

Geo-information for Disaster Management



The Fifth International Symposium on Geo-information for Disaster Management (Gi4DM) was jointly held by the ICA Working Group on 'Cartography in Early Warning and Crisis Management' (CEW&CM) and the Ad-hoc Committee on 'Risk and Disaster Management' in Prague, Czech Republic, from 19th to 22nd January 2009. The Symposium was supported by ISPRS, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), International Society for Digital Earth (ISDE), the European Commission (JRC), OGC and UNESCO.

Programme

The symposium concentrated as usual on aspects of crucial importance for risk and disaster management, such as geo-information technologies and infrastructures for early warning and emergency response. The four-day symposium included several keynotes, oral and poster sessions, and sponsor presentations, and was attended by 145 participants from 34 countries representing all six continents. Several presentations related directly to applications developed for specific countries in South Asia, South America and Europe, discussing data availability, collection of information from citizens, regional damage and the help provided by international and national geo-organisations. Other papers concentrated on open services and technology allowing relatively fast employment. A number focused on user interfaces, usability investigations, types of visualisation appropriate for work under stress etc.

Ad-hoc Committee

The symposium hosted two important events: a working meeting of the Ad-hoc Committee on 'Risk and Disaster Management' and a roundtable. The ultimate goal of the Ad-hoc Committee is the 'JB GIS Common Communiqué on Disaster Management' to inform decision-makers of consequences arising from not being appropriately prepared in disasters, and at the same time show examples of best practice identified by JB GIS members. A call for examples of best-practice was released shortly thereafter (see website).

Roundtable

Roundtable discussions recognised increasing improvements in technology and its availability, allowing access to various types of data via open standards and the web. New virtual environments were emerging; advanced technologies, such as serious gaming, are now under consideration for simulation and training. Contacts with end users are improving. Many issues, however, remain to be addressed. These include building SDIs at national and international level, involving Central and East Europe, Asia, Central and South America countries in standardisation initiatives, increasing attention on aspects of modelling (3D/4D) and particularly on the quality of models (not only of data), further development and utilisation of sensor web, building semantic web/ontology (communication between different domains), developing user-oriented applications, considering the context of task and surrounding environment etc.

The next Gi4DM symposium is to be organised by the Ad-Hoc Committee on 'Risk and Disaster Management' and ISPRS, WG VIII/2 'Hazards, Disasters and Public Health' in January/February 2009 in Torino, Italy.