IRDR Conference Concluded with a Strong Message on the Role of Disaster Risk Science

The second Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Conference successfully concluded in central Beijing last 9 June with a strong message on the role of Disaster Risk Science in global initiatives. With the theme ‘Integrated Disaster Risk Science: A Tool for Sustainability,’ the event attracted over 200 participants from 54 countries.

David Johnston (speaking in the photo below), Chair of the IRDR Science Committee and Director of the Joint Centre for Disaster Research (JCDR) at Massey University in New Zealand, called for a more active engagement from the IRDR community to contribute to the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (March 2015), sustainable development goals (September 2015) and climate change agreements through UNFCCC (December 2015). The IRDR 2014 conference also emphasised the urgent need to have disaster risk reduction included explicitly in the draft Sustainable Development Goals. (See David’s summary on page 3)

"There are many meetings coming up, where we should have a presence both individually and collectively to carry forward our integrated research on disaster risk (IRDR) message," Johnston said.

New Executive Director of IRDR appointed

The co-sponsors of the IRDR programme - ICSU, ISSC and UNISDR - announced the appointment of a new Executive Director, Dr Rüdiger Klein, a German national. (See Page 4)
IRDR Conference concluded with a strong message on the role of Disaster Risk (cont’d)

During the first day (7 June) of the IRDR Conference, Johnston introduced the opening ceremony speakers, which included Qin Zhang, Vice President and Executive Secretary of the Chinese Association for Science and Technology (CAST); Huadong Guo, Director-General of the Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth (RADI), Chinese Academy of Sciences; Steven Wilson, Executive Director of the International Council for Science (ICSU); Feng Min Kan, Head of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; and Hanlin Li, Director General of the National Institute of Social Development, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) for the International Social Science Council (ISSC).

In his opening speech, Qin Zhang, Vice President of CAST, emphasised the importance of disaster prevention within the Chinese government’s programmes. Recognising that disasters impact people’s lives and properties, the Chinese government has integrated disaster prevention into the country’s economic and social development plans.

Huadong Guo, Director-General of RADI, mentioned that the Chinese scientific community has been actively promoting and carrying out comprehensive research on disaster risks and risk control, and providing a scientific basis for governments at all levels to make decisions concerning disaster mitigation.

Steven Wilson, Executive Director of ICSU, shared how the programme that was to become IRDR was the brainchild of ICSU during the first decade of the millennium. Wilson underlined the link between disaster risk and sustainable development.
Feng Min Kan, Head of the UNISDR’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, highlighted the urgent need for science and the research community to strongly inform policy and practice for disaster risk reduction.

Hanlin Li, representing ISSC, said, “Disasters tear social relations apart and place people in confusion. Compared to rebuilding physical damages, it takes longer time and greater patience to help people recover from social wounds. This is the reason why ISSC is part of the IRDR programme and took on the role as one of three Co-Sponsors in this programme.”

Keynote Speeches and Closing Summary:

- Translate Knowledge to Action to minimize Disaster Risks, Senator LEGARDA tells audience in IRDR Conference Opening Ceremony
  Loren Legarda: From Knowledge to Practice: Building Back Stronger After Haiyan with the Aid of Science
- MURRAY gives speech in IRDR Plenary Session with how Science can influence Policy and Practice
  Virginia Murray: The road to HFA2: can science help to inform policy and practice?
- PELLING outlines the international process and IRDR’s role in framing Disaster Risk Reduction
  Mark Pelling: Intergovernmental Processes and the Framing of Disaster Risk Reduction
- FORBES tells IRDR Conference Audience to manage Water Scarcity as a Disaster
  Nathaniel Forbes: Water and Emergencies: The Impact of Thirst
- Introducing the International Study Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Tokyo, Japan 14-16 January 2015)
  - David Johnston: IRDR Conference Closing Summary, Outcomes, and Way Forward

More Photos of the IRDR Conference 2014
New Executive Director of IRDR appointed

The co-sponsors of the IRDR programme - ICSU, ISSC and UNISDR - announced the appointment of a new Executive Director, Dr Rüdiger Klein, a German national.

