**Global Platform for Disaster Risk reduction**

4th Session, Geneva, Switzerland, 19 to 23 May 2013

**Statement of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA)**

1. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA) is the office responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. OOSA serves as the secretariat for the General Assembly's Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and has the dual objective of supporting the intergovernmental discussions in the Committee and its subcommittee, and of assisting developing countries in using space technology for development. At the 67th Session of the General Assembly in December 2012, Resolution 67/113 emphasized the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in developing countries.
2. The United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) is implemented by OOSA to guarantee that all countries and international organizations have access to the use of space based information in support of disaster response activities. The UN-SPIDER programme acts as a gateway for access to space information during all phases of the disaster management cycle, connecting the disaster management and space communities, and facilitating capacity building and institutional strengthening. Its network of 15 Regional Support Office, set within entities of Member States, coordinates with UN-SPIDER for outreach, capacity building and institutional strengthening activities.
3. The United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Affairs (IAM) is a formal inter-agency mechanism supported by OOSA aimed at enhancing coordination of space-related activities within the UN system. The Meeting generates biennial reports of the Secretary-General on coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system and addresses the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development. The IAM organizes open informal session with participation of Member States to promote dialogue among United Nations entities, Member States and other stakeholders by demonstrating examples of how the United Nations system responds to selected themes. At its 10th Session, kindly hosted by UN-ISDR in Geneva on 12 to 14 March this year, the Open Informal Session focused on “Space and disaster risk reduction: Planning for resilient human settlements”. Two panels talked to: 1) Towards resilient cities: A wider use of geospatial data in urban planning; and 2) Mainstreaming space technology in land use planning and rural development strategies for effective disaster management. The first panel covered aspects of city planning and underground infrastructures; lessons learned from the Making Cities Resilient campaign; integrated urban planning processes for disaster risk reduction and adaptation; and experiences on resilience, urban planning and technical considerations. The second panel provided an opportunity to discuss needs related to the full cycle of disaster management in a coordinated approach and to the ever present need for capacity building and institutional strengthening in the use of space-based geospatial data and information.
4. The discussion at the open informal session reconfirmed the importance of space-based tools and spatial data infrastructure for policy planners and decision makers in increasing the resilience of human settlements. Space-derived and in-situ geographic information and geospatial data was also shown to be of benefit during times of emergency response and reconstruction, particularly in large urban areas with a high population density and especially after the occurrence of major events such as earthquakes or floods.
5. Availability of structured and easily-accessible, shared geographic information is also indispensable for disaster management activities, such as identifying access corridors or establishing the optimal location for essential public institutions such as hospitals or emergency shelters. Such geographic data and related resources and capacities are part of “spatial data infrastructures” (SDI). Although SDIs are being developed at the local (city), national, regional and global scales, much more investment of effort is needed to optimize their use in the future for disaster risk reduction and disaster management. Furthermore, multi-stakeholder coordination is essential to ensure a systematic, timely and adapted integration of the space-based technology applications of remote sensing, meteorological satellites, satellite telecommunication and global navigation satellite systems to multi-source geospatial datasets.
6. The focus on the use of space technology and its applications to enhance resilience to disasters in the context of land use and urban planning reflected a mounting recognition for the important role of space-derived data and information in making informed decisions for disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.

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