

China joins space data disaster charter

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China has become a member of the Space and Major Disasters Charter that provides satellite data to nations during natural or human origin disasters.

China National Space Administration Administrator Sun Laiyan signed the charter Thursday at European Space Agency headquarters in Paris during a ceremony attended by ESA Director General Jean-Jacques Dordain and the chairman of the French space agency, Yannick d'Escatha.

With China's entry, disaster management authorities won't only have access to Chinese satellite data archives but also to data from new Chinese space missions.

Created in 1999 by the European and French space agencies, the charter has been activated 125 times, most recently on May 8 after the worst flooding to hit Uruguay in half a century caused the evacuation of 12 000 people. Charter members provided satellite images that detailed key information about the stricken areas.

Other charter members include the space agencies of Britain, Canada, India, Japan and the United States, as well as the U.S. Geological Survey.

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