
Natural Hazards Focus Group Newsletter (June, 2010)

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It is time to nominate your best student for the 2010 NH Focus Group Graduate Research Award. Deadline is **1 July 2010!** Read details at page 3 or go to

http://www.agu.org/focus_group/NH/awards/

AGU NATURAL HAZARDS FOCUS GROUP NEWS No. 3 (June 2010)

1. Chair's Report for 2009-2010

http://www.agu.org/focus_group/NH/reports

The AGU Natural Hazards Focus Group established in 2008 by the decision of the AGU Council and started its activity on 1 June 2009. The group fosters geophysical hazard studies – droughts, earthquakes, fires, floods, heat waves, landslides, space weather, storms, tsunamis, volcano eruptions, impact by near-Earth objects, and related events. It establishes links between extreme natural hazards and dynamic processes on Earth and in space and focuses on real-time and long-term monitoring of Earth and Space active processes; quantitative natural-hazard modeling; studying predictability of natural extreme events. The NH Focus Group concentrates on the development of links between geophysical sciences and mathematical, engineering, and social sciences communities and users of knowledge concerning natural hazards. We works in cooperation with and provides a bridge to similar efforts by the global programs of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), International Council for Science (ICSU), U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISR), and other national, regional and international bodies.

The report covers the period from 1 June 2009 to 31 May 2010 and illustrates the activities of the NH Focus Group for this period:

- AGU NH Focus group held two business meeting (25 May in Toronto and 18 December 2009 in San Francisco) and one teleconference. The Minutes of the meeting can be found at http://www.agu.org/focus_group/NH/events/meetings
- The 2009 Fall AGU meeting featured a range of special sessions on natural hazards (NH): 413 oral talks and posters were presented at the 17 oral and 16 poster sessions, which covered various aspects of natural hazards.
- Dr. M. Vithanage received the 2009 NH Focus Group's Graduate Research Award.
- 2009 Outstanding Student Paper Awards in NH went to T. Swierczynski, K. Brodie, and I. Larsen.

- The first reception of the AGU Natural Hazards Focus Group was held on Tuesday, 15 December 2009 in San Francisco. The formal part of the reception featured the presentation of the 2009 Award for Graduate Research to Dr. Meththika Vithanage (Sri Lanka) and the lecture "Risk Management of Natural Perils in Munich Re: from 1972 Managua earthquake to the Global Earthquake Model" by Dr. Anselm Smolka (Head of GeoRisks, Munich Re). The reception was sponsored by Munich Re.
- The Executive Committee of the Focus Group developed the Natural Hazards Index Terms; it has been submitted to the AGU Staff to be added to the AGU Index Terms.
- The Executive Committee of the Focus Group established the Advisory Board. The purpose of the Advisory Board is to evaluate the activity of the Focus Group and elaborate the vision of the group for future activities. Chair of the Advisory Board is S. Cutter, Vice Chair of the Group.
- The Focus Group Web page is maintained at http://www.agu.org/focus_group/NH/. The page contains the information on the latest news related to natural hazards and disasters, on the activities of the Focus Group, FG executives, meetings, conferences, links to relevant organizations dealing with natural hazards. The group e-mail is: nathazards@gmail.com.

2. Focus Group Executives for the term 2010-2012

http://www.agu.org/focus_group/NH/about/officers/

The new term of the NH Focus Group will start on 1 July 2010 and will last till 30 June 2012.

The following **officers** have been re-appointed by the AGU President:

Alik Ismail-Zadeh, Chair (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany)
 Susan Cutter, Vice Chair (University of South Carolina, Columbia SC, USA)
 Ilya Zaliapin, Secretary (University of Nevada, Reno, USA)

The work of the focus group is coordinated by the following committees:

Executive Committee

Harsh Gupta (National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad, India)
 Kelly Klima (Graduate Student at Carnegie Mellon University)
 Yev Kontar (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA)
 Bruce D. Malamud (King's College London, UK)
 Richard J. Murnane (Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences)
 Roger A. Pielke Sr. (CIRES and University of Colorado, Boulder, USA)
 Vasily Titov (NOAA Center for Tsunami Research, Seattle, WA, USA)
 Gezahegn Yirgu (Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia)

