



Newsletter 11

May 18, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I'm writing you as president of the PORSEC Association to express our community's sadness and our sympathy for the people in China and Myanmar, who have suffered the effects of terrible disasters in the last weeks.

It seems the Earth is presenting us with greater and greater challenges—earth quakes are mostly outside the fields of inquiry that we in PORSEC represent, but when they cause tsunamis then it is our concern. The tropical cyclone and associated run-up and wave effects are very much parts of the subjects that PORSEC colleagues are studying. The scale of these disasters are exacerbated by the huge populations that live in vulnerable areas, by limited construction of dikes and by housing that is not up-graded to be earth quake protected yet. Even more affluent countries like the U.S.A. and European countries are also behind in protecting against storms and flooding, heat waves and so on. Much of that requires political effort.

It is our job as scientists to keep improving understanding and predictions, to aid in developing warning systems, better engineering solutions (as consultants) and so on. Let's as a community in PORSEC Association commit ourselves to keep this work going as we expect more and more threats to human habitations through climate changes.

We don't know yet if the economic effects of the Chinese earthquake will affect our 2008 meeting, but we could determine right now to devote special focus on the weather and oceanic hazards. We have a session on natural hazards planned already. I have not heard yet if any oceanic effects or a tsunami was associated with this massive earth quake and its after shocks. If anyone of you should have such information—do write us a note for the Bulletin of the PORSEC Association's July issue (should reach me by July 5 or before). Studies of Cyclone Nargis, that was the cause of the Myanmar devastation, are also very appropriate for the PORSEC 2008 sessions, even if the work is preliminary.

We could also determine to operate the conference in a modest manner and devote any extra funds we can collect to helping the disaster areas—in some way.

We convey our heartfelt sorrow and condolences to any PORSEC Association members, who may have relatives affected by the earth quake and cyclone and to the countries of China and Myanmar. We wish we had scientist members of PORSEC Association in Myanmar, but that is perhaps for the future.

*Yours in PORSEC Association,
Kristina B. Katsaros*