

Gi4DM 2010



While geomatics technologies are capable of supporting management and recovery in the aftermath of both manmade and natural disasters, disaster management also poses big challenges in all areas of the geo-information cycle. These were discussed at the sixth International Symposium on Geo-information for Disaster Management (Gi4DM) that took place in February in Turin, bringing together researchers, developers, data providers and users from all over the world. This Gi4DM Conference was jointly organised by the Federazione Italiana delle Associazioni Scientifiche per le Informazioni Territoriali e Ambientali (ASITA) and the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS). ASITA is the Italian Federation of Scientific Associations devoted to environmental information.

Conference

The conference comprised five plenary sessions, the first being the official Opening and the others designated The International Organization Approach to Disaster Management; GIS Solutions for Emergency Response and Preparedness; New Perspectives in Satellite and Aerial Data Acquisition; and Public and Private Programmes in the Field of Emergency Response. Fifteen Parallel Oral Sessions addressed Climate Change; Coastal and Water Analysis; Data Acquisition for Early Impact Stage; Drought Early Warning Systems; Early Warning and Impact Tools for Floods; Earthquake Early Impact; Fires and Technological Hazards Global SDI; Landslide Monitoring and Data Processing; Monitoring and Processing; Thematic and National SDI; Urban Analysis; User Requirements; and Web/GIS Applications. Two Poster Sessions took as their subject Emergency Preparedness and Response and Early Warning and Impact Systems respectively.

SDI and Collaboration

Conference attendees came from more than thirty countries worldwide, and broad discussion centred on early warning and impact systems, the role of Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) and a collaborative approach to disaster management. In particular, representatives of the main operational UN Agencies (WFP and UNOOSA) explained their approach to emergencies, presenting different projects relating to coordinated intervention, namely UN-Spider, SpaceAid and GMES/Safer.

Very successful was the cartographic session about maps created by the international community for the earthquake that occurred in Haiti on January 12th, 2010. More than fifty different maps produced by several Institutions were displayed, and most interesting considerations were examined concerning quality and effectiveness (from the operational point of view) of these mapping products.

Technical Matters

Technical discussions covered the following topics:

- necessity for standardising procedures both in terms of data description and reliability of proposed methodologies; UN agencies consider a global approach a must

- lack of automated methodologies for extraction of value-added information; proposal for a comprehensive and complete dataset to be delivered free of charge to take into account various reliable ground-truth tested automatic procedures

- lack of coordination during emergencies, causing multiple and overlapping data acquisition, redundant analysis and misleading information delivered to organisations concerned

- essential data sharing whenever possible, especially when participatory and voluntary effort is needed

- more effective collaboration between international organisations, national research centres and governmental bodies to be encouraged in all phases of disaster management.

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