

KICK-OFF MEETING OF RADIUS PROJECT

In the Main Conference Room of the City Hall, on the 19th of May, 1998, the Municipal Government of Guayaquil officially inaugurated RADIUS project, an English acronym for "Risk Assessment Tools for Diagnosis of Urban Areas against Seismic Disasters".

RADIUS is a project promoted by the Secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) of the United Nations which is currently being carried out simultaneously in 9 cities that were selected in January 1998, after a rigorous selection process where 58 cities from all over the world participated.

Initial work began in February 1998, under the direction of the Office of Urban Planning and Development of the City of Guayaquil, and under the technical responsibility of the Research and Development Institute of the School of Engineering of Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil (IIFIUC) and the supervision of GeoHazards International Institute from the University of Stanford, California.

The Project will finish on July 31, 1999, when two main objectives will be satisfied:

- a) An Action Plan for the Reduction of the Seismic Risk in each of the nine cities, based on the "Seismic Scenarios" locally, prepared and;
- b) A set of Planning Tools for the Diagnosis of the Seismic Risk in Urban Zones, that the United Nations will share with many other cities around the world, that are located in seismic risk zones, just like Guayaquil City.



Mr. Luis Chiriboga Parra (center) during the inaugural session of RADIUS project, with Mr. Víctor Aznar (to his right), from the Office of the United Nations in Ecuador. (Taken from Diario Hoy of May 20, 1998).

The Program of the Kick-off Meeting was as follows:

1. Welcoming Address by Mr. Luis Chiriboga Parra, Vice-Mayor of the City of Guayaquil;
2. Lecture: "The City on a Glance", by Mr. Felipe Huerta Llona (Municipal Government of Guayaquil).
3. Lecture: An Introduction to RADIUS project by Dr. Carlos Villacís (GeoHazards International), Co-Director of Project RADIUS;
4. Conference about the Historical Seismicity of the Country and Region, by Mr. Hugo Yepes, Director of The National Institute of Geophysics;
5. Conference about Objectives, Working Plan and Organization of Project RADIUS by Mr. Jaime Argudo (Universidad Católica de Guayaquil), Responsible Scientist of the project;
6. Explanation about the Role of The Advisory Committee, by Dr. Carlos Villacís;
7. Presentation of a Report about current status of the project, by Mr. Guillermo Arguello, Director of the Office of Urban Planning and Development of the City of Guayaquil.

1. WELCOMING ADDRESS:

In his welcoming address, Mr. Luis Chiriboga expressed on behalf of the City, his satisfaction for the selection of Guayaquil for Project RADIUS and stated that the Municipal Government is supporting and working together with the United Nations in this initiative aimed to produce worldwide common tools for the reduction of seismic risk.

He mentioned that the Municipal Government of Guayaquil in this year of 1998 will have a new digital cartography covering the whole city, and that important investments are being carried out aimed to the strengthening of the Municipal Planning.

He reminded that in the last six years the City of Guayaquil has made a lot of progress in this field, and based on that, it is possible nowadays for our city to contribute to world efforts such as the Project RADIUS.

2. THE CITY ON A GLANCE:

A historical account of the City was presented, its relationship to the region and the cause of its big urban and demographic growth, specially during the sixties and seventies.

It was concluded that this unplanned growth is one of the main reasons for the Seismic Risk to be incremented in such an important way.

As a historical note, during the earthquake of may 13, 1942, the City had only 180.000 inhabitants in an area of 8 km². Today, it has more than two millions inhabitants in an urban area of 338 km².

3. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT:

Dr. Carlos Villacís emphasized the importance of the participation of private and public institutions, NGO's from the city and country in the different stages of the Project, as well as the support that must be given by the media to allow the results of the project to be publicized to the Guayaquil community.

He explained the purpose of the two Workshops that will be organized in October 1998 and in March 1999, the former for the discussion of the Seismic Scenario and the latter for the discussion of the Action Plan.

