



MARCH 2013 UPDATES

UN-SPIDER AT A GLANCE

Vietnam: Technical Advisory Mission concluded

At the request of the Government of Vietnam, through the Disaster Management Centre of Ministry of Agriculture, UN-SPIDER carried out a Technical Advisory Mission to Vietnam from 25 to 29 March 2013. The mission served to evaluate the current and potential use of space-based information in all the aspects of disaster management in Vietnam and to strengthen disaster risk management in the country by providing better access to space-based information for disaster risk reduction as well as response. In the course of the five-day mission, the expert team visited a number of Vietnamese government institutions including the Department of Dike Management, the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control and the National Institute of Agricultural Planning and Projection. In the follow up of this mission, the team will prepare a report including its findings and recommendations.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

UNOOSA and UNISDR organize Session on Space and Disaster-Risk Reduction

During the thirty-third session of the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting (IAM) on Outer Space Activities from 12 to 14 March 2013 in Geneva, UNOOSA and the United Nations Office for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) organized the 10th Open Informal Session entitled: "Space and Disaster Risk Reduction: Planning for Resilient human settlements." The session provided an opportunity for representatives of Diplomatic Missions in Geneva to become aware of the usefulness of space-based applications in disaster-risk reduction and for all participants to discuss ways to promote the use of such applications in countries exposed to natural hazards, including through efforts within the "Making Cities Resilient"-campaign of UNISDR and the upcoming session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction which will take place from 19 to 23 May 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

VALID: User Appraisal of "Top Ten" Geo-Information Products

VALID - a joint project by UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER and the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies (JBGIS) - focuses on the value of geo-information for disaster and risk management. In order to evaluate strategic and operational benefits and needs in the use of geo-information for disaster and risk management, the project team invites all interested end-users of geo-information products for disaster and risk management to participate in a user appraisal of ten products, including for example flood risk maps, earthquake damage assessment maps or fire risk maps. The poll is available in English, Spanish and French and is open until **11 April 2013**.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

UNOOSA/Pakistan Workshop on Space Technologies for Food and Water Security

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) jointly organized the United Nations/Pakistan International Workshop on Integrated Use of Space Technologies for Food and Water Security. The Workshop took place from 11 to 16 March 2013 in Islamabad, Pakistan. Participants discussed how space tools could contribute to sustainable economic and social development programmes supporting food security and water management, primarily in developing countries. The programme of the Conference included two special sessions - "Mountains Under Review - Experience Exchange on Remote Sensing-based Monitoring of Natural Resources in Mountain Regions" (organized in cooperation with UNEP) and "SERVIR-Himalaya - Enhancing Use of Earth Observation and Geospatial Technologies in the HKH Region" (organized in cooperation with ICIMOD). Overall, 39 oral presentations and 27 papers were delivered.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)





NEWS FROM OUR REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICES

New RSO profiles online: CONAE, ICIMOD and LAPAN

The profiles of UN-SPIDER's three newest Regional Support Offices are now available on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal: Argentina National Space Activities Commission ([CONAE](#)), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development ([ICIMOD](#)) and the Indonesian National Institute of Aeronautics and Space ([LAPAN](#)). The profiles provide an overview of available expertise, databases, capacity building activities and most recent news as well as contact details and relevant links.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

UN-SPIDER RSO in Ukraine participates in Workshop on Wild Fires

On March 4th, 2013 experts of the UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office in Ukraine took part in the regional workshop "Wild fires in Eastern Europe: science, politics and management" and the official opening of the Regional Eastern Europe Fire Monitoring Center (REEFMS) at the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine. Prof. N. Kussul and Dr. S. Skakun delivered a presentation on the "UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office in Ukraine: Fire Monitoring using Satellite Data". During the round table regional collaboration on the wild fire management in Eastern Europe was discussed (including cooperation between UN-SPIDER RSO in Ukraine and REEFMC), and a working plan was worked out that will be presented during the European Economic Commission Forum in Geneva in November 2013.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

Ukraine: Satellite data to support ice monitoring and flood preparedness

Over the period March 22-24, 2013, northern and western regions of Ukraine experienced a snowfall equal to the monthly norm. The amount of snow and rising temperatures significantly increased the risk of potential floods. UN-SPIDER's Regional Support Office in Ukraine made a request to NASA to acquire images from the EO-1 satellite over the Kiev region. The image was taken on March 29, 2013 at 07:59UTC, and was made available at about 11:25UTC, thus ensuring fast access and delivery of the satellite data. The image and products were delivered to the State Space Agency of Ukraine (SSAU) and local

authorities responsible for dealing with the emergency.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