AGU Program Committee

Yev Kontar (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA) 2010
 Corné Kreemer (University of Nevada, Reno, USA), 2009-2010

Graduate Research Award Committee

Michael Ghil, Chair (UCLA & Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, France)
 Efi Foufoula-Georgiou (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA)
 Friedemann Wenzel (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany)

3. Natural Hazards at 2010 AGU Joint Assembly in Brazil

<http://www.agu.org/meetings/ja10/>

The Meeting of the Americas will be held during 8-12 August, 2010 at Foz do Iguassu, Brazil. NH focus group will be represented by **8 sessions with 60 papers**. NH will also co-sponsor **27 sessions with 227 papers**. A special **union session** (U13B) will be devoted to "*Natural Hazards and Disaster Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean*".

You can search the meeting program at <http://agu-ja10.abstractcentral.com/planner>

Discounted meeting registration is open until June 25!
<http://www.agu.org/meetings/ja10/registration/index.php>

4. 2010 Graduate Research Award in Natural Hazards

http://www.agu.org/focus_group/NH/awards/

The deadline for nominations for the 2010 GR Award in natural Hazards is **Thursday, July 1, 2010**. Nominate the outstanding PhD students and promote nominations among your colleagues!

Announcement: The AGU Natural Hazards Focus Group seeks nominations for its award to young scientists engaged in studies of natural hazards and risks. This award recognizes one or more promising young scientists for outstanding contributions achieved during their Ph.D. research. Accordingly, eligibility is restricted to current Ph.D. students and those who have completed the requirements for a Ph.D. degree up to 12 months prior to the nomination deadline. Nominees should be AGU members. The major criterion in the evaluation of candidates nominated to this award is the impact (or potential impact) of the research on the field of natural hazards. The award consists of \$500 for support of travel to the AGU Fall meeting, a certificate, and recognition at the Natural Hazards Reception. The awardee(s) will have the opportunity to deliver an invited paper in an appropriate Natural Hazards session at the AGU Fall meeting. The awardee(s) will also be announced in EOS.

Nominations should include (i) a letter of nomination, (ii) a curriculum vitae, (iii) two supporting letters, coming from outside of the nominee degree-granting institution, and (iv) up to three PDF reprints (or preprints) of the nominee's work.

Please submit your nominations in e-form to Ilya Zaliapin (zal@unr.edu or nathazards@gmail.com)

5. Extreme Natural Hazards and Societal Implications (ENHANS) project

<http://www.enhans.org>

Natural Hazards Focus Group becomes an active contributor to the global ENHANS project. The group is involved presently in the organization of the first project event in Brazil.

The principal goals of the ENHANS project are (i) to improve understanding of critical phenomena associated with extreme natural events and to analyze impacts of the natural hazards on sustainable development of society; (ii) to promote studies on prediction of extreme events reducing predictive uncertainty and on natural hazards mitigation; to bring the issues into the political and economical policies; (iii) to disseminate knowledge and data on natural hazards for the advancement of research and education in general and especially in developing countries; and (iv) to establish links and networks with the international organizations involved in research on extreme natural hazards and their societal implications setting up a consortium of experts of international scientific unions and several major intergovernmental and multi-national organizations involved in the project.

The goals of ENHANS will be achieved via scientific meetings and open forums bringing together research experts, decision makers, and disaster management, insurance agency and mass media practitioners. The project will place a special emphasis on importance of research on extreme natural hazards and disaster risk mitigation in the most vulnerable regions of the world, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, in sub-Sahara Africa, and in Asia and the Pacific region.

The ENHANS is a project of the International Council of Science (ICSU) led by the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG). ENHANS partners are the American Geophysical Union (AGU), International Geographical Union (IGU), International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), International Union of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (IUTAM), Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRD), Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

5a. Focus on Latin America and Caribbean

The first ENHANS Project event (<http://www.enhans.org>) will be held at the Meeting of the Americas in Iguassu, Brazil (<http://www.agu.org/meetings/ja10/>). The ENHANS-related science sessions and Town Hall meeting will be held on **Monday, 9 August 2010 from 10:30 to 20:00**. The poster sessions are scheduled on **Tuesday, 10 August 2010**.

