



# UN-SPIDER

## November 2010 Updates

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### UN-SPIDER News

#### 1. UN-SPIDER office opens in Beijing

On 10 November 2010 the UN-SPIDER office in Beijing was inaugurated. The inauguration ceremony took place at Zhongmin Plaza where the National Disaster Reduction Center of China (NDRCC) is hosted. The ceremony was attended by Mr. Luo Pingfei, Vice Minister of Civil Affairs of P.R. China, Mr. Xu Hong, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Treaty and Law of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of P.R. China, Mr. Hu Yafeng, Standing Deputy Director of the Committee for International Coordination of China National Space Administration, Mrs. Mazlan Othman, Deputy Director-General, UNOV, Ms. Anthea Webb, Director of the World Food Programme Beijing Office, Mr. Zhang Weixing, Director-General of the Department of Disaster Relief, Ministry of Civil Affairs of P.R. China. Representatives from Government organizations, international organizations, universities, and scientific institutions attended the ceremony. Mr. Ahmad Talebzadeh, Director General of the Department of External Relations and Legal Affairs, Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) presented the Golden Eagle frame to the newly inaugurated UN-SPIDER Office on this occasion. The funding agreement was signed by Mr. Zhang Weixing and Mrs. Mazlan Othman during the ceremony.

*For further information >> [UN-SPIDER News](#)*

#### 2. UN-SPIDER present at the 19th General Assembly of the International Civil Defence Organization

The International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO) held its 19th General Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, in the period 1-2 November 2010. UN-SPIDER was invited to make a presentation and took the opportunity to highlight its efforts concerning knowledge management, the Knowledge Portal, and the SpaceAid mechanism. During the event, staff from UN-SPIDER took the opportunity to meet with the ICDO Secretary General Mr. Al Sleibi and other high ranking members of the Permanent Secretariat of ICDO to explore synergies in areas related to capacity building with a particular emphasis on Africa and Asia. In addition, the opportunity was

used for UN-SPIDER to establish links with representatives of several Members States of this International Organization.

*For further information >> [UN-SPIDER News](#)*

### **3. Technical Advisory Mission in Guatemala finds well advanced use of GIS in the country**

UN-SPIDER carried out a Technical Advisory Mission (TAM) to Guatemala from 22 to 26 November 2010, conducted at the request of the Presidential Secretariat for Planning and Programming (SEGEPLAN). UN-SPIDER assembled a team of experts from CATHALAC-SERVIR (Panama) which is a UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office, CONAE (the Argentinean Space Agency), CRECTEALC (Mexico), and the Organization of American States. As in previous missions to Ecuador, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic, the TAM to Guatemala included visits to a variety of government institutions and universities, as well as a workshop with the goal of identifying strengths and weaknesses regarding access to- and use of space-based information in all phases of the disaster management cycle. Through a review of existing institutional policies, strategies, and past and ongoing activities of these institutions, the team of experts was able to develop a set of recommendations that will allow Guatemala to institutionalize its capacity to use space-based information to respond to disasters provoked by floods, hurricanes, droughts, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes or other hazards.

*For further information >> [TAM Guatemala](#)*

### **4. UN-SPIDER participates in Sixth Space Conference of the Americas**

The Sixth Space Conference of the Americas took place from 15 to 19 November in Pachuca City, in the State of Hidalgo in Mexico. Organized by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs with the support of the Office of the Governor of the State of Hidalgo, the Conference brought together official delegations from countries in North America, the Caribbean, Central and South America, as well as representatives from the space community, the academic community, regional and international agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other experts from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Officially inaugurated by the Secretary of Communications and Transport of Mexico and other high-ranking authorities of Mexican institutions and the representative from UNOOSA, the Conference set the stage for a wide range of discussions. Delegations deliberated on how best to join efforts to take advantage of existing opportunities for the use of space technologies in the context of peaceful uses of outer space. Experts, practitioners, and students exchanged impressions, and representatives of agencies discussed joint strategies and activities. For the host country, the Conference served as a venue for Mexican authorities and agencies to discuss the establishment of the Mexican Space Agency as a way to institutionalize the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and to take advantage of existing opportunities offered through a variety of space applications.

