

Germany, Item 7

UNCOPUOS Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

61st Session, Vienna, 29 January–9 February 2024

Statement by Germany on

Agenda item 7: Space-system-based disaster management support

Madam Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

2023 was a record year for activations of the International Charter “Space and Major Disasters”. This is first and foremost a stark reminder that we need to take better care of our planet and address the urgent challenge of climate change. But the high number of Charter activations also demonstrates that it is an effective mechanism to use space-based information in support of disaster management efforts. This collaboration of 17 space agencies, including the German Aerospace Center DLR, is another example of the benefits that international cooperation in the use of space technology can bring to improve life on Earth.

DLR supported 53 activations of the Charter last year and contributed 30 archival images and 176 newly acquired images to these activations. This is an increase from the 130 images that DLR contributed to the Charter in 2022. Following the widespread floods in Somalia in late May of 2023, DLR performed rapid mapping based on data of the German hyperspectral satellite mission EnMAP. This was the first time the satellite was used in the frame of the Charter, and Germany is exploring ways to further use EnMAP to contribute to the Charter.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

Germany continues to strongly support the UN-SPIDER programme. Over the past five years, the German government has funded the SPEAR project, a collaboration between the University of Bonn and UN-SPIDER to develop methods and tools based on space-derived information for disaster risk reduction, and to apply these methods and tools in UN-SPIDER's capacity-building efforts. The project will conclude this year, with a major international conference on space-based solutions for disaster management – "Early warnings for all". The conference will take place from the 12th to the 14th of March, and registration is open until the 16th of February. We look forward to seeing many of you in Bonn next month. We are also happy to announce that the German government will fund a follow-on SPEAR project for another five years, thereby extending its support to UN-SPIDER. The project partners are currently developing the new project, which will start in July this year.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Center for Satellite Based Crisis Information of DLR in 2022 launched a new Fire Monitoring System. The system provides up-to-date information on wildfires and their spatial development over the past 30 days. The service is provided online and free of charge. The regional focus of the system currently lies on Europe and North America, but it is intended to expand the system to cover northern Africa as well.

Germany also supports capacity-building activities to improve knowledge in using space-based information for disaster risk reduction.

The FPCUP project aims to increase awareness and use of the Copernicus Earth observation satellite system. As part of the project, DLR participates in the "Great Disaster Challenge", an effort addressed at school students and teachers to improve understanding of how to use satellite images in the classroom for monitoring our planet, in particular in the area of disaster management and civil protection.

The long-running education platform "EO College", which is run by several German universities and supported by the German government, is

currently hosting the massive open online course "Towards Zero Hunger". This free educational activity offers learning materials on Earth observation in various areas of food supply that are related to the SDG 2: Zero Hunger. We invite you to sign up for this activity to learn more about how space applications can contribute to societal goals here on Earth.

Finally, the Earth Observation Center of DLR has conducted a project called "Locust-Tec" that focused on the detrimental effects that locust outbreaks play in food security. The researchers developed methods that rely on Earth observation data to help detect such outbreaks as early as possible and take action against them. By detecting environmental parameters that favor the spread of locusts, it was possible to implement countermeasures in affected areas to combat impending outbreaks. These methods could prove highly beneficial in agriculture and thereby support food security in the future.

Madam Chair,

Thank you for your attention.