



Swiss Re



News Release

For immediate release

Beijing Normal University and Swiss Re today launched a new catastrophe atlas for China, setting forth 500 years' worth of risk data.

Beijing, 20 February 2004: Beijing Normal University (BNU) and Swiss Re, a leading international reinsurance company, today launched the new "Atlas of Natural Disaster System in China". The atlas is the most comprehensive map series of natural catastrophe risk in China ever published and is intended to help insurers and the general public to better understand natural catastrophe risk in China. Swiss Re is the sole financial sponsor of the project.

The atlas contains 500 years' worth of data on earthquake, flood, typhoon, snow and hailstorm risks and includes more than 400 maps and 50 statistical tables. It was produced by BNU's Research Centre on Natural Catastrophe Exposure and Insurance (the Centre), which was set up as a joint effort by BNU and Swiss Re in 1999. The book gives a unique perspective on disaster patterns across China and provides detailed information on China's major natural perils, looking at how they are formed, their characteristics, their distribution across the country and evolving changes over time.

In 2002 alone, the direct economic losses caused by natural disasters in China totalled USD6.3 billion, according to Swiss Re *sigma* statistics. "Natural catastrophe risk management is thus vital to the future growth and development of the Chinese economy," said Franz-Josef Hahn, Member of Executive Team of Asia Division & Head of Greater China, Swiss Re Property & Casualty, commenting on the launch. "The data in this atlas will provide a scientific reference to help the insurance industry evaluate and anticipate nat cat risks, and develop viable insurance solutions for protection against them," Mr Hahn added.

Professor Shi Peijun, Vice President of BNU, who leads the work of the Centre's 32 staff, said: "This new data bring together the findings of many, many scientific projects at national, provincial, ministry and local levels. It reveals the fundamental system of disaster formation and its evolution pattern and will be of great value in promoting disaster reduction in China."

The atlas is the result of four years of research and is one of the Centre's key projects. In line with Swiss Re's policy of sharing global expertise, the atlas, including an electronic format, will be made available from major book stores.

Contact

Swiss Re Corporate Communications, Asia, tel +852 2582 3660, email asia@swissre.com

Beijing Normal University, tel: +86 10 6220 7656, email spj@bnu.edu.cn

Notes for Editors

About Swiss Re

Swiss Re is a leading reinsurer and the world's largest life and health reinsurer. The company is global, operating from 70 offices in 30 countries. Since its foundation in 1863, Swiss Re has been in the reinsurance business. Swiss Re has three business groups: Property & Casualty, Life & Health and Financial Services. Swiss Re offers a wide range of traditional reinsurance products and related services, which are complemented by insurance-based corporate finance solutions and supplementary services. Swiss Re is rated "AA" by Standard & Poor's, "Aa1" by Moody's and "A+" by A.M. Best.

About Beijing Normal University

Founded in 1902, Beijing Normal University (BNU) is one of China's ten key universities and one of the country's earliest-established institutions of higher learning. It is a multi-disciplinary university, with an international reputation for high quality teaching and research. BNU has 12 colleges, 24 departments, 21 research institutes and 25 research centres.

The University's School of Resources and Environment has studied natural disaster and insurance for many years, accumulating vast amounts of data and research experience.

About the Research Centre on Natural Catastrophe Exposure and Insurance, Beijing Normal University

The Research Centre for Natural Catastrophe Exposure and Insurance (the Centre) was formally launched in 1999 by Beijing Normal University (BNU) and Swiss Reinsurance Company.

It combines BNU's data and experience with Swiss Re's technical guidance and support to study natural catastrophes in China and develop, using insurance and reinsurance, means of managing the losses caused by major natural perils.

Co-operation between BNU and Swiss Re began in early 1998, following a Swiss Re seminar in Beijing on natural perils and insurance/reinsurance techniques. Speakers from BNU and the State Seismological Bureau looked at flood and earthquake risks, impressing Swiss Re's representatives with their depth of knowledge and extensive research experience.

As a result, the reinsurer started to co-operate formally with BNU to set up the Centre and this process culminated in April 1999 with an official signing ceremony and launch. Present were Pierre Ozendo, Chief Executive Officer of Swiss Re's Asia Division, and Guiren Yuan, President of BNU.

The Centre is managed by the Key Laboratory of Environmental Change and Natural Disaster of the Ministry of Education and the College of Resources Science & Technology, Beijing Normal University. Swiss Re is the sole financial sponsor of the Centre.