



OCTOBER 2015 UPDATES

UN-SPIDER at a glance

UN-SPIDER participated in regional events in Bangkok, Thailand

UN-SPIDER was invited to participate in the 19th Session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee (ICC) on the Regional Space Application Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP) and in the 4th session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR). Both events were conducted in Bangkok, Thailand from 26-29 October 2015. The ICC session was used to review the progress of work during the last year in four major areas: (i) the timely provision of near real-time satellite imagery to countries affected by severe disasters; (ii) operationalization of the Regional Drought Mechanism; (iii) enhancing institutional capacity to address remaining gaps and emerging challenges; (iv) deepening emerging innovative technology applications.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

Workshop on the Applications of Geospatial Technologies to Disaster and Emergency Response

From 7 to 10 October 2015 the United Nations Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), in collaboration with the Geospatial Information and Technology Association (GITA), SharedGeo, the Secure World Foundation and Delta State University (DSU), conducted an international workshop in Jackson, Mississippi (USA), on the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing applications in emergency management and response practices established at Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. Funded participants from Georgia, Vietnam, Mozambique, Japan, USA took part in seminars which addressed the topics related to emergency management, the incident command system, the application of open-source software to emergency management, data gathering techniques using crowd-sourcing. The workshop included a tour and an exercise at the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

Launch of the 2015 World Disasters Report at the United Nations Office at Vienna

On October 5 2015 the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Austrian Red Cross, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Norwegian Embassy launched the 2015 World Disasters Report in the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV). The annual World Disasters Report addresses current and future challenges, trends and innovations in disaster risk reduction and crisis management through the use of evidence-based research. This year, the report focuses on difficulties and challenges experienced by local actors in times of humanitarian crises. The report calls for a “localization” of humanitarian aid, as well as a closer and equal relationship between international and local actors.

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Joint Workshop on “Information Needs in Crop Monitoring”

A joint workshop entitled “Information Needs in Crop Monitoring” was conducted in Kiev, Ukraine, from 22 to 23 of October 2015. The workshop was funded by European Commission’s Joint Research Centre and co-funded by UNOOSA and UN-SPIDER. It benefitted from the participation of institutional users in Ukraine and neighboring countries, governmental representatives from the EU and technology experts from neighboring countries, international programmes and European institutions. The workshop was used to discuss how modern satellite based technologies can contribute to fulfill current requirements for information on agricultural statistics, crop monitoring and crop production.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)



Data application of the month

In this section, the UN-SPIDER team presents every month a specific example of a satellite data application for disaster risk reduction or emergency response.

Access the full list [here](#).

Population and settlement data

Satellite data shows where the people live and provides information about population dynamics, while census data shows how many people are living in an administrative unit. A combination of both provides indispensable information for exposure, vulnerability and

risk mapping. Satellite-based population and settlement data is also needed to monitor indicators of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

News from our Regional Support Offices

ALOS PALSAR satellite images to map southern provinces flooded in Sri Lanka

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI), one of UN SPIDER's Regional Support Offices, in association with Sentinel Asia System (SAS) and JAXA, activated the International Charter on October 1 to generate satellite images covering the Southern Provinces in Sri Lanka. The imagery was used to contribute to emergency response and relief operations. Floods were mapped on 30 September and 1 October 2015 using the IFMAN tool and covered the districts of Hambantota, Galle, Matara, Monaragala and Ratnapura.

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Adaptation to climatic variability and change in agriculture

The Agustin Codazzi Geographic Institute (IGAC), in collaboration with the Colombian Corporation for Agricultural Research (CORPOICA) presented a paper entitled: "Using satellite images to identify areas affected by drought" at the international seminar entitled: "Adaptation of the Agricultural Sector to Climate Change and Variability". The seminar was organized by the Directorate of Research and the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Cundinamarca (Colombia) and it was held in the university campus from 5 to 9 October 2015. The seminar included the participation of international speakers from Germany, Austria, Chile and Panama; as well as the participation of representatives of national entities.