Pakistan: Building flash flood resilience in mountainous regions

As flash floods hit Pakistan in February and caused damage over a wide area which also killed 29 people in various area in Peshawar, ICIMOD, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development and host of a UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office, tries to help communities in understanding and adapting to the impact of human development and climate change. ICIMOD also works together with the local authority, Province Disaster Management Authority in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, to raise awareness within communities on minimizing damages in Pakistan. Additionally, ICIMOD has published the study "Case Studies on Flash Flood Risk Management in the Himalayas : In support of specific flash flood policies" including eight case studies from China, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

IGAC: Launch of new website of the National Bank of Images

In February 2013, the Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute in Colombia, host of a UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office, launched a new web site allowing access to the National Bank of Images of Colombia (BNI): <http://www.bni.gov.co/portal/public/classic/> The BNI aims to integrate and share data, metadata, web services, cartographic and satellite information around the country, also looking for the optimization of the State investment made in the use and acquisition of satellite and Remote Sensing data. To access the images, users must identify the image of interest and proceed to request it by sending a letter to the Department of Geography and Cartography of the IGAC including their contact data to ensure timely delivery.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)





NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Sri Lanka: Making disaster risk information available

Sri Lanka is a country affected by a variety of hazards including drought, flood, mass movement, severe storm or tsunami. In order to make information on disaster risks in Sri Lanka more easily available, the Disaster Management Center (DMC) in partnership with UNDP, NGOs and GDFRR Labs launched the Sri Lanka Disaster Risk Information Platform (RiskInfo): <http://www.riskinfo.lk/>. RiskInfo lets users compose and share maps. Users can create maps with a cartography tool, or explore maps shared by others. Additionally, RiskInfo allows for uploading, managing, and browsing of data. Users can search for data that is valuable to them, or upload their own data.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

New instrument on ISS to provide imagery to Developing Nations

A new Earth-observing instrument was installed on the International Space Station (ISS): ISERV Pathfinder. The instrument consists of a commercial camera, a telescope, and a pointing system, all positioned to look through the Earth-facing window of ISS's Destiny module. The camera allows taking high-resolution photographs at 3 to 7 frames per second, totaling as many as 100 images per pass. With a resolution down to 3.2 meters (10 feet), it will be possible to spot fairly small details and objects –if there's a good viewing opportunity. The long-term goal is to develop a system providing imagery to developing nations, the natural hazards community and to basic research scientists as they monitor natural disasters and environmental concerns.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

UN family agrees on plan for disaster risk reduction

Representatives of UN agencies, funds and programmes completed an action plan in early March 2013 that will accelerate the integration of disaster risk reduction into all UN country level operations in response to the rising levels of disruption to millions of lives each year from disasters. The United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience commits to bringing multiple partners together to support the further implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, the international framework agreement on disaster risk reduction, adopted

by all UN member States in 2005. The UN Plan prepared by a senior management team, was presented to the UN's 29-member High Level Committee on Programmes by UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström. It notes that developing countries can suffer a 2% to 15% of GDP annual loss due to disasters.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

Vietnam: Launch of first Earth Observation satellite scheduled

Vietnam's first remote sensing satellite is scheduled to be launched into orbit in April, as Viet Nam News reported. The VNREDSat-1A satellite is designed by the French satellite company Astrium. The project started in 2010 with the satellite tasked to monitor natural resources and environmental management, while also helping in co-ordinating responses to natural disasters throughout Vietnam for the next five years.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

UN kicks off Global Campaign for Drought Mitigation

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have kicked-off the 2013 global campaign to drought preparedness and risk management on 13 March during the High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy, which took place from 11 to 15 March 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. "Droughts have devastating effects on people, on livelihoods, the economy. However, current response to drought is too little and too late. We are starting a global campaign on raising awareness by calling to set up policies, mechanisms and systems that will pre-empt future devastating impacts of drought. Our call is: Do not let our future dry up", said UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

UNISDR: Economic losses from disasters keep rising

The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) stated that for the first time in history the world has experienced three consecutive years where annual economic losses have exceeded \$100 billion due to an enormous increase





in exposure of industrial assets and private property to extreme disaster events. UNISDR Director, Elizabeth Longworth, speaking at a press briefing on 14 March 2013, said: “A review of economic losses caused by major disaster events since 1980 shows that since the mid-90s there has been a rise in economic losses and this has turned into an upward trend as confirmed by the losses from last year when, despite no mega-disaster such as a major urban earthquake, economic losses are conservatively estimated in the region of \$138 billion.”

