



UN-SPIDER

May 2011 Updates

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UN-SPIDER News

1. Celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and also the 50th anniversary of human spaceflight, a number of special events are taking place at the Vienna International Center. This includes a month-long Special Exhibition on Human Space Flight and tours for visitors. A dedicated brochure is available for download. The Daily Journals of the ongoing 54th session of COPUOS are also online, as well as other relevant documentation.

For further information >> [COPUOS 2011](#)

2. The SPIDER Global Thematic Partnership active in the 3rd session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

The SPIDER Global Thematic Partnership (SPIDER GTP) which was launched in 2009 was again active in the 3rd Session of the Global Platform, which was organized by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) from 9 to 13 May 2011 on the premises of the Geneva International Convention Center. This session of the Global Platform brought together more than 2600 representatives from a variety of agencies from national governments, regional and international organizations, academia, NGOs, and from the private sector. Taking advantage of the format of the event which included several side sessions, the SPIDER GTP brought together high ranking authorities and experts from the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), the International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies (JBGIS), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), and Esri in a side event titled "Integrated Use of Space Technologies for Disaster-Risk Reduction". This side event took place on 12 May and attracted a wide range of participants.

Read the key messages from this session online: [UN-SPIDER News](#)

3. UN-SPIDER contributes to workshop on global environmental change and water-related diseases in Uzbekistan

“Global environmental change and water related diseases: Improving risk assessment strategies for public health care in Uzbekistan” was the theme of a workshop held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from 2 to 6 May 2011. It was organized by the Center for Development Research (ZEF) in Bonn with the support of the Volkswagen Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan. The workshop in Tashkent focused on the impact of global environmental change on human health. One of the main premisses of the workshop was that globalization brings about increased spreading of diseases and a changing epidemiology of endemic diseases. The final goals were to develop an international collaborative research and capacity-building program and to improve health care services related to water-borne diseases in the region. This includes an initiative for improved risk assessment strategies for public health care. Based on the results of the workshop, a proposal will be submitted for funding this application-oriented and trans-disciplinary research on water-related diseases and global environmental change in Central Asia. Within the planned international research and capacity-building program, UN-SPIDER will be involved in a work package for the development of an effective dissemination approach for relevant products and results in the course of the project.

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

4. Advancing VALID at Gi4DM in Antalya

For the sixth time, the international symposium on Geo-information for Disaster Management (Gi4DM) brought together researchers, developers, data providers and users from all over the world to discuss the challenges and possible solutions in this field. Gi4DM 2011 was attended by 153 participants representing 39 countries. The programme offered a well balanced mixture of science, technology and application in 3 plenary, 15 technical and 2 poster sessions. UN-SPIDER participated in its function as co-chair, leading two sessions and benefiting from the network particularly for the Programme’s knowledge management activities. In a working session with the VALID editorial group the online stakeholder assessment form was finalized and endorsed for the kick-off of the online prioritization process. In the VALID round table session with 20 invited participants the VALID concept was presented and discussed, and the call for participation in the products prioritization exercise was announced. VALID was highly welcomed, especially by UN-OCHA, Esri, OGC, NAPSG Foundation and TU Vienna/ICA.

For further information >> [VALID project](#)

5. UN-SPIDER seminar at GSSF, Abu Dhabi

During the Global Space and Satellite Forum (GSSF), a three-day event held at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Centre from 9 to 11 May, leading experts discussed how satellite communications play an important role in disaster relief, particularly in areas where land lines and mobile telephone infrastructure are destroyed, as was the case for large parts of the east coast of Japan after it was hit by the devastating earthquake and tsunami in March this year. At GSSF 2011, UN-SPIDER initiated talks towards developing partnerships with space communication providers, including satellite operators, satellite phone companies and satellite broadband providers, coordinating the provision of robust emergency communications to the countries directly affected by disasters. The UN-SPIDER activities were presented and a short workshop was organized on “The Use of Space Science and Technology for Disaster Management and Emergency Response”. The major Earth Observation and Telecommunication stakeholders of the region were represented at the meeting, and several of them stated their willingness to support UN-SPIDER activities in the field of satellite communications.

