



## SUBMISSION FORM

### PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION

*IUAES Scientific Commissions are defined as “groups of individual members OR group members of the Union who share a common academic or practical interest and have formed and maintained an active Commission according to the rules of the Union.” (IUAES STATUTES Art.5c.1)*

*“The Scientific Commissions are at the core of the academic activities of the Union.” (Art.8b.1)*

In order to propose a new Commission, please fill in this form and send it to:

[s-g\[at\]iaaes.org](mailto:s-g[at]iaaes.org)  
[iaaes.secretariat@idc.minpaku.ac.jp](mailto:iaaes.secretariat@idc.minpaku.ac.jp)

Proposals for the establishment of new Scientific Commissions must be supported by at least, but preferably more than ten paid up members of the IUAES. The list of supporting members should be as globally representative as possible.

In the process of evaluation of the proposal, the Executive Committee may provide feedbacks on the proposal and recommend revisions. In order for the Commission to be composed of globally representative members, the Executive Committee may provide the proposers with names of members who might potentially be members of the proposed Commission.

After approved by a two thirds majority of the Executive Committee, the proposal must also be approved by a two thirds majority of IUAES member in good standing at a General Assembly meeting or through an electronic vote.

(1) Planned name of the proposed Scientific Commission

Commission on \_The Anthropology of Risk and Disaster

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(2) New Commission Proposed by: Susanna\_M. Hoffman

Present title/position: Director

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(Ph.D. University of California, Berkeley: former professor University of San Francisco)

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Date of submission: August 29, 2016

Check the box to the right if you are aware, and you can ensure, that each Commission must/will contribute a panel to an IUAES World Congress or Inter-Congress, or to another major conference (so long as the panel is designated as IUAES sponsored), at least once in every three consecutive years (Art.7e).

Check that you are aware that each Commission is responsible for maintaining a list of members and for electing one chair and one deputy chair before the World Congress, that they are elected for a term of five years (renewable for one such term) in a democratic fashion by simple majority vote of the members of that Commission, and that all Commission members are eligible to self-nominate for election to these offices (Art.7f).

Check that you are aware that each Commission is required to submit an annual Commission report which should include the full list, and email addresses, of all the Commission members.

Check that you are aware that chairs and deputy chairs of Commissions comprise the Council of Commissions, that the Council elects a Head and Deputy Head from among Council members at each World Congress, and that the Head and Deputy Head become full voting members of the Executive Committee of the IUAES for the duration of their term between World Congresses. (Art.8b.2 - 3).

- (3) Explain your aims and objectives of establishing a new Commission. Be sure to include specific details so that you can demonstrate the uniqueness of the Commission you propose and the likelihood of new perspectives being brought about and/or introduced to IUAES members by its establishment.

(3) In the last few years two occurrences have taken place. One is that disasters of both geophysical and technological origin had become ever more frequent and severe across the planet. The alarming situation is due in large part to the increasing conditions of vulnerability among the human community affecting ever larger numbers of people as the previous set of driving factors of disaster is now combined with grave new components, global warming, coastward migration, urban densification, worldwide economic, developmental, and hegemonic policies. The other occurrence is the now almost totally accepted that there is no such thing as a natural disaster. All disaster are human caused at one level or another. Even such fields as seismology, climatology, and engineering have come to accept this second fact. There may be natural triggers to disasters, but it is what human chose or did or made or altered or ignored that results in disaster, including those erroneously called “natural” disasters, and clearly technological ones.

Along with these two happenings, and perhaps due to them, there has emerged a growing concession that the reason countless programs in risk reduction and disaster recovery worldwide have ended up as fiascos or even harm is that the deep and abiding culture of the people has rarely been considered. Indeed, if a people’s culture is not regarded in either risk reduction or disaster recovery, detrimental effects will result. As a result, the field of anthropology, its perspective and especially its core concept of culture, has come to be recognized as essential to the understanding and mitigation of risk, calamity, recovery and more and more, resettlement. Anthropology has, in fact, recently emerged as the cutting edge of disaster studies.

