

**United Nations/Austria/European Space Agency Symposium on
Space Applications to Support the Plan of Implementation
of the World Summit on Sustainable Development**

**“Space systems: protecting and restoring water resources”
(Graz, Austria, 13-16 September 2005)**

REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSONS

“Low-cost space-based technology, data and information for addressing water challenges in developing countries”

Chairpersons: P. Saccon (Austria)

The objectives of this session included the identification of information requirements and availability of affordable space-based data. The session also aimed at identifying functional partnerships that would deliver quality information for decision-makers in real time and at low cost.

The following presentations were made during this session:

- Low cost remote sensing data for water resource management, by S. Vibulsresth, Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency, Thailand;
- Low cost telecommunications and electronic data transfer systems, by O. Koudelka, Joanneum Research, Austria;
- Low-cost mapping tools for managing water hazards at the community level: the case of developing countries, by A. Retiere, United Nations Organization Satellite (UNITAR/UNOSAT); and
- Low cost software for interpretation of satellite data, by L. Fusco, European Space Agency.

Recommendations/recommendations

Based on the above presentations and the discussions that followed the presentations, the chairperson and interested panel members and participants of the session made the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. There is a need to continuously discuss the potential and opportunity that low-cost space-based technology can offer to the international scientific community, especially in developing countries. For this reason, it is suggested that, if possible and compatible with themes of future symposia, a session on “Low-cost space-based technologies” be included as a traditional issues in all United Nations similar symposia.
2. Low-cost space-based technology MUST be made accessible not only for scientists and technicians but also to the end-users in order to ensure the sustainability of programs.

3. The scientific community is not only interested in low-cost but also in FREE of charge space-based technology data and software. The World Wide Web is full of interesting sites where it is possible to download space-based data, GIS data, software and educational materials for FREE or at low-cost. Unfortunately, this kind of information is not well organized and some times it is difficult to know what are the new web sites of this specific sector. For this reason, it is proposed to have a centralized web space called “The corner of free science”. The international scientific community could contribute to the collection of web links dealing with low-cost and free-of-charge space-based data.

4. In order to increase capacity-building and the operational use of space-base technology, it is suggested that major space agencies make available their older imagery and software/tools for free.