RISK AND PLANET EARTH
Vulnerability, Natural Hazards, Integrated Adaptation Strategies
Conference on the occasion of the International Year of Planet Earth and the 600th anniversary of the University of Leipzig.

Constant environmental threats as well as periodically occurring extreme weather events like floods, tempests or heavy turbulences can have a powerful impact on our lives, even more so in the face of climate change and changing patterns of extreme weather events. Preventing the worst effects of such cataclysms requires interdisciplinary academic collaboration as well as close cooperation between academia and politics.

The three-day conference (March 2 – 4 2009) will bring together experts from natural and social sciences to discuss aspects of resilience and strategies for the prevention of catastrophic losses caused by extreme weather events. It further connects multiple perspectives from three different continents: North America, Africa and Europe.

The main focus of the conference is on adaptation; that is, adaptation to given parameters, as well as to expected changes. In this context, it is necessary to discuss a) What we know (or do not know) about changing patterns of extreme weather events, b) how we can know about them and how we distribute this knowledge, in order to efficiently prevent disastrous effects, c) which strategies secure optimal adaptation, and d) how these strategies can be implemented in daily practice. While the conference sessions concentrate on the first three issues, the second conference day features several workshops, which deal especially with the question of implementation, thus reflecting both scientific research and concrete practices and bringing together academia and professionals.
MONDAY, MARCH 2
9:00 hrs: Opening Session
Address of Welcome on Behalf of the Conference Organizers: Wolfgang Facht, Vice-Rectector for Teaching and Studies, Leipzig University
Words of Welcome Eva-Maria Stange, State Minister of Science and the Arts
Opening Lecture: Ingmar Schwaetzer, Chair Person of the German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKVV), Former Federal Minister
Opening Lecture "Who is afraid of Planet Earth?" Eduardo de Mulder, Director of International Year of Planet Earth Inc., Tondraheim
10:00 – 13:00 hrs
Session I: Changes of Risk and Climate
CONVENER: Ingmar Schwaetzer, German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKVV)
Bernd Hoffmann, Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Eschborn
SPEAKERS:
The Use of Weather Forecasts for Disaster Prevention/Reduction: Manuela Lucia, World Meteorological Organization, Geneva
Weather forecasting and issuance of Official Warnings of Severe Weather Occurrences: Gerhard Adrian, Deutscher Wetterdienst, Berlin
Hydro-meteorological Hazards in Africa: Wolfram Geier, Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Prevention, Bonn
19:00 hrs: Lecture
Newsmakers on Disaster: The Challenge of Natural and Human-Induced Environmental Hazards: An International Research Program: Gordon McBean, University of Western Ontario, London, Canada
14:00 – 18:00 hrs
Session II: Adapting to Natural Hazards, Preparing for Predictable Disasters: Lessons Learned, Lessons Neglected: The Example of “Katrina”
CONVENER: Jost Heinzenberg, Beirztein Institute for Tropospheric Research (IFZ), Leipzig
SPEAKERS: Geographies of Urban Growth, Decline, Disaster, and Recovery: New Orleans, 1718-2009: Richard Campanella, Tulane University, Center for Bioenvironmental Research, New Orleans
Reducing Hazard-Related Social Vulnerabilities: Susan L. Cutter, Hazzard and Vulnerabilities Research Institute, University of South Carolina
An Integrative Framework for Vulnerability Assessment – a Case Study from the Tsunami Affected Areas in Thailand: Martin Voss, Disaster Research Unit (KFS), Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel
Agencies of Catastrophe: How Scientists Warned, or Did Not Warn, Us about Katrina: Lee Clarke, Department of Sociology, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
Nature’s Casino? The History of Flood Insurance in the United States and Germany: Ulve Liebklein, The Amerikan-Institut at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich
20:00 hrs: Reception
Words of Welcome Franz Häuser, Rector of Leipzig University
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4
9:00 – 11:00 hrs
Panels for Junior Scientists
PANEL I: Klimawandel als Herausforderung für neue Konzepte der Katastrophenvorsorge und der Anpassung: Convener: Jörn Birkmann
11:15 – 13:00 hrs
Panel Discussion: Adapting to Climate Change Related Hazards: Interdisciplinary Perspectives
PANEL CHAIR: Alexandra Kemmerer, Simon-Dubnow-Institut for Jewish History and Culture at Leipzig University
PANEL MEMBERS:
Eduardo de Mulder, International Year of Planet Earth, Trondheim
Bernd Hoffmann, Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Eschborn
Christoph Kottmeier, Karlsruhe Institute for Technology
13:30 – 14:00 hrs
Presenration und Adaption of Conference Communiqué: "Disaster Prevention as a Future Task for Leipzig University"
19:00 hrs: Lecture
Deutschland im Klimawandel: Was müssen wir tun? Hanny Lehmann, Umweltbundesamt, Dessau-Roßlau
20:00 hrs: Reception