



January/February 2008 Updates

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We also 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. Check out:

<http://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=h1a93vb3rk6ud1tvrequisfk8s%40group.calendar.google.com>

1. **Outer Space Scientific and Technical Subcommittee Concludes its 45th Session in Vienna** - The established space-system-based disaster management programme (UN-SPIDER) was in the focus of the 45th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), which took place in Vienna, Austria, from 11 to 22 February 2008. Possible dangers from near-Earth objects, space debris mitigation and a safety framework for nuclear power sources in outer space were also key agenda items. For further information check out: <http://www.spaceref.com/news/viewpr.html?pid=24816>.
2. **Sahana Free and Open Source Disaster Management System** – Check out: <http://www.sahana.lk/>. Sahana is a web based collaboration tool that addresses the common coordination problems during a disaster from finding missing people, managing aid, managing volunteers, tracking camps effectively between Government groups, the civil society (NGOs) and the victims themselves. It was conceived during the 2004 Sri Lanka tsunami and was developed to help manage the scale of the disaster. Based on the success of this initial application, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) funded a second phase to generalize the application for global use and to help in any large-scale disaster. The project has now grown to become a global project with deployments in many other disasters such as the Asian Quake in Pakistan (2005), Southern Leyte Mudslide Disaster in Philippines (2006) and the Jogjarkata Earthquake in Indonesia (2006).
3. **Joint ISCRAM-CHINA and GI4DM Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Management** - Conference Theme: Information Systems and Geo-Information for Urban Crisis Management - August 4 - 6, 2008 - Harbin Engineering University, Harbin, China. The series of GI4DM Symposium (Geo-Information for Disaster Management) is recognised as one of the main international events that focuses on geospatial information for risk and disaster management. The next symposium will be a Joint Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Management combining the 3rd International China Workshop on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM-CHINA) and the 4th International Symposium on Geo-Information for Disaster Management (GI4DM). Presentations will include aspects of the design, development, deployment, operation, or evaluation of information systems for crisis management (ISCRAM track) and the collection, management, analysis, sharing and visualization of geo-information for disaster management (GI4DM track). Check out: <http://www.iscram.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=2005&Itemid=2>.

4. **GIM International** – Check out the contribution by **Prof. Bengt Rystedt, past president of the International Cartographic Association, "Co-ordinated Societies"** http://www.gim-international.com/issues/articles/id948-Coordinated_Societies.html, where he reports on the work of the ad hoc group established by the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Services (JBGIS) (<http://www.fig.net/jbgis/adhoc/index.htm>) with an initial task of collecting information about existing projects in the field of risk and disaster management as well as early warning, and to come up with recommendations to avoid competing activities. The article presents an approach to ensuring that geospatial professional do contribute by co-ordinating efforts in a variety of fields: defining an international research agenda, developing specific university curricula, provide on-the-job training for risk and disaster management officers and support the organisation and implementation of geospatial information and technology at crisis-management centres. They should also contribute to improving political awareness of the role of geospatial information and technology in risk and disaster management, and provide risk maps.
5. **United Nations Response to Combat Floods in Namibia** – On 14 March 2008 the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) triggered the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters" to help Namibia in its combat against floods which were caused by heavy rain and have led to an outbreak of cholera. A request to provide satellite imagery for northern and north-eastern regions of Namibia that are most affected by floodwater, came to UNOOSA from the country office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Namibia and will cover an area 100 km north from the Angolan-Namibian border to the northern shore of Etosha Pan in Namibia. The satellite imagery, provided free of charge through the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters" (<http://www.disasterscharter.org>) will help the Namibian authorities who declared a state of emergency on 5 March, to assess the impact of the floods. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the increased floodwaters have inundated the sewage system. An increase in cholera and other water borne diseases is anticipated. UNOOSA has activated the Charter 48 times since it became a cooperating body to the Charter in 2003. Any entity of the United Nations system responding to an emergency and identifying the need for satellite data and information within the scope of the Charter may forward a request for assistance to the Charter through UNOOSA. This year, the Charter has already been triggered three times through UNOOSA: for floods in Bolivia in January, earthquake affecting Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and floods in Ecuador in February. For further info check out: <http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2008/unisos366.html>.
6. **The New Cartographers - What does it mean to map everything all the time?** by Jessica Clark http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/3524/the_new_cartographers/. This is an interesting article which demonstrates just how much maps are everywhere these days. The ubiquity of global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) and mobile directional devices, interactive mapping tools and social networks is feeding a mapping boom.
7. **PreventionWeb.net - Call for Contributions** - PreventionWeb aims at facilitating an understanding of the subject of disaster risk reduction and the work of professionals in DRR by providing current news and information on the topic. Contribute content related to disaster risk reduction online at: <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/submit/>.
8. **Soil Moisture for Hydrometeorologic Applications in the SADC Region (SHARE)** is an European Space Agency supported project which makes available an operational soil moisture monitoring service for the region of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). With this service SHARE proposes to address one of today's most severe obstacles in water resource management which is the lack of availability of reliable soil moisture information on a dynamic basis at a frequency of a week and less. The soil moisture information system is based on the newest radar satellite technology. The service uses data delivered by ENVISAT's ASAR sensor operated in global mode and the METOP scatterometer sensors. The synergistic use of both systems allows for frequent, high resolution monitoring of regional soil moisture dynamics. The long-term vision of SHARE is to supply soil moisture information for the entire African continent, at a resolution of 1 km, posted on the web, freely accessible to all. Check out: <http://www.ipf.tuwien.ac.at/radar/share>.

9. **Planet Action** is a non-for-profit collaborative initiative launched in June 2007 by Spot Image, a world leader in satellite imagery. Its purpose is to encourage the Earth Observation industry and geographic information professional communities to help and tackle the climate change related issues. Check out their website for further information: <http://www.planet-action.org/web/3-home.php>.
10. **Internship Opportunities** – UN-SPIDER has internship opportunities in Vienna and also in Bonn. If you are interested check out the information provided on the following website: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/employment.html>. Please also forward your application to Mr. Levent CANTURK (Email: levent.canturk@unoosa.org).
11. **Report on activities carried out in 2007 in the framework of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response** – this report is now available in all official languages of the United Nations. Download it: <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/unspider/docs.html>.
12. **Upcoming UN-SPIDER Outreach Activities.** Check out the UN-SPIDER webpage for information on the upcoming outreach activities: <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/unspider/workshops.html>.

"United Nations Regional UN-SPIDER Workshop: Building Upon Regional Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response for the Caribbean" in Barbados, 8 to 11 July 2008

* Further information can be obtained from Mr. Georg Magerl (georg.magerl@unoosa.org).

"United Nations Regional UN-SPIDER Workshop: Building Upon Regional Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response for the Pacific region" (venue and date tbd)

* Further information can be obtained from Mr. Georg Magerl (georg.magerl@unoosa.org).

Second United Nations International UN-SPIDER Bonn Workshop: "Disaster Management and Space Technology - Bridging the Gap" in Bonn, Germany, 13 to 15 October 2008

* Further information can be obtained from Mr. Joerg Szarzynski (joerg.szarzynski@unoosa.org).

"5th UN-wide Meeting on the Use of Space Technologies for Emergency Response and Humanitarian Assistance" in Bonn, Germany, 16 to 17 October 2008

* This meeting is planned back-to-back with the Second United Nations International UN-SPIDER Bonn Workshop. Further information can be obtained from Mr. David Stevens (david.stevens@unoosa.org).