

Opening Remarks by UNITAR's Executive Director, Mr Nikhil Seth

Space Sustainability Forum 2024

High Level Conversation – Part 1

SPACE-BASED SERVICES AND THEIR IMPACT – Harnessing economic and social benefits

10 September 2024, 9h30 to 10h30

Thank you, Joanne Wilson, for the kind introduction.

Dear Doreen, Secretary-General of ITU,

Distinguished Members today's panel discussion and participants,

It is a great honor to address you today and to share insights about the work of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and its operational UN Satellite Center, UNOSAT. UNITAR's mission is to empower individuals and institutions through capacity building and knowledge.

Overview of UNITAR's Impact

UNITAR has a significant footprint, annually reaching over half a million people globally through our diverse capacity building programs. We have four offices and 32 affiliated offices worldwide. We cover all key areas of the UN's work, including peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights. Our collaborative approach and partnerships with governments, international organizations, business and civil society enhance our effectiveness and reach.

UNOSAT: Supporting Humanitarian Action and Security

UNOSAT is an integral part of UNITAR, providing satellite imagery analysis to support humanitarian action and sustainable development policies. Our 24/7 Emergency Mapping Service offers real-time analysis of satellite imagery to support conflicts, complex emergencies and in the aftermath of natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes. We are currently working on emergencies in Vietnam, Sudan, Chad, Bangladesh, Libya, Yemen, Pakistan, Cameroon and Guinea. Requests come from national governments, UN-OCHA and other UN agencies, IFRC notably.

UNOSAT also focuses on capacity building for LDCs and SIDS countries, helping them utilize geospatial information for humanitarian action, building climate and disaster resilience, and supporting sustainable development. A notable project, supported by NORAD, has been implemented in eight countries across Asia Pacific and Africa since 2021 to leverage the use of space-based applications in support of DRR policy and decision making.

Our success stories include capacity building in Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Bhutan and Bangladesh where cutting-edge knowledge transfer activities and technical solutions developed are already demonstrating transformative changes in bridging data science and policy gaps for improved climate adaptation, and land and ecosystem management.

Relevance of UNOSAT to panel discussion SPACE-BASED SERVICES AND THEIR IMPACT – Harnessing economic and social benefits

UNOSAT's expertise in satellite-based services directly aligns with today's discussion on harnessing space-based technologies for economic and social benefits. By providing critical geospatial data and real-time satellite imagery to support disaster response, humanitarian aid, and sustainable development, UNOSAT enables informed decision-making that drives economic resilience and social equity. Our efforts in building capacity within developing nations also empower these regions to harness satellite data for disaster preparedness, environmental monitoring, and infrastructure development, underscoring the transformative impact of space-based services globally.

Conclusion

Thank you for your attention and for your continued support of UNITAR and UNOSAT's vital work. We look forward to strengthening our collaboration to achieve our shared goals of peace, security, and sustainable development.