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News from our Community

Space-based information to support the SDGs Indicators and Monitoring Framework

The second meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) was held at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok, Thailand from 26 to 28 October. The aim of the convention was to review the possible global indicators of the framework needed for the monitoring of the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda at the global level, and support its implementation. The event was broadcasted live to the public during the three days. Space technology capabilities and space-based information are used to support the Sustainable Development Goals Indicators and Monitoring Framework.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

Lasting forest fires in Indonesia

Since several weeks ago, Indonesia has again experienced severe forest fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan, as well as in the Borneo Island. Social Minister Khofifah Indar Parawansa officially confirmed the death of 19 people due to the effects of the fire haze. Fortunately, heavy rainfall within the last days contributed to decrease the number of fire hot spots from 1,578 to 291 by 28 October. Pollution levels advanced from “unhealthy” to “moderate” in the Riau province on Sumatra Island. Overall, more than half a million Indonesians suffer from the effects of the haze. This year’s fires had been worsened by the manifestation of an El Niño event, which further caused severe dryness in Indonesia.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

New agreement on Copernicus Earth Observation Data between EU and USA

The European Commission and the United States confirmed a new agreement to facilitate data sharing from the Copernicus constellation of Sentinel Earth Observation satellites among a broad spectrum of users on both sides of the Atlantic. The treaty was signed on 16 October 2015 in Washington. The main goal of the new cooperation policy aims to enhance the use of Earth Observation for different purposes. Climate change research, improved forecasting, ocean and atmospheric monitoring, land use management and mitigation of natural disasters are some of the focus areas.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

Four new Chinese satellites to contribute for disaster prevention

Four satellites were recently launched with the aim of contributing to the estimation of harvests, geological disaster prevention and the conduction of surveys on natural resources. The satellites were launched as part of the Jilin-1 mission led by China. Jilin-1 satellites will generate high-definition images that will contribute to forecast and mitigate geological disasters among other purposes. China aims to launch 60 satellites by 2020 and 138 by 2030. By 2019, 16 satellites are expected to be in orbit as a part of a network for remote sensing satellites. Satellites will cover the entire globe and will be able to provide updated data every three to four hours.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

UAE Space Agency strengthens the use of space assets at the Eye on Earth Summit 2015

Dr. Mohammed Al Ahababi, Director General of the United Arab Emirates Space Agency (UAE), reinforced the agency’s commitment to strengthen international collaboration on the use of space assets in environmental research. In his speech at the Eye on Earth Summit 2015 in Abu Dhabi, Dr. Mohammed Al Ahababi highlighted: “Space assets are our ‘Eyes on Earth’ and enable us to perform Earth Observation. GNSS and satellite communications are indispensable tools for environmental monitoring and management and help pave the way for a sustainable, safe and ecologically balanced environment.”

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

International Charter activated twice in September

The International Charter Space and Major Disasters was activated four times in this month. On 06 October, because of the Hurricane Joaquin in Bahamas, on 07 October due to landslides in Guatemala, 26 October after the earthquake in Afghanistan and on 27 because of the aircraft crash in Egypt.

Read more: [International Charter](#)





Upcoming events

The 36th Asian Conference on Remote Sensing

ACRS is one of the largest remote sensing conferences in Asia. ACRS 2015 will bring together students, researchers, scientists, engineers, policy makers, professionals and practitioners from developed and developing countries from and around Asia to share insights into the challenges and opportunities of remote sensing and related geospatial technologies to enhance resiliency and encourage economic growth and development.

The conference will specifically focus on how remote sensing applications can contribute to increase resiliency to natural disasters and to strengthen capabilities to adapt to stress and change.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

22nd Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 22)

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) entered into force in 1994 with the aim of facilitating political negotiations related to the reduction of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. The Conference of the Parties (COP) was designated as the supreme governing body of the Convention. To date, 195 countries have submitted their instruments of ratification. The next COP 21 will take place in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015, and it is expected to conclude negotiations on a new international

agreement on climate that is applicable to all countries, with the aim of keeping global warming below the 2 degrees Centigrade target.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

UNOOSA to collaborate with DLR in its Conference on Climate Change 2016

2015 is a crucial year in the context of negotiations related to climate change. During the upcoming 21st Conference of Parties (COP), to take place in Paris, France, from 30 November to 11 December 2015, governments will conclude and launch a new agreement that aims to limit the global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Centigrade in the next century.

From 5 to 7 April 2016 The German Aerospace Center (DLR) will conduct the "DRL Conference n Climate Change 2016". The conference will bring together international scientists, as well as experts from space agencies and from UN organizations. The aim of the Conference is to investigate the considerable challenges in atmospheric climate research, to discuss how space and atmospheric research can support the requirements of climate protection and to identify tools and methods for a continuous monitoring process to ensure adherence to climate change agreements. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) will collaborate in the conduction of this Conference.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)