



UNITED NATIONS
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Institute for Environment
and Human Security



**Munich Re
Foundation**
From Knowledge
to Action

Call for Applications

Munich Re Foundation and United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security
proudly announce the fourth annual

Summer Academy on Social Vulnerability

Tipping Points in Humanitarian Crises



Source: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

26 July – 01 August 2009
at the historic **Hohenkammer Castle** (Schloss Hohenkammer)
in the countryside outside of Munich, Germany

Chair/Director of the 2009 Academy: Thomas E. Downing
Co-director: Mohamed Hamza

Accepting applications until 15 January 2009

We invite qualified PhD candidates who have an interdisciplinary focus and are working on dissertations related to environment, social vulnerability, disaster risk reduction, resilience and institutional management and change, to apply for the 2009 Summer Academy by 15 January 2009. Most participants are expected to be PhD students, ideally in their second or third year. However, a few places will be reserved for practitioners who wish to take a step back from their operational work to engage with young researchers on this strategic issue. Applications are submitted online at www.ehs.unu.edu.

Purpose

The summer academy provides a platform for around twenty outstanding PhD candidates from all over the world to present and discuss their research with leading international experts and scholars in social vulnerability, as well as senior scientists from the United Nations University and Munich Re Foundation. The summer academy is designed to advance the science of social vulnerability by discussing “state of the art” research needs and strategies to address academic, policy and practical challenges and knowledge gaps.

Tipping points in humanitarian crises

The multiple stresses of dynamic vulnerability are embedded in coupled socio-ecological systems. The tendency has been to assume that one complex of vulnerability persists into the future without causing structural and functional changes in societies. Neither would it lead to a shift to a different complex of vulnerability. Yet, the literature recognises that vulnerability (and even more so resilience) is dynamic; the outcomes of interactions between social agents and the environment, across scales.

The topic of the 2009 Summer Academy builds on the first three academies, which focused on water-related (2006) and mega-cities (2007) social vulnerabilities and resilience-building, and the interplay of environmental migration and social vulnerability (2008). The academy will integrate the role of environment and the managed landscape, socio-economic processes of displacement and migration, and the institutions that mediate between sustainability and collapse. Further on, the academy will explore plausible futures where a complex of vulnerability tips into a humanitarian crisis. Conversely, we also intend to explore the potential for scaled up improvements in livelihoods, those plausible futures that achieve sustainability and a substantial reduction in vulnerability. With the focus in 2009 on the run-up to COP15¹, climate change will be a central issue.

Academy format and programme

The 2009 Summer Academy is designed to maximize interaction and encourage innovative problem-solving among participants. Instead of classical teaching we planned our academy to be discursive and participative. We expect participants to provide their active inputs in the working sessions facilitated by an expert team.

The entire working week will be devoted to a simulation representing a real-world situation. Participants will be assigned various tasks and the outcome of the exercise is expected to be presented to international stakeholders. Therefore, participants must come prepared to work together in a demanding context; their output will be evaluated in a final 'town hall' hearing at the academy. Among other academic activities, a briefing to the Adaptation Fund Board² recommending an annex to their handbook on how to design and fund projects that reduce the risk of large scale tipping points, economic collapse and humanitarian crises, will be prepared. Participants would work in groups on the various sections, from rationale to project templates and monitoring and evaluation.

¹ COP stands for Conference of Parties. It is the highest body of the United Nations Climate Change Convention and consists of environment ministers who meet once a year to discuss the convention's developments. The overall goal for the 2009 (COP15) United Nations Climate Change Conference hosted by Denmark is to establish an ambitious global climate agreement for the period from 2012.

<http://www.cop15.dk/en/servicemenu/faq/>, 10 Nov 2008.

² The Adaptation Fund has been established by the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The Adaptation Fund Board is composed of 16 members and 16 alternates and its meeting will take place at least twice a year in the country hosting the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Experts at the Summer Academy

Chair/Director of the 2009 Summer Academy: Prof. Dr. Thomas E. Downing
Co-director: Dr. Mohamed Hamza

Munich Re Chair on Social Vulnerability:

Prof. Dr. Ursula Oswald Spring
Prof. Dr. Hans-Georg Bohle
Prof. Dr. Anthony Oliver- Smith

Expert from Munich Re Foundation:

Mr. Thomas Loster

Experts from UNU-EHS:

Prof. Dr. Janos J. Bogardi
Dr. Fabrice Renaud
Dr. Jörn Birkmann
Dr. Koko Warner

To find out about the Munich Re Chair on Social Vulnerability, the UNU-EHS or past summer academies, please visit our websites www.ehs.unu.edu and www.munichre-foundation.org.

