



## Editorial at the occasion of the 100th volume of natural hazards

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The four issues of the first volume of *Natural Hazards* appeared between March 1988 and December 1989. This spans the time period during which I (James Goff) ventured out into the early stages of a research career that has become increasingly focussed on natural hazards. It also represented a time when society was starting to seriously consider the effects of natural hazards. Indeed, in the 1988 editorial then editors-in-chief stated:

In recent years, natural catastrophes have menaced the society of many countries more than at any previous time. Major hazards have challenged scientists, government officials, and the public in general.

These words are probably even more appropriate over 30 years later because we have now experienced several catastrophic natural disasters with one, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, standing out in particular since it brought into sharp international focus how societies can be overwhelmed by such events. It is sobering to recognise the international reach of such events—thousands of miles away this was Sweden’s worst natural disaster with 543 people killed by the tsunami. In spite of all the scientific, technological and administrative developments, the losses due to natural hazards continue to grow. For example, in the first 19 years of the 21st Century, more human lives were lost due to earthquakes and resultant tsunamis than the similar losses during the entire 20th Century. “Natural Hazards” was the focus in the centennial year 2019 of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) and the American Geophysical Union (AGU).

It is not necessarily a case of natural hazards becoming more common, but rather that these entirely natural processes that occur within the biophysical environment are from time to time a hazard that is capable of causing harm to people and communities and things we value. In other words, as the global population grows and the climate continues to

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change, we are increasingly putting ourselves in harm's way. It is true that climatic conditions are worsening, and as such, areas that may previously have been relatively safe are now increasingly exposed to a suite of climate-related hazards, so in that sense natural hazards are becoming more common and the need for risk reduction is growing. The journal has therefore expanded its focus to incorporate these two overarching elements: one that deals in all aspects of the biophysical system and the other with socio-economic issues and disaster risk management.

Of particular interest and value to the journal and researchers alike therefore are those works that cross these disciplinary divides. After all, a natural biophysical process is only a hazard when it has a negative impact on human systems (Goff and Dominey-Howes 2013). This need to understanding disaster risk, of which natural hazards are the key driver, has been re-emphasised time and again as a key imperative by the science community, following endorsement by the UN General Assembly of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. The journal could not be better placed to serve the interests of this growing research community. On a planet with a growing population, a rapidly changing climate, and a geological baseline of recognised ongoing extreme natural processes, there has never been a more important time for this journal and for the high-quality contributions that we publish.

## Reference

Goff J, Dominey-Howes D (2013) Tsunami. In: Shroder JF (ed) Treatise on geomorphology. Geomorphology of human disturbances, climate change, and natural hazards, vol 13. Academic Press, San Diego, pp 204–218

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