

Name of your section/focus group: **Natural Hazards (NH) focus group**

Name and email of president/chair: **Alik Ismail-Zadeh, [Alik.Ismail-Zadeh@kit.edu](mailto:Alik.Ismail-Zadeh@kit.edu)**

**What's the best thing that happened in your section/focus group this year?**

- The 2012 FM features a range of NH sessions. The NH Program run for the whole week and included 450 oral talks and posters in 38 NH sessions covering various aspects of natural hazards as hazard assessment techniques and mitigation strategies, data collection approaches, extreme events, interaction with government, policy and decision makers, as well as numerous case studies. A 30% increase in the number of submitted abstracts compared to the 2011 FM.
- The first recipient of the new Gilbert F. White Distinguished Lecture Award in Natural Hazards was selected. The Award Committee chaired by Susan Cutter (University of South Carolina, social aspects of natural hazards) and represented by John Eichelberger (U.S. Geological Survey, volcanology), Kerry Emanuel (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, atmospheric sciences), Upmanu Lall (Columbia University, hydrology), Mary Lou Zoback (Stanford University, seismology), and Ilya Zaliapin (University of Nevada Reno, extreme events, ex officio) announced its decision on the winner: **Ross Stein**, U.S. Geological Survey, will deliver the lecture and receive the award plaque for *his outstanding contribution to basic knowledge of seismic hazards*.
- The 2012 AGU Natural Hazards Focus Group Graduate Research Award went to **James Belanger**, PhD Candidate at the School of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, Georgia Institute of Technology. The award is given for *his original research on understanding and assessing the predictability of hurricanes*. The Award committee chaired by Michael Ghil (ENS Paris and UCLA, atmospheric sciences) and represented by Efi Foufoula-Georgiou (University of Minnesota, hydrology) and Friedemann Wenzel (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, seismology), has emphasized substantial creativity, originality, and maturity of the work and recognized Mr. Belanger's potential to become a leader in the meteorological hazard field.
- The 2011 AGU Outstanding Student Paper Award in Natural Hazards went to **Jonas von Ruetten** (ETH Zurich), **Themistoklis Stefanakis** (ENS de Cachan), and **Michael Verrier** (San Diego State University).
- For the first time NH focus group elected the group officers. **Rick Murnane** (Bermuda Institute for Ocean Sciences, Bermuda; disaster risk management), **Upmanu Lall** (Columbia University, New York; hydrology), and **Ning Lin** (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge; atmospheric sciences) have been elected President, President-elect and Secretary of the NH focus group, respectively. Early career scientist **Kelly**

*Klima*, a representative of the NH focus group, was elected a member of the AGU Council (2013-2014).

- The Chair of the NH Focus Group Alik Ismail-Zadeh met with Gretchen Kalonji, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences of UNESCO, in Paris to discuss issues related to disaster risk assessment. The assessment could be performed by a high-level intergovernmental body comprising of experts on natural hazards and disaster risk analysis. The assessment would contribute to enhance the knowledge of disaster risk at global, regional, and local levels and the awareness of the people living with risk.
- The Vice Chair of the NH Focus Group Susan Cutter was invited to speak at the first AGU Science Policy Conference (Washington, D.C., 30 April-3 May 2012).
- The Secretary of the NH Focus Group Ilya Zaliapin is a co-organizer of the international workshop “Mathematics of Climate Change, Related Natural Hazards and Risks” (29 July – 2 August 2013, Mexico City) under the patronage of the International Mathematical Union (IMU), the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), the International Union of Applied and Theoretical Physics (IUTAM), and the Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean of the International Council for Science (ICSU).

### **How is your section/focus group promoting the science?**

- The NH focus group fosters a focus within AGU on studies of geophysical hazards and promotes fundamental research into the links between extreme natural hazards and dynamic processes on Earth and in space; real-time and long-term monitoring of active Earth processes; quantitative natural-hazard modeling; studying predictability of natural extreme events, their operational forecasting, and reducing predictive uncertainties; and implementation of effective strategies and designs for hazard mitigation and disaster management worldwide.
- The NH focus group promotes science on disaster risk analysis for the benefit of society to mitigate (and to prevent, if possible) harmful consequences of disasters caused by extreme natural events.
- The NH focus group promotes NH sciences via networking with distinguished stakeholders dealing with NH and disaster risk (DR) studies: the Union Commission on Geophysical Risk and Sustainability of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG); the International Scientific Programme Committee on Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) of the International Council for Science (ICSU), International Social Sciences Council (ISSC), and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the Asian Oceania Geosciences Society (AOGS), and the European Geosciences Union (EGU).

**What are the most effective ways for your section/focus group to engage members and communicate information? How are you increasing transparency between AGU, the Council, and your section/focus group members?**

- The most effective ways to engage AGU members and communicate information is e-mail correspondence (e.g., NH quarterly newsletters, important short messages) and the NH web-page. Normally NH members are active before and during FMs, and less active between the FMs.
- Most important decisions of the AGU Council are communicated to the NH members via newsletters.

**How is your section/focus group approaching and/or engaging students and early career scientists?**

- The NH focus group promotes talented students and earlier career scientists. Two awards of the group (Graduate Research Award and OSPA) concern young talents. The NH focus group attracts young talented researchers and students to work on programs of the group.
- The Executive Committee (EC) of the NH focus group has a seat reserved for a student member. At present *Hans Lechner* (PhD Candidate at Michigan Technological University) is a student representative at the EC.

**How is your section/focus group encouraging diversity and inclusiveness?**

- The NH focus group is truly multi- and trans-disciplinary group of scientists and students. We promote an international participation and collaboration at all levels. Three seats of the EC are reserved for NH experts from Africa, Asia and South America.

**Do you have any examples to share of collaboration with other sections/focus groups or other organizations?**

- The NH focus group established in 2009 an Advisory Board comprised of the representatives of AGU Sections and chaired by the Vice Chair (President-elect) of the group. The Advisory Board (i) advise on strategy in natural hazards research development; (ii) provide guidance and constructive criticism to help chartering the Group's activities; (iii) provide guidance and facilitate communication with other AGU sections and focus groups; (iv) advise on cooperation between AGU and other bodies dealing with natural hazards; and (v) advise on new awards and honors in recognition of natural hazards research and mitigation of disaster risks. The Advisory Board meets with the Executive Committee of the focus group at the business meeting of the group.

- The NH focus group collaborates with AOGS (a joint session on concatenated extreme events held at the AOGS-AGU Joint meeting in Singapore), IRDR (cooperation in the FORIN program), and IUGG (cooperation in the organization of the GRC conference on extreme natural hazards to be held on 8-11 December 2012 in Orange, California).

**What issues are you facing that you'd like us to be aware of?**

- The NH focus group (4 years old) has a limited funding and obtains funds for its projects from various sources (e.g., insurance companies, international organizations, and some donations). AGU sections and focus groups should not rely only on donations from AGU members, but rather on allocations from the AGU Headquarters based on projects proposed by an AGU body.