Learning objectives

- Independent and problem solving orientated thinking;
- Actively engaging and communicating with other participants in an inter/multidisciplinary and intercultural team;
- Identifying research need and designing research project proposals;
- Translating scientific language into policy relevant recommendations by drafting a policy brief in a team;
- Enhancing participants' ability to fit their own research into a broader research context and the ability of strategic planning of future research;
- Identifying opportunities for research application;
- Professional networking amongst young and senior professionals at the academy to link up synergy for further collaboration;
- Increasing and updating participants' knowledge of the literature on dynamic social vulnerability and humanitarian crisis in relation to climate change.

Requirements of the participants

Before the academy:

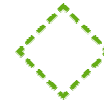
- Each participant is required to bring a poster³ of their work, designed to fit within this year's theme. A series of introductory sessions will use these posters as the evidence base for the recommendations to the final panel;⁴
- Participants are invited to prepare a 10 page long paper linking their work to the topic. These papers must be ready in final draft by mid-May, to circulate to all participants.

³ A scientific poster should communicate your research at a scientific meeting using visual tools such as pictures, diagrams etc. It is composed of a short title, an introduction to your research question, an overview of your methodological approach, your research results, some insightful discussions and the most substantial literature for your research.

⁴ Examples of previous years' academy posters are available on UNU-EHS website: <http://www.ehs.unu.edu/article:574?menu=81>



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During and after the academy:

- The progress of the academy's activities totally relies on participants' engagement and input.
- Participants are required to take part in the discussion actively and fulfil their assignments;
- Participants are required to serve as rapporteurs in various sessions and submit their session notes by the end of the academy;
- Participants are required to draft a synthesis report of the Summer Academy outcomes, a policy brief in a working group as well as revise their submitted papers for publication, should their papers be selected.

Outcome

Selected papers will be revised immediately after the Academy and published, along with the final recommendations (policy brief), and presented to international stakeholders as a contribution to the benchmark COP15 in Copenhagen.

Financial support

The participants are expected to cover their travel. Accommodation and meals during the academy will be generously sponsored by the Munich Re Foundation. There are only limited funds available for travel support for applicants from developing countries. All applicants are encouraged to seek their own funding for travel.

Summer academy application process

Complete applications must be received no later than 15 January 2009. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Notifications will be made mid-March 2009. The working language for the Summer Academy is English.

To apply for the 2009 Summer Academy, please submit the information listed below, in the online form provided at the UNU-EHS website (www.ehs.unu.edu).

Required application materials from qualified PhD students to be **submitted online**:

- Completed 2009 Summer Academy Application Form (detailing your contact and academic information, scientific paper, and expectations and questions for the Academy)
- Curriculum vitae
- One letter of recommendation from your PhD thesis advisor

For questions please contact:

Ms. Xiaomeng Shen
Consultant
Institute of Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)
United Nations University
UN Campus
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
53113 BONN Germany
email: shen@ehs.unu.edu



2009 Summer Academy Application Form
(please use ONLINE form provided at www.ehs.unu.edu)

--Page 1 of 2--

A. Complete contact information

Family name: _____

First name: _____

Name as you prefer it to appear in Academy materials (correspondence, program, etc.):

Email address:

Alternative email address:

Complete postal address:
Street: _____
House number or apartment number: _____
City: _____

Postal code: _____
Province: _____
Country: _____

Telephone number: _____

Fax number: _____

Are you: ___ Female or ___ Male

Your nationality: _____

Your academic discipline (in what academic field will you receive your PhD?):

B. Academic information

University name: _____

Department and/or Institute name:

Name of principal PhD advisor
(Note: this person should write a letter of recommendation for your application to the 2009 Summer Academy):

Names of additional advisors (such as committee members):

Title of your dissertation: _____

Expected year of completion of your PhD program: _____



C. How does your PhD work contribute to understanding dynamic vulnerability, tipping points and humanitarian crises (about 100 words)?

D. Title of the paper and poster you will make at the 2009 Summer Academy (related to tipping points in humanitarian crises)

E. 5 Keywords for your paper and poster

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

F. Attach your paper and poster abstract (maximum 500 words)

G. Your expectations and questions for the 2009 Summer Academy

In 100 words or less, list 1 to 3 main expectations or goals you have in attending the 2009 Summer Academy on tipping points in humanitarian crises.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In 100 words or less, list three questions you would like to address in attending the 2009 Summer Academy on tipping points in humanitarian crises.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.