Before joining the programme, Dr Klein was at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, where he served inter alia as Director of the European Federation of National Academies (ALLEA), leading a number of European science policy initiatives. Earlier he was responsible for interdisciplinary collaborative research programmes and for a "research and foresight" portfolio at the European Science Foundation in France, after long years of research and science diplomacy missions carried out in the Middle East and North Africa region, Western and South Asia. Dr Klein’s term of office started on 1 July. During the signing ceremony at RADI last June, Dr Klein expressed his appreciation for the continued support the IPO receives from CAST.

![Dr Klein is shown here with IRDR Science Committee Chair David Johnston (left) and Director-General of RADI, Professor Huadong Guo (right) during the signing ceremony at RADI last June.](image)

![Dr Klein (middle) with (left to right) Feng Min Kan, (Head of UNISDR Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific), Howard Moore (ICSU), Director-General Prof. Huadong Guo (RADI), David Johnston (IRDR SC Chair) and Vivi Stavrou (ISSC).](image)

Science Committee (SC) News

11th SC Meeting

The 11th SC meeting was held on 6 and 10-11 June 2014 at the Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth (RADI), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in Beijing. The meeting coincided with the second IRDR Conference "Integrated Disaster Risk Science: A Tool for Sustainability".

On day one of the meeting (6 June), SC members discussed the IRDR research projects and the interaction of the programme with the wider UN processes, such as Sustainable Development Goals, and the renewal of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA II).
On 10 and 11 June, presentations were given by National Committees (NCs) and International Centres of Excellence (ICoEs). In particular, the SC debated the role of comprehensive IRDR pilot and test-bed projects for integrating the various innovative approaches developed by IRDR participants.

On 11 June, the DATA, FORIN and RIA co-chairs held respective breakout sessions with meeting participants to brainstorm ideas for the strategic development of the projects in the coming months. The following are highlights of each breakout sessions as reported by the project co-chairs:

- **DATA breakout:** the DATA group discussions focused on the peril classification in the recently released *DATA Project Report No. 1, Peril Classification and Hazard Glossary (March 2014)*, and a review of the Chinese peril classification system in comparison to that presented in the Report. This session also involved the Secretary General from IRDR Japan, who also shared the Japanese experience.

- **FORIN breakout:** participants in this session offered suggestions on how best to improve the FORIN template, including constructive criticisms on the strengths and weaknesses of the template. The revision of the FORIN template is the next major project activity, which will be conducted during a workshop planned for September 2014.

- **RIA breakout:** the discussion in the RIA session concerned issues of uncertainty, probability as opposed to descriptive assessments of risks, and how to influence senior colleagues across sectors in an effort to reduce disaster risk. These issues are central to the RIA project.

After the breakout sessions, IRDR China was given the opportunity to briefly introduce the following four projects to the SC:
Science Committee (SC) News (cont’d.)

- **SC Executive Updates**
  As of 11 June 2014, the IRDR SC Executive is composed of the following:
  - David Johnston – Chair
  - Susan Cutter - Vice-Chair
  - Irasema Alcántara-Ayala - Vice-Chair (Replacing Sálvano BRICEÑO)
  - Kuniyoshi Takeuchi - Vice-Chair

- **SC Membership Renewals**
  - Mark Pelling and Anthony Oliver-Smith accepted the invitation of the Co-Sponsors to renew their memberships on the SC until 30 June 2017.

- **Ex-Officio Replacement**
  - Feng Min Kan, Head of the UNISDR’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, has replaced Andrew Maskrey as the UNISDR’s ex-officio on the IRDR SC.

- **New Member**
  In June 2014, the IRDR programme welcomed a new member to the SC:

  **Jörn BIRKMANN**

  Jörn holds a PhD in Spatial Planning from the Dortmund University and a post-doctoral degree in Geography (venia legendi) from the University of Bonn, Department of Geography. He heads a research section at the United Nations University – Institute for Environment and Human Security in Bonn.