5b. Focus on North America and Europe

The mini-Symposium will be organized at the 2010 AGU Fall Meeting in San Francisco, 13-17 December 2010. The symposium will consist of a Union session (by invitation only) and Natural Hazards session (contributed papers)

Title of the symposium: *Extreme Natural Events: Modeling, Prediction and Mitigation*

Co-conveners:

Alik Ismail-Zadeh, Geophysical Institute, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Karlsruhe, Germany;
Ilya Zaliapin, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, USA;
Surjalal Sharma, Department of Astronomy, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA.

Scope:

This symposium will discuss theories and methodologies for understanding, modeling, and predicting extreme events in complex natural and socio-economic systems. We welcome contributions that develop methodologies for probabilistic assessments and forecasting extreme events, evaluation of their socio-economic impact, design of corresponding mitigation strategies, as well as case studies that report successes or failures of the proposed methods. The goal is to develop tools that can be used by disaster management authorities.

5c. Focus on Africa

Workshop "*Extreme Natural Hazards and Disaster Risk in Africa*"

Dates: 4 days in early January 2011 (the dates are not yet determined precisely)

Place: Aon Benfield Natural Hazard Centre, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Scope (tentative): The workshop will provide an opportunity to the research community of the African countries and international experts to discuss and analyse major topics related to extreme natural events and disaster risk in order (i) to improve understanding of critical phenomena associated with extreme natural events; (ii) to monitor geophysical fields using observing systems to enhance predictability of extreme event; (iii) to promote studies on predictability of extreme events and to bring the issues into the political and economical policies; (iv) to analyse impacts of the natural disasters on sustainable development; (v) to disseminate knowledge and data on natural hazards for the advancement of research and education; and (vi) to establish links and networks between African

experts in natural hazards and risk analysis with the relevant international organizations. The number of participants: 40-60. Local Organizing Committee - LOC (responsible for the organization of the workshop) Andrzej Kijko, University of Pretoria, South Africa (Chair) Ansie Smit, University of Pretoria, South Africa

5d. Focus on Asia and Pacific

The ENHANS event will be held in Melbourne, Australia, at the XXV IUGG General Assembly, 28 June - 7 July 2011. The scope and conveners of the Union symposium can be found at the web: <http://www.iugg2011.com/program-union.asp>

6. News from AGU

6.1 AGU Council Meeting

AGU held the Council Meeting at June 7th at the AGU Headquarters, Washington, DC. Among other items, the council members discussed and approved the *AGU Strategic Plan* and *Governance Work Group Report*. The Council has considered the Proposal from the Natural Hazards Focus Group for the Gilbert F. White Distinguished Lecture Award; the proposal was sent to the AGU Committee for Honors and Recognition for a review.

6.2 AGU new Executive Director

The AGU is pleased to announce that Christine W. McEntee will be its new Executive Director. McEntee, a seasoned and highly accomplished association executive, will join AGU in late August 2010. To learn more about Christine, visit <http://www.agu.org/about/ed/>

6.3 AGU blog

Now you can blog at AGU: <http://blog.agu.org/> The current items include discussion of geo-hazards and respective mitigation strategies: <http://blog.agu.org/geohazards/>

6.4 AGU Leadership Meeting

AGU held a Leadership Meeting during June 7-10, 2010 at the AGU Headquarters, Washington, DC. The meeting was attended by over 50 representatives from the AGU sections and focus groups. The main goals of the meetings were to discuss (i) the organization and roles of the new AGU Board and Council, (ii) the science and policy trends that will affect and will be affected by AGU in the future, and (iii) organization and role of the AGU Future Science Task Force (FSTS). An illustrated (and quite detailed) report on the meeting can be found at <http://www.agu.org/blog/sp/>

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.

Editors: A. Ismail-Zadeh and I. Zaliapin