



United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER)

October 2007 Updates

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<http://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=h1a93vb3rk6ud1tvrejujsfk8s%40group.calendar.google.com>

News included in this **UN-SPIDER Updates**:

- 1. UN-SPIDER opens Office in Bonn** - The newly established United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), which is implemented by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), has opened its first office in Bonn, Germany, on Monday, 29 October 2007. Check out: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=24485&Cr=outer&Cr1=space>. The new office – expected to be the first of several – aims to carry out the UN Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER). Unlike other recent initiatives where space-based information is used for humanitarian and emergency response, UN-SPIDER is the first to focus also on the technologies to cover all stages of disaster, including the risk reduction phase which could significantly cut the loss of lives and property. UN-SPIDER will provide universal access to all countries and interested organizations to space-based information and services on disaster management “and will have a considerable impact on the way space-based information is used in dealing with disasters around the world,” said Franz Baumann, Deputy Director-General of the UN Office at Vienna. The programme, established by the UN General Assembly last December, hopes to assist countries and organizations by acting as a gateway to space-based information for disaster management support and facilitate developing countries in their capacity-building and institutional strengthening efforts. UN-SPIDER offices are also scheduled to open in Beijing and Geneva. Check also: <http://www.spaceref.com/news/viewpr.html?pid=23930>.
- 2. Space Solutions for Climate Change, Equal Access to Space-based Technologies, Warnings about Outer Space Arms Race** dominate debate in the 10th meeting of the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) kicked off its general debate on the 24th October 2007 on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space with a panel discussion on space solutions for climate change, calling for equal access to space-based technologies by all Member States, and taking the opportunity to warn against a possible arms race in outer space. Check out: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/gaspd379.doc.htm>. During the panel discussion the Programme Coordinator for UN-SPIDER, David Stevens, stressed the support that the new programme will provide to global climate change-induced disasters and presented to the Fourth Committee the proposed plan of work for 2008-2009 of the new programme.
- 3. Launch of UN-SPIDER Hailed in Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly**: Delegates Stress Benefits for Disaster-prone States, Including Tsunami Early Warning, Potential to Enhance Global Coordination, but Call for More Resources. Check out:

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/gaspd380.doc.htm>. During the 11th Meeting of the Fourth Committee, held on the 25th October 2007, delegates continued their general debate on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) commending the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs for progress made on the recently inaugurated United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (SPIDER). Touching specifically on UN-SPIDER, several speakers emphasized the benefits that programme could provide to disaster-prone countries, particularly those in the developing world. Recalling the monstrous tsunami of 2004, the representative of Thailand, who spoke on behalf of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the kind of satellite technology made available through UN-SPIDER was an essential component of the tsunami early warning project being developed in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia.

4. **Early Warning Systems** - The report of the Secretary-General on the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems is now available (A/62/340). The survey report recommended the development of a globally comprehensive early warning system, rooted in existing early warning systems and capacities. Check out: <http://unhq-appspub-01.un.org/LIB/DHLRefWeblog.nsf/dx/10102007084640AMUNRGZA.htm>.
5. **Acting with Common Purpose - Proceedings of the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**. The report of the proceedings of the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held in Geneva, 5-7 June 2007 captures discussions of the high level dialogue; the outcome of the workshops; and the conclusions of the multi-stakeholder deliberations on progress in implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and identification of priorities for the ISDR system for 2008-2009. Check out: <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/gpdr/ docs/GP-Acting-with-common-purpose.pdf>.
6. **Conference on "Geospatial Sciences for Sustainable Development in Africa" - Global Dialogue on Emerging Science and Technology (GDEST) 2008 Cape Town, South Africa - 17-19 March, 2008**. Announcement and Call for Expressions of Interest. For further information contact Mr. Paul Bartel – E-mail bartelpp@state.gov. The GDEST 2008 Conference on Geospatial Sciences for Sustainable Development in Africa will be held in Cape Town, South Africa from March 17 to 19, 2008. The aim of the Global Dialogues on Emerging Science and Technology is to increase partnerships and networking among scientists and experts in the United States and across other world regions by building upon and reinforcing existing networks among international partner scientists and governments. The conference will highlight challenges, opportunities, and potential steps toward the effective use of geospatial science for sustainable development in Africa. Research papers and posters will be considered for presentation by specialists in the field of geospatial sciences. All participants selected will be reimbursed for their travel, lodging, and meals associated with the GDEST Africa Conference.
7. **Global Forum on Effective Use of Telecommunications / ICT for Disaster Management: Saving Lives** - 10-12 December 2007, International Conference Center (CICG), Geneva. Check out: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/globalforum/>. The purpose of this event is to bring together the main stakeholders active in developing, deploying and using telecommunications/ICT for disaster mitigation, and to serve as a forum in which they can map out concrete strategies and adopt practical measures aimed at giving telecommunications/ICT a central role in disaster management, i.e. early warning, preparedness, relief and response. The discussions will focus on policy, regulation, technology, finance and the deployment of last-mile communications systems. The debate will take a multi-hazard approach, as the role of telecommunications/ICT remains the same irrespective of the nature or type of disaster at hand. Attention will also be focused on the ways in which last-mile solutions and remote sensing applications can be integrated into existing and future early warning systems. For this, cooperation among organizations involved in disaster prevention and management is an essential element.
8. **Earthzine.org** is a premier on-line resource for news, articles, information and educational materials about Earth Science, Earth observations and users of Earth information. Earthzine.org is

a contribution of the IEEE Committee on Earth Observation in support of the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS). Check out: www.earthzine.org.

9. **ZKI maps flooding in Mexico with high-resolution radar satellite TerraSAR-X** – Check out: http://www.zki.dlr.de/applications/2007/mexico/142_en.html. In early November, heavy rainfalls lasting for a whole week led to devastating floods in the Mexican states of Tabasco and Chiapas, displacing about one million people and approximately half of Tabasco's overall population. About 80% of the state of Tabasco's surface (overall area: 25,000 km²) has been temporarily flooded. The region around the city of Villahermosa with its population of approx. 600.000 was hit most by the floods. The Center for Satellite Based Crisis Information (ZKI) of DLR supports the Mexican civil protection (CENAPRED) with satellite image maps of the floods. The DLR radar satellite TerraSAR-X, which was launched in June 2007 and is still in its commissioning phase, proves to be highly suitable for the assessment of flood events again. Independently from cloud cover or daytime, TerraSAR-X is able to deliver high resolution imagery with a resolution of up to one meter. In this case, the data acquisition could be accelerated significantly by using TerraSAR-X's unique left looking recording ability. Also check out: http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/NaturalHazards/shownh.php3?img_id=14604.
10. The "**United Nations/Sudan International UN-SPIDER Workshop: Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response**" planned for Khartoum, Sudan, has been postponed to 2008. All applications received will be considered when the new dates are fixed. A new deadline for receiving additional applications to participate in the workshop will be informed. For more information please contact Mr. Georg Magerl: E-mail: georg.magerl@unvienna.org.
11. First Call for Papers for **Geoinformatics Forum Salzburg - GI_Forum2008** – Check out: <http://www.gi-forum.org/>. The Salzburg University Centre for Geoinformatics is offering an annual forum to the worldwide geoinformatics community, bringing together English-speaking researchers and practitioners across disciplines and industries. Simultaneously, the GI_Forum connects participants into a well established co-located regional symposium - Applied Geoinformatics (AGIT) - sharing the state-of-the art AGIT-EXPO exhibit.
12. **Humanitarian Information in Spanish** – Check out: <http://www.redhum.org/>. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) launched La Red de Información Humanitaria (Redhum) a website to provide Spanish-speakers with information on natural disasters and complex emergencies in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The site will provide up-to-date situation reports, maps, and contact information to promote better preparation and response in the event of a disaster. A similar service, ReliefWeb, has been available in English since 1996. The website was launched at the conclusion of the Global Symposium +5, a conference on information for humanitarian action held in Geneva last week of October (<http://www.reliefweb.int/symposium/>).