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

OGC: Best Practices Document for Earth Observation Products, Services and Sensors

An official OGC Best Practice document entitled, “OGC EO Product Collection, Service and Sensor Discovery using the CS-WebRIM Catalogue” was adopted by the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC). This OGC Best Practices Document describes the relations that exist between several metadata conceptual models: Earth Observation (EO) Product, EO Product Collections, Sensors and Services and proposes a technical guideline for implementing the discovery of these models. The document is available free of charge online.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

Landsat: First Images Released From Newest Earth Observation Satellite

On 21 March 2013, NASA and the Department of the Interior’s U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have released the first images from the Landsat Data Continuity Mission (LDCM) satellite, which was launched on February 11, 2013. The natural-color images show the intersection of the United States Great Plains and the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains in Wyoming and Colorado. In the images, green coniferous forests in the mountains stretch down to the brown plains with Denver and other cities strung south to north. “We are very excited about this first collection of simultaneous imagery,” said Jim Irons, LDCM project scientist at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

International Charter: March 2013 Newsletter published

The International Charter “Space and Major Disasters”

published the March 2013 issue of their Newsletter, which is available online. The issue highlights among other topics the presentation of the International Charter’s Universal Access initiative during the 2013 session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) of the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). The Newsletter also touches on issues such as the RADARSAT Constellation, 2012 activation statistics and the December 2012 flooding in the UK. Finally, it presents the International Charter Geographic Tool, a new web interface developed by Charter member CNES (French National Centre for Space Studies) tracking and geo-referencing all Charter activations.

Read more: [International Charter](#)





UPCOMING EVENTS

8-19 April 2013: Fifty-second session of the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS

The Legal Subcommittee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) will hold its fifty-second session from 8 to 19 April in Vienna, Austria. It serves as the UN's primary forum for discussion and negotiation of international agreements relating to outer space. In its fifty-second session, the subcommittee will discuss i.a. issues such as the definition and delimitation of outer space, the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, national legislation relevant to the peaceful use of outer space and capacity building in space law.

Read more: [UNOOSA](#)

9-13 April 2013: UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference on Desertification

From 9 to 13 April 2013, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is holding its 2nd Scientific Conference in Bonn, Germany. The UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference puts a specific thematic focus on the "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas", requiring the evaluation and analysis of current state-of-the-art knowledge on this topic and translating available scientific findings into recommendations for the use by policy and decision makers. The theme is divided into the following two sub-topics: Economic and social impacts of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and Costs and benefits of policies and practices addressing DLDD.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

26-27 June 2013: United Nations/Germany Bonn Expert Meeting on Early Warning - Apply now!

While the application phase for funded participation in the United Nations/Germany Bonn Expert Meeting on the use of space-based information for early warning systems has been closed on 31 March 2013, it is still possible to apply for non-funded participation to this

meeting **until 15 May 2013**. The expert meeting will take place in Bonn, Germany, from 25 to 26 June 2013 and will bring together space technology and disaster management communities representing national, regional and international organizations as well as internationally active private companies to share experiences and lessons learned regarding the use of space-based information in early warning systems. The goal is to identify needs and to discuss knowledge management strategies to improve existing early warning systems through the incorporation of recent advances in space-based applications.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

2-4 September 2013: United Nations/Indonesia International Conference on Integrated Space Technology Applications to Climate Change – Apply now!

The application phase for the United Nations/Indonesia International Conference on Integrated Space Technology Applications to Climate Change under the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications is now open. The Conference will take place in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 2 to 4 September in 2013, hosted by the National Institute of Aeronautics and Space (LAPAN). This International Conference will bring together experts from the space and the climate change community as well as decision makers to discuss methods to use space-based applications to support the identification and implementation of adaptation measures. It also serves to share experiences and lessons learned on the use of such applications in the context of climate change mitigation. The application deadline is **15 May 2013**. A limited number of applicants from developing countries will be supported financially.

Read more: [UNOOSA](#)

