



UNITED NATIONS
Office for Outer Space Affairs

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT (3 JUNE 2013)

United Nations International Conference on Space-based Technologies for Disaster Management - "Disaster risk identification, assessment and monitoring"

Organized by the

United Nations for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

and

Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China

Beijing, China- 23-25 October 2013

UN-SPIDER is the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, the programme implemented by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). The UN-SPIDER Beijing Office is pleased to announce the **"United Nations International Conference on Space-based Technologies for Disaster Management - "Disaster risk identification and response" from 23-25 October 2013**. The **International Training Programme "Flood Risk Mapping, Modelling and Assessment using Space technology"** will be organised for 25 participants of the conference.

The UN-SPIDER Beijing Office has organised two successful conferences since 2011. Previous conferences covered the themes of "[Best Practices for Risk Reduction and Rapid Response mapping](#)" in 2011 and "[Risk Assessment in the context of global climate change](#)" in 2012. These conferences offered a forum for disaster management communities and experts to strengthen their capabilities in using space based information to identify, assess, monitor and respond to disaster risks and integrate space technology into long-term disaster risk management efforts.

Rationale

Despite technological advances in the earth observation and the existence of ground-based systems for disaster prediction and monitoring, several countries face challenges to assess and reduce disaster risks. These challenges can be addressed by setting up a mechanism for identifying, assessing, monitoring and responding to disaster risks. With advances in the earth observation technology and increasing access to the space based information, several opportunities are available for disaster managers to use space technology effectively for disaster management. The conference is an opportunity to share information on latest methods, approaches and models used for identifying, assessing and reducing disaster risks. The conference will also focus on how to operationalize technological developments to address challenges at the national level by the national disaster management authorities. The sole purpose of this conference is to bring together the technologists and end users on a single platform to ensure that space-based information is effectively employed in decision making that saves life and prevents economic losses.

Conference topics

[The United Nations Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2011 \(GAR 2011\)](#) confirms the countries with weak governance are likely to find it difficult to address the underlying risk drivers. The effects of climate extremes and variations pose additional challenge making these countries more susceptible to greater potential losses. Although several countries are able to use space technology to monitor and respond to floods and droughts, recent examples of floods in Pakistan ([2010](#) and 2011), floods in Thailand (2011) and [drought in Horn of Africa \(2011\)](#) have proven the need of thinking beyond response



efforts. The victims and economic losses from these disasters are enormous. The main opportunity for governments to control these potential losses lies in reducing vulnerability. Precise mapping of hazards combined with vulnerability provides correct understanding of disaster risk.

The earth observation technology is advancing in terms of offering satellite images of varying resolution that provides local to global coverage. As scientific organisations are making these products available on web portals, access to these value added products is improving constantly. These changing dynamics offer opportunities to strengthen disaster risk management (DRM) by making effective use of space based information, especially to understand underlying risks. The challenge is to transfer approaches, models and methodologies used in developing these products to the end users and operationalize the research outcomes to contribute in decision making.

In this context, the conference will cover the following topics:

1. Operational initiatives/programmes/projects on disaster risk identification, assessment and monitoring

This session will discuss proven and operational work from various countries in disaster risk identification and prevention using space-based information. The disaster managers and experts from member countries will be invited to share practical work carried out at the national and regional level focusing on the mechanisms, methods and national programmes of disaster identification and prevention with focus on space-based information.

2. Advanced research and development in use of space based information in Disaster risk assessment

This session will focus on the latest research and development to improve on-going disaster risk identification and assessment practices. The experts from centres of excellence will be invited to share research outcomes and advanced knowledge to benefit the national disaster management programmes. The focus will be on new models, methods, approaches and data integration from multiple sources (including space based information) for disaster risk identification and assessment.

3. Preparing for effective disaster response and rapid mapping by knowing risks

This session will provide insight into latest practices and opportunities to monitor risks and prepare for effective disaster response. Several new tools and technologies related to gathering disaster risk and response related information will be discussed, such as crowd sourcing, space information based products with open access and integration of such information ensure public safety from potential risks.

4. Cooperation mechanism for improving disaster risk management

This session will discuss existing opportunities, mechanisms and provide elements to plan cooperation programmes to improve disaster risk management at national and regional level. The session will also offer opportunities to discuss programmes to be planned jointly with the UN-SPIDER and partner organisations in 2014, such as technical advisory missions, capacity building programmes and outreach events.

5. Special session on Drought Risk Assessment



UNITED NATIONS Office for Outer Space Affairs

In collaboration with the Asia Pacific Space Cooperation Organisation (APSCO), a special session “Drought Risk Assessment using Space Technology” will be organised for the benefit of APSCO member countries.

Side meetings

The conference will organise side meetings to discuss the cooperation related to rapid response mapping, information sharing and cooperation project on drought assessment for Africa.

International training programme

The International Training Programme will be organised for 25 participants with support from the APSCO and National Disaster Reduction Centre of China (NDRCC).

Title: Hands on training programme on “Flood Risk Mapping, Modelling and Assessment using Space technology”

Dates: 27-31 October 2013

Target Audience for the conference

Disaster managers, policy makers, providers of space technology solutions/tools/applications from Government, academia, researchers, NGO and corporate sector.

Number of expected participants: 120

Venue

Zhongmin Plaza, 7, Baiguang Road, Xicheng District, Beijing 100053, CHINA

How to apply and application deadline

Please register on line through following weblink

<http://www.un-spider.org/beijingdisasterrisk>

Please note that **the final deadline for registration is 5 August 2013**. Online registration is mandatory for all participants.

Financial Support to the participants

Due to funding constraints, the organisers will be able to offer support to limited number of participants from the member states and organisations engaged in developing or intend to develop partnership with the UN-SPIDER programme. The support will defray the cost of travel (round-trip ticket – most economic fare – between the airport of international departure in their country of residence and Beijing) and/or room and board expenses during the duration of the event.

Point of Contact

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