

United Nations, United States to hold workshop on global navigation satellite systems, 15 - 19 July

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Vienna -- Improving applications of the Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) will be the key topic of a five-day United Nations/United States workshop in Lusaka, Zambia. Representatives of governmental institutions and private industry from developed and developing countries from Africa and Western Asia are to be briefed on both practical and cost-effective space-based solutions, which are currently available for different sectors of economy.

The workshop will focus on specific applications of the use of existing and near-term GNSS and their augmentations to further global environment objectives, sustainable development programmes and deepen the understanding of these applications in developing countries. Such global systems include the Global Positioning System (GPS) of the United States, Glonass of the Russian Federation, and the planned Galileo project of the European Community. Applications will include monitoring of the environment, disaster management, precision agriculture, surveying, mapping and Earth sciences, resource conservation, transportation and telecommunications, education and training. The workshop will review applications of the GNSS with special emphasis on: (i) current status and briefing on the modernization policy of GPS, current status and future developments of Glonass (Russian Federation), and developments in the European Galileo programme; (ii) existing and future potential applications of these systems for sustainable development and protection of the environment of interest for countries in the Africa and the Western Asia region; and (iii) promotion of regional and international cooperation.

The workshop will aim at:

- bringing the benefits of the availability and use of GNSS signals to the awareness of decision-makers and technical personnel from potential user institutions, as well as to service providers in the private sector, particularly in developing countries; and
- identifying actions that could be taken and partnerships to be established by potential users. The workshop will try to increase the awareness of participants of the intrinsic value of the GNSS signals in a sustainable development context and motivate their imagination to make use of them in their own programmes and projects. A direct result would be an expanded user base, which is likely to include a network of experienced and beginner users from governmental and academic institutions, as well as from the private sector.

The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) identified the need to determine precise locations on the ground for use with Earth observation images and ancillary information in geographical information systems. This location information is needed for a large number of remote-sensing applications, some of which support such strategic areas for development as disaster management, monitoring and protecting the environment, management of natural

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resources and food production. With the availability of high-resolution images, some applications will require a location precision of the order of one meter. The GNSS, which include the GPS of the United States, provide a signal that can serve this purpose and, in addition, could be used for a large range of other applications with economic benefits for the user.

United Nations-sponsored space-technology related workshops and training courses are intended to help countries develop indigenous capacity to enable them to benefit fully from the growing worldwide body of know-how derived from space research and developments.

This regional workshop, the fourth in the series being co-sponsored by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, the Government of the United States and the European Space Agency (ESA), is being organized in cooperation with the Government of Zambia for the benefit of developing countries in the Africa and the Western Asia region. The workshop will be hosted by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training.

Around 100 participants are expected to attend the workshop, from the following countries and international organizations:

Algeria, Austria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cape Verde, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Zambia, EIS-Africa, European Commission, European Space Agency, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Peace Parks Foundation, Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.

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