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## New Swiss Re publication: Natural catastrophes and reinsurance – Swiss Re presents some methods for risk assessment

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**Zurich, 8 May 2003 - Although nobody can say for certain exactly when natural catastrophes will occur, reinsurers are now in a position to assess the risk posed by natural catastrophes with a considerable degree of accuracy. Swiss Re presents the methods and concepts that it uses to quantify the risk in its new publication "Natural catastrophes and reinsurance".**

Year in, year out countless human lives are lost and considerable property damage is caused by natural catastrophes. In spite of huge annual fluctuations, a clear trend becomes apparent from looking at natural catastrophes over the last 30 years, indicating that insurance losses caused by natural catastrophes have risen dramatically. This increase mainly reflects higher population densities, a rise in insurance density in high-risk areas and the high vulnerability of some modern materials and technologies. Furthermore, this is a consistent trend: losses caused by natural catastrophes will continue to rise.

Demand for insurance against natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, windstorms and floods has steadily increased in the past, as has the willingness of re/insurers to cover these risks. Scientific and technological progress have significantly advanced our understanding of the causes and effects of natural catastrophes: hazard maps, construction standards and emergency planning all help the industry prepare for future scenarios.

This is the context in which Swiss Re, the world's second-largest reinsurer, is publishing "Natural catastrophes and reinsurance".

One of the insurance industry's key responsibilities is to assist in the risk mitigation process. The objective is to form a community of insureds whose premium payments will be sufficient to cover the cost of repairing the damage in the wake of natural catastrophes. The requisite risk assessment is carried out by means of computer-aided loss modelling. Modelling programmes developed by Swiss Re provide risk analysis for earthquakes (global), tropical cyclones

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(global, including storm floods), winter storms (Europe) and floods (selected markets).

The publication is primarily aimed at direct insurers and reinsurers, while also providing an insight into the practical application of scientific risk research to any interested parties among the broader public.

**You can order a copy as follows:**

"Natural catastrophes and reinsurance" is available in German and English. French, Spanish and Chinese editions will follow.

This publication is a complete revision of "Natural hazard and event loss", which was published in 1988.

Swiss Re also offers clients and other interested parties "CatNet", an interactive atlas with global hazard maps of the main natural hazards, data on historical events and analyses of various insurance markets.

To order a copy (order no. 1493661\_03\_language code), please send a fax with your full postal address to:

**Zurich:** +41 43 285 2023  
**London:** +44 20 7814 3014

The publication is also available on the Internet at [www.swissre.com](http://www.swissre.com), in the Swiss Re Publishing section, from where it can be downloaded.

This press release is also available by e-mail; to receive a copy, please contact [media\\_relations@swissre.com](mailto:media_relations@swissre.com).

Swiss Re plans to hold a media information session on the subject of natural catastrophes and reinsurance in London. For further information, please contact:

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**Notes for editors:**

Swiss Re is one of the world's leading reinsurers and the world's largest life and health reinsurer. The company operates globally with 70 group companies in 30 countries. Swiss Re has been in the reinsurance business since its foundation in 1863. The company is divided into three business groups: Property & Casualty, Life & Health and Financial Services. Swiss Re offers a wide range of traditional reinsurance products to provide comprehensive cover for insurance risks, including insurance-based solutions for corporate financing and supplementary services. Swiss Re is rated "AA+" by Standard & Poor's, "Aa1", by Moody's and "A++" by AM Best.