UN-SPIDER / ZFL
Regional Virtual Expert Meeting

"Space-based Solutions for Disaster Risk Management and Emergency Response for Southern Africa"

Co-organized by

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs
Through its
Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response
UN-SPIDER

And

The Centre for Remote Sensing of Land Surfaces of the University of Bonn (ZFL)

CONCEPT NOTE

13 to 15 July 2021 (virtual)

1. Introduction

In recent decades, several countries in Southern Africa have experienced disasters triggered by floods, droughts, landslides, and other hazards that have eroded hard-won development gains. Taking note of advances in space technologies and other technological innovations, the African Union indicated in its 2017 African Space Policy that space represented a unique opportunity for cooperation in using and sharing enabling infrastructure and data towards the proactive management of, inter alia, responses to natural hazards and disasters. In that respect, the African Union aims to promote the use of space applications to improve weather forecasts and to develop a range of early warning systems, as Africa is subject to various extreme weather, climate, ecosystem and geological events.

Convinced that space technologies can play a vital role in supporting disaster management, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) established the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) in 2006 as a programme to be implemented by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). The General Assembly mandated UN-SPIDER to provide universal access to all countries and all relevant international and regional organizations to all types of space-based information and services relevant to disaster management to support the full disaster management cycle. Since 2008, UN-SPIDER has been providing technical advisory support to several countries in Southern Africa to facilitate the use of space technologies and space-based information in disaster risk, preparedness, response and recovery activities.

To continue efforts to promote the use of space technologies in disaster risk management, emergency response and recovery efforts; UN-SPIDER and the Centre for Remote Sensing of Land Surfaces of the University of Bonn (ZFL) are joining forces to organize the *UN-SPIDER / ZFL Regional Virtual Expert Meeting for Southern Africa "Space-based Solutions for Disaster Risk Management and Emergency Response*". This regional expert meeting, to be conducted virtually from 13 to 15 July 2021, will contribute to the efforts conducted by UN-SPIDER in the area of disaster risk reduction, preparedness, early warning systems, disaster response and recovery efforts. The aims of this regional expert meeting are:

- To raise awareness regarding novel applications of satellite technologies in hazard mapping, early warning systems, and disaster response operations;
- To take stock of efforts conducted by risk and disaster management institutions in Southern African countries on the use of space technologies and space-based information in disaster risk management, preparedness, response and recovery efforts;
- To explore ways to enhance the use space technologies in disaster risk management and response and recovery applications in Southern Africa;
- To provide continuity to the efforts conducted by UN-SPIDER and its partners in Southern Africa;
- To discuss the overarching topics of climate change in Southern Africa with special emphasis of the contribution of space-based technologies to mitigate the impact of, and enhance adaptation to climate change and land degradation utilising innovative monitoring and analysing tools.

2. Expected participants

The Regional Expert Meeting will bring together experts from Southern African countries drawn from the following groups:

- Experts and professionals engaged in disaster-risk management, preparedness, response and recovery efforts, including those with experience on the use of geographic information systems and satellite-based applications.
- Experts from national and regional institutions and organisations responsible for providing space-based technologies and solutions for risk and disaster management.

- Experts from regional and international organizations active in Southern Africa in risk and disaster management, including disaster preparedness and early warning systems.
- Experts from the UN-SPIDER Network of Regional Support Offices.
- Experts targeting climate change mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage in Southern Africa.
- Experts and graduate students in universities and research centres engaged in disaster-risk management, preparedness and emergency and disaster response and space technology efforts.

3. Description of virtual event, main components

The virtual regional expert meeting will include:

- Presentations by government agencies and the space community on efforts regarding the use of space-based technologies in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery efforts; as well as in climate change applications.
- Discussions on ways to enhance the use of space-based solutions in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery efforts; as well as in climate change applications.
- Afternoon technical sessions to present information on specific types of solutions developed by different institutions.

4. Expected Outcomes and Results

The proposed regional expert meeting will allow participants to:

- Become aware of the most recent examples regarding the use of space-based applications and solutions targeting disaster-risk management, response and recovery; and to identify ways advantage of those applications and solutions.
- Become aware of the activities being conducted by national disaster management agencies and UN-SPIDER in Southern Africa and identify ways and means to become engaged in these activities.
- Network with representatives of institutions in countries in Southern Africa and regional and international institutions engaged in these types of activities.

5. Participation requirements

Participants should hold managerial or technical positions at governmental agencies; international, regional, or national organizations, NGOs or private industry with programmes or activities relating to providing support to disaster-risk management and emergency response activities or development of space technology capabilities and/or solutions. Researchers from academia and graduate students, as well as professionals and experts dedicated to disaster management or geospatial efforts will also be able to participate. **Participation of women is highly encouraged**.

6. Language of the Regional Expert Meeting

The working language of all planned activities will be English.

7. Deadline for Submission of Applications

Applications to participate in this Regional Expert Meeting can be submitted to the Organizing Team. The completed application form should be submitted to the points of contact below by email no later than **Wednesday 07 July 2021**. Only complete applications, with all the requested information will be considered.

8. Points of Contact

For information regarding the agenda and general arrangements, please contact.

Mr. Juan Carlos Villagran de Leon Programme Officer, UN-SPIDER Programme UN-SPIDER Bonn Office, UNOOSA UN Campus, Bonn, Germany E-mail: juan carlos.villagran@un.org	**Mr. Adrian Strauch** Center for Remote Sensing of Land Surfaces (ZFL) Department of Geography University of Bonn Bonn, Germany E-mail: adrian.strauch@uni-bonn.de