Yet only one anthropology organization has officially recognized the crucial importance of the field of disaster anthropology by establishing the topic as part of its core agenda. That one is the Society for Applied Anthropology in the United States. The branch is called the Risk and Disaster Thematic Interest (TIG) and it has grown exponentially since its inception. The first year the anthropology of disaster was presented as a theme at the SFAA, two or three panels with perhaps twelve presenters was anticipated. Instead, one hundred and three presenters attended, making up close to thirty panels. The next year the number grew to one hundred twenty-five; the year following year, one hundred thirty-five. The topic proved so germane that a vibrant network was formed complete with a posting list, Facebook page, and other media presence. There are now several hundred members of the SfAA TIG. A considerable number at this point are not even anthropologists, but their fields and interests overlap and they strongly recognize the pertinence of anthropology to their endeavors.

At the same time, three of the founding books in the field of disaster anthropology have become best sellers for their respective publishers: *The Angry Earth* (Anthony Oliver-Smith and Susanna M. Hoffman, editors, Routledge Press), *Catastrophe and Culture* (Susanna M. Hoffman and Anthony Oliver-Smith, School of Advanced Research Press), and *Disaster Culture* (Gregory Button, Left Coast Press). Routledge has, in fact, asked for a second edition of *The Angry Earth* which is in process. Along with these, an almost plethora of other volumes on various aspects of the anthropology of risk and disaster have appeared. Some are theoretical; others involve case studies. These include *Killing with Kindness and Humanitarian Aftershocks* (Mark Schuller, Rutgers University Press), *Watermarks: Urban Flooding and Memoryscape* (Susann Ullberg, University of Stockholm Press), *Standing in the Need* (Katherine Browne, University of Texas Press) and *Governing Affect* (Roberto Barrios, University of Nebraska Press) and many more. Three major academic publishers, Routledge, Elsevier, and Berghahn, noting the growth and crucial nature of the topic, have also now established ongoing and expanding series in the anthropology of disaster. Berghahn alone has three volumes on disaster currently in their pipeline and are seeking more. Routledge is producing a handbook on the anthropology of disasters and is also looking to add to their disaster series. Presentations dealing with disaster at the IUAES congress, the American Anthropology Association meetings, the European

Association of Social Anthropologists meetings, and the Chinese and Japanese Associations conferences have all witnessed a major increase in presentations on the topic. The presentations are drawing international contributors and large audiences. Presenters at the IUAES meeting in Dubrovnik came from New Zealand, Germany, the Philippines, Chile and the United States. Two years prior at the meeting Chiba City, there were numerous panels on disaster, many from Japan and other Asian countries as well as Europe, the United States, and Mexico. Disaster panels also cross over to other subjects, such as the worldwide food crises, oil and gas extraction, climate change, and health. Last but by no means least, centers dedicated to the anthropology of disaster have formed in a number of worldwide places: Sweden; Denmark; Portugal; and China among them. They join already extant centers for the study in Mexico, all over Latin and South America, and the United States. And as a top note, two anthropologists of disaster have recently received both the Malinowski and Margaret Mead Awards.

Considering all the above, the objectives in establishing a commission in the field of Disaster Anthropology for the IUAES are: 1) to take this rapid and crucial interest further and wider. 2) To expand the consciousness of the anthropological community to understand the significance of the topic and its issues globally and across the board in anthropology and ethnographic work. And 3), on the flip side of that same consciousness raising coin, to make the policy-practice community aware of how much anthropology can contribute to their efforts. It is also time to acknowledge that many of the communities we anthropologists have studied throughout the history of our discipline have experienced a disaster of one sort or another, recognized or not and many of our study sites face them in the future.

- (4) Describe the specific subfields or specific topics of anthropology/ethnology which will be the focus and concern of the proposed new Commission.

Significantly, perhaps because of its sudden and critical pertinence, the field of disaster anthropology has recently been recognized as currently perhaps the most theoretically innovative in the entire field of anthropology. The statement speaks to the broad sweep of social and cultural concerns involved, as well as to its current exigency. As stated above, disasters and their impacts are increasing. Disasters are also totalizing processes and events, touching every domain of human life. As such, virtually every subfield of anthropology can be, and is, engaged with the topic and from both materialist and culturalist perspectives. Among the anthropological subfields encompassed are: Environmental Anthropology; Ecology and Political Ecology; Economics Anthropology; Social Structure, including kinship, class and ethnic divisions, and voluntary associations; Inheritance; Climate Change; Archaeology and Cultural History; Religion, Ideology and Symbolism; Law and Issues of Justice; Identity and Place Attachment; Cognition and Perception, including time, space, and risk; Memory and Memorialization; Expressive Culture, including art, legend, storytelling, and song; Food and Nutrition and Water; Medical Anthropology, including disease and illness onsets, epidemics, chronic illness, and delivery of health services; Displacement and Resettlement; Development and Neoliberalism; Material Culture, including the habitat, other structures, and material goods; Global Action Movements; Conflict; Continuity; and the current fad, Resilience, in other words, sustainability and adaptation.

