster risk management helps preventing that natural hazards like floods and droughts turn into disasters. Space technologies, especially Earth observation and global navigation satellite systems, provide information which can be used for risk assessment. The potential contribution of space-based information to disaster risk management is not yet fully exploited – technical solutions are not tailored enough to the needs on the ground, and the information is rarely easily accessible for disaster managers. With this expert meeting, UN-SPIDER is aiming to fulfil one of its core functions: serving as a bridge between the different space and disaster risk management communities.

The Expert Meeting is organized by UN-SPIDER and the German Space Agency (DLR) in cooperation with the Government of Germany and Secure World Foundation. The expert meeting will take place in Bonn, Germany, from 05 to 06 June 2014. It will bring together experts from national, regional and international organizations as well as internationally active private companies from the space and the disaster risk management communities.

2. Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The main objective of the expert meeting is to promote the use of space-based applications to assess and to manage risks related to floods and drought.

Expected outcomes include:

- Recommendations for the improvement of flood and drought risk management through the use of space based information;
- Elements to contribute to the Post 2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA-2) and to sustainable development;
- Elements to contribute to the upcoming World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to take place in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015.

These outcomes will feed into UN-SPIDER's outreach activities, capacity building, Knowledge Portal, and Technical Advisory Support.

3. Working Modality for the Expert Meeting

The Expert Meeting will make use of keynote presentations as a way to set the stage for discussion sessions. Keynote presentations will include contributions:

- from experts of the space community on the use of space-based information in flood and drought risk assessment (hazard, exposition, vulnerability);

- from experts involved in disaster risk management on the lessons learned regarding the use of space-based information in their day to day work; and

Discussion sessions in the format of break-out sessions will target specific topics. Issues to be discussed in these break-out sessions include:

- Best practices and lessons learned on the use of remote sensing applications for flood and drought risk assessment including the exposure of vulnerable assets;
- Best practices and lessons learned worldwide on the use of space based information for flood early warning;
- Overview on existing drought monitoring services and initiatives including vegetation, soil moisture and precipitation monitoring.
- Strategies to combine space based information and in-situ measurements for flood and drought risk management and early warning;

4. Participants

The expert meeting is expected to bring together a selected number of participants from national, regional, and international public and private organizations including:

- Experts from the space community who focus their efforts on disaster-risk management and emergency response activities;
- Experts from the Disaster-Risk Management and Emergency Response communities who are involved in early warning and disaster preparedness activities;
- UN-SPIDER National Focal Points;
- Experts from the UN-SPIDER Network of Regional Support Offices;
- Experts from the UN-affiliated Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education, and other national, regional, and international Centres of Excellence.

Applicants must have a well-established professional working experience in a field related to the theme of the expert meeting. Applicants should ideally be involved in the planning or implementation of relevant space, disaster-risk management or early warning programmes in relevant governmental organizations, international or national agencies, non-governmental organizations, research or academic institutions or industry.

5. Financial Support to Selected Participants

Taking into consideration the limited financial resources available for this expert meeting, a number of qualified applicants from developing countries, who have expressed the need for financial support, will be offered financial support to attend the expert meeting. This may include the provision of a round-trip air ticket between Bonn and the applicant's international airport of departure or daily subsistence allowances to cover board and lodging for the duration of the Expert meeting. Any changes made to the air tickets must be the responsibility of the participants.

Due to this limited availability of financial resources, applicants and their nominating organizations are strongly encouraged to find additional sources of sponsorship to allow them to attend the Expert meeting. Qualified participants whose nominating agency/organization agrees to fund round-trip travel and/or living expenses will be considered on a priority basis.

6. Language of the Expert Meeting and Presentations by Participants

The working language of the Expert Meeting will be English.

7. Dates and Location of the Expert Meeting

The Expert Meeting will be held in Bonn, Germany, from 5 to 6 June 2014. All selected and invited participants will receive information with details on board, lodging and other local options.

8. Deadline for Submission of Applications

The detailed information for applications will be made available in a timely manner via the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal. Deadline for applications for those requesting financial assistance is 22nd April 2014. Only complete applications, with all requested information and signatures, will be considered.

Information on the application process will be made available at: <http://www.un-spider.org/BonnExpertMeeting2014>

9. Life and Health Insurance

Life and major health insurance is the responsibility of each selected participant or his/her nominating institution or government. UNOOSA and the co-sponsors will not assume any responsibility for life and major health insurance nor for any other expenses related to medical treatment or accidental events.

10. Visas

Participants are responsible for making their own arrangements to secure the visas which may be required when making stop-overs in countries other than Germany due to flight connections and to enter Germany.

11. Point of Contact

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Please check <http://www.un-spider.org/BonnExpertMeeting2014> for the latest information about the Expert Meeting.