

FIRST CIRCULAR



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

on

THE GEODYNAMICS OF AFAR AND THE ETHIOPIAN RIFTS: *Geohazard Challenges, Resources*

November 1-4, 2007
Addis Ababa

Organized by
Geophysical Observatory, AAU

Address to register and submit Abstracts:

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Deadline: August 30, 2007



Dalol Potash



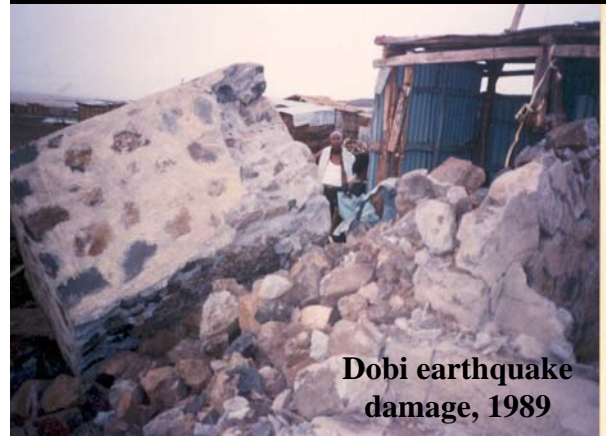
Da'ure Vent



Metehara fissure



Ert Ale volcano



Dobi earthquake
damage, 1989

First Circular

International Scientific Conference to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Geophysical Observatory of Addis Ababa University

Background

The Geophysical Observatory of Addis Abeba University was established during the International Geophysical Year (IGY), on November 2, 1957. It started its operations as a geomagnetic observatory to study the earth's magnetism. In 1959 seismological observation was started using Wood-Anderson and Willmore seismometers with photographic recording. This was augmented with a WWSSN equipment system in 1962. Due to its strategic location close to the Magnetic Equator and the western margin of the most active sector of the East African Rift System, the observatory's work in the fields of geomagnetism and seismology have remained of central importance.

Since the establishment of the WWSSN the interpretation of seismograms and the determination of earthquake parameters for regional earthquakes led to the publication of several research papers. In 1979, the book "Earthquake History of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa" was published by Professor Pierre Gouin, the observatory's founder and first director.

The observatory has made ground-breaking contributions to the knowledge of the geological development of Ethiopia and the process of rifting. An early staff member of the observatory, Professor Paul Mohr, made contributions in this area through the compilation of the first Geological Map of Ethiopia (1962) and the identification of the Wenji Fault Belt as the most recent expression of the tectonic and magmatic development of the East African Rift System in Ethiopia (1967).

At the regional and international levels, the observatory's role as a generator of geophysical data has been very important. Through the collaboration and support of universities and research agencies in Europe and America it participated in research in the geodynamics of the Afar and the Main Ethiopian Rift. Locally this enabled the Observatory to make significant contribution to the better understanding of geophysics and tectonics of the rift system within Ethiopia.

Now approaching the 50th anniversary of its founding, the Geophysical Observatory of Addis Abeba University invites its friends and research collaborators, old and new, to share in the anniversary celebrations during 2 to 4 November 2007.

The year 2007 is also the 50th anniversary of the IGY and has furthermore been declared the International Heliophysical Year. It is a happy coincidence for the Observatory, as an Ethiopian national institution, that 2007 is the also the beginning

of the Third Ethiopian Millennium, an occasion already attracting world-wide attention.

The Anniversary Celebrations Organizing Committee, 50AOC, views the occasion as an opportunity for a valuable retrospective view of the observatory's past history and the prospects for the future.

One of the planned anniversary marking events will be the hosting of an International Scientific Conference.

This 1st Circular is to announce the organization of the planned conference and to provide preliminary information to prospective participants.

The Conference

The international conference is being organized to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of scientific information in the geoscientific fields of endeavor that the Geophysical Observatory and other national, regional and international institutions engage in.

The theme of the conference is presently proposed to be "Geodynamics of Afar and the Ethiopian Rifts: Geohazard Challenges, Resources"

Venue

The conference is tentatively planned to be held in the new Graduate Program Building of the Faculty of Science.

Activities

The planned activities comprise technical sessions in plenary and a field trip. The details of the organization and scientific program of the conference and the field trip will be announced through a 2nd Circular that is planned to be issued on 30 May 2007. The following tentative programs will be modified and finalized following the evaluation of expressions of interest and suggestions by prospective participants.

It is tentatively planned that there will be a two-day technical program of four sessions during which 20 oral and a number of poster presentations will be made. Two key-note addresses on special topics are planned to be delivered by invited guests

A two-day post-conference field trip to the northern sector of the Main Ethiopian Rift is tentatively planned. The Wenji Fault Belt can be viewed at a number of places along the axial zone of the rift floor. The western and eastern margins of the rift may also be visited to provide views of these contrasting tectonic features

The conference organizing committee recognizes that the observatory's work is so much the richer due to its being an element within that of a vigorous international scientific community and would like to highlight this by responding to suggestions by

the observatory's, friends, collaborators and supporters regarding the structure and content of the conference and welcome any suggestions.

Fees

The conference organizers are endeavoring to raise financial support for meeting part of the cost of the conference. In order to contribute to offsetting this cost, participants will be charged conferences participation and field trip fees.

Social Functions

A reception for welcoming conference participants and a farewell dinner at the end of the conference are planned

Travel Arrangements

Participants will be responsible for making their own arrangements for acquiring entry visas for Ethiopia (where required) and for making airline reservations. The conference organizers will however provide advise and assistance upon request.

Accommodation

It is expected that there will be difficulties in finding hotel accommodation in Addis Abeba due to the large influx of visitors expected to arrive from overseas on the occasion of the commencement of the 3rd Ethiopian Millennium (11 September 2007) and during the following months. Persons who wish to participate in the conference are advised to inform the organizing committee of their requirements for accommodation at their earliest convenience. The conference organizers will provide assistance in making reservations well in advance.

Communication

50AOC has created a Sub-Committee, 50AOC-SCP to take charge of Conference Organization and the production of conference publications and documentation. All communication regarding the planned conference and field trip may be directed to it at the following addresses:

Scientific Conference and Publications Sub-Committee
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