

IAF EARTH OBSERVATION SYMPOSIUM (B1)
21st Anniversary of the Disaster Charter: History, Status and Future of this Powerful and Productive
International Cooperation (6)

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UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER: FACILITATING THE LINK BETWEEN THE CHARTER AND THE
DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY

Abstract

The International Charter Space and Major Disasters was launched on 20 October 2000 to implement some of the recommendations from the UNISPACE+3 Conference held in Vienna, Austria, in the year 1999. The aim of the Charter is to contribute to disaster response efforts through the provision of timely and reliable space-based information free of charge to those institutions which are in charge of disaster response efforts. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) was invited to become a Cooperating Body to the International Charter in 2003 and since then, it has been bridging the gap between the International Charter and disaster management agencies worldwide. In 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations launched UN-SPIDER as a programme under UNOOSA with the mandate to serve as a gateway to space-based information for disaster management, to bridge the space and the disaster management communities, and to carry out capacity building and institutional strengthening efforts focusing on developing countries. Over the years, UN-SPIDER has been conducting efforts to raise awareness about the International Charter in the conferences that the programme organises annually, as well as during technical advisory and institutional strengthening missions that the programme conducts to developing countries. In addition, UNOOSA and its UN-SPIDER programme have elevated requests for the activation of the Charter on nearly 100 occasions, when sudden-onset disasters have struck developing countries in Africa, Asia, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, to contribute to the implementation of the Universal Access policy of the International Charter, UNOOSA and its UN-SPIDER programme have worked with national civil protection agencies in several countries in these regions to engage them as Authorised Users of the International Charter. More recently, through its UN-SPIDER programme, UNOOSA and the International Charter have joined forces to conduct training activities for project managers in Asia and in Europe. The presentation will provide information on the activities conducted by UNOOSA as a Cooperating Body to the International Charter and reflect on the lessons learned over the years regarding such activities.