



Press Release

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CNES at Understanding Risk 2018 conference organized by World Bank in Mexico

Tuesday 15 May at the Understanding Risk 2018 conference organized by the World Bank in Mexico, CNES and its Haitian partners organized a session on the Recovery Observatory (RO). Some 40 participants from the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Copernicus programme discussed the use of satellites for disaster risk management in Haiti. This workshop organized jointly by Haiti's CNIGS national geospatial information centre, DPC civil protection agency and CNES provided the opportunity to review the status of the RO project.

This project, initiated and led by CNES with a view to aiding Haiti's reconstruction, is collecting large amounts of satellite data to derive map products in support of recovery efforts after Hurricane Matthew, which left a trail of destruction across the southwest of Haiti in October 2016. CNES, working with numerous member agencies of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS)—ESA, DLR, ASI, NASA, NOAA and Copernicus—aims through this four-year project to build a shared vision between CEOS and international partners (World Bank, UNPD and EU) on a 'generic and replicable' RO that could be deployed in the event of major disasters to support reconstruction.

The RO is an extension of the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters, which delivers satellite imagery free of charge to aid emergency responders in the field. CNES is one of the founding members of the charter, which today counts 17 member space agencies. The charter is able to call on 30 or so optical and radar satellites, which can be tasked to acquire detailed imagery of disaster-hit areas in record time. It was activated at the beginning of October 2016 to help organize relief efforts for populations hit by Hurricane Matthew.

During the conference session, DPC formally announced its candidacy to be granted universal charter access so that it can trigger activations independently. CNES will be actively supporting this candidacy through training for DPC, Haiti's Authorized User, as well as for Charter Project Leaders at CNIGS.

Understanding Risk is an international event organized every two years by the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR). It attracts some 1,000 participants from around the globe working at various levels in the risk management chain, offering opportunities for stakeholders like CNES, CEOS member agencies and Haitian partners to network and share expertise, and new perspectives for the next Understanding Risk conference in 2020.

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