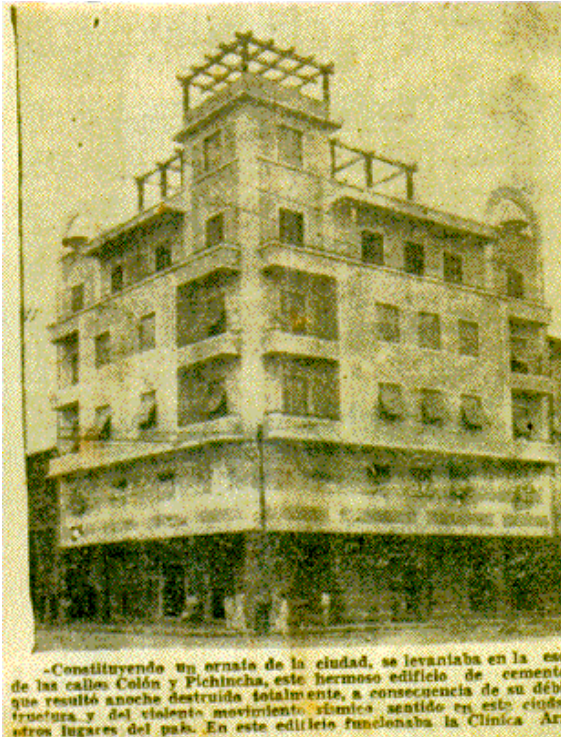


Dr. Carlos Villacís (GeoHazards International), emphasizing the participation of the Advisory Committee . (Taken from Diario El Telégrafo of may 20, 1998).

4. HISTORICAL SEISMICITY OF THE COUNTRY AND REGION:

According to the historical Seismicity of Guayaquil and the region, there is a high probability that the city will experience in the future an earthquake of a maximum Intensity of VIII in Modified Mercalli Scale.

This Intensity defines structural damage in structures designed against earthquakes, considerable damage and even partial collapse in strong constructions without seismic resistant design, and major damage in poorly constructed structures.



Building of Clínica Arreaga, one of the two which collapsed during the earthquake of may 13, 1942. (Taken from Diario El Universo).

5. OBJECTIVES, WORKING PLAN AND ORGANIZATION:

The Project has three stages:

- a) Gathering of available information (February to May 1998);
- b) Preparation of the Seismic Scenario of Damages (June to October 1998);
- c) Preparation of the Action Plan for the mitigation of damages caused by an earthquake (November 1998 to July 1999).

It was informed that the first stage has been successfully completed, thanks to the contribution given by the institutions to whom the support was requested.

Emphasis was made in that the Project is for the whole City and that the results will be totally shared and publicized to the community.

6. ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Scenario, more than thirty officials from local institutions will be interviewed to know from them the state and vulnerability of the systems they administrate, which are considered vital for the City and must be able to withstand the most probable earthquakes. Their knowledge and experience will be incorporated to this study, together with the theoretical simulations that will be conducted to estimate the damage due to an hypothetical earthquake.

It was announced that in the design of the “ Action Plan”, special treatment will be given to the safety of essential structures (hospitals, schools, etc.) and also a detailed study of the different types of buildings with great seismic risk.



A type of structure with a high seismic risk are those condominiums built by BEV in Sauces IX, in which extensions have been built without any structural design and technical supervision. (Taken from the archives of IIFIUC - Universidad Católica, Project FUNDACYT-BID).

COMMITTEE:

have been produced until now.

An Advisory Committee will be established for the RADIUS project. This Committee will be formed by various representatives of important local organizations; Ecuadorian and foreign; public and private, and its principal functions will be as follows:

- a) to advise the local Executive Committee in charge of the fulfillment of the project;
- b) to give support to the project activities during their fulfillment; and,
- c) to promote the diffusion of the Action Plan within the community.

7. REPORT ON CURRENT STATUS OF PROJECT:

The Director of the Office of Urban Planning and Development of the City of Guayaquil, Mr. Guillermo Arguello, emphasized the current development of this study: all the infrastructure information of the city has been gathered and many theme maps of the different basic services (water supply, electricity, sewage, etc.) and the urban services (hospitals, schools, etc.) combined with the expected seismic intensities for the different types of soils



Diario El Universo, 28 de mayo de 1998.