  Jörn has extensive expertise in the field of vulnerability and risk assessment, urban and spatial planning as well as sustainable development and environmental impact assessment. He specialised in the development of methods to assess vulnerability, risk and resilience. As an IPCC Lead-Author in the IPCC Special Report “Managing the Risk of Extreme

- **Risk Analysis and Management of Mountain Hazards in Western China** (Rong CHEN, Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment, Chinese Academy Of Sciences)
- **Study on data requirement of specific disaster events: Earthquake & Flood as showcase** (Zhang Hongyue, Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth, CAS)
- **Climate Change, Drought and Migration: Dynamics and Risk Assessment** (ZHENG Yan, Chinese Academy of Social Science)
- **Urban Disaster Vulnerability Analysis and Risk Assessment** (China Earthquake Disaster Prevention Center; Dalian University of Technology; Liaoning Normal University.)
Science Committee (SC) News (cont’d.)

Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation” and in the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC, he has intensively worked on new challenges for linking risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.

Jörn conducted research projects in more than 15 countries in Southeast Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa and the United States. In addition, he is closely collaborating with various UN institutions in the field of disaster risk reduction and spatial/urban development. He authored and co-authored more than 100 scientific papers. His recent book publications include the second edition of “Measuring Vulnerability to Natural Hazards - Towards Disaster Resilient Societies.”

Research Activities

Assessment of Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (AIRDR)

During the first half of 2014, AIRDR, through the IRDR ICoE on Vulnerability and Resilience Metrics (IRDR ICoE-VaRM), conducted an overview of academic literature on the state of the science, between 2000-2013, for three themes to be explored in the 2015 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR 2015). The first paper, Incentives for Disaster Risk Management, has been completed.

On May 2014, the AIRDR team met with Ad-Hoc expert group on disaster risk assessment in Paris, France to further a resolution on Disaster Risk Research and Assessment at the 2014 ICSU General Assembly.

Disaster Loss Data (DATA)

The DATA project working group held its third expert meeting on 19-21 May in Ispra, Italy. Hosted by the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre, the working group members discussed the implementation of the Peril Classification based on the newly released IRDR “Peril Classification and Hazard Glossary” document. The meeting also focused on assessing human impacts in disasters and analysing methodologies to addressing losses based on physical damage to assets.

On 21 May, a joint technical workshop was held with loss data experts from the European Commission’s Humanitarian Office and representatives from nine European Union countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, and the UK. Attended by DATA co-chairs Susan Cutter, Daniele Ehrlich and Sisi Zlatanova, the workshop aimed at establishing a common methodology of recording losses and minimum common fields for loss reporting at the EU level to be compatible with international standards.
Network Building Highlights

IRDR Welcomes:

New National Committee (NC)

IRDR NC Australia:

The SC recognised the Bushfire & Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNH CRC) in Australia, as IRDR NC Australia during the 11th SC meeting.

The BNH CRC’s mission is to provide valued, high-quality research and advice on bushfire and natural hazards in order to reduce risk; enhance disaster resilience; reduce negative social, economic and environmental impacts; and build an internationally renowned Australasian research and utilisation capacity and capability.

New International Centre of Excellence (ICoE)

IRDR ICoE-REaL: (South Africa)

The SC designated the Periperi U Consortium (Partners Enhancing Resilience for People Exposed to Risks) in South Africa, as the IRDR ICoE for Risk Education and Learning (IRDR ICoE-REaL).

The Periperi U consortium committed itself to bridging the historic divide between Africa’s institutions of higher learning and the practice fields of disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action.

6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR)

The 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) was held in Bangkok, Thailand from 22-26 June 2014. David Johnston, S.H.M Fakhruddin and Jane Rovins from IRDR attended the event.

The Conference adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia and the Pacific 2014, which highlighted the importance of an implementation plan and a strengthened monitoring and review system for HFA2. Annex 10 of the Bangkok Declaration 2014 is the Statement of Voluntary Commitments of Asia Science, Technology and Academia Stakeholder Group for the 6th Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, thanked the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting the Conference and welcomed the ‘Bangkok Declaration’ as a milestone on the road to Sendai.
Network Building Highlights (cont’d.)

IRDR at UNISDR’s PrepCom 1 of the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR)

The first session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom1) of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction was held from 14-15 July 2014 in Geneva. IRDR Executive Director Rüdiger Klein was asked to lead, on behalf of ICSU, the delegation of the Major Group Science and Technology at this meeting of UN member states’ delegations in Geneva, and to deliver the jointly agreed statement of the Major Group to the plenary assembly on 14 July.

