

# GDACS Stakeholders Meeting

Geneva, 28-29 April 2009

Chairman's Summary

The GDACS Stakeholders Consultation was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 28/29 April 2009. 38 Participants from 15 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 follow-up on recommendations of previous meetings, including the establishment of a GDACS Steering Committee and identify next steps, in particular priority funding of critical GDACS Services.

The meeting included the following activities

- Update on latest developments of GDACS alert and impact estimations presented by the European Commission Joint Research Centre
- Update on latest developments of the Virtual OSOCC presented by OCHA
- Update on latest developments of GDACS map and satellite image services presented by UNOSAT
- Update on latest developments of ReliefWeb presented by OCHA-Reliefweb
- Discussion of the discussion paper with recommendations from previous GDACS meetings
- Working groups were held on the following topics:
  - Impact estimations: the power of datasets and scientific collaboration (facilitated by EC/JRC)
  - Maps and satellite images – coordinating an underutilised resource (facilitated by UNOSAT)
  - Exchange for operational disaster information - joint effort towards better decisions (facilitated by OCHA)

The discussion during the meeting resulted in the following

## Conclusions and Recommendations

It was confirmed that GDACS services are to focus on information requirements of disaster managers and first responders in the early phase after major sudden-onset natural, technological and environmental disasters. Therefore, new information services that might be synchronised with GDACS should be selected according to these criteria in order to avoid possible overflow with unrelated information.

**Action:** GDACS Steering Committee and GDACS Secretariat

It was recognised that the GLIDE number is a useful mechanism to synchronise disaster related information systems. However it was recommended to review the GLIDE number concept to allow for more scalability and a more robust procedure for the creation of GLIDE numbers by GDACS information providers.

**Action:** ReliefWeb and EC/JRC

The meeting considered it a priority to identify a sustainable funding mechanism for GDACS services, in particular for EC/JRC alert and impact estimations. The EC/JRC alert and impact estimations are being temporarily funded by the EC/MIC (“bridge-funding”) until a sustainable funding mechanism has been established.

**Action:** EC/JRC to provide cost/work plan to GDACS stakeholders

There is a need to improve GDACS alerting and forecasting services in particular to floods, storms and volcanoes as well as improvements to the interface of the GDACS website. An overview of identified issues is attached as Annex 1.

**Action:** EC/JRC to compile and prioritise an overview of recommended improvements and present it to the GDACS Steering Committee for review.

There is a need to establish a coordination mechanism for the provision and use of maps and satellite images through GDACS. It was recommended to create a technical GDACS working group to develop procedures for the coordination of maps and satellite images from various providers and national mapping agencies. This effort should also link to ongoing activities related to the collection and delivery of operational geospatial information and data relevant to GDACS.

**Action:** TOR for the working group to be prepared by UNOSAT and submitted to the Steering Committee and interested participants to be identified.

A set of manuals for the use of various GDACS components shall be developed and disseminated to GDACS stakeholders.

**Action:** GDACS service providers

A need was identified to develop standards for information exchange among disaster managers in affected and responding countries and organisations. This would include defining counterparts in countries and organisations and the development of a subscription-policy for GDACS services. It was recommended to establish a technical working group to address these issues.

**Action:** GDACS Secretariat to draft TOR for the working group to be presented to the Steering Committee

A more systematic training and awareness building of GDACS tools and services to be introduced, preferably using related training events such as UNDAC, INSARAG, UNCMCoord or EC/MIC courses and others. Standardised curricula, background material and user-manuals should be developed to facilitate this process and ensure a coherent presentation and utilisation. An overview of suitable training events to be developed.

**Action:** GDACS Secretariat to coordinate this process with GDACS service providers

It was emphasised that the synchronisation of GDACS services, in particular the Virtual OSOCC and map/satellite image provision needs to be closely coordinated with field based information systems such as UNDAC/OSOCC.

**Action:** GDACS Secretariat to coordinate

It was agreed to pursue the conduct of virtual GDACS simulation exercises in connection with related exercises organised by countries, organisations or regional networks (e.g. INSARAG, EU, NATO, ASEAN, etc.). An overview of suitable scheduled events to be compiled and circulated among GDACS Stakeholders.

**Action:** GDACS Secretariat

A need to clarify the different tools and services (UNDAC OSOCC, GDACS, FACT, MIC-Coordinators, HIC, etc.) and the sequence of their activation, procedures and their interrelationship in disasters was identified. The meeting strongly recommends to develop an overview of related tools and services managed by OCHA and other organisations (IFRC, EU, NATO, national systems, etc.)

**Action:** GDACS Secretariat in cooperation with relevant organisations

With regard to GDACS meetings and working groups, it was recommended to conduct these events jointly in order to minimise travel costs. Working groups are to exchange information through e-mail

or on the Virtual OSOCC and consolidate their results at a meeting on the day prior to GDACS stakeholders meetings, if needed. The working group results should be subsequently presented at the stakeholders meeting. The GDACS Steering Committee meeting to be held after stakeholders meetings at the same venue to agree on issues raised at the stakeholders meeting and to define strategic directions.

**Action:** GDACS Secretariat to inform participants of working groups, Steering Committee and GDACS stakeholders and schedule meetings accordingly.