



SEPTEMBER 2017 UPDATES

UN-SPIDER at a glance

UN-SPIDER Regional Support Offices conduct virtual meeting

As a follow-up to the 8th annual meeting of the UN-SPIDER Regional Support Offices (RSOs), conducted from 6 to 8 June in Vienna, a virtual meeting of RSOs was organized on 26 September as an online video conference. The UN-SPIDER team from Vienna, Beijing and Bonn and RSOs from Greece, Indonesia, Nigeria, Romania and Sri Lanka participated in the meeting. During the two-hour-long meeting, participants discussed the potential role of RSOs as project managers on specific activations of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters, the experience of the International Water Management Institute (RSO in Sri Lanka) as project manager during the Charter activation for the recent flood emergency in Sri Lanka, ideas on engaging RSOs with the Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS), the UN-SPIDER Strategy 2030 and UNISPACE+50. In addition, the meeting discussed a workplan for joint activities in 2018. It was decided that the next online video conference will be organized on the sidelines of the 7th annual UN-SPIDER conference in Beijing from 23-25 October 2017.

[Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.](#)

EVIDENZ project presents midterm results

The project on "Earth Observation Based Information Products for Drought Risk Reduction at the National Level" (EVIDENZ) conducted a workshop from 21 to 22 September at the United Nations Campus in Bonn to present its midterm results. The event brought together project partners, scientists, policy-makers, practitioners and representatives

of governmental institutions. The project is carried out by the Centre for Remote Sensing of Land Surfaces (ZFL), University of Bonn, the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) through its Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), together with partner organizations in South Africa and Ukraine.

[Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.](#)

UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER requests activation of Copernicus EMS - Mapping for Niger floods

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) requested the activation of the Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS) - Mapping for floods in Niger. The request was accepted and several maps were delivered under the activation.

[Read more on the Knowledge Portal.](#)

UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER supports emergency response for Hurricane Irma in Haiti

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Haiti, successfully requested the activation of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters for Haiti, as Hurricane Irma made landfall on the country's northern coast.

[Read more on the Knowledge Portal.](#)

News from our RSOs

New drought indices for South Asia

Relevant and current data on soil moisture and vegetation conditions can support authorities in identifying drought and implementing mitigation measures to address its impacts.

In an effort to provide such information on a regional basis, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture



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and Food Security (CCAFS) developed the South Asia Drought Monitoring System (SADMS) in 2014. The system consists of a wide range of drought indices such as the Standardized Precipitation Index and the Soil Moisture Index. Through a dedicated website, IWMI provides access

to drought severity maps and other resources based on space-derived information.

[Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.](#)

News from our community

New Earth observation online learning platform launches with radar remote sensing course

A new online platform offers Earth observation courses, learning resources and social network functionalities to foster exchange among users. EO College has been launched by SAR-EDU, a joint education initiative for radar remote sensing by the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and Friedrich-Schiller University Jena. The platform kicks off with "Echoes in Space", a five-week massive open online course (MOOC) on radar remote sensing. The course has been developed by DLR, the European Space Agency (ESA) and Friedrich-Schiller University Jena. The course is free of charge and starts 9 October.

[Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.](#)

Emergency mechanisms activated for Mexico earthquake

The Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS) - Mapping and the International Charter Space and Major Disasters were activated for a 7.1 magnitude earthquake in Mexico.

[Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.](#)

Emergency mechanisms activated for Hurricane Maria

The Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS) - Mapping and the International Charter Space and Major Disasters were activated for Hurricane Maria, a category 5 storm, as it made landfall on Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

[Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.](#)

International Charter Activations

The International Charter Space and Major Disasters was activated on 5 September for Hurricane Irma in the Dominican Republic, at the request of the National Emergency

Commission of the Dominican Republic (CNE), and in the Caribbean, at the request of the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT) on behalf of United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC); on 7 September for Hurricane Irma in Haiti and the United States, at the request of UNOOSA and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) respectively; on 18 September for Hurricane Maria in the Caribbean at the request of UNITAR-UNOSAT; on 19 September for Hurricane Maria in the Antilles Islands and in Puerto Rico/ U.S Virgin Islands at the request of the French Ministry of the Interior's Operational Centre for Interministerial Monitoring of Crises (COGIC) and Purdue University respectively; on 20 September for the earthquake in Mexico at the request of UNITAR-UNOSAT; and on 20 September for Hurricane Maria in the Dominican Republic at the request of CNE. For more information, please visit the website of the Charter.

[Read more on the website of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters.](#)

New soil moisture data set developed under ESA's Climate Change Initiative

A new near-real-time soil moisture data set developed as part of the European Space Agency's (ESA) Climate Change Initiative (CCI) project aims to improve forecasting and monitoring of droughts. The data set is based on satellite measurements of active and passive microwaves, the intensity of which depends on the amount of water in the soil. The data set is already used by Italy's Research Institute for Geo-Hydrological Protection of the National Research Council (IRPI-CNR), which also contributed to its development. Using the data, researchers from the institute were able to see that soils, especially in central Italy, were much drier than usual at the end of July.

[Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.](#)



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Upcoming events

United Nations/Germany International Conference on International Cooperation Towards Low-emission and Resilient Societies

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs / UN-SPIDER and the German Aerospace Centre (DLR), in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), will host the International Conference on International Cooperation Towards Low-Emission and Resilient Societies from 22 to 24 November 2017 at the UN Campus in Bonn. The conference will bring together decision-makers from government agencies, high ranking officials from regional and international agencies,

representatives and experts from UN agencies, UNOOSA/ UN-SPIDER National/Regional Focal Points and experts, and experts from the space and remote sensing communities working on disaster risk management or disaster response efforts. The International Conference will be used to discuss ways to incorporate satellite technologies to achieve a better system-wide understanding of disaster risk and the manifestations and effects of climate change. Registration for the conference is open until Sunday, October 29, 2017.

[For more information on the event and how to register, please see the event page.](#)



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. 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 spacebased solutions during all phases of the disaster management cycle.