

14 March 2020

Dear Friends,

As you are no doubt aware, the COVID-19 virus is spreading around the world. Increasing numbers of restrictions are being placed on travel by governments, employers, