



## International Conference on Natural and Man-Made Hazards in the Coastal Zone

La Jolla, California, U.S.A., and Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico  
(August 14-21 1988)

The conference, set up partly as a preliminary to the Joint Oceanographic Assembly of SCOR, was held for the first morning at Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and then moved to Ensenada, some 200 km south of the Mexican border (Photo). In his excellent opening address, Dr. George Pararas-Carayannis, outlined the extent and vast economic impact of disasters during the past 20 years: 3 million dead, 800 million affected, \$3100 million loss. Professor W. Munk, the doyen of oceanography, presented a superb review of the topical problem "Global warming and sea level." His important conclusion was that thermal expansion of the ocean could account for most of the present recorded sea level rise, and there is little justification for claims of sea level rise of the order of 2.5 m or more. After the morning opening session, the conference moved to Ensenada.

Sessions at the ensuing days addressed the problems of nearshore earthquakes and landslides, coastal erosion and engineering aspects, coastal pollution, storms and surge effects, including prediction of El Niño and giant ocean waves, tsunamis, ecological hazards, and legal aspects of coastal hazards. Included at the conference was the International Tsunami Society business meeting, and a meeting to review progress on the UNESCO sponsored resolution for the 1990s to be an "International Decade on Natural Disasters Reduction." Arising from this meeting was the formation of the "International Society for the Prevention and Miti-

gation of Natural Hazards" with M.I. El-Sabh (Canada) elected as President.

A feature of the conference was the strength of papers presented by the developing nations, particularly, from India, China, and the host country, Mexico, who exhibited many fine papers on wave theory. But a disappointing aspect was the inappropriate programming of some papers into unlikely sessions, and particularly the non-attendance of many participants listed in the programme.

The Mexican organising committee did a splendid job hosting the event at Ensenada, with excellent social functions, and a really friendly, welcoming, and efficient administrative team. It is hoped that future International Conferences on Natural Hazards (the next one to be in India in December, 1990) can continue this high standard of conference management, but improve on the pre-conference communication, dissemination of information for participants, and programme organisation, *e.g.* the guided tour of Scripps Institute promised to participants by the Scripps Organising Committee, was never, in fact, carried out.

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Photo. Participants to the International Conference on Natural and Man-Made Hazards in the Coastal Zone, held at La Jolla, California, and Ensenada, Mexico (August 14-21, 1988). (*Facing Page*).