*For further information >> [UN-SPIDER News](#)*

### **5. UN-SPIDER presented at IEEE-GRSS Administrative Committee Meeting**

Programme and activities of UN-SPIDER were presented at this year's meeting of the Administrative Committee of the IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society (GRS-S), which was held November 6-7 in Miami, Florida. The participating staff highlighted the global UN-SPIDER network, the SpaceAid Framework and the Knowledge Portal. GRS-S seeks to advance science and technology in geoscience, remote sensing and related fields using conferences, education, and other resources (<http://www.grss-ieee.org/>). The fields of interest of the Society are the theory, concepts, and techniques of science and engineering as they apply to the remote sensing of the earth, oceans, atmosphere, and space, as well as the processing, interpretation and dissemination of this information. The meeting was chaired by Professor Alberto Moreira, President of GRS-S and director of the Microwaves and Radar Institute of German Aerospace Center (DLR), and was attended by about 30 persons. Common fields of interest and cooperation were discussed in detail, focusing especially on issues of remote sensing and geo-data application to humanitarian support, and dissemination of relevant information to the global community.

*For further information >> [UN-SPIDER News](#)*

## **6. Benefits of Space Application to Disaster Management: Presentation for the Vienna-based Permanent Missions to International Organizations**

Following an invitation by the Head of the German Permanent Mission to the U.N., H.E. Ambassador Rüdiger Lüdeking, representatives of the Missions to the International Organizations in Vienna attended a presentation on “Benefits of Space-based Support to Disaster Management”, organized jointly with the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and held on the premises of the German Permanent Mission on 3 November. Enframed by an introduction by Ms. Annette Froehlich of DLR, and a welcome address by Ambassador Lüdeking, three presentations were given, introducing the Center for Satellite-Based Crisis Information of DLR (Stefan Voigt, DLR/German Remote Sensing Data Center), the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal (Robert Backhaus, UN-SPIDER), and the UN-SPIDER SpaceAid Framework (Juan-Carlos Villagran de Leon, UN-SPIDER). A lively discussion that followed addressed mainly questions of coordination and standardization of procedures in the context of support to disaster response and relief measures. In recognition of the vivid interest expressed by the participants as well as for further fruitful exchanges regarding these issues, a follow-on meeting on “Enhancing Global Cooperation in Satellite-based Emergency Mapping” has been scheduled for 9 December.

For further information >> [UN-SPIDER News](#)

## **7. Technical Advisory support to Madagascar, the Comoros and Malawi**

In the framework of the European Commission - Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection (ECHO), UN-SPIDER is contributing to the project "Providing Geographical Information Systems (GIS) technical support for Disaster Risk Reduction programmes implemented by DIPECHO partners in the South East African and South West Indian Ocean region (Malawi, Madagascar, Comoros, and Mozambique)". This project is lead by the Italian NGO Cooperazione Internazionale, headquartered in Milano, and in partnership with the Centre for GeoInformatics (Z\_GIS), University Salzburg, and UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER. The meetings were held in Antananarivo, Madagascar, bringing together delegations from Madagascar and the Comoros, and in Lilongwe, Malawi respectively. Meeting goals were to provide an overview and general introduction to GIS and space-based information for risk and disaster management and emergency response, to describe existing international mechanisms such as the International Charter Space and Major Disasters and the Services and Applications For Emergency Response (SAFER) in the framework of the European Initiative: *Global Monitoring for Environment and Security* (GMES), and finally to explain the role of UN-SPIDER and its cooperation and coordination with these mechanisms.

For further information >> [TAM Madagascar, the Comoros and Malawi](#)

## **8. UN-SPIDER attended the RCMRD 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of Ministers**

UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER was invited to attend the RCMRD 7th Conference of Ministers in Cape Town, South Africa, from 22nd to 23rd November 2010. The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) is an intergovernmental organization with 15 contracting Member States from the Eastern and Southern African region. The conference of ministers reviewed annual reports, the recent 2007-2010 Strategic Plan as well as approved a new Strategic Plan (2011-2014). Development partners and stakeholders were invited to attend the meeting and discuss on issues and future plans to strengthen partnership with the Centre. A UN-SPIDER senior expert presented the activities of the office with specific focus on Africa to the attending group of ministers and delegates from 15 countries. The solid collaboration between RCMRD and UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER is already evident from a number of successful joint activities such as the response to the flood in Kenya in May 2010 in frame of the activation of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters. Additionally, an official cooperation agreement was signed on the occasion of the Regional Workshop – “Building Upon Regional Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response for Africa” in Addis Ababa on Wednesday, 7 July 2010.