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

6. GDACS Stakeholder Meeting in Bergen

UN-SPIDER staff participated from 10 to 12 May in the annual Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) Stakeholder Meeting that was organized by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and hosted by the Municipality of Bergen in Norway. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Head of the European Commission Emergency Response Unit/Monitoring and Information Center (MIC). 35 Participants from 24 countries and organizations attended and participated actively in the discussions about the improvement needs of the system as well as in the definition of the GDACS Work Plan for the next year. Presentations on new technologies were made by GDACS partners, and a lessons-learned presentation by OCHA on the recent Japan disasters was of particular interest to the participants. The UN-SPIDER Knowledge Portal was also recognized in the discussions as one of the effective information dissemination channels in this domain, and it was therefore considered a potential test site for the new collaborative tools being developed at the European Union's Joint Research Center (JRC), such as more automated data exchanges and feeds based on standards implementation. GDACS provides near real-time alerts about natural disasters around the world and tools to facilitate response coordination, including media monitoring, map catalogues and Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (VOSOCC). The aim is to solve the challenge of coordinating international assistance after major sudden-onset disasters.

For further information >> [GDACS, Chairman Summary](#)

7. UN-SPIDER at the Annual Central Asia GIS Conference GISCA 2011

The Austria-Central Asia Centre for GIScience, together with the Kazakh National University and the Centre for Geoinformatics (Z_GIS), University of Salzburg, Austria organized the fifth GIS-in-Central-Asia Conference (GISCA 2011) in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The main objectives of this conference are to bring together GIS scientists, researchers and practitioners in the Central Asian countries and to encourage international cooperation and knowledge exchange in GIS education. The GISCA series of conferences aims at building a Central Asian network of GIS professionals supporting the sustained development of this region into an environmentally friendly, secure and prosperous society. In 2011, GISCA focused on the theme of "Geoinformatics: Managing Environment, Resources and Risk". UN-SPIDER presented its activities and held discussions on how to expand the Programme's engagement in the region. This included the potential establishment of National Focal Points and possibly co-organizing a regional meeting.

For further information >> [GISCA 2011](#)

8. Technical Advisory Mission to Sudan brings together disaster management stakeholders and Remote Sensing experts

At the request of the Government of Sudan, through its Remote Sensing authority, UN-SPIDER with the support of several partners carried out a Technical Advisory Mission to Sudan. The aim was to evaluate the current and potential use of space-based information in all the aspects of disaster management in the country and to strengthen its disaster risk management by providing better access to space-based information for disaster risk reduction as well as response. The expert team met with several high ranking members of the Government as well as other national institutions and organizations. A one-day workshop was organized as a part of this mission, which was attended by about 120 persons from government departments, UN agencies, NGOs and private companies involved in using geospatial technologies for disaster management. The workshop was inaugurated by the Minister of Science and Technology and the Minister of Interior. The workshop was not only effective in generating awareness, but participants also provided valuable input to strengthen the use of space technology in disaster management in Sudan.

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

9. UN-SPIDER represented at the International Conference on Emergency Management Technologies (ICEMT 2011), Hungary

In light of Hungary's EU Council Presidency, this year's ICEMT focused on the development of European Union public administrative procedures for the reduction and management of environmental hazards, especially building upon the experience during the recovery from the largest disaster in Hungarian history, the Kolontar red sludge dam burst. The three day event from 23 to 25 May covered a range of topics including the exploration of new technologies for monitoring, warning and relief procedures, the protection of critical

infrastructure, and the collection of best-practices. The presentation by UN-SPIDER met with high interest from the participants, particularly the issue of data accessibility since this was also one of the topics discussed in a number of presentations. UN-SPIDER further followed-up with Károly Róbert College in Gyöngyös, Hungary, discussing the possibility of setting up a Regional Support Office where the University could contribute its Remote Sensing and GIS expertise to the UN-SPIDER Programme.

For further information >> [ICEMT 2011](#)

Community News

10.Sentinel Asia supports disaster response to floods in Indonesia

Sentinel Asia is a voluntary basis initiative led by the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAP) to support disaster management activities in the Asia-Pacific region by applying WEB-GIS technology and space-based technology, such as Earth Observation satellite data. In May 2011, parts of South Garut district in West Java, Indonesia, were affected by a heavy flash flood. Sentinel Asia supported the response to the floods in Indonesia providing satellite images for post-disaster situation assessment.

