

Scope and Activities of the International Working Group on Satellite based Emergency Mapping - IWG-SEM

S. Voigt^{a,*}, T. Schneiderhan^a

^a German Aerospace Center (DLR), Earth Observation Center, German Remote Sensing Data Center, Geo-Risks and Civil Security, Oberpfaffenhofen, 82234 Weßling, Germany – Stefan.Voigt@dlr.de

THEME: Natural disasters monitoring, warning and response (DISA). Special session on international initiatives for EO-based Disaster management

KEY WORDS: Satellite, Emergency Mapping, Cooperation, International

ABSTRACT:

In major disaster incidents, satellite based mapping can provide decisive information to improve situational awareness for emergency responders. However, in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake in 2010, within three weeks, more than 380 mapping products, with a huge diversity in content and visualisation were generated by the global community. This made it extremely difficult - if not impossible - for the relief workers and decision makers to choose the most suitable and best quality maps for supporting their work. The need for closer global cooperation of the satellite-based emergency mapping community became evident. As a result of this, the International Working Group on Satellite based Emergency Mapping (IWG-SEM) was founded in April 2012, as a voluntary group of involved organizations, working to improve the exchange of meta information and possibly to harmonise emergency mapping contents as well as formats in the future. The vision of IWG-SEM is “Supporting disaster response by improving international cooperation in satellite based emergency mapping”. Its working program was defined by the following mission statement: “Establish best practices between operational satellite-based emergency mapping programs, stimulate communication and collaboration, support the definition of emergency mapping guidelines, strengthen the sharing of expertise and capacities and review relevant technical standards as well as protocols. Work with the appropriate organizations to define professional standards for emergency mapping”. The IWG-SEM has a yearly rotating chair who takes care of the agenda. During its regular spring and autumn meetings organized by one of the members, the group reviews what has been achieved and defines the next steps of its work. Furthermore, monthly teleconferences are held for discussions on particular matters of satellite based emergency mapping at global scale. In this paper, scope, current work and the first achievements of the group are discussed. Furthermore, the first edition of the “Emergency Mapping Guidelines” is presented. The aim of the guidelines is to help supporting an effective exchange and harmonization of emergency mapping efforts, leading to improved possibilities for cooperation amongst involved Emergency Mapping Organizations globally.

* Corresponding author. This is useful to know for communication with the appropriate person in cases with more than one author.