- (5) The theme of a new Commission should not duplicate the theme of an existing Commission. If there is any possibility of duplication, please describe the differences between the Commission you propose and those of existing Commissions.

The Commission of the Anthropology of Disaster does not duplicate any existing Commission within the IUAES. It will, however, overlap with some and bring new perspectives.

(6) Explain/describe what kind of academic and other activities you plan to carry out.

As I was the person who began the Risk Disaster Thematic Interest Group for the Society for Applied Anthropology, I would do the same for the IUAES only with expanded international participation. The highly successful disaster TIG at the SfAA already has ongoing participants from at least ten countries. IUAES offers opportunity to grow yet larger as a large percentage of IUAES members come from regions where disasters are chronic, severe, and swelling. I would seek to bring in new members (I have already brought some in), and expand the panel activity with both old and new members contributing. The new commission would as well seek to: 1) diversify anthropological participation in the field of disaster anthropology by demonstrating that there is no dimension of human life and thought that is not impacted by a disaster. 2) endeavour to expand the use and application of anthropological concepts, knowledge, and methods far more extensively into vast arena of management of risk, disaster, recovery and mitigation. The lack of attention to culture, although now recognized in the research community, has still to penetrate into the policy practice fields to any great extent. The commission would seek to demonstrate conclusively that anthropological methods and information can make risk reduction more effective, aid delivery more efficient and effective, and reconstruction far more appropriate and accepted by affected populations.

Already, the SfAA Risk and Disaster TIG grown beyond anthropology to include sociologists, psychologists, architects, city planners, medical doctors, structural engineers, government and non-government agents. If the IUAES is open to crossing into such non-anthropological fields, in terms of disaster reduction and disaster understanding, I would seek to do the same with its commission.

(7) Explain/describe all your concrete plans for conferences, symposia, conference panels and panels at the World Congress or Inter-Congress of IUAES or at another major meeting.

As the founder of the Society for Applied Anthropology Thematic Interest Group in the Anthropology of Risk and Disaster, I already have a great deal of experience in enlisting speakers, forming panels, and organizing schedule at conferences on the topic. What I did for the SfAA, I would attempt to do for IUAES, that is, form a large contingency of experts on all aspects of the topic from many regions and representing many sort of events and cases who would attend meetings, present, and potentially develop articles for publication. While I cannot state any "concrete" plans at this point, it will be quite easy for me to make sure that there is an IUAES sponsored panel at the IUAES congresses and in addition to see that there is at least one IUAES sponsored panel represented at other society meetings, SfAA, AAA, EASA, among others. In addition, I will, perhaps jointly with the SfAA, attempt to develop single topic conferences on the anthropology of risk and disaster.

(8) Explain if you have concrete plans for publications by your proposed Commission.

The TIG at the SfAA has already published sets of articles on disaster in two major journals, Human Organization and Annals of Anthropology. I further had my own articles published by, and have very close relations with, the editors of the disaster series with all three notable publishers on the topic, Berghahn, Routledge, and Elsevier. I am co-editing one of the books for the Berghahn series currently, with two more in development, one tentatively using expanded papers from both the UAES session in Chiba City and Dubrovnik. While again I do not as yet have concrete plans for publications beyond the above, already one of the new members I have brought into the IUAES is seeking to explore a IUAES funding grant for publication of articles. He was the editor of both the Human Organization and the Annals of Anthropology collections.

(9) Provide any other useful information that may support the proposal.

I believe the above sections have covered most of the information I can offer at this time.

(10) Proposals for the establishment of new Scientific Commissions must be supported by at least, but preferably more than ten paid up members (individual or group/corporate members) of the IUAES (Art.7b). Please list them below with their names, present titles/positions, institutions, addresses, countries, phone numbers (with country code) and e-mail addresses. This list should be as globally representative as possible.

PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED PAGES.

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<http://www.uc.pt/fctuc/dcv/>  
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[http://www.uc.pt/fctuc/dcv/ensino/dou\\_antrop](http://www.uc.pt/fctuc/dcv/ensino/dou_antrop)  
<https://estudogeral.sib.uc.pt/handle/10316/14637>  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/18799817>  
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