



Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System

**Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS)
Geneva, Switzerland, 6 Feb 2018**

Summary Report

The annual meeting of the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) was held in connection with the HNPW 2018 in Geneva Switzerland on 6 February 2018. The meeting was attended by 39 participants from 22 countries and organisations. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Artavazd Davtyan from the Armenian Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations.

The presentations made at the meeting and the GDACS survey results can be downloaded from the event website at www.leading-edge-programme.org/gdacs.

GDACS survey results

The meeting began with a presentation of the GDACS survey results, which was carried out prior to the event with the aim to analyze the perception of GDACS among its stakeholders, and to collect recommendations for improvement of GDACS services, messaging, and awareness raising. The survey revealed that the understanding of GDACS depends very much on the services that stakeholders mostly use, in particular alerts and impact estimations (to obtain early disaster information), and the Virtual OSOCC (to coordinate response and preparedness activities such as simulation exercises). The purpose and availability of the Satellite Mapping Coordination System (SMCS) and the Science Portal were less known to those who participated in the survey.

The conclusions drawn from the survey are that GDACS is appreciated by its users, but more needs to be done to introduce the purpose of GDACS services to relevant stakeholders. It should be considered to develop targeted messaging in order to reach the different user groups (i.e. exercise organizers, disaster managers, satellite mapping, and scientists).

Presentations and updates of latest developments:

- The revised GDACS website has been launched (www.gdacs.org), which is designed to facilitate access to GDACS tools and services. Mostly of the changes are related to the Alert session, aimed to improve the understanding of the impact information related to the events. The other sessions (VOSOCC and SMCS) will be updated soon accordingly, to improve the sharing of data, products and services among the different GDACS portal's sections.
- EC/JRC presented the improved algorithm for earthquakes, based on Shakemaps instead of simple circles around the epicentre and including the Lack of Coping Capacity taken from INFORM (<http://www.inform-index.org/>). An update of GDACS alerting protocols has been provided, which have been revised to better manage uncertainty of alerts. The inclusion of multi risk indicators with advanced alert score is under development. The new alert score retains the green-orange-red color scheme, but foresees a scale to indicate whether e.g. an orange alert is more towards green or red, with the intent to provide the receiver with a





mechanism to interpret alert uncertainty. The GDACS community suggested that a proper detailed description should be also provided to improve the understanding of the alert level.

- OCHA provided an update on Virtual OSOCC (VO), informing that a Community of Practice of VO moderators has been established with the aim to exchange best practice and collect recommendations for improvement among those users who use specific VO services. This was considered necessary because not all VO moderators use the entire range of features of the tool, but rather require selected elements of the platform in their daily work (e.g. roster alerts, simulation exercises, training events and meetings, workspaces, and moderated disaster discussions). A dedicated VO Moderator workshop will be held at the HNPW on Tue, 6 Feb.
- UNOSAT made a presentation about latest developments of the Satellite Mapping Coordination System (SMCS), which contains a platform for Satellite Mapping Coordination, an overview of satellite mapping reports, live maps, and an on-line tutorial for the mapping coordination tool (<https://gdacs-smcs.unosat.org>).
- A presentation was made by EC/JRC, introducing the new GDACS tropical cyclone alerting methodology, which combines different data sources for wind, rainfall and surge into a comprehensive impact analysis. Once operational, the new information will be available through static and interactive maps on the GDACS website. The 2018 GDACS+ concept and its full spectrum of potential improvements was also introduced. The proposed improvements, referring to a multi-hazard approach (Floods, Forest Fires, Droughts and new sections on Meteorological information and Natech) was more than welcome by the GDACS stakeholders since these contribute to the Sendai Framework for DRR (Target G). Nevertheless, a piloting approach will be followed and when ready will be first presented to the users before an official release.
- A presentation by SARWeather introduced the latest developments of an on-demand and operational weather forecasting system that is already in use in a number of developing countries, and developed in cooperation with UNECA. The system is built around the WRF-Chem model and takes advantage of a number of open source components (e.g. WRF/WPS, Python, Linux), and is designed to be event driven, scalable and resilient. The system can produce short to medium term weather forecasts for any location on the globe, including ensemble and S2S forecasts. The output of the system can be integrated into decision support software through API and as such could complement the EC/JRC forecasting system.

Meeting recommendations and follow-up action

- **Awareness about GDACS services:** A summary of GDACS services and their relevance to stakeholders should be produced and disseminated accordingly. The information should also be made available and easily accessible on the GDASC website. Awareness raising about GDACS services, including training of respective stakeholders on how to use these components should be included in an overall communications strategy, which should be developed and implemented in the course of 2018.

It was further recommended to include, where possible, GDACS services in simulation





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exercises and training events, in order to raise awareness and introduce these to relevant actors.

- **Connectivity with other networks and partnerships:** In the course of 2018, GDACS should examine, which humanitarian networks and partnerships (that attended the HNPW 2018) share common interest, and develop a strategy for interaction or collaboration with them.

GDACS should also examine to provide an overall information about the official warnings issued by the international authorities (e.g., tsunami warning providers, tropical cyclone warning centres) more prominently in the site respect to what currently done. This is expected to facilitate Users in having a more comprehensive assessment of the ongoing events.

- **Feedback to GDACS website:** GDACS stakeholders are requested to provide feedback to the revised GDACS website directly to EC/JRC or to the GDACS Secretariat (OCHA). The feedback will be compiled and analyzed for possible further action in the course of 2018.
- **GDACS chairmanship:** It was agreed that the chairmanship be handed over from Armenia to EC/JRC at the annual GDACS meeting in 2019. With this, Armenia will have acted as GDACS Chair for five years (2014 - 2019). An annual or bi-annual rotation of the chairmanship should be considered as of 2019.

