Geophysical Research Abstracts, Vol. 9, 01602, 2007
SRef-ID: 1607-7962/gra/EGU2007-A-01602

Communicating environmental geoscience- a challenge for the geoscientific community

D.G.E. Liverman

Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Natural Resources, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, PO Box 8700, St. John's NL A1B 4J6, Canada (dliverman@gov.nl.ca)

There is a gulf between environmental geoscientists and those who could be using science in planning and decision-making. There are numerous examples of where scientific work has clearly indicated a direction in planning and policy, yet this has been ignored. This ranges from the global scale, where some countries resist scientific advice on climate change; to the local, where people live in places that are highly vulnerable to landslide, earthquake, flood, or other hazards. Policy makers frequently ignore the natural variation in earth systems when making decisions, and lack the long-term perspective that palaeoenvironmental research can offer.

Conventional means of producing geological information as designed for effective communication to the scientific peer group. Academic papers, geological maps, and conference presentations are designed to inform an audience that is familiar with geological principles and terminology. Consequently scientific input is commonly not sought, or used ineffectively, resulting in often unfortunate consequences

To address this problem the International Union of Geological Sciences Commission on Geosciences for Environmental Management accepted a proposal to set up a working group on "Communicating Environmental Geoscience".

The main task of the group is educating, training and assisting scientists in the following areas:- - Learning how to communicate effectively with non-scientists - Tool development - developing tools to aid scientists in communication - Communicating the concepts of risk, probability and natural variation in earth systems. - Building contacts and relationships with media, politicians and decision makers - Coordinating existing efforts to improve communication