

**GDACS Stakeholders Consultation
Geneva, Switzerland
24/25 June 2008**

Chairman Summary

The GDACS Stakeholders Consultation was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 24/25 June 2008. 22 Participants from 16 countries and organisations attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached.

The purpose of the meeting was to take stock of latest development of GDACS, to discuss the establishment of a GDACS Steering Committee and identify next steps, in particular priority funding of critical GDACS Services.

The meeting included the following presentations

- Results of the GDACS on-line survey conducted by the EC/JRC
- Results of the analysis of the use of the Virtual OSOCC during the Nargis cyclone in Myanmar and the Sichuan province earthquake in China
- Review and introduction of existing and potentially new GDACS Services
 - o Asgard, EC/JRC (automatic alert notifications, automatic impact analysis, and GDACS portal)
 - o UNOSAT (satellite images and maps)
 - o Virtual OSOCC, OCHA (disaster information exchange)
 - o Reliefweb, OCHA (disaster reports and maps)
 - o UN-HABITAT (shelter related information in disasters)
 - o OCHA's Environment Emergencies Section, EES (monitoring of environmental secondary risks)
 - o OCHA's Logistics Support Unit, LSU (information exchange of logistics during emergencies)
 - o MapAction (maps with field related operational information)
 - o Dartmouth Flood Observatory (flood warning and analysis)
 - o ARC (NGO) (disaster and relief interpreting and translations)

The discussion during the meeting resulted in the following

Conclusions and Recommendations

It was agreed that GDACS has become a vital tool in the early stages of major natural disaster response, and efforts should be made to establish a mechanism for sustainable support of the system.

GDACS Steering Committee

- The meeting agreed on the establishment of a GDACS Steering Committee according to the attached draft Terms of Reference (TOR)
- The following countries/organisations, in attendance or represented at this meeting, indicated an interest to participate in the GDACS Steering Committee
 - o ECHO
 - o EC/MIC
 - o Tunisia
 - o Sweden
 - o EC/JRC
 - o UNOSAT
 - o OCHA

- The GDACS Secretariat was requested to identify additional Steering Committee members also from other regions and consolidate the Steering Committee by October 2008. The list of interested countries/organisations should be made available on the Virtual OSOCC.
- A formal proposition and announcement of the GDACS Steering Committee should be made by the GDACS Secretariat upon its creation.
- Upon creation of the Steering Committee, its first meeting should be organised in connection with the next GDACS Stakeholders meeting in the first half of 2009. The GDACS Secretariat (OCHA) was requested to inform about date and venue of the meeting.
- Tunisia indicated an interest to host the next Steering Committee/Stakeholders meeting in Tunisia.

GDACS Funding

- Immediate implications of the cease of GDACS funding (in September 2008) will be the discontinuation of automatic alerts and impact analysis by the EC/JRC. Furthermore, any further development and synchronisation of GDACS services will end.
- Therefore, the meeting agreed that an urgent short-term solution for funding of the EC Joint Research Centre has to be found to ensure continuation of automatic alerts and automatic impact analysis. The funding of the EC/JRC should be arranged on a bilateral basis by interested donors and ensure continued funding until a sustainable funding mechanism for GDACS has been established. EC/JRC with support from the GDACS Secretariat should contact possible donors directly in this regard.

Promotion of GDACS

- It was emphasised that GDACS promotion and awareness-building should be increased. It was recommended to use existing disaster response networks such as INSARAG, UNDAC, etc. for this purpose.
- The GDACS Secretariat was requested to prepare a short descriptive note on GDACS and its current situation for distribution among actual users and potential donors, as required.

Cooperation among GDACS Service Providers

- The meeting participants recommended OCHA and UNOSAT to take further steps to their existing collaboration framework agreement, to ensure satellite mapping in the context of UN humanitarian principles. It was recommended to review possible combination of respective capacities in support of GDACS, possibly through a joint UNOSAT-OCHA entity following the model of the UNEP-OCHA Joint Unit.
- The introduction of new GDACS Service Providers was appreciated by the meeting and their formal integration into the System should be pursued to improve overall performance of GDACS.

Specific issues for improvement of GDACS Services

- A number of issues were identified or confirmed during the meeting, to improve GDACS Services and its usability. These include continued funding, coordination between Service Providers, need for standardised procedures and terminology, integration of data, user-friendliness, etc
- It was recommended that the GDACS Steering Committee should address these issues upon its creation. GDACS Service Providers were requested to consolidate possible solutions and identify a coordinated approach to resolve these. The GDACS Secretariat should coordinate the process.