

GEOHAZARDS INTERNATIONAL

A Nonprofit Working Toward Global Earthquake Safety

President's Newsletter

June 26, 2006

Dear Members and Friends of GHI,

Recent attention to the 100th Anniversary of the Great San Francisco Earthquake on April 18 placed some key issues regarding natural disaster preparedness, prevention and mitigation in the international spotlight. The century of progress that has improved earthquake safety standards in California provides a model for the world. GHI's mission involves "exporting" the lessons learned in California, as well as others learned in Europe and Japan, to vulnerable communities in the developing world. We are grateful to the Munich Reinsurance Company for including the GHI story in the current issue of its publication on losses and loss prevention, *Schadenspiegel*. Also courtesy of Munich Re, we now have a generous supply of article reprints that will help us tell our story (See "Exporting earthquake safety practices from California – A look at the work of GeoHazards International.")

Update on India and Central Asia Projects

Our recent USAID-funded work in Delhi to retrofit five lifeline buildings will serve as a model for projects in other cities of India. The expertise of Mel Green, Bill Holmes, Kip Edwards and Ed Idriss significantly enhances our contribution through this project. We now expect an extension of funding for our project work in Delhi to initiate actual construction. In Central Asia, the Hospital and School Disaster Preparedness Handbooks (Russian editions) have been developed with multi-national teams and will be distributed electronically in the near future. The project's ten five-minute public education videos, produced with funding from Risk Management Solutions, are now being shown on television throughout the region.

Tsunami Preparedness

Although the South Asia Tsunami has moved from center stage in the world's media focus, GHI continues to take a long-term, strategic view of the developing world's rapidly increasing natural disaster risk. In accordance with our mission, we seek ways to assist threatened regions with tsunami disaster awareness, preparedness, prevention and mitigation measures. Supported by funding from the National Academy of Sciences, GHI's Laura Samant is now preparing tsunami materials developed in the United States for adaptation abroad. Experts will convene at a GHI-organized workshop in November to review materials assembled in this project before they are distributed in at-risk regions.

Ishiyama Foundation Funds GHI Endowment



GHI Trustees express their gratitude to Terrie McDonald, representative of the Ishiyama Foundation, San Francisco, at April 12th luncheon in Palo Alto.



GHI received a contribution to our endowment in the amount of \$75,000.00 from the Ishiyama Foundation, San Francisco, in December 2005. Terrie McDonald represented the Foundation at an informal luncheon with the GHI Board of Trustees following the Board meeting on April 12, 2006, at which time the Board expressed appreciation for the gift. Terrie's interest in the mission and work of GHI underlies her support and advocacy on behalf of the organization.

GHI in Dharamsala, India

Dr. Janise Rodgers and Hari Kumar of GHI undertook a fact-finding mission in May to determine the personnel and resources needed to conduct a seismic assessment of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives and other structures of the Tibetan exile community in Dharamsala, India. Based on their report, we received in June a grant of \$25,000 from the Flora Family Foundation to make an initial structural assessment of these buildings. Located in the Himalayan foothills in northern India, near the epicenter of the great 1905 Kangra earthquake, this community is at serious earthquake risk. We view this work as a stepping stone toward broader efforts with the dispersed Tibetan people.



View of the setting of Upper Dharamsala (McLeod Ganj). Note steep slopes and peaks of the Dhauladhar Range (approximately 17,000 feet) that indicate the proximity of active faults.

School Earthquake Safety for Pakistan and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Since the devastating Pakistan earthquake on October 8, 2005, we have been in close contact with colleagues in Pakistan (including Abid Shaban, a member of GHI's Advisory Board) and here in the United States regarding ways in which GHI might help improve earthquake safety in the region. To date, we have focused on two activities. Together with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Turkey's Ministry of National Education we co-organized a workshop held in Istanbul (June 1-2) on school earthquake safety for representatives of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). ECO comprises the 10 countries bounded by Turkey on the west, Pakistan on the east, Kazakhstan on the north and Iran on the south. For this workshop, Serkan Bozkurt, a GHI consultant sponsored by Swiss RE, helped us estimate the number of people in ECO who have the same earthquake risk as the people in northern Pakistan: of the 380 million people in the region, 180 million have northern Pakistan's risk, of which 40 million are school-aged children. We hope to start a program to improve school earthquake safety in ECO similar to the one we helped start in OECD. Our second focus is in Pakistan. Just last week Tom Tobin, GHI's COO, returned from a trip to Pakistan that was sponsored by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences with the purpose of recommending how the U.S. government can best help Pakistan manage its earthquake risk. We hope that we will have an opportunity to apply some of the experience in GHI's network to Pakistan's most evident needs.

I close by sending you my best wishes and my deep appreciation for your support. It may not be evident to each of you how important your various contributions are, but truly it is the moral, fiscal and technical support you provide that enables us to continue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Tucker". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brian Tucker, President

Enclosure: "Exporting earthquake safety practices from California—A look at the work of GeoHazards International" from *Schadenspiegel*, a publication of the Munich Reinsurance Company