

# Press Release

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## International Charter on Space and Major Disasters 600<sup>th</sup> activation

Created in 1999 by CNES, ESA and CSA (Canadian Space Agency) and declared operational in 2000, the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters makes space assets available to emergency response teams in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. A unique example of successful international cooperation, it today combines and coordinates the Earth-observation expertise and resources of its 17 member space agencies. The charter aims to respond to requests from emergency management agencies in affected nations, local authorities, civil security agencies and the United Nations, for which it provides satellite imagery of disaster zones free of charge through priority tasking of more than 35 satellites to get information as quickly as possible to relief teams on the ground.

After the 40<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Charter's Steering Committee in Toulouse last October, CNES officially took over the charter's rotating chair on behalf of France for six months. During its term, CNES has focused on developing the Universal Access initiative launched the last time it was chair in 2012, designed to enable any nation in the world to activate the Charter. CNES and the Charter are currently working with the United Nations to develop this direct access, notably for African nations. Since last October, five African nations have successfully applied for Universal Access to the Charter and applications from Zimbabwe and South Africa are being processed.

On 19 March, the Charter was activated for the 600<sup>th</sup> time, in response to flash flooding and landslides caused by torrential rains in Indonesia. Three days earlier, it had been activated after Cyclone Idai swept through Mozambique and Eastern Zimbabwe. CNES is closely involved in the activation for Zimbabwe, asking France's SERTIT rapid mapping department to manage it and to generate damage maps for UNOOSA, UNDP and the Zimbabwe authorities. SERTIT is supplying its crucial expertise in processing imagery from the French SPOT and Pleiades satellites, whose agility and responsiveness spearheading the Charter need no confirmation.

See the new Charter website at <https://disasterscharter.org/fr/web/guest/home>

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