

Press Release

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For immediate release

New maps aid flood relief efforts

Satellite images processed by IWMI show extent of inundation in Southern Province

(Colombo, 7 October 2015). In response to the extensive flooding in the south of Sri Lanka, the International Water Management Institute has published a series of maps to help plan relief efforts.

For the first time, maps have been prepared by a consortium consisting of IWMI, the Disaster Management Centre of the Ministry of Disaster Management (MoDM) and the UN's space based information service for disaster management and emergency response (UN-SPIDER). These show the flood situation using real-time, cloud-free satellite images provided by the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). The maps are being used by the DMC Emergency Operation Centre to support rapid impact assessment and disaster response. The information is also shared with other relevant authorities.

“This partnership has enabled us to deliver accurate and timely maps which we hope can provide valuable information for flood relief,” said Giriraj Amaranth who leads IWMI's flood mapping research. “We believe that satellite data has huge potential in this regard and hope that we can play a useful role in rapid emergency response mapping. Last Saturday we accompanied the DMC on a field mission to the affected districts to evaluate the scale of flooding and its impact on paddy fields. The information collected in the field will be used to develop a situation report.”

There has been exceptionally high rainfall in Sri Lanka's Southern province, particularly around Galle, Hambantota, Ratnapura, Matara and Monaragala. As a result IWMI has activated its emergency response disaster charter in partnership with Sentinel Asia, an initiative of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) to aid disaster management in the Asia-Pacific region using remote sensing. This was done at the request of the Sri Lankan Disaster Management Centre (DMC) in the (MoDM).

Flooding is a recurring problem in Sri Lanka. Whilst the current situation has not been as severe as some previous events, the rapid response capability of IWMI to provide timely, accurate mapping will hopefully enable future major flooding incidents to be dealt with more effectively. The institute's partnerships, both with international space agencies and the national government, will give Sri Lanka a real-time flood mapping facility that hitherto has been unavailable locally.

The maps are available on the UN-OCHA Relief International website:

<http://reliefweb.int/map/sri-lanka/mapping-floods-southern-provinces-sri-lanka-using-alos-palsar-satellite-images-02>

<http://reliefweb.int/report/sri-lanka/2015-floods-sri-lanka-monitored-using-satellite-rainfall-estimates>

The research behind the maps is supported by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)

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Notes for editors:

Copies of the maps are attached to this email. Should you require higher resolution images, please contact IWMI. The maps can be reproduced to illustrate this story, credited to "IWMI".

The **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)** is a non-profit, scientific research organization, headquartered in Colombo, which focuses on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries. IWMI is a member of the CGIAR Consortium. CGIAR is a global partnership that unites organizations engaged in research for a food-secure future. It leads the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems which examines how we can intensify agriculture while still protecting the environment and lifting millions of farm families out of poverty. www.iwmi.org

The **CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)** is a strategic partnership of CGIAR and Future Earth, led by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). CCAFS brings together the world's best researchers in agricultural science, development research, climate science and earth system science, to identify and address the most important interactions, synergies and tradeoffs between climate change, agriculture and food security. www.ccafs.cgiar.org