



JUNE 2008

UNOSAT IS A PEOPLE-CENTRED PROGRAMME INTEGRATING SATELLITE SOLUTIONS FOR HUMAN SECURITY, PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS.

## Space Charter and UNOSAT increase their collaboration

At its Board meeting in March 2008, the International Charter Space and Major Disasters decided to allow UNOSAT the ability to submit requests for activation on behalf of UN users directly to the Charter. Thus, UNOSAT will be able to operate even more swiftly generating additional tangible benefits for UN organisations engaged in humanitarian relief and emergency response.

This decision is illustrated in a letter from the Board of the Charter stating that "UNOSAT has emerged as an important contributor in the activation and access of the Charter within the UN system (...) by facilitating almost all the submissions thus far (...), interfacing with the various functional units of the Charter, furnishing PM services for most of the UN activations, generating excellent value added products, and ensuring the delivery of these in the field (...)".



This important recognition by the Board of the Charter comes at a time when UNOSAT's consolidation process is bearing positive results. Further, it is a confirmation of our expectations that UNOSAT be considered by UN and non-UN entities as the centre of excellence for operational satellite applications capable of supporting the entire UN family.

In its letter, the Satellite Operations Board of the Charter expresses the view that "UNOSAT's experience working with the Charter and its technical capabilities needed to be acknowledged and recognised in the framework of our existing UN relationships". This decision is also based on the complementary roles of UNOSAT for operational satellite applications and of the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs, whose role of Cooperating Body to the Charter is equally recognised by the Board. So far the Charter has had a cooperating body agreement with UN OOSA for promotion and information activities and for allowing UN users to submit requests for Charter activations in case of major disasters. The new arrangement grants UNOSAT the capability to act as gateway for submitting requests coming from humanitarian users of the United Nations system, which UNOSAT has been facilitating since 2003.

## Humanitarian rapid mapping support, June 2008

The Rapid Mapping team continued its support to sister agencies and government offices working on the cyclone Nargis, Myanmar, emergency relief operations. At headquarters, the Flash Appeal for Myanmar made extensive use of satellite maps. Additionally, OCHA used results from our analyses as baseline data for organizing the appeal. The Early recovery efforts are now gaining momentum and are utilizing damage assessment analysis and maps. In the framework of the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER), a UNOSAT team member is currently in Myanmar to coordinate and define exact needs in terms of satellite imagery with local and national authorities, MIMU, and UN agencies involved in Nargis early recovery and reconstruction operations, such as the Ministry of Forestry, MIMU and UN Country Team among others.



UNOSAT

UNITAR

Palais des Nations

CH-1211 Geneva

Switzerland

Telephones:

+41 22 767 4020  
(Operations)

+41 22 917 8650  
(External relations)

Fax: +41 22 917 8062

E-mail: [info@unosat.org](mailto:info@unosat.org)

Web: [www.unosat.org](http://www.unosat.org)

**24/7 hotline:**

**+41 76 487 4998**



The earthquake that hit Sichuan, China, on 12 May killed close to 70,000 people and left over five million people homeless. UNOSAT provided satellite mapping support in relation to the quake lakes that formed due to landslides that blocked natural river flows. These quake lakes presented a significant threat to the communities downstream causing Chinese authorities to evacuate several towns. Although clouds presented a problem for detailed monitoring in this highly mountainous area, the daily imaging capacity of the FORMOSAT-2 satellite provided good information on the situation of the quake lakes. UNOSAT provided several maps that demonstrated the progression of the situation, for example an increase of water in quake lakes and effects of the draining of lakes on nearby towns. Maps and information were shared with the Chinese Space Charter Project Manager to complement the satellite analyses conducted by the National Disaster Reduction Centre of China.

- [Myanmar](#) cyclone Nargis
- [China](#) earthquake in Sichuan



Photos: Reuters, Jason Lee