For further information >> [UN-SPIDER News](#)

## Community News

### **9. International Charter Space and Major Disasters celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with DLR's membership**

The International Charter Space and Major Disasters (Charter) celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In the past 10 years, the Charter has provided satellite data for more than 300 disaster events like earthquakes, hurricanes, cyclones, floods and fires, spanning nearly 100 countries. In November, the Charter accepted three activations on a volcano eruption in Indonesia, an ocean storm in Haiti, and floods in Colombia.

With the inclusion of DLR, the Charter has now 11 members and three other agencies in the process of joining: the Russian Federal Space Agency, the Korea Aerospace Research Institute and Brazil's National Institute for Space Research.

For further information >> [International Charter Space and Major Disasters](#), [Charter Activations](#)

### **10. Sentinel Asia covering floods in Vietnam**

Thua Thien Hue, Da Nang, Quang Nam suffered heavy rains and an emergency observation was therefore requested from Sentinel Asia in Mid-November. On November 29<sup>th</sup>, Sentinel Asia produced another emergency observation for the high alarming rate of river floods caused by continued heavy rains from Quang Ngai to Khanh Hoa province of the South-Central Vietnam.

For further information >> [Sentinel Asia](#)

### **11. DLR held 2010 annual General Meeting and Science Show live**

With its accession to the Charter, DLR adds to its role as Germany's Space Agency the broad commitment to provide support using its satellites in the event of natural disasters, major accidents or humanitarian relief operations. The 2010 DLR General Meeting showcased the Braunschweig facility and covered the subjects of the volcanic ash cloud studies, the Earth Observation mission TanDEM-X, alternative fuels, etc. In November, the *Center for Satellite Based Crisis Information (ZKI)* - a service of the *German Remote Sensing Data Center (DFD)* of DLR, produced a Disaster Extent Map for the Hurricane Tomas disaster over Haiti, Port-au-Prince. The Satellite Map covered an area around Leogane, one of the hardest affected areas where floods lead to necessary evacuations.

For further information >> [DLR](#), [ZKI](#)

### **12. SAFER produces hotspot mapping (ERS-SAFER) and collaborates on Merapi Eruption project**

SAFER is aiming at building an archive of mapping products on the areas that are identified to be vulnerable to disasters within the Emergency Response Service (ERS.) ERS-SAFER aims to provide the highly accurate products with a more rigorous and less time dependent process to be delivered rapidly at the onset of a disaster. SAFER also supported a preliminary analysis of the geophysical risks on Merapi volcano by using available remote sensing data and models.

For further information >> [SAFER](#)

### **13. Survey on spatial data sharing in Rwanda**

The Centre for Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing of the National University of Rwanda conducted a spatial data sharing survey in June 2010. The objectives were to assess the preparedness of organizations to share spatial data in Rwanda. Organizations dealing with spatial data production, management and use were targeted. It assessed the sharing culture and identified the needs and gaps in existing data sharing capability. The resulting summary is attached below. The three datasets most sought after are fundamental datasets. These are administrative boundaries data accounting for 25% of all spatial datasets used, topographic map series (15%) and ortho-photos (14%). Free access to spatial data in Rwanda is the most supported option among organisations using geospatial technology (60%). The major barrier to spatial data sharing identified is the lack of a national spatial data policy especially, and the need for a spatial data sharing

policy in organizations was identified. The survey was funded by the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association (GSDI) through a small grant award (2009/2010) and the Rwanda Development Gateway Group grant at the CGIS-NUR.

*For further information >> [UN-SPIDER News](#)*

#### **14. Use of satellites to track Mt. Merapi eruption and to know your snow**

Satellite data for assessing a volcanic eruption's danger to air traffic and public safety is crucial. To better enable this, Australia's Darwin Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres (VAACs) obtained from ESA satellite information on ash and trace gases, i.e. sulphur dioxide, erupting into the atmosphere.

