

## How to Handle Natural Disasters

Professor of Geology John F. Dewey Will Speak about Earthquakes, Volcanic Eruptions, and Tsunamis as a Challenge for Man and Politics at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Geo-KIT Symposium



*Destructive forces of nature are in the focus of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Geo-KIT Symposium (Photo: KIT)*

**Natural disasters are unavoidable, many of their consequences are not. On Tuesday, January 26, 18 hrs, Oxford emeritus John F. Dewey will speak about how mankind can better prepare for earthquakes or volcanic eruptions at the Großer Bauingenieur-Hörsaal, Baumeister-Platz 1, building 10.50, KIT Campus South. This presentation in English will be part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Geo-KIT Symposium, an event organized jointly by the Institute for Applied Geosciences and ZAK | Center for Applied Cultural Science and Studium Generale.**

The tsunami in Southeast Asia in 2004 and the current earthquake catastrophe on Haiti reveal the destructive force of our planet. Since four and a half billion years, the earth has been threatened episodically or at periodic time intervals by a series of natural disasters of various type, duration, and intensity. They are caused by the inner forces of the earth (e.g. earthquakes and volcanic

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eruptions) or the solar system (for example, meteorite impacts from space).

In his public presentation “Natural Geohazards – Governmental and Individual Responsibility”, John F. Dewey will refer to various examples of earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis. According to the professor of geology, the central challenge for mankind lies in the precise forecast of such events. Continuous recordings of measurement data and their modeling on various time scales from one to ten to thousand years and understanding of geological and physical processes may contribute to mitigating economic, political, and humanitarian damage. However, this requires an effective knowledge transfer from research to the parties affected as well as increased individual and societal responsibility in handling natural hazards, for instance, when settling on hazardous areas.



Professor of geology John Frederick Dewey “in the field”. (Photo: private)

John Frederick Dewey, born 1937, is emeritus of the University of Oxford and Professor of Geology at the University of California. The structural geologist is the leading representative of the theory of plate tectonics, according to which the lithosphere (the earth’s crust and uppermost earth mantle) consists of about 20 rigid plates that move relatively to each other at various speeds. Dewey is an authority in the field of the evolution and development of mountain chains and Fellow of the British Royal Society.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Geo-KIT Symposium “New Ideas of Plate Tectonic Problems” at KIT does not only comprise this public presentation, but also an expert workshop on two mornings, during which John F. Dewey will present current findings relating to mechanical processes at the plate boundaries. At these plate boundaries located on continents or at the bottom of oceans, rock crust is “created” or “swallowed”. Detailed knowledge of these mechanisms is required to better understand natural hazards like earthquakes. The Geo-KIT Symposium is funded by the KIT Earth and Environment Competence Area. It will provide students and scientists of KIT with

an opportunity to exchange opinion with prominent, internationally renowned geoscientists.

**Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation and state institution of Baden-Württemberg. It fulfills the mission of a university and the mission of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. KIT pursues its tasks in the knowledge triangle of research, teaching, and innovation.**

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