



INFORMATION NOTE

United Nations/Syria Regional Workshop on Integrated Space Technology Applications: Support to Monitoring Climate Change and Impact on Natural Resources

Hosted by the General Organization of Remote Sensing

Damascus, Syria, 23 - 26 May 2011

1. Introduction

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA) and the Government of Syria are jointly organizing the above regional Workshop to promote the use of space technology for benefits of the developing countries.

The Workshop will be held in Damascus, Syria, from 23 - 26 May 2011, and it will be hosted by the General Organization of Remote Sensing (GORS) on behalf of the Government of Syria.

2. Background and objectives

Global climate is a consequence of complex interactions between the solar energy input to Earth, the atmosphere (and atmospheric composition), the oceans, the hydrological cycle, the land surface and vegetation, the cryosphere and geosphere, stratospheric ozone, etc., just to name a few. Space science and technology can greatly complement traditional methods of observations required for understanding the Earth's system.

Space technology is capable of providing the synoptic, wide-area data required to place measurements in the global context needed for the observation of many climatic phenomena. Satellite missions make or help derive key global observations of atmospheric structure and dynamics, sea-surface temperature, surface parameters, precipitation, land-surface characteristics, including biodiversity, and ozone layer via geostationary and polar-orbiting platforms, thus providing an unprecedented capability to monitor, on a global basis, nearly all aspects of the Earth's climate system.

The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held from 19 - 30 July 1999 in Vienna, in its resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", noted the benefits and applications of space technologies in addressing the challenges to sustainable development, as well as the effectiveness of space instruments for dealing with the challenges posed by matters such as climate change and effects of natural and anthropogenic disasters.

In this context, UNISPACE III placed a great importance to enhance capacity building of the developing countries that could be accomplished through international cooperation in various aspects such as: the development of human and budgetary resources; adequate coordination among the technical and research organizations that are in charge of global climate change monitoring and evaluation; and the development of infrastructures and policy regulations in this area.

The Workshop will address the above issues and will discuss a wide range of space-related technologies, services and information resources available for monitoring and analysis of climate change related matters and environmental hazards such as flood, drought, and desertification, with the following primary objectives:

- To increase awareness among decision makers and representatives of research and academic community about the use of integrated space technology applications for sustainable development programmes supporting monitoring and early warning of climate change induced disasters and environmental hazards in developing countries;
- To examine low-cost space-related technologies and information resources available for addressing social and economic issues caused by climate change and global warming;
- To strengthen capacity building in the area of space technology applications for climate change monitoring and hazards management; and
- To strengthen international and regional cooperation in the subjects.

3. Programme

The programme of the Workshop will focus on integrated applications of space technologies, such as remote sensing and GIS, navigation and positioning, telecommunications and satellite meteorology, for monitoring and analysis of climate change impact on sustainable development, with the aim to enable and support participants to develop and implement projects related to the subject, and to provide reliable data and information for policy- and decision-making in this area.

The programme will include presentations on successful applications of space technology and data that provide cost-effective solutions or essential information for planning and implementing programmes or projects related to observation and monitoring of climate change. The Workshop will also feature presentations on the needs of end users engaged in monitoring the impacts of climate change on natural resources and early warning of climate related disasters and environmental hazards such as flood, drought, and desertification that could influence sustainable development programmes in developing countries.

The Workshop will be composed of a series of technical presentations with sufficient time set aside for discussions. Technical sessions will be followed by open discussions, which will focus on specific topics of interest and will provide additional opportunities for participants to voice their opinions.

The programme of the Workshop may include, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- Space-related technologies, services and information resources which are available for observation/monitoring, analysis and modeling of climate change and impact on natural resources.
- International and regional initiatives, programmes and cooperation.
- Use of small satellites systems for climate change observations.
- Capacity building in developing countries, including discussions on human, financial and technical resources required for successful use of space technologies and services for climate change monitoring.

The Workshop's discussions will consider ways of expanding the use of space technologies and information/data for better water resources management, as well as will identify the priority areas where pilot projects could be launched and will examine possible partnerships that could be established.

Participants of the Workshop are encouraged to make presentations on the topics suggested above, as well as to participate actively in all discussions of the meeting.

4. Participation

The Workshop is being planned for a total of 80 - 100 decision-makers, technical experts, researchers and educators drawn from the following groups: international, regional, national and local institutions, academic institutions, multi-lateral and bi-lateral development agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and also from private industry. Experts and professionals from both space-related, natural resources management and environmental protection institutions will be invited, providing an opportunity to exchange experiences and strengthen networks and partnerships that will contribute to the increased use of space technology solutions for monitoring of climate change and impact on natural resources.

5. Participation requirements

Applicants must have a university degree and well-established professional working experience in a field related to the theme of the Workshop. Applicants should be in managerial, decision-making, technical or academic positions within governmental agencies, international, regional and national institutions, universities, NGOs or private industry with responsibilities for carrying out programmes or projects in the areas related to the theme of the Workshop.

Applicants who demonstrate that the Workshop is central to his/her professional activities and responsibilities will be selected on a priority basis. **Equally qualified female applicants are particularly encouraged.**

The co-sponsors of the Workshop will jointly select participants on a competitive basis. Selected participants will be notified by 10 April 2011.

All selected and invited participants will receive an information package with details on boarding, lodging and other local arrangements.

6. Language of the Workshop and presentation by participants

The working language of the Workshop will be English.

Selected participants who are funded by the cosponsors of the Workshop will be required to prepare a presentation of approximately 10 to 20 minutes on topics relevant to the meeting objectives and the programme. Presentations on actual on-going projects will be of particular interest to organizers of the event.

7. Financial support

Within the limited financial resources available, a number of selected participants will be offered financial support to attend the Workshop. This financial support will defray the cost of travel (a round trip air ticket – **most economic fare** – between the airport of international departure in their home country and Damascus, Syria) and/or room and board expenses for the duration of the Workshop.

Due to limited availability of financial support, not all participants can be funded. In this respect, applicants and their nominating organizations are strongly encouraged to find additional sources of sponsorship to allow them to attend the meeting.

Funded participants will receive additional information on the support upon notification of their selection.

8. Deadline for submission of applications

The completed application form, properly endorsed by the applicant's government/institution, should

be received by the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs **no later than Friday, 1 April 2011.** Applications received after the deadline will be considered, but applicants will not be eligible for financial support.

We strongly encourage all candidates **to apply for participation in the Workshop online**, as it helps us to streamline the processing of applications. The online application form can be accessed through the following Internet link: <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/SAP/act2011/Syria/index.html>

Alternatively, candidates may download a copy of application form from the above Internet site, complete it and submit it by mail to:

Office for Outer Space Affairs
United Nations Office at Vienna
Vienna International Centre
P.O. BOX 500
A-1400 Vienna, AUSTRIA
Fax: (+43-1) 26060-5830
E-mail: unpsa@unoosa.org

In that case, an advanced copy of completed application form should be e-mailed to the Office or sent there by fax. The applicant may also submit the original of his/her application through the Office of the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the applicant's respective country.

Only complete applications, with all the requested information and signatures, will be considered for financial support.

9. Life and health insurance

Life/major health insurance for each of the selected participants is necessary and is the responsibility of the candidate or his/her institution or government. The co-sponsors will not assume any responsibility for life and major health insurance, nor for expenses related to medical treatment or accidental events.

10. Points of contact

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