



UN-SPIDER December 2008 Updates

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

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

1. UN-SPIDER Strengthens Collaboration with Bonn-based UN Agencies and Related Organizations

During an official visit to the UN-SPIDER Bonn Office, UNOOSA Director Mazlan Othman held a day of discussions and visits with Bonn-based UN agencies and German organizations to review past collaboration and explore future opportunities. The UN meeting included representatives from the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction - Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning (UN/ISDR-PPEW), the World Health Organization - Regional Office for Europe, European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO-ECEH), and the Consulting Unit of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) on Biodiversity and Tourism for Tsunami Affected Countries. Discussions on the German contribution to UN-SPIDER were held with the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. After a visit to the DLR Institute of Aerospace Medicine, future areas of collaboration with the German Aerospace Center (DLR) were also discussed with the Vice Chairman of the Executive Board, the head of International Cooperation, and the deputy director of the German Remote Sensing Data Center.

2. First Regional Conference on Geoinformatics: Disaster Management and Early Warning Systems, Kuwait

The Gulf region faces a specific combination of hazards including climate change, drought, sand storms, air pollution, oil spills and landslide-caused tsunami. Government authorities and research institutions in the region are increasingly aware of the need to dispose of appropriate geo-spatial and space-based technology to successfully meet this challenge. This first regional conference on Geoinformatics, held from 24 to 26 November 2008 in Kuwait, was organized by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) in cooperation with the National Authority for Remote Sensing and Space Sciences (NARSS), Egypt, to assess the application of geo-technology for disaster management and early warning systems.

Participants from Egypt, Italy, Libya, Oman, Syria, the United Kingdom and the United Nations (UN-SPIDER and WHO) presented case studies, research results and national experiences. The implementation of advanced communication and information technology, e.g. to ensure interoperability of subsystems in the generation of common operational pictures in situation centres, as well as decision support systems are thought to play a key role in strengthening disaster management in the region. Possible areas of collaboration between Kuwait and UN-SPIDER were also discussed.

Full story at: <http://www.unspider.org>

Conference Webpage: <http://www.kisr.edu.kw/geoinfo/home.aspx>

3. ESA Starts to Make Data Available for GMES

ESA, as coordinator of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) Space Component, has launched a new website through which data for GMES Services can be obtained. The GMES Space Component Data Access web portal is now providing data from ESA satellites and ESA Third Party Missions. In the next months, data from more than 25 other European and non-European satellites contributing to GMES will be made available. This event marks the start of pre-operations for the GMES Space Component.

Full story at: http://www.esa.int/esaLP/SEM1Z9STGOF_LPgmes_0.html

GMES Space Component Data Access web portal: <http://gmesdata.esa.int/web/gsc/home>

4. Satellite-based Flood Response in the Aftermath of Sichuan Earthquake

In this article published in GIM International, the properties of imagery that should be considered in acquiring TerraSAR-X data for flood monitoring and mapping are discussed, and a semi-automated process for flood assessment is described. Access to relevant data is crucial at the time of a disaster. The article notes that UN-SPIDER not only provides access but also increases awareness of the value of such data.

Full story at:

http://www.gim-international.com/issues/articles/id1214-The_Sichuan_Earthquake.html

5. Use of Space-Based Information to Reduce Disaster Risk in Asia-Pacific Region Receives a Boost

The use of space-based information and services to help reduce the risk of disasters in the Asia-Pacific region received a boost with a collaboration agreement between the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). At a ceremony held during the 15th meeting of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAP-15), on 12 December 2008, in Ha Long Bay, Viet Nam, representatives of the two organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding which will see them expand their cooperation and collaboration in promoting the use of space-based information and services – such as satellite imagery, remote sensing and satellite-based communications – for disaster risk reduction and disaster management in Asia and the Pacific.

Full story at:

<http://www.unescap.org/unis/press/2008/dec/g64.asp>

6. Web Tool Ushahidi Helps Map Crisis Information via Crowdsourcing

A web-based reporting tool is allowing Africans caught up in political unrest to report incidents of killing, violence and displacement. The website is called Ushahidi, which means "testimony" in Swahili. Ushahidi is now being used in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to report on the war that has torn the country apart for the last 15 years. Its goal is to create a simple way of aggregating information from the public for use in crisis response. The site is a free open-source mash-up which can be used to gather distributed data via SMS, email or web and visualise it on a map or timeline.

Full story at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/7773648.stm>

Ushahidi Homepage: <http://www.ushahidi.com>

7. China Launches Yaogan V Remote-sensing Satellite

China on Monday launched a remote-sensing satellite, "Yaogan V," from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in north Shanxi Province. The satellite will be used for data collection and transmission involving land resources surveys, environmental surveillance and protection, urban planning, crop yield estimates, disaster prevention and reduction, and space science experiments.

Full story at:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-12/15/content_10507101.htm

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>

“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>

“Map World Forum” in Hyderabad, India, 10-13 February 2009

Map World Forum will be a medium of convergence of various stakeholders of global geospatial community and its integration with end users of geospatial information. Map World Forum will include a combination of activities in the form of seminars, workshops and panel discussions covering technology to policy to user-oriented themes at the global level. UN-SPIDER is an Institutional Partner to the Forum. UN-SPIDER Senior Expert Dr. Jörg Szarzynski will attend as a speaker and will be available for side meetings.

For more information:

<http://www.mapworldforum.org>

III Cuban Earth Sciences Convention and Fair, Havana, Cuba, 16-20 March 2009

The event welcomes presentations about the Geology, Resources and Geohazards of the Caribbean and Cuba, with special reference to Earth Sciences for Society, including the application of new technologies in the exploration and exploitation of natural resources, and the sustainable use of these resources. Presentation are welcome in the main subjects of the Planet Earth Initiative, such as Ground waters, Natural Hazards, Earth and Health, Climate Change, Energy for a Sustainable World, Megacities, Deep Earth, Oceans, Soils, Earth and Life, Earth Sciences Education.

For more information:

<http://www.cubacienciasdelatierra.com/>

“Processing and Classification of Satellite Imagery” Thematic Session within the VipIMAGE2009 – II ECCOMAS Thematic Conference on Computational Vision and Medical Image Processing in Porto, Portugal, 14-16 October 2009

The session aims to be a forum in which innovative methods are presented and applied to cases of study in different fields. Participants are expected to discuss improvements and/or alternative applications, in the frame of constructive discussions between software developers and practitioners of image processing and image data analysis applied to any field involving Earth Observation.

For more information:

http://paginas.fe.up.pt/~vipimage/conference/thematic_sessions.html

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>

United Nations International UN-SPIDER Workshop: “Promoting the Use of Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response” in Vienna, Austria, 2-4 June 2009

UN-SPIDER Regional Workshop “Building Upon Regional Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response for Africa” in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (second half of 2009)

UN-SPIDER Regional Workshop “Promoting the Use of Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response in Latin America” in Ecuador (second half of 2009)

Third United Nations International UN-SPIDER Bonn Workshop: “Disaster Management and Space Technology – From Concepts to Application” in Bonn, Germany, 21-23 October 2009

Upcoming Events Supported by UN-SPIDER

UN-SPIDER/GEOSS Spring School, Argentina

Organized by UN-SPIDER/GEOSS/CONAE/CRECTEALC (second half of 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.*