

An International Day for Seismology: rationale, co-ordination, and planning

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Why do we need a World Seismology Day?

Several areas of science have been assigned a UN-recognised day for the field (e.g., World Meteorological Day, World Tsunami Awareness Day, World Oceans Day); however, such a day is presently lacking for seismology. In preparation for a “Seismology Day”, we would like to gauge the degree of support within the seismology community and increase momentum behind the idea. A World Seismology Day will not only provide a focal point every year for outreach and public engagement activities but furthermore, gives researchers a higher chance of success with funding that supports such activities.

Traditionally, seismologists are seen as focusing on studying earthquake sources and seismic hazard. However, seismology is not only limited to earthquake studies: for example, much of our knowledge of the deep interior of our planet is thanks to seismology. New branches in seismology are using different types of sources other than earthquakes: natural (e.g. ambient noise, weather storm monitoring, volcanic tremors, mass-wasting events), and man-made (e.g., controlled sources for geophysical studies and nuclear explosions), the latter playing a crucial role in the nuclear test-ban treaty monitoring. Seismologists are not only studying Earth but are also exploring other planets and moons. In addition, engineering seismology is making our society safer. Unfortunately, much of this cutting-edge research is less known to the public resulting in many seismologists, specialising in one of the above-mentioned fields, left unappreciated.

A raised profile

We believe that the profile of seismologists and the vast array of studies associated with their work can be raised through a celebration of an international seismology day. Currently, non-UN-recognised days associated with earthquakes (e.g., ShakeOut, Vancouver Earthquake Day) are scattered on different days across various countries around the world. A single global day will have a stronger impact on community outreach and international policy; will not only be limited to earthquakes and hazard preparation but will also be representative of a wider scientific community; will help encourage young scientists to pursue a career in Earth sciences; will help attract research funds locally and internationally; and, will have long-term benefits for the global community in general.

The way forward

A steering committee has recently been formed to oversee the process of proposing a list of possible seismology days and to run a poll to select a single day. The seismology day will ultimately have to be endorsed by IASPEI. We are keen to receive feedback from seismologists and other interested people on our plans for the seismological community. People interested in joining the steering committee are invited to contact us.

We need your help, join us today!

We need your help! We seek volunteers to help us reach out to the World as much as possible, and make a Seismology Day a truly international initiative. We require help with the following:

- Regional public relations officers
- Website administrator
- Website editor
- Graphic designers
- Blog writers
- National language translators

If you are interested in any of the above and in joining a diverse dynamic team, please contact any of the above listed people, or e-mail matthew.agius@soton.ac.uk.

Become a proud sponsor

Although this initiative is entirely voluntary, financial assistance is necessary to help with setting up and maintaining a dedicated website. This requires IT services for designing, hosting, and database management. Furthermore, financial assistance is required to help with promoting a Seismology Day worldwide by, for example, attending regional conferences and meetings, and printing of posters, and leaflets. Companies and organisations interested to sponsor are kindly asked to contact matthew.agius@soton.ac.uk.

