

Quarterly Report on the Activities of the IUGG GeoRisk Commission (GRC) in the first and second quarter of the Year 2009

1. The year 2009 began with a series of severe weather events on both hemispheres. A prolonged heat wave struck the south eastern part of Australia from 25th January to the 09th February. On the 07th February an outbreak of bushfires devastated parts of Victoria (Australia). The winter storm Klaus was the heaviest events since almost a decade hitting southern France, northern Spain, Andorra and the northern parts of Italy. Almost all of the winter season was characterized by the occurrence of avalanches in many parts of the world (Afghanistan, Austria, Scotland and Turkey). Each of the events caused many fatalities and enormous damage.
2. An informal business meeting of GRC was held on 12th January 2009 in Cape Town on the occasion of the IASPEI General Assembly. The minutes of this meeting in full are shown under “Meetings and Reports”. On the occasion of the IYPE Meeting of Science Implementation held in Pretoria, South Africa, on 18-19 May 2009 the IUGG hazard projects for Africa were discussed, continuing the GRC-decisions of the Oslo meeting (10 August 2008; see also “Meetings and Reports”). The same applies to a project meeting on 04th March in Leipzig, Germany, between the projects leaders of the IUGG African hydrometeorological hazards (see IUGG Electronic Journal Vo. 9 No 5).
3. Scientific meetings : GRC-members participated actively in a many scientific conferences and meetings all related to GRC topics. The following list do represent a selection of these activities.
Sessions or conferences were organized by
--Vladimir Kossobokoy “The Year of the Planet Earth –Second International Seminar on Prediction of Earthquakes, Lisbon, Portugal, 29-30 April 2009; Electronic Geophysical Year : State of the Art and Results, Pereslayl-Zalessky, Russia, 3-6 June 2009;
--Gerd Tetzlaff “Risk and Planet Earth”, celebrating the 600th anniversary of the University Leipzig, Leipzig Germany, 3-5 March 2009.
4. The number of memberships and participations in scientific and management meetings was numerous and multifold, according to the cross cutting nature of georisk research. Each one of the commissioners actively contributed to several organizations, meetings, workshops and conferences, both in more national and in international events. The individual contributions are best found via the individual members of GRC. Outstanding activities were connected to the Regional Offices of ICSU, namely ROAP and ROA. The contacts to the Asia and Pacific Office was kept by Harsh Gupta. The contact to Africa was kept by Harsh Gupta and Gerd Tetzlaff, trying to support development of the science plan on Georisks and on Hydrometeorological Risks.
5. The GRC commissioners actively published or edited scientific articles and papers :

--Gerd Tetzlaff coedited a volume on “Addressing the Challenge” Second Global Platform Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 25th June 2009, DKKV-Volume 38, 60p.).

---Tom Beer edited “IYPE Book Series”, Springer;

--Harsh Gupta coedited “The devastating Muzaffarabad earthquake of 8th October 2005 of western Himalaya”, Journal of Seismology.

--Harsh Gupta published “Is northern Bay of Bengal Tsunamigenetic?” in the Bulletin of seismological Society of America, and “Cooperation plan on hazards and disasters risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific”, IYPE Book Series, Springer.

--Kuniyosho Takeuchi and Gerd Tetzlaff acted on the scientific board of the Spring School on Fluid Mechanics and Environmental Hazards, Singapore, 19 April to 2 May 2009.

A. Jayawardena and Gerd Tetzlaff lectured and also supplied student projects, Harsh Gupta gave an invited talk “Natural and Human Induced Environmental Hazards and Disasters”, 20th April 2009.

6. Participations, representations and networking : There were many contacts between GRC commissioners and national and international organizations. The contact to UNISDR is secured by Harsh Gupta, who is a member of the science committee. The contact to UNISDR Europe is kept by Gerd Tetzlaff. Tom Beer was actively involved in the international coordination IYPE activities. He reported on the hazard theme on the occasion of the Pretoria, South Africa, meeting 18-19 May 2009 (see “Meetings and Reports”). Gerd Tetzlaff is a focal point in the Nairobi Work Program Process of the UN Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC) contributing to the Cuba workshop March 2009 and the Bonn Climate talks in June 2009 .

A.Jayawardena gave an invited talk “Cooperative Actions for Disaster Reduction”, ISDR- UNU, organized by International Association for Wind Engineering, Tokyo, Japan, 4-6 March 2009.

7. Planned future activities : Develop the IUGG African hazard projects.

G. Tetzlaff
Secretary General