

Jean-Christophe Mauduit
Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Tufts University
MALD Candidate 2017

Center for International Environment and
Resource Policy (CIERP)
Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
160 Packard Avenue, Medford, MA 02155

Dear CIERP staff,

This September I attended the United Nations / Austria Symposium on "*Integrated Space Technology Applications for Climate Change*" that took place in Graz, Austria from 12-14 September 2016. It was organized jointly by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the Government of Austria, with the support of the European Space Agency (ESA). The objectives of the UN/Austria Symposium were to:

- *“Discuss ways in which countries affected by climate change, especially developing countries, can make better use of space applications to assess vulnerability to climate change and potential losses and damages;*
- *Become aware of recent advances in the use of integrated space technology applications in the context of mitigation and adaptation to climate change;*
- *Improve synergies among space agencies and organizations targeting efforts on climate change;*
- *Strengthen international and regional cooperation in this area;*
- *Raise awareness on the recent advances in space-related technologies, services and information resources which can be used to assess the impacts of climate change and the effects of measures implemented to reduce such impacts.”¹*

My background as a scientist working on imagery from various agencies satellite missions (ESA, NASA), my recent training in international relations and involvement in sustainable development and science diplomacy around the Arctic issues form a nexus that is particularly relevant to this event. Hence I was selected and funded by the U.N. to attend the symposium. I was offered accommodation and the conference fee and CIERP kindly contributed to funding my travel. High-level officials included the Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), the Head of the UNOOSA Space Applications Section, the Director of Earth Observation at the European Space Agency, high-level officials of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), the Group on Earth Observation, the Brazil National Institute for Space Research, and officials from ministries of various countries (Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, etc.).

¹ http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/psa/schedule/2016/symposium_austria_climatechange.html



Figure 1 – Group photo of the participants to the September 2016 United Nations / Austria Symposium on "Integrated Space Technology Applications for Climate Change". I can be seen at the top row, fourth from the left.

Given the high-level conference, I did not give any talk but did significantly contribute to the conference. Indeed, the symposium was organized around series of talks followed by open discussion sessions and thematic breakout sessions. As stated on the conference website *“the observations and recommendations of the Symposium will be published as a United Nations General Assembly document in all official languages of the United Nations and will be brought to the attention of relevant policy- and decision making bodies. The recommendations will also inform the preparations towards UNISPACE+50, which will be held in 2018 mark the fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space held in 1968”*. Being able to actively take part in such an endeavor and influence the outcome of the document (which was constructed, amended and voted on by consensus of the symposium participants) was very rewarding.

The symposium provided me with incredible insights into the difficulties and challenges encountered by scientists and policy-makers from various parts of the globe (e.g. Africa, Latin America, Asia) regarding satellite data of climate change, in terms of access, knowledge, funding, etc. I was also able to have a long personal discussion with the Director of Earth Observation at the European Space Agency, who offered to host me at the ESA Earth Observation Headquarters in Frascati, Italy to further my research on governance issues regarding Earth monitoring satellites, data sharing and capacity-building for climate change.

The symposium significantly contributed to my exposure to a field in which I would like to pursue a professional career. Hence I would like to thank CIERP and the United Nations for helping to attend the symposium and gain significant into the global challenges associated with climate change data as observed by satellites.

Best regards,

Jean-Christophe Mauduit