

Haiti Earthquake Aftermath: Urgent Action Needed to Improve Scientific Communication in the Caribbean Region

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The Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) contributed to the American Geophysical Union (AGU) and International Union on Geophysics and Geodesy (IUGG) initiatives related to further development of scientific research on natural hazards and environmental disasters and its implementation in the Caribbean region. After witnessing the earthquake-related humanitarian disaster in Haiti and the broken link between scientific research and disaster managers, the importance of multidisciplinary geological risk research was again highlighted. For example, geologists and geodesists working in the Caribbean region showed most recently that the local fault was capable of a magnitude 7+ earthquake. Unfortunately, the seismological community did not react to those results, and regional seismic hazard maps were not revised. This example illustrates that effective risk management implementation requires interaction between research and its application. AGU and IUGG plan to establish an international committee of experts to prepare a document on how the scientific community should react to a natural disaster once it has occurred. The committee intends to help answer the questions of (1) how to provide immediate and proper scientific information about the event to public, media, and government and (2) how to help local geoscientists in their work after the disaster. A Web site, "[Geosciences and Natural Disasters](#)," has been developed for the immediate placement of such information.

The ISGS contributed to these initiatives. On January 14-15, 2010 an ISGS staff member participated in the AGU JA10 Science [Program Committee \(SPC\) Planning Meeting](#) at the AGU Headquarters in Washington, D.C. ISGS also helped with the preparation of a Union Symposium and 10 scientific sessions conducted during the AGU Joint Assembly 2010: The Americas. The symposium and sessions were focused on natural hazards and disaster risk assessment for the Caribbean region and South America. (Contact: [Yevgeniy Kontar](#))