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SPACE FOR HUMANITARIAN RELIEF: THE CENTRE FOR RESPONSIVE INFORMATION FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY (CRISIS)

Abstract

A humanitarian crisis represents a crucial point of danger to the health, safety or security of people, and always involves a potential turning point where a decisive and pivotal decision must be made that will, depending on the courses followed, repair or worsen the crisis. In these scenarios, decision makers must take rapid actions to resolve the situation.

Accurate, real-time data is indispensable for efficient and rapid decision-making in crisis-based humanitarian relief. Space applications offer numerous benefits for assistance, for instance via remotely-sensed data and improved communications ease. However, there are many challenges associated with utilizing these services in support of humanitarian relief efforts, such as in how to raise awareness of the capabilities of space assets for this purpose, and how to communicate efficiently and effectively between data users and providers.

The 2012 Space Generation Congress (SGC) Society Working Group proposes the establishment of a Centre for Responsive Information for Safety and Security (CRISIS) to act as an international coordination body for providing space-derived information in support of humanitarian relief. CRISIS should act as an impartial interface between data providers and users, apply political pressure and promote public support. It would also address novel ways of incorporating new media tools alongside space assets.

In this context, CRISIS would ensure that accurate data is delivered on time, at an affordable price and to the people or authority that is in need of the data. CRISIS protects data providers by allowing them to remain anonymous in the case of politically sensitive events and helps to bridge the information and data gap between NGOs and those data providers who hold the data but have limited channels for distribution. CRISIS would also standardize the process, in particular at all stages of the data request and delivery and in matters of liability and confidentiality. Finally, crowdsourcing could be used to free up NGO resources for low-priority or developing crises, as well as to encourage public support and participation.