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

11.International Charter activated for flood in Colombia and wildfires in Canada

In May, the International Charter Space and Major Disasters supported Colombia which was hit in the province of Bolivar by devastating floods that affected around 2 million people. The activation was requested by UNOSAT on behalf of UN OCHA. Mapping products are available on the Charter website. The activation of the Charter was also requested for wildfires in Alberta, Canada, by Public Safety Canada, while the project manager was Canadian Space Agency. Roughly 7,000 people had been evacuated from the area. Image products delivered under the Charter will be published on the website as soon as they become available.

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

12.SAFER supporting response to fires in the Netherlands and earthquake in Spain, and GMES User Newsletter online

Europe's GMES mechanism Services and Applications for Emergency Response (SAFER) was activated twice in the month of May. The service delivered disaster extent maps and damage assessment maps to support the response to fires in North Holland in the Netherlands and to earthquakes in the South-eastern part of Spain.

Since the beginning of 2009, the GMES Emergency Response Service, as developed by the SAFER project, has delivered a large number of space-based products in support of European decision-makers facing natural and technological disasters. Reducing response time and developing new types of value-added products are the prevailing objectives of the Emergency Response Service.

The GMES User Newsletter is dedicated to informing the user communities about the activities of the Emergency Response service. The aim of this initiative is to reflect the end user's point of view in relation to crisis and emergency management support in the case of disaster, humanitarian crisis, or other complex crises occurring in Europe or anywhere in the world.

For further information >> [SAFER Activations](#), [GMES User Newsletter May 2011](#)

13.UK takes the helm of International Charter

The UK has taken the lead of the International Charter Space and Major Disasters. The Charter is an agreement that coordinates space agencies worldwide in gathering vital satellite images of disaster-stricken regions - providing the images to civil protection authorities to inform their response efforts and save lives. As Chair of the Charter Board, the UK Space Agency will take responsibility for implementing strategy and policy, and is

committed to finding ways of widening national access to the Charter's services. Speaking ahead of his keynote address at the Charter Board Meeting in London, Minister for Universities and Science David Willetts said:

"The Charter is a great example of the enormous benefits space can bring to our everyday lives. It provides invaluable and immediate satellite images during times of crisis, from tracking extreme weather to dealing with the aftermath of earthquakes and tsunamis, as we saw very recently in Japan. During the UK's chairmanship we're keen to build on the Charter's success and open up international access to the world's satellite resources. This means the Charter will play an even bigger role in helping countries respond effectively to emergencies, and ultimately help save lives."

For further information >> [TERRADAILY](#)

14. International Conference on Crisis Mapping (ICCM 2011): registration opened

The third annual International Conference on Crisis Mapping (ICCM 2011) is now open for registration. It will take place in Geneva, Switzerland from 14 to 15 November 2011. This year's event is co-hosted and co-organized by the Swiss Confederation, the ICT4Peace Foundation and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. Sponsors include the World Bank. ICCM 2011 follows the highly successful events in 2009 and 2010, which helped foster a dynamic network of action-oriented collaboration. ICCM 2011 will include Ignite Talks, Self-Organized Sessions, a Tech & Analysis Fair, and a special Keynote address. Please be ready to apply to deliver an Ignite Talk or present your work at the Tech & Analysis Fair upon registration. Please note that registration will be open on a first come, first served, basis.

Taking advantage of this event and potential synergies, the second UN-SPIDER expert meeting on Crowdsourcing Mapping for Preparedness and Emergency Response will take place back-to-back with ICCM 2011 on 16 November 2011. To read more about UN-SPIDER activities on "Space-based information for Crowdsourcing Mapping" go to the [Concept Note](#).

For further information and registration >> [ICCM 2011](#), [ICT4peace](#)

15. ESA and the World Bank join forces

Recognizing the value of using Earth observation satellite data to support development activities, the European Space Agency (ESA) and the World Bank will work together on several projects through the 'eoworld' joint initiative. ESA and the World Bank first started collaborating two years ago when ESA carried out small-scale pilot projects that demonstrated the potential of Earth observation for the World Bank's operations. Based on the pilots' promising outcomes, Earth observation information will now be scaled up and incorporated into 12 World Bank activities in the marine environment, water resources management, urban development, urban and disaster risk management, and agriculture and forestry.

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

16. Satellite observations show potential to improve ash cloud forecasts

Predicting the exact dispersal of a volcanic ash cloud is never going to be easy. However, satellite data are showing that the eruption from Iceland's Grímsvötn volcano in the month of May was unlikely to have posed a significant threat to airspace over central Europe. The Icelandic Met Office reports that eruption from Grímsvötn has subsided and that there is now virtually no ash being produced from the volcano. This major eruption began during the evening of 21 May and led to the disruption of flight schedules across Europe. Although this is minor compared to the chaos caused last year when Eyjafjallajökull erupted, satellite data are showing that this week's eruption did not pose a serious threat to aircraft flying over central Europe. Satellite measurements offer an excellent means with which to follow the spread, extension, concentration and movement of volcanic plumes.

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

17. DubaiSat-2 to be an improvement on predecessor

Emirati engineers have completed the design for DubaiSat-2 at a satellite manufacturing plant in South Korea and are working on a flight model for the launch, which is expected at the end of next year from Russia. The

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second remote sensing and imaging satellite from the Emirates Institution for Advanced Science & Technology (EIAST) will have greater resolution, will gather more information from larger areas of the Earth and will download the data more than five times faster than its predecessor, DubaiSat-1. DubaiSat-2 can provide fresh images each orbit, or several times a day. Officials stressed that while the technical improvements will produce higher-quality images to be used for everything from urban planning to disaster recovery, there will still be a market for DubaiSat-1's wider but less-detailed images. Having two satellites in orbit will also provide continuity of data, they said.

For further information >> [The National](#)

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

Upcoming UN-SPIDER events

UN-SPIDER International Expert Meetings: Crowdsourcing Mapping for Preparedness and Emergency Response Vienna, 5-6 July 2011

In recent years, advancements in technologies have made it possible for virtual communities such as OpenStreetMap, Ushahidi, Sahana, CrisisMappers, Virtual Disaster Viewer, Google MapMaker and INSTEDD to provide increasing support to disaster preparedness and emergency response efforts. Important cornerstones of this virtual effort are the possibility to access and take advantage of post-disaster satellite imagery as well as the use of other space-based technologies such as telecommunications satellites and global navigation satellite systems. Taking note of the need to connect these pioneering communities with the space industry as well as the disaster management community, the UN-SPIDER Programme is carrying out a one-year project ("Space-based information for Crowdsourcing Mapping") aiming at identifying specific actions that could ensure a closer cooperation among the three communities. The first activity of this project will be an Expert Meeting to be held in Vienna to discuss strategies that will contribute to supporting civil protection and emergency management agencies to make use of products generated by such groups in areas of preparedness and emergency response and provide a better understanding to these groups on the specific needs of the disaster management community.

Discussions will include: Feedback from experts from the disaster management community on how information has to be generated and/or tailored to ensure that it can be used effectively, novel potential applications and products which could be elaborated by the crowd-sourcing communities that can support preparedness and emergency response, and how to build upon existing solutions to facilitate the sharing of information to the emergency management community. Additionally, we will also be discussing strategies on how to adequately address intellectual property and copyright concerns. The first Expert Meeting will bring together 30 leading experts representing crowd-sourcing communities, space agencies, disaster management and civil protection agencies, NGOs, private companies, and regional and international organizations.

A second expert meeting on this topic is planned for 16 November 2011 in Geneva.

For more information: [UN-SPIDER Expert Meeting on Crowdsourcing Mapping](#)

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Upcoming events supported by UN-SPIDER

PAIGH Crisis Support Workshop, Panama, 13-14 June 2011

The Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) Crisis Support Workshop will take place from June 13 to 14 at the Hotel Panama under the coordination of Leslie Armstrong of the United States Geological Survey / EROS Data Center (USGS/EDC). UN-SPIDER will present its activities in Latin America.

For more information: [International Charter News](#), [GSDI News](#)

ESCAP Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, Second Session, Bangkok, 29 June-1 July 2011

The second session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction will be held from 29 June to 1 July 2011 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. The Committee is organized by the Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). UN-SPIDER will join the Expert Group Meeting on Regional Knowledge and Cooperation for Comprehensive Multi-Hazard Risk Management in Asia and Pacific, which takes place prior to the Committee session from 27-29 June, as well as the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction from 29 June to 1 July.

For more information: [ESCAP](#)

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

*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.*