Satellite information on snow cover is now available through ESA's GlobSnow project soon after it snows. Understanding snow conditions helps us to predict floods and advance climate studies. Seasonal changes in snow cover mostly occur in the northern hemisphere. The one-year, near-real time demonstration service makes information about snow cover and snow amount publicly available online on the GlobSnow website.

*For further information >> [ESA](#), [ESA](#), [Finnish Meteorological Institute](#)*

#### **15. Space Ministers emphasize priority to deliver Galileo and GMES**

Ministers in charge of space activities representing the Member States of the European Space Agency and the European Union met in Brussels for the Seventh Space Council. The Space Council unanimously endorsed a resolution that called for the necessary actions to deliver a space strategy that would enable economic growth, respond to public policy objectives and develop the vocations of science and technology in Europe. Ministers emphasised that the flagship programmes Galileo and GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) remain the priorities for the EU in space and identified the key decisions to be taken in these areas over the coming months.

*For further information >> [ESA](#)*

#### **16. GMES & Africa side event at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Africa-EU Summit**

The GMES & Africa initiative event took place from 8 to 9 November 2010, in Hammamet, Tunisia. The aim was to review the progress achieved so far on the GMES and Africa process, to agree on a strategy for the future and to pave the way for specific actions included in the framework of the 2010-13 Action Plan of the 8th Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space to be adopted at the third Africa-EU Summit. GMES and Africa is a coordination umbrella for cooperation in the use of space to monitor the Earth for environment and security applications impacting on development policies and the African citizen. Monitoring of natural resources, water and desertification, informing decision makers ahead to counter effects of climate change, support to peace keeping operations, conflict prevention and response to natural and human made disasters are areas where GMES & Africa can bring added value.

*For further information >> [Africa-EU Partnership](#)*

## Upcoming UN-SPIDER Outreach Activities

Information on upcoming UN-SPIDER outreach activities can be obtained from the events section of the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal:

[www.un-spider.org/events](http://www.un-spider.org/events)

### Upcoming events supported by UN-SPIDER

#### **34th International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment: “The GEOSS Era: Towards Operational Environmental Monitoring”, Sydney, 10-15 April 2011**

The Organizing Committee of the 34th International Symposium for Remote Sensing of the Environment (ISRSE) cordially invites you to visit Sydney and participate in what promises to be an excellent high quality Symposium on Remote Sensing of the Environment. ISRSE has become one of the main forums for programmatic discussions on remote sensing components of the ‘Global Earth Observation system of Systems-GEOSS’, currently being implemented through the Group on Earth Observation GEO, which (at the time of preparation) is composed of 80 member countries, 58 participating organizations and 5 observers. The Symposium will provide a platform for countries with established and emerging earth observation programs to report on their progress, as well as new initiatives in the remote sensing arena. As well, the 10-year Implementation Plan of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) is well underway and therefore the Symposium provides an important opportunity for GEO members and task teams to present details of progress of their work.

UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER will be attending and plans to organize a joint session with Sentinel Asia.

*For more information and registration:* [ISRSE34](#)

#### **Gi4DM 2011 – Geoinformation for Disaster Management, Antalya, 3-8 May 2011**

Geomatics technologies are able to support management and recovery in the aftermath of manmade and natural disasters. However, disaster management also poses big challenges in all aspects of the geo-information cycle, from data acquisition, processing, management and delivery. For the seventh time, the International Symposium on Geo-information for Disaster Management (Gi4DM) brings together researchers, developers, data providers and users from all over the world to discuss these challenges. The Gi4DM is coordinated by the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) Ad-hoc Committee on Risk and Disaster Management, Working Group 1 (Disaster) of the ISPRS Commission VIII (Remote Sensing and Policies) and Working Group 8 (3D Spatial Data Integration for Disaster Management and Environmental Monitoring) of the ISPRS Commission IV (Geodatabases and Digital Mapping). The indicative topics of interest will at least cover the fields of enterprise crisis management, public security and crisis management in city development, geo-information systems for disaster management, industrial crisis management, incident management systems, as well as others. The following themes are for reference:

- User Requirements
- Monitoring and processing
- Early Warning systems
- Early Impact systems
- Spatial Data Infrastructures

*For more information and registration:* [Gi4DM](#)

## 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:

[www.un-spider.org/events](http://www.un-spider.org/events)



**Season's greetings to all our partners!**

*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.*

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