



SEPTEMBER 2007

SPACE BASED SOLUTIONS FOR EARLY WARNING, CRISIS RESPONSE, SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY, VULNERABILITY REDUCTION AND LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING FOR UN AGENCIES AND MEMBER STATES

## Recovery and development in Timor-Leste

Following a series of violent protests in Dili, Timor-Leste, during May-August 2006, the UNDP country office requested UNOSAT to support field assessments of the



occurred damage. For this task, UNOSAT used very high resolution satellite imagery to compare in detail the situation before, during and after the protests. Significant damage to infrastructure, including burned houses and schools, were identified in the imagery. UNOSAT included the image analysis results into a Geographic Information System (GIS) for further studies and mapping. A total of 32 maps were produced. The results from this assessment are used to plan reconstruction and longer term development activities in support to the government of Timor-Leste. The technical method used for this assessment clearly proves the usability of detailed satellite imagery for assessing damage due to conflicts in an urban setting. UNOSAT has implemented similar assessments for other cases, for example during the Middle East crisis in 2006.

*Image source: DigitalGlobe, Eurimage 2006*

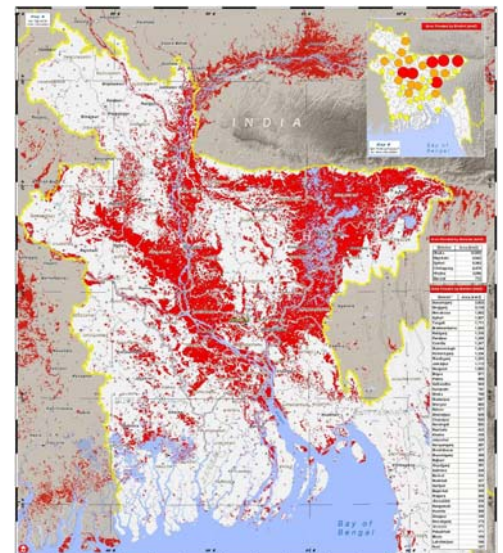
## Humanitarian rapid mapping support, August 2007

Four major natural disasters and two ongoing complex emergencies covering several countries were supported by UNOSAT last month. Rapid mapping products were distributed for large scale flooding in Asia:

- Bangladesh
- China
- India
- South Asia (rainfall estimates)

Hurricane Dean strongly affected countries in Central America and the Caribbean and UNOSAT also supported the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams responding to this disaster. Maps were produced for

- Belize, and
- Guadeloupe



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An 8.0 magnitude earthquake struck Peru on 15 August. The international community responded with search and rescue teams and relief items in support to the government's coordination and response. UNOSAT produced and facilitated maps to the early responders, including UNDAC team and other actors.

A fire map was produced in support to the UN operation in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo.

In support to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and OCHA, UNOSAT also produced radio coverage maps for Lebanon in the context of the emergency operation and optimal installation of VHF antennas.

*Map source: UNOSAT*

## Future satellite communications in emergencies

Under the auspices of the new Joint Inter-Agency Unit (set up together by UNITAR/UNOSAT, the ISDR Secretariat and other partners as a follow up to the ISDR Global Platform meeting of June this year), UNOSAT and ESOA organized in Paris on 3 September 2007 a first technical information workshop of half a day. The event is designed to raise awareness on the work of the UN in emergency telecommunications and other

non-emergency fields such as early recovery and capacity development, and to discuss the potential for the international community of satellite based telecommunications.



*The Chairman of ESOA Mr. Protopapas (center), with A. Retiere and F. Garvizu Rios of UNOSAT during a recent visit to UNOSAT Computing Centre at CERN*

ESOA is the European Satellite Operators' Association, formed in 2002, to provide the space telecommunications community with an interface with key international organizations, including the European Commission, Parliament, Council and the European Space Agency as well as other organizations. ESOA has 10 Members and is governed by a Board of Directors with a Secretariat based in Brussels. Mr. Protopapas of Greece is the current Chairman of ESOA.

The understanding of the relevance of satellite communication in international emergency response and development activities is still rather basic in both the UN and the satellite community. For this reason UNOSAT and ESOA are undertaking to organise a series of technical workshops to discuss and clarify the various aspects and user requirements for satcoms. Two types of workshops are envisaged: a first type aimed at the satellite community (in which satellite operators can learn more about the UN system and the emergency management cycle), and a second type aimed at the UN



*From left, Mr. Gonzalez-Nunez, Vice-Chair of ESOA, Mr. Protopapas, Ms. Holla, the Secretary-General of ESOA, discussing with E. Bjorgo of UNOSAT*

community (in which UN staff can be made aware of the potential of satcoms in relation to their work). The first workshop will take place in Paris on 3 September 2007.

UNOSAT has entered this collaboration with ESOA based on the very positive experience of working with Telecoms Sans Frontieres (TSF). TSF and UNOSAT are linked by a strategic partnership that may benefit from the outcome of the additional collaboration with ESOA members. *Photo courtesy: UNOSAT*

## Civil society and outer space forum Vienna 2007

Where do we stand on using outer space for peaceful purposes? This important topic, recurring in the debates of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space (COPUOS), will be main agenda item of the forthcoming "Civil Society and Outer Space Forum 2007". The event is organized by the Vienna CONGO office (Conference of Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations) will be held 8 - 9 October 2007 at UN/VIC, Vienna. The Forum will be organized by CONGO Vienna in cooperation with the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI) and a number of UN entities including the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). The Forum, which will last two full days, will be comprised of three chaired sessions, with a keynote speaker and panel of experts, to which UNOSAT has been invited to provide its contribution. The presentation by the keynote speakers and the statements by the panelists will be followed in each instance by an extensive Q & A session. The fourth and final session will focus on the findings and recommendations of the Forum. For more info and to register, please see [www.ngocongo.org](http://www.ngocongo.org)



## Group on Earth Observations (GEO)

The intergovernmental *Group on Earth Observations* (GEO) is a global effort to build a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) over the next 10 years whose aim is to build upon existing national, regional, and international systems to provide comprehensive, coordinated earth observations from thousands of instruments worldwide, transforming the data they collect into vital information for society at large.

The GEO was formally established at the Third Earth Observation Summit in February 2005 to carry out the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. From 2003 to 2005, GEO had an ad-hoc structure established at the First Earth Observation Summit in July 2003 and in charge of developing the draft GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan.



GEO consists of a Plenary, an Executive Committee, a Secretariat, and committees and working groups. GEO meets in plenary at least annually at the senior-official level, and periodically at the Ministerial level. Members are countries participating in the GEO strategy, while numerous international organisations and programmes including UNOSAT are part of GEO as "participating organisations". In May 2005 a GEO Secretariat was formally established in Geneva, hosted in the WMO building. Its current Director is José Achache, a world renowned expert formerly with ESA, who assumed leadership in September 2005 as first GEO Secretariat Director.



UNOSAT has been following GEO since its very inception contributing intellectually and politically to the design phase of the GEOSS strategy as we know it. UNOSAT shares with GEO the vision of earth observation at the service of better informed decision making in some of the most vital areas of social and economic life on our planet. In particular, UNOSAT, as the centre of excellence for earth observation in the UN system, is supportive of the GEO drive to harness regional and international efforts in the area of earth observations to reach a situation where access to information and its societal benefits will be unrestricted and above all easier than today.

GEO will hold its fourth ministerial summit in South Africa in November 2007. For more information on the Summit and the work of GEO, visit [www.earthobservations.org](http://www.earthobservations.org)