



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



May 1, 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 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. On Friday, November 21, 2008 we will celebrate a day of lectures



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based on the IYEP themes and posters presentations of educational research on the key issues under discussion. Finally on Saturday, November 22, 2008 we will carry out several field trips around the island of Puerto Rico. The theme of the whole sequence will relate to the interior structure of the planet, geological hazards, groundwater resources, climate record, as well as geology and health.

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.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lorna G. Jaramillo Nieves  
Conference Coordinator  
787-764-0000 X 2209  
787-562-5186  
email: [jaramillolg@gmail.com](mailto:jaramillolg@gmail.com)

Dr. Fernando Noriega Castillo  
Director  
Department of Physical Sciences  
787-764-0000 x 2209  
email: [cifi@uprrp.edu](mailto:cifi@uprrp.edu)