UN-SPIDER participates in 2nd Asian Science and Technology Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction

In response to the increasing importance and role of science-based technologies in decision-making for disaster risk reduction, the Asia-Pacific office of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) established the Asian Science Technology Academia Stakeholder Group (ASTAAG) in May 2015. The group brings together academic, scientific and technological communities in supporting the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). ASTAAG convenes the Asian Science and Technology Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction on a biennial basis, the latest edition was held on 17-18 April 2018 in Beijing, China, with the theme “Science-Policy Dialogue for Implementation of the Sendai Framework”.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.

UN-SPIDER conducts Technical Advisory Mission follow-up and national training programme in Sri Lanka

At the request of the Government of Sri Lanka through the Ministry of Disaster Management (MoDM), UN-SPIDER carried out a Technical Advisory Mission (TAM) follow-up activity to understand long-term capacity-building needs and to co-organize a national training course on disaster risk assessments together with two of its Regional Support Offices. During this follow-up activity, the UN-SPIDER team also visited a landslide relic field at Kegalle District of Sri Lanka, the site of a May 2016 landslide that left 120 people dead, where on-site briefing was provided to district level officials about emergency support mechanisms and the role of space technology.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.

New resources

New tool for global severe index allows climate community to assess meteorological drought by terrestrial water storage

A new technique has been developed to help mitigate the effects of drought. The satellite-based drought severity index (DSI) has been created using terrestrial water storage changes from the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) to help identify the timing, extent and severity of droughts for adequate relief efforts.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.

Using new techniques in Greece to track the effects of flooding

In late February, flooding and landslides caused by heavy rainfall affected the Farkadona municipality in central Greece, leading to evacuations and loss of farmland in the region. In response, the company Geospatial Enabling Technologies (GET) produced data sets using imagery generated by the Sentinel-1 satellite in a prototypical algorithm, which in turn uses data from the Sentinel Application Platform (SNAP) and Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC). This data provided complete and comprehensive coverage of the floods, giving authorities the information they needed to better respond and prepare in the future.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.
CEOS publishes handbook on how Earth observation can support implementation of the SDGs

The Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) has recently released a new handbook in support of using Earth Observation (EO) to help accomplish the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The handbook delves in-depth into each of the SDGs that it affects and shows how Earth observation can be used to achieve them, highlighting specific cases in which EO has been used in the past to aid in the realisation of goals, such as: hunger alleviation, clean water, sanitation, and more.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.

China launches satellites for disaster warning and emergency response

China launched three Gaofen-1 Earth observation satellites on 31 March. These high-resolution satellites will be used in a range of different fields, including disaster early warning and emergency response.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.

Using GPM software to track cyclone rainfall

NASA’s Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM) mission core observatory satellite has been an integral asset in disaster risk management last month. This satellite is able to produce information on precipitation particles within cloud layers by using an active radar - information that is beneficial in monitoring, predicting, and tracking the progression of cyclones and other extreme weather phenomena.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.

European Commission and India to share satellite data

The European Commission (EC) and Department of Space (DoS) of India signed a Cooperation Agreement on 19 March that will enable them to share earth observation data from each other’s satellites. The shared space-based information will be used to forecast natural and human-made disasters, to provide emergency response and rescue of people during such disasters, to gather land and ocean data, and for issues related to security, agriculture, climate change and the atmosphere.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.

Indian and France to strengthen cooperation on satellite missions

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the French National Centre for Space Studies (CNES) have signed an agreement to strengthen cooperation in the use of satellite technology on various joint missions.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.

International Charter activated for Russian Federation flooding in the Volgogradskaya

The International Charter Space and Major Disasters was activated for flooding in the Volgogradskaya Oblast Region of the Russian Federation on 4 April, caused by vast amounts of melting snow that resulted in river water levels rising.

Read more on the UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal.