



Canadian Risk & Hazards
Network
(Knowledge and Practice)

www.crhnet.ca

HazNet

Réseau canadien d'étude des
des risques et dangers
(connaissances et pratiques)

Volume 5 No.2 Spring 2014

Welcome from the Co-Presidents

Ernie MacGillivray - CRHNet Co-president - and I extend to each of you our Board's greetings and well wishes. We at CRHNet are proud to present to you our latest "newsletter", which thanks to its editorial staff and contributors has again established new records.

Last fall, CRHNet held its 10th annual symposia in Regina, SK. Like its predecessors, this symposium provided many opportunities to explore new facets and firm-up important linkages among the many stakeholders of disaster risk reduction; the new theme this time was the introduction of an Aboriginal theme to the discussion. This theme facilitated closer connection between CRHNet and the Aboriginal community and is allowing for more meaningful dialogue on related disaster risk reduction (DRR) issues. Additionally, the symposium's continued linkage to the national Roundtable on (DRR) again provided an opportunity for cross-issues dialogue, and continued discussion on critical current topics.

The symposium provided another success story – implementation of the CRHNet new governance model. Ratified by the membership at the AGM, the model involves a smaller and more agile Board, an Executive Director in-charge of a management group to manage the day-to-day affairs of the association, and various standing committees that participate more-directly in the affairs of the Association. The changes aim to enhance membership engagement in the Association and allow for greater contribution to the growth of disaster resilience in Canada.

The new governance model is designed to advance CRHNet's mission: to promote dialogue, increase awareness, and advance collaboration towards DRR in Canada. This mission is supported by our enhanced ability to disseminate information.

CRHNet new website (www.CRHNet.ca) **now has many more opportunities to communicate** and share information. It is designed to serve as a platform for discussion, engagement and collaboration; **you are invited to contribute to its content**. We are now engaged in an on-going project to develop and populate a searchable electronic library, focused on the many facets of emergency management and disaster risk reduction. This library is intended to complement our evolving E-book – the Canadian Disaster Management text, which is on our website. We invite any of you to share your publications by sending them to Ron (rkuban@shaw.ca) for posting to the library.

Additionally, as part of our outreach and networking initiative, we have recently reactivated our LinkedIn site (www.linkedin.com). This site together with the CRHNet Young Professionals Facebook page provides diverse channels for dialogue, collaboration, and growth. CRHNet will continue to promote the site and publish both its own content and that which is offered by others.

On behalf of the Board, we again wish to thank all of you who belong and contribute to the Association, and welcome all others who are interested in enhancing emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Success in this field of practice is based on "Team effort" and we are proud on the inclusiveness of our growing team.

Ron Kuban and Ernie MacGillivray,
CRHNet Co-Presidents

CLIMATE CHANGE REPETITION ≠ PERFECTION

By: *Ilan Kelman*

<http://www.ilankelman.org>

Here we go again. The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) is yet again publishing a report, as usual in three Working Groups with the reports spaced several months apart. The one perhaps most relevant to disaster scholars was released in Japan at the end of March.

This happens every 5-6 years. 2013-2014 represents the IPCC's Fifth assessment, with the first one dating back to 1990. This year's report tells us that climate change is happening, that humans are to blame for a significant proportion of the observed climate change, that there are ways that we can deal with climate change, and that we are not doing what needs to be done.

Does that sound exciting? No, of course not.

Because that is exactly what was said previously in the Fourth Assessment Report, released in 2007. Five years of effort involving hundreds of scientists, requiring tens of thousands of hours of writing, reviewing, and editing alongside thousands of hours of travelling and meetings at an immense environmental and carbon cost (and carbon offsets do not help).

All to tell us what we know already. So why does the IPCC continue? That is indeed a good question.

As a model for science, the IPCC (similarly to all models of science) has advantages and disadvantages. The IPCC brings scientists together, assesses and synthesises the science available, and reaches consensus-based conclusions. Those

consensus-based conclusions are then reviewed by scientists and governments to reach summaries and overall conclusions acceptable to all, usually involving multiple compromises.

Amongst the advantages of the IPCC process are the consensus and the compromises. Amongst the disadvantages are the consensus and the compromises. Amongst the advantages are the interactions amongst and influence of scientists and governments. Amongst the disadvantages are the interactions amongst and influence of scientists and governments. The level and scope of the IPCC's peer review is impressively thorough and intense. Nonetheless, glaring errors and misconceptions nonetheless get through to the final reports, representing a tiny fraction of the entire text yet tarnishing the whole.

Naturally, we all make mistakes. The importance is learning from them and improving.

How could the IPCC be improved? The fundamental problem is the self-perpetuating bureaucracy. The IPCC has become an institution, but it is not clear that institutionalised science, consensus-based science, or government-reviewed science produces the best science. As an experiment and as a start for the field of climate change science, the IPCC did amazingly well and is to be admired and commended. As the co-winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, the IPCC has demonstrated its significant political power and has earned deserved respect from society. Neither is a statement of scientific quality.

When nothing fundamentally new is presented; when so much time, effort, energy, and travel is taken away from new, original, innovative science; when an institution becomes a lightning rod for

critics, is it time to recognise that senescence does not always represent betterment?

Has the time come to thank the IPCC for its needed service and then to move on from it?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PROMOTING CANADIAN ABORIGINAL DISASTER RESILIENCE IN FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT COMMUNITIES

By: *Eric Bussey, Brenda L. Murphy and Laurie Pearce, March 2014*

This report is an initiative of the Aboriginal Resilience Sub-Working Group (AR). In 2013, the AR was struck within the Resilient Communities Working Group (RCWG). The RCWG is one of the four national working groups established under Canada's Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. This report was prepared on behalf of the Canadian Risks and Hazards Network for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

The paper summarizes the key themes about Aboriginal disaster resilience that arose from two events held in November 2013 in Regina, Saskatchewan: the Canadian Platform's annual meeting and the Canadian Risks and Hazards (CRHNet) annual symposium. It also references key literature about resilience to contextualize the discussion.

A resilience approach is often portrayed as one that builds on current strengths, effectively manages and creatively adapts to all types of change, including disasters. Resilience requires knowledge about local hazards and vulnerabilities as well as information about what resources are available. While there is overlap between the disaster resilience issues facing rural/urban non-Aboriginal populations and Aboriginal communities, information about disaster resilience in Aboriginal contexts is quite slim.

The concept of Aboriginal resilience is linked to the idea of community resilience since each community has its own history, culture, traditions, language, family ties, and relationships to its landscape. In a Canadian context, Aboriginal resilience also needs to be differentiated and understood within First Nations, Métis and Inuit traditions. A key advantage of community resilience is that it fosters a proactive rather than a reactive approach to emergency management. Many Aboriginal communities have a history of self-reliance and resilience upon which to draw. Aboriginal resilience is tied to Traditional Knowledge such as local knowledge about hunting and country foods, natural resources, travel routes, and weather, snow and ice conditions. The capacity of each Aboriginal community is often dependent on the level of resources and/or economic development within that community. To become more disaster resilient, communities need access to formal networks, systems and arrangements and local, informal arrangements to deal with immediate community needs after a disaster. Strong cultural traditions and close relations between family and neighbours were noted strengths of small First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. Communities also need support from higher levels of government, non-government organizations and private corporations to bolster resilience.

Based on the discussions and presentations which were a part of the 2013 Platform and Symposium, several important themes emerged:

ENHANCING ABORIGINAL DISASTER RESILIENCE

Since the scholarly literature and Aboriginal perspectives on the tenets of disaster resilience are quite slim, it is critical to consider the unique circumstances of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and to engage Aboriginal knowledge holders to further define the resilience concept. Support from higher levels of government, non-government organizations and private corporations