ECOSOC 2013 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION

Geneva, July 2013

INNOVATION FAIR

UNITAR participation

This brief is based on the guidelines provided by the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination of DESA (in particular the *background note* on the Ministerial Review segment).

Areas selected by UNITAR and suggested activities to be showcased:

1. **Promoting food and water security** - Show case: UNOSAT water resources mapping using satellite remote sensing;
2. **Social media: An innovative tool for advocacy** - Show case: the use of crowd sourcing and collaborative mapping in emergency response and disaster reduction.

Criteria

The initiatives above were selected among the applied technology and innovation work developed at UNITAR with technology partners because they meet the following criteria suggested by DESA:

1. Utilize science, technology and culture to contribute to sustainable development;
2. Demonstrate strong links between STI and Culture and the global development agenda;
3. Encourage sustainability and replicability;
4. Promote women's inclusion; and
5. Promote partnerships and foster synergetic activities with other stakeholders.

Application 1

UNOSAT water resources mapping using satellite remote sensing

Description: UNOSAT is implementing in Chad an innovative project combining technology, innovation, satellite mapping and academic knowledge. Since 2012 UNOSAT and the Swiss Development Cooperation are engaged in implementing an innovative water management and capacity development activity in Chad with the ambitious aim of combining technology and learning to strengthen the national capacity in the area of water resources discovery, mapping and management. The project uses extensive radar and optical satellite technology to map water reserves that are not visible on the surface and contributes to mapping the entire water resources of the country for more efficient water management. Part of the project is designed to transfer the knowledge and techniques to national experts and also help the local University to develop academic curricula that include this innovative approach.

Application 2

Crowd sourcing and collaborative mapping in emergency response and disaster reduction

Description: UNOSAT produces satellite derived mapping used by UN agencies for humanitarian relief, human rights and development planning. A set of highly innovative tools and solutions have been developed to allow citizen participation in these activities. By using new web-supported solutions, on-line volunteers can participate actively in the work of the UN by carrying out simple tasks that are then ingested in larger work processes under the control of technical experts at UNOSAT. In one example, citizens are collaborating with UN experts in the identification of deforestation in Brazil via a project called ForestWatchers (http://forestwatchers.net/). In another example, the ASIGN crowd-source app, developed by UNOSAT and AnsuR Technologies of Norway together with other partners, allows citizens worldwide to automatically upload and share geo-referenced pictures, videos, voice and other data (http://www.unitar.org/unosat-uses-crowd-source-app-involve-locals-monitoring-floods-bangkok) . The application works on Android and iOS operating systems and has been tested by UNOSAT in operational contexts during natural disaster response in Haiti, Thailand, Pakistan, Nigeria and other countries, in combination with UNOSAT rapid mapping. The ASIGN solution won the 2012 ESA App Challenge for the best application idea for the use of mobile phones for key areas (land, marine environment, atmosphere, climate change, and emergency management).

Contacts

Direction and policy coordination: Francesco Pisano, Director of Research, technology Applications and Knowledge Systems. Mail: francesco.pisano@unitar.org Tel +41 22 917 8720

Management and execution: Einar Bjorgo, UNOSAT Manager. Mail Einar.bjorgo@unitar.org Tel +41 78 7451620

Event management in July: Olivier Van Damme, Programme Officer, Mail olivier.vandamme@unitar.org Tel +41 22 767 2324