

**Chengdu Forum on UN-GGIM
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Development and Applications in Urban Hazard Mapping
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Keynote Address

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Delivering Reliable Geospatial Data during Emergencies

Abstract

New York is a mature and physically diverse city with an environment ranging from the skyscraper neighborhoods of Manhattan to the beaches and wetlands of Brooklyn with a wide variety of building types and civic infrastructure in between. Its hazards range from the man-made (the World Trade Center attacks) to the natural (extreme weather events). The city is feeling the effect of rising ocean temperatures with larger “tropical” storms making their way more frequently as far north as the city - as evidenced by Hurricane Sandy in October of 2012. Three million of the city’s residents live in areas threatened by potentially severe coastal flooding. Geospatial data and applications are particularly well suited to preparing for and recovering from such storm events - from the surge modeling used to produce evacuation zones, to correlating field reports on building damage, power outages, and debris removal. Ever more powerful and elegant geospatial applications are constantly being developed, but ensuring the reliability of the data input remains a difficult and time-consuming task. The primary duty of a geospatial data specialist during an emergency event is to provide reliable data to decision makers at all points in the emergency. In a hurricane this includes the planning phase, the evacuation decision, logistics support, recovery coordination, and the development of long-term mitigation strategies.