FOREWORD

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In the recent two years, the Far East region was marked by the manifestation of many strong destructive earthquakes: Olyutor (2006, $M_w = 7.6$), Gornozavodsk (2006, $M_w = 5.6$), Simushir (November 2006, $M_w = 8.3$; January 2007, $M_w = 8.1$), and Nevelsk (2007, $M_w = 6.2$). The latter earthquake and its aftershocks in South Sakhalin were so devastating that the town of Nevelsk has to be completely constructed anew. Two people were killed and tens of people were injured. The material damage amounted to more than 5 bln rubles. Seismologists believe that such events could take place in the nearest future in the southern area of the Kamchatka Peninsula and the South Kuril Islands.

The recent earthquakes in this region emphasize urgency of the provision of seismic safety for the population of the Russian Far East and East Siberia. The necessity of the revision of the seismic potential of many seismoactive regions is long overdue.

Thus, it has become clear that we should urgently carry out the scientific analysis and discussion of the new realities of the seismotectonics of the Far East region, elucidate the reasons responsible for the seismic events, assess the consequences, and predict new events. These issues were discussed in many reports delivered at the international symposium Problems of the Seismic Safety of the Far East and East Siberia held in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (September 27–30, 2007).

The present issue of our journal includes 11 papers devoted to the analysis of catastrophic earthquakes on Sakhalin Island and the Kuril Islands and to the elaboration of concepts of the behavior of the seismic processes in the Far East region.

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