ICSU has been appointed as the UN’s Organising Partner (OP) for the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group for the WCDRR. In this role, ICSU is responsible for the coordination of the scientific community’s participation in the discussions and the meetings during the preparatory phase and at the conference itself wherein IRDR, as part of the broader ICSU family, is a major contributor to this process.

Workshop on Big Data for International Scientific Programmes

The Workshop on Big Data for International Scientific Programmes: Challenges and Opportunities convened in Beijing last 8 June. The workshop was designed to provide a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges of "Big Data" for international collaborative science programmes.

The workshop participants and sponsoring organisations released a Statement of Recommendations and Actions that recognised that Big Data ‘present particularly significant challenges and notable opportunities for transdisciplinary, international research programmes’ as well as for scientific data services and infrastructure providers.
Network Building Highlights (cont’d.)

International Centres of Excellence (ICoEs)

IRDR ICoE Taipei (Academy of Sciences located in Taipei, China)

IRDR ICoE Taipei will conduct an Advanced Institute on Forensic Investigation of Disasters (FORIN II) from 21-25 October, 2014. FORIN II will provide 15-20 young to mid-career researchers and practitioners from Southeast Asia with enhanced skills to carry out FORIN-related studies, and will include educational modules, hands-on interactive exercises, and field visits.

In 2012, FORIN I was hosted and organised by the IRDR ICoE-Taipei, in partnership with START (Global Change System for Analysis, Research and Training), ICSU and IRDR.

IRDR ICoE Community Resilience (Joint Centre for Disaster Research (JCDR), Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand)

IRDR ICoE-Community Resilience (IRDR ICoE-CR) completed two workshops on Building Resilience Amongst Communities on 8 April at Massey University and on 16 April at Lincoln University. Their current activities include the continued development of online knowledge bank by the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, called the Community Resilience Toolbox, to house a database of projects, research and related information on community resilience initiatives in the Wellington Region.

On 26 September, a knowledge sharing workshop on Community Resilience will be conducted during the 7th Australasian Natural Hazards Management Conference 2014.

Announcements

The United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction

Nominations are now open for the 2015 United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction, under the theme “Shaping the Future.”

The United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is awarded to an individual or institutions that have taken active efforts in reducing disaster risk in their communities and advocates for disaster risk reduction. Nominations will close on 31 October 2014.

More details at:
http://www.wcdrr.org/sasakawa/
Publications

A case study for early warning and disaster management in Thailand
(S.H.M. Fakhruddin, Y. Chivakidakarn)

Evaluations of disaster education programs for children: A methodological review
(Victoria A. Johnson, Kevin R. Ronan, David M. Johnston, Robin Peace)

Challenges in Sustainability

Building Disaster Resilience: Steps toward Sustainability
(Susan L. Cutter)

Events

- **UNISDR:** PrepCom 1 Preparatory Committee (PrepCom1) of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction – Geneva, Switzerland 14-15 July 2014
- **ISSC:** World Social Science Fellows Seminar – Global Social Science Governance – London, United Kingdom 28 July 2014
- **Global Risk Forum:** 5th International Disaster and Risk Conference IDRC Davos 2014 – Davos, Switzerland 24-28 August 2014
- **IRDR NC Australia:** AFAC14 conference “After Disaster Strikes, Learning from Adversity” – Wellington, New Zealand 2 September 2014
- **ICSU:** 31st General Assembly – Auckland, New Zealand 30 Aug – 3 Sept 2014
- **RADI/CAS:** The 2nd International Symposium on Earth Observation for Arid and Semi-arid Environments - ISEO 2014 – Issyk-kul, Kyrgyzstan 10-12 September 2014
- **Disaster Management Institute of Southern Africa (DMISA) Conference** - KZN Province, South Africa 17-18 September 2014
- **IRDR ICoE and NC New Zealand:** 7th Australasian Natural Hazards Management Conference - Wellington, New Zealand 23-24 September 2014  (Download the Program here)
- **IRDR NC Japan:** Tokyo Conference on International Study for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience – Tokyo, Japan 14-16 January 2015