



## REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON THE USE OF SPACE TECHNOLOGY FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Earth observation satellites provide important and unique solutions in all disaster management areas: disaster mitigation, disaster preparedness, disaster relief and also disaster rehabilitation. Such solutions are already an integral part of disaster management activities in many developed and even developing countries.

The **United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs**, within the framework of its Programme on Space Applications, will hold between 2000 – 2003 a total of 5 **Regional Workshops on the Use of Space Technology for Disaster Management**, bringing together space agencies and users from various institutions that have already developed space technology-based solutions and those responsible for dealing with disaster management and space technology in developing countries.

These Regional Workshops are an element of capacity building modules whose final objective is to incorporate the use of space technologies in a sustainable manner into operational disaster management programmes around the world. In addition to the workshops, the modules being developed include a training component, pilot projects and a presentation of results to high-level disaster managers and decision-makers from national and international institutions.

These workshops will increase the awareness of the potential benefits of using space-based technologies; will provide a forum in which needs which are specific to the region and institutional settings can be identified; will enable the consolidation of networking among national and regional agencies and the definition of possible partnerships; and most importantly will develop a regional plan-of-action that will lead to pilot projects that incorporate and refine the use of space technologies for disaster management.

The first of the five workshops was held in La Serena, Chile, from 13 to 17 November 2000, for the benefit of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. More than 200 participants attended, various partnerships were formed and pilot projects are presently being defined for future implementation.

The following Regional Workshops will follow the Chilean Workshop: Africa (2002), Asia and the Pacific (2002), Western and Central Asia (2003) and Central and Eastern Europe (2003).

The objectives of the workshops are:

- (a) To increase the awareness of managers and decision makers involved in disaster management of the potential benefits and the cost-effectiveness of using space technologies;
- (b) To determine the types of information and communications needed in managing specific disasters and the extent to which they could be met by space technologies;
- (c) To develop a regional plan of action that would lead in the near future to one or more pilot projects that incorporate and test the use of space tools in disaster management.

It is expected that, as a result of the workshops, action will be taken in the short term that will lead to the launching of pilot projects in which interested national institutions responsible for disaster management would incorporate the use of space technologies. The pilot projects would be designed and carried out through international cooperation and would be aimed at producing synergy among regional initiatives.

These workshops are being promoted by the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs and is an initiative which is being coordinated with and is an integral part of the work plan of the Action Team established by the **United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space** to utilise space technology in support of disaster management.

The next two workshops (Africa and Asia and the Pacific) will have the co-sponsorship of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS).

If you provide space-technology based solutions to disaster management or if you are responsible for the implementation of disaster management activities your participation in the workshop is very important. For more information on how you can participate and/or contribute contact the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs.



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