



## FEBRUARY 2013 UPDATES

### UN-SPIDER AT A GLANCE

#### **Knowledge Management: Read the latest UN-SPIDER Newsletter**

When tackling a disaster situation or when assessing the risk of a potential disaster, knowledge is the key. Disaster and disaster-risk managers face the challenge of identifying knowledge keepers, information focal points and data sources – sometimes under the pressure of extremely short timeframes. Finding the right path from data to information to knowledge is not always easy in a world where we tend to be rather overwhelmed with information. Read about UN-SPIDER's Knowledge Management efforts in our latest Newsletter and take a closer look at our Knowledge Portal

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

#### **VALID project: Case Study for Namibia**

Assessing the economic value of applying geospatial information in Disaster and Risk Management is an essential topic in the VALID project. The crucial issue is to determine, in monetary figures, what difference is made by utilizing specific geoinformation products in specific Disaster Risk Management situations. In this context, a case study has been carried out by Tessa Belinfante from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam demonstrating an innovative Cost Avoidance Approach by addressing the severe 2009 flooding in Namibia. The results are based on a comprehensive questionnaire.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

#### **UN-SPIDER invited to contribute to improve the UNESCO-IOC tsunami risk assessment guidelines**

UN-SPIDER has been invited to contribute to the revision and updating of the UNESCO-IOC Guidelines on "Tsunami Risk Assessment and Mitigation for the Indian Ocean: Knowing Your Tsunami Risk - and What to Do About it". The guidelines are an element of the project: "Enhancing Tsunami Risk Assessment and Management, Strengthening Policy

Support and Developing Guidelines for Tsunami Exercises in Indian Ocean Countries" carried out by UNESCO-IOC with the support of UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific). The first meeting of the Task Team involved in this activity was held in the premises of the Sri Lanka Disaster Management Centre (DMC) and those of the University of Moratuwa in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 27 February to 1 March 2013. UN-SPIDER aims to highlight the benefits of geo-spatial information generated with the aid of space-based technologies such as earth observation and satellite assisted positioning in applications such as the assessment of vulnerability and to contribute to the identification of warning strategies and evacuation routes.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

#### **UNESCAP Workshop: UN-SPIDER on relevance of space-based information for HFA priorities**

From 20 to 22 February, UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) held a regional workshop on geo-referenced disaster risk management information systems for South-East and East Asia, and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop discussed the importance of standardized geo-referenced information, and the necessity of having a strong institutional mechanism and coordination for data/information sharing among the relevant national agencies, as well as having a strong network and community of practices for an effective disaster risk management. UN-SPIDER made a meaningful contribution to the workshop by holding a presentation on "Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) Priorities and relevance of space based/geographic information – UN-SPIDER Interventions" briefing the participants about UN-SPIDER's Technical Advisory Support and capacity building activities in the region. The presentation is available on the Knowledge Portal.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)





## NEWS FROM OUR REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICES

### UN-SPIDER's 4th Annual Meeting of Regional Support Offices

UN-SPIDER inaugurated on 11 February 2013 its 4th Annual meeting of Regional Support Offices (RSOs) on the premises of the United Nations Office in Vienna, Austria. The two-day meeting was a side event of the annual session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) of the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) taking place from 11 to 22 February 2013. The RSO meeting's participants included representatives from eleven of the thirteen RSOs and representatives of agencies from Russia, Indonesia and Nepal. Outcomes of the RSO meeting include among others an agreement on next steps towards developing recommended practices on the use of archived imagery for floods and drought.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

### UN-SPIDER welcomes two new Regional Support Offices

On the sidelines of the fiftieth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) of COPUOS UN-SPIDER furthermore signed agreements with two new partners establishing new Regional Support Offices (RSOs). On 12 February 2013, during the 4th annual UN-SPIDER Regional Support Offices meeting, the official signing ceremony for the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), located in Nepal, was held making ICIMOD the

fourteenth UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office. ICIMOD is a regional intergovernmental learning and knowledge sharing centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayas. On 19 February 2013, LAPAN, the Indonesian National Institute of Aeronautics and Space, became UN-SPIDER's fifteenth Regional Support Office by signing a memorandum of understanding with UNOOSA. LAPAN is the Indonesian government space agency responsible for long-term civilian and military aerospace research.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

### University of West Indies conducts geo-training

At the St. Augustine campus of the University of West Indies, host of a UN-SPIDER Regional Support Office, more than 40 Caribbean data managers, IT specialists and software developers concluded on 24 February 2013 a one-week advanced training in "GeoNode". This open-source platform allows national ministries and agencies to populate, catalog, view, and share geospatial data on a central repository to increase the access and use of data to inform decision-makers. The training was sponsored by the World Bank, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), and the University of West Indies. Participants learned how to manage, share, and increase the use of spatial data to reduce disaster risks in the Caribbean.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

## NEWS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

### Fiftieth Session of the COPUOS Scientific and Technical Subcommittee concluded

From 11 to 22 February 2013 the Fiftieth annual session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC) of the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) was held in Vienna, Austria. Representatives of 57 Member States attended the session discussing a variety of issues regarding the peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of humankind under the chairmanship of Félix Clementino Menicocci (Argentina). In the 20 meetings held, topics such as space debris, space-based disaster management support or near-earth objects were discussed. During the 2013 STSC session, the continuous commitments of the governments of Austria, China and Germany to support UNOOSA's UN-SPIDER

Programme in 2014-2015 was noted with satisfaction by the Subcommittee.

Read more: [UNOOSA](#)

### UNOOSA and LAPAN to organize joint International Conference on Climate Change

The United Nations is organizing the United Nations/Indonesia International Conference on Integrated Space Technology Applications to Climate Change under the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The Conference will take place in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 2 to 4 September in 2013, hosted by the National Institute of Aeronautics and Space (LAPAN). This International





Conference will bring together experts from the space and the climate change community as well as decision makers to discuss methods to use space-based applications to support the identification and implementation of adaptation measures, as well as to share experiences and lessons learned on the use of such applications in the context of mitigation.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

### **CSSTEAP: New training courses on space applications**

The UN-affiliated Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP) in India has announced its new training course programme 2013-2014 covering the fields of Remote Sensing and GIS, Satellite Communications, Satellite Meteorology and Global Climate and Space and Atmospheric Science. The courses are designed for scientists, engineers and university educators and include the Ninth Post Graduate Course on Satellite Communications (SATCOM), the Second International Training Course on Navigation and Satellite Positioning System (NAVSAT) and an International Training Course on Hyperspectral Remote Sensing and its Applications.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

### **International Charter activated for Seychelles and Madagascar**

The International Charter “Space and Major Disasters” was activated twice in February 2013 to provide satellite imagery and derived products for emergency response. On 1 February, UNITAR/UNOSAT, on behalf of UNOCHA, triggered the mechanism in response to Tropical Cyclone Felleng in the Republic of Seychelles which had caused floods and landslides. On 23 February, the mechanism was again triggered by UNITAR/UNOSAT in response to Cyclone Haruna, that had affected Madagascar causing torrential rains and heavy flooding.

Read more: [International Charter](#)

### **Austria database on Space Technology**

The Austrian Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (bmvit) published a new catalogue on “Austrian Technology in Space” and introduced a new homepage: <http://www.spacetechnology.at/>. The database is intended to allow easy identification of specific partners dealing with space applications in Austria.

Read more: [Space Technology](#)

### **Digital Globe and GeoEye complete Combination**

As of 31 January 2013, Digital Globe and GeoEye are one single company for earth imagery and geospatial analysis. As a result of the combination, DigitalGlobe will be able to provide a wider array of earth imagery and geospatial analysis. “With a stronger financial profile, more robust suite of services, and among the world’s most advanced geospatial production and analysis capabilities, we will be even better positioned to meet customers’ needs and create value for shareowners,” said Jeffrey R. Tarr, President and Chief Executive Officer of DigitalGlobe.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

### **HOT: Demonstrating the usefulness of spatial data**

One of the core challenges in UN-SPIDER’s work is to demonstrate the usefulness and effectiveness of space-based information when dealing with “non-spatial” partners who are not yet involved in the use of such data and therefore are not familiar with its applications. For the Humanitarian Open Street Map team, a network of volunteers involved in crowdsourced mapping, this challenge is similar. In a recent article on their website, the network describes how to engage with non-spatial partners. For example, by showing real-world examples, such as the mapping of vulnerable infrastructures, the use of geo-spatial data becomes much more tangible for partners.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)

### **NASA launches Landsat Data Continuity Mission**

On 4 February 2013, NASA’s Landsat Data Continuity Mission (LDCM) lifted off into space aboard an Atlas V rocket from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. LDCM is expected to reach its orbit within two months and will go through a check-out phase for the next three months before it becomes fully operational. The use of Landsat data has been transformed in recent years by advancements in computing power and the decision by US Geological Service (USGS) to allow free online access to Landsat information. This revolution has allowed scientists to detect changes to our planet over time and has enabled a host of applications based on Landsat measurements to be developed by researchers, the private sector, and state, local, and tribal governments.

Read more: [Knowledge Portal](#)







## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **26-27 June 2013: UN-SPIDER Expert Meeting on Early Warning – Apply now!**

The UN-SPIDER Expert Meeting on the use of space-based information for early warning systems is now open for applications. The main objectives of this expert meeting are to raise awareness concerning the most recent advances regarding the use of space-based information in early warning systems and disaster preparedness; to identify and systematize areas where space-based information can improve the functionality of existing early warning systems, to identify knowledge management strategies that can facilitate access to and use of space-based information in early warning and preparedness and to bridge the space and the early warning communities. The expert meeting will bring together participants from national, regional and international organizations representing the space community, the disaster risk community and the emergency response community. A limited amount of participants from developing countries will receive financial support to attend the event. The application deadline for financial support is **31 March 2013**, the application deadline for participation without financial support is **15 May 2013**.

Read more and apply online: [Knowledge Portal](#)

### **3-10 June 2013: ESA Earth Observation App Camp**

Following the success of last year's first ever App Camp organised by the European Space Agency (ESA), 20 app developers from all over Europe will be invited once again to ESA's ESRIN centre in Frascati, Italy, from 3 to 10 June. The event aims at helping to bring Earth Observation services to the everyday user with the participants' ideas for mobile phone applications. The deadline for application to the 2013 App Camp is **25 March 2013**.

Read more: [App Camp](#)

### **19-23 May 2013: 4th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

The 4th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 19 to 23 May 2013 at the International Conference Centre of Geneva (CICG).

Heads of State, government ministers, parliamentarians, CEOs, scientists and civil society representatives will meet to discuss a new global framework to reduce disaster risk. It is expected that around 3,000 people will attend this fourth session of the Global Platform which will be the last to take place before the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan in 2015. The Global Platform is the 4th such event to be held since 2007 and will be a major milestone event in the consultative process facilitated by UNISDR for the development of a post-2015 global framework for disaster risk reduction. Those wishing to attend can register online.

Read more: [UNISDR](#)

### **11-15 March 2013: High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP)**

Drought is widely recognized as a slow creeping natural hazard that occurs as a consequence of the natural climatic variability. In recent years, concern has grown world-wide that droughts may be increasing in frequency and severity given the changing climatic conditions. In order to address the issue of national drought policy, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Congress at its Sixteenth Session held in Geneva in 2011 recommended the organization of a "High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP)." Accordingly, WMO and the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in collaboration with a number of UN agencies, international and regional organizations and key national agencies, will organize the HMNDP in Geneva in from 11 to 15 March 2013.

Read more: [UNCCD](#)

