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Statement by Germany on

Agenda item 9: Space-system-based disaster management support

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

last year, natural disasters have again caused severe disruptions to the lives and health of affected people, often destroying their homes and livelihoods. Climate change raises the scale of such disasters and poses increasing challenges for sustainable development, the eradication of poverty, and the attainment of disaster-resilient societies.

Space technologies, and in particular remote sensing satellites, can help monitor the immediate effects of disasters and guide recovery efforts, as well as observe underlying disaster risks in order to help build resilient and future-oriented societies. Germany, often in cooperation with European or international partners, conducts a range of scientific and operational activities in the field of Earth observation that serve the purpose of disaster and risk management and humanitarian relief support. I would like to highlight some of these activities.

Germany continues to contribute to the International Charter 'Space and Major Disasters', which was activated for almost 50 disasters worldwide in 2021. The German Aerospace Center, DLR, supported these activations by providing more than 130 TerraSAR-X and TanDEM-X radar satellite images to the operations of the Charter and by supplying emergency on-call-officers and project managers for these activations. The data provided was used to support emergency response activities related to several flood disasters, tropical storms and volcanic eruptions experienced in 2021.

Last year, Germany itself was affected by a natural disaster when catastrophic flash-flood events hit parts of the country, especially in the Western part. The DLR Center for Satellite Based Crisis Information supported the disaster relief efforts and produced both air- and space-based image analyses of the events in order to assist the relief forces on the ground. The Center also runs a project on humanitarian technologies that supports aid and relief organizations such as the World Food Programme through space-based technologies in crisis situations.

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Germany remains committed to a multilateral approach in disaster and climate change management and strongly supports efforts to promote international collaboration in that regard.

Through the SPEAR project, a collaboration between UN-SPIDER and the University of Bonn, capacity-building activities have been conducted in 2021 that have included experts from a wide range of countries. As the containment of the COVID-19 pandemic restricted meetings and conferences in physical presence, the project has developed alternative digital formats for technical support and capacity building that substitute and supplement traditional formats with a high innovation potential for future cooperation. They have also allowed for broader participation and enhanced the exchange of ideas within the global expert community. For example, the UN-SPIDER Bonn International Conference in November 2021 brought together nearly 150 experts from more than 30 countries to discuss space-based solutions for disaster management, with a particular focus on the African continent. We hope that even as physical events will return, the inclusive and international character of these events will be maintained.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

thank you for your kind attention.