

Natural Hazards Focus Group Newsletter (December, 2009)

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As the 2009 Fall AGU meeting is approaching, we are glad to distribute this newsletter, which covers in brief, among the other news, the science, business and social program of Natural Hazards focus group at the meeting.

We would like to remind you about the AGU Outstanding Student Paper Award, an important AGU tradition, which now embraces student works in Natural Hazards. Please take your share in judging the papers and attract your colleagues to this important voluntary activity. With 93 student presentations, we all should be able to choose papers that will fit our taste and schedule! Please contact Ilya Zaliapin (nathazards@gmail.com) for details.

Sincerely,

Alik Ismail-Zadeh
Group Chair

Ilya Zaliapin
Group Secretary

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AGU NATURAL HAZARDS FOCUS GROUP NEWS

No. 2 (December 2009)

1. Natural Hazards at 2009 AGU Fall Meeting in San Francisco

<http://www.agu.org/meetings/fm09/>

The 2009 Fall AGU meeting will feature, for the very first time, a range of special sessions on Natural Hazards. The NH Program will run from Monday, 14 December, till Friday, 18 December, with a break for social reception on Tuesday, 15 December. The outstanding total of 413 oral talks and posters will be presented in 17 oral sessions, which will cover various aspects of natural hazards, including hazard assessment techniques and mitigation strategies, data collection approaches, PR, interaction with government, policy and decision makers, as well as numerous case studies.

Look forward to seeing you in San Francisco!

2. Group Reception at the 2009 AGU Fall Meeting

The Natural Hazards Focus Group Reception will take place on **15 December; 6:30-8:00 PM** in the Intercon Ballroom A, Fifth Floor, the InterContinental San Francisco Hotel (888 Howard St, San Francisco; phone: (415) 616-6500). This will be a good chance for all of us to meet and establish personal bonds for future achievements.

Please join us for the **2009 Graduate Research Award** presentation to **Dr. Meththika Vithanage** and for an invited talk by **Dr. Anselm Smolka**, GeoRisk Department at Munich RE titled "Risk Management of Natural Perils in MunichRe: from 1972 Managua earthquake to the Global Earthquake Model"

Abstract- Natural Catastrophes like the Managua earthquake in 1972 and Cyclone Tracy, which destroyed the city of Darwin in Northern Australia in 1974 came as a surprise to the global reinsurance market. Nobody had expected that this global market would be hit by such events, which affected only relatively small cities located far away from the big urban and industrial centers in highly developed nations. In consequence, Munich Re decided to establish its Geo Science Research Unit in 1974. It was the first unit of this kind worldwide, which developed a long tradition of assessing and managing the risk from natural perils. Landmarks of this development are the first World Map of Natural Hazards published in 1979 and the first in-house probabilistic model for earthquake risk assessment of 1987. Climate change has been mentioned in a MR publication already in 1973. The most recent milestones in the agenda of the unit were the fourth edition of the World Map as a DVD and the strategic decision to support the open source Global Earthquake Model (GEM) project initiated by the OECD, which will be addressed in some more detail in this talk.

The talk will be followed by **social interaction, wine, beer, snacks, etc.**

3. Executive Committee Business Meeting at the 2009 AGU Fall Meeting

The second business meeting of the Executive Committee of the AGU Natural Hazards Focus Group will take place in San Francisco on **Friday, 18 December, at 12:30 to 1:30 PM, in Room 222, Moscone South.**

4. Group Web-page in full operation

<http://nh.agu.org/> (http://www.agu.org/focus_group/NH/)

The group Web-page has moved to its permanent site at http://www.agu.org/focus_group/NH/. Please bookmark this site and feel free to submit any NH-related info (projects, events, links, photos, etc.) that you would like to see posted on the site to Ilya Zaliapin, Secretary of the Focus Group. We hope to make

it a useful informational NH-related resource and welcome your suggestions on the site improvement.

The group e-mail is: nathazards@gmail.com; you also can use the "Contact" page on the site.

5. Meeting of the Americas, Foz do Iguassu (Brazil, August 2010): session proposals

http://www.agu.org/meetings/ja10/program/session_proposals.php

The Meeting of the Americas will be held in Foz do Iguassu (Brazil) on 8–13 August 2010. Deadline for submission session proposals is 31 December 2009. Please contact your colleagues in North and South America and organize sessions on the topic of natural hazards, risk and disasters in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region.

6. News from AGU

6.1. Governance Vote Results

Voting by the membership for proposed changes to AGU bylaws and articles of incorporation was completed on 13 November 2009. The proposed changes would expand AGU's Council to focus it on science; shift the business and fiduciary responsibility for AGU to a newly created, smaller Board of Directors, freeing the Council to focus on science policy and other science-related matters; and modernize AGU's governing documents to reflect current practice in not-for-profit governance. Timothy Grove, AGU President, announced the results of the vote. The total number of valid ballots received was 11,614, or 20.5% of the 56,670 eligible voters. Twenty-eight invalid ballots were recorded. No discrepancies were observed. Members voted overwhelmingly to support the proposed changes. The results of the vote are as follows: 96.8% approved the bylaws; 96.8% approved the articles of incorporation. The 20.5% participation level exceeds the response level of the previous two AGU elections.

President Grove wrote: "This vote is an important watershed in AGU's history. It marks the culmination of more than a year's work by leaders throughout the Union to envision a structure that combines sound member fiduciary oversight with even greater attention to our science. The soon-to-be-formed Board of Directors will partner with staff leadership to guide the business of running the \$34-million institution that is AGU. At the same time, the expanded AGU Council will benefit by having not only section leaders but also focus group and key committee leaders as it considers the challenges facing our science and our members. This clear delineation of roles should result in a much more nimble, more member- and scientifically responsive organization, well positioned for many years to come."

6.2. Seeking a new Executive Director of AGU

AGU has begun the search for a new executive director to serve in partnership with AGU's elected leadership to build tomorrow's AGU—the contemporary scientific society envisioned by our members and needed for 2010 and beyond. This is a rare opportunity to take the helm of a highly respected, financially strong membership organization in a moment of transformation and help us achieve our goals to grow in impact. Reporting directly to the Board of Directors, the executive director is responsible for providing strategic vision, leadership, and overall management to the organization according to the direction set by AGU's elected leaders.

6.3. Web site changes

Significant changes and improvements have been made to the AGU Web site on 4 December 2009. The new site offers easy navigation, resources for different audiences, an improved publication search interface, and social networking opportunities. If you have a bookmark from the old site or find a link that no longer works, please go to the home page and either re-navigate or use the Google site search

that appears on every new page to find what you need.

7. AGU's 2010 Voluntary Contribution Campaign

Last year, members of the Natural Hazards Focus Group contributed \$219 to AGU's Voluntary Contribution Campaign. In 2008, due largely to member donations like these, AGU facilitated career development events attended by 600 students, hosted 75 K-12 teachers at Fall Meeting workshops, and sponsored 31 members' visits with U.S. policy makers. Additionally, voluntary contributions allowed AGU to provide travel grants to 135 deserving students to present their research for the first time at an AGU meeting. These programs are essential for AGU's relevance and vitality. I know Natural Hazard members want AGU to do more. Please join me in supporting AGU's efforts to strengthen our scientific society by making a gift to the 2010 Voluntary Contribution Campaign. You can make your gift when you renew your AGU membership, or **you can give today** at:

https://www.agu.org/givingtoagu/making_your_gift.php

8. News about Natural Hazard Research and Programs

In response to the urgent need to reduce the impacts of natural disasters, the International Council for Science (ICSU) launched in November 2008 a new, 10-year, international research program "Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR)" designed to address the gaps in the knowledge and methods that are preventing the effective application of science to averting disasters and reducing risk. International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics in cooperation with American Geophysical Union and several other international and intergovernmental organizations (listed below) submitted a grant application to ICSU to convene three scientific events on natural hazards and disasters in South America, Africa and Asia. The basic objective of the project is to promote the IRDR scientific programme and to attract attention of scientific community worldwide to this new initiative. The organizations supported the grant application are the International Geographical Union, International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, International Union of Geological Sciences, International Union of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics, and UNESCO- Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

Note: Contributions to AGU Natural Hazards Focus Group Newsletters are welcome from AGU members. Please send your contributions to Ilya Zaliapin by e-mail nathazards@gmail.com or via the "Contact" page at the group Website (<http://nh.agu.org/contact/>) inserting the Subject line: "Contribution to AGU NHFG Newsletters". The contributions will be reviewed and may be shortened.

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