



University of Puerto Rico
Río Piedras Campus
Faculty of General Studies
Physical Sciences Department



October 22, 2008

Press release: Planet Earth and Society Conference

International Year of Planet Earth at the international level:

The United Nations (UN), declared 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE) to emphasize the importance of earth sciences in achieving the sustainable development of the planet we inhabit. The UN designated the UNESCO, jointly with UN's Environmental Program (UNEP) and the International Union of Geologic Sciences (IUGS), to develop the activities during the triennium, 2007 to 2009. The Science Programme consists of 10 broad, societally relevant and multidisciplinary themes, framed in an outreach program, aimed to achieve a broad participation of communities, organizations, government and individuals in planetary topics, at local, regional and international levels.

The target of this world effort is captured in the subtitle of the International Year of Planet Earth: Earth Science for Society. It seeks to ensure greater and more effective use by society of the knowledge accumulated about the planet to build safer, healthier and wealthier societies around the globe.

International Year of Planet Earth at the Puerto Rico level:

The Department of Physical Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus joins the worldwide celebration of the International Year of Planet Earth with a series of events to be held from November 20 to 22, 2008 at the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras, with the slogan Planet Earth and Society: Earth Sciences and Human Activity. The events include a day of plenary sessions, field trips and virtual activities.

The local approach to complex issues, such as Planet Earth, can be diverse and interesting. Local scientific and educational research and outreach works will be featured at the Outreach Session during Friday, November 21, 2008. Call for an abstract is due on Friday, October 31, 2008. Two poster categories will be represented, a competitive poster on activities for classroom on Planet Earth for duos of teachers and the general outreach.

The events will seek to establish a forum for communicating earth sciences to the community at large. A virtual space will be available for discussion on Thursday, November 20, 2008. Please ask us if you are interested in participating in this videoconference.

Video Conference	
República Dominicana Panel	Puerto Rico Panel
Dr. Rafael Guardado Lacaba (Cuba)	Alejandro Soto (Puerto Rico)
Osiris de León (República Dominicana)	Jorge Ellis (Puerto Rico)

On Friday, November 21, 2008 we will celebrate a day of lectures based on the IYEP themes and posters presentations of educational research on the key issues under discussion.



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Conference	
Panelist	Themes
Dr. Jorge Ellis	UNESCO and the International Year of Planet Earth
Dr. Alberto López Venegas	Deep Earth: from crust to core
Dr. Wilson Ramírez	Climate: the "stone tape"
Local Posters	Local Outreach: Poster Session
Luis Rodríguez	Groundwater: towards sustainable use
Dr. Lizzette Rodríguez	Hazards: minimizing risk, maximising awareness
Dr. José Centeno	Earth and Health: building a safer environment

Finally on Saturday, November 22, 2008 we will carry out several field trips around the island.

Field Trips	
Resources	Theme
Alejandro Soto, SGPR	General geology of northern Puerto Rico
Arnaldo Hernández y Leandro Addarich, SGPR	General geology of southern Puerto Rico
Dr. Angel Olivares, Faculty of General Studies	Ecology and conservation of coastal systems
Dr. Luis Rivera, Faculty of General Studies	Karstic forests of northern Puerto Rico
Dr. Ricardo Morales, Faculty of General Studies	Climate of eastern Puerto Rico

The main objective of the events of Planet Earth and Society is to present information on topics relevant to planet Earth to the university community and the general public by professionals in earth sciences. The University of Puerto Rico will serve as a great discussion classroom and as a focal point of scientific and educational outreach. This would lay the groundwork for creating a permanent discussion forum of issues and problems in the earth sciences. We seek to emphasize the relevance and impact of earth sciences in human affairs in general. It is intended that these events increase the intellectual curiosity and capacity for reflection of the attending community, their commitment to social responsibility and the environment, their approach toward the Caribbean-geological conditions, their capacity for community service and the interest in the internationalization of our campus. Visit our website at <http://galileo.uprrp.edu/planetatierra2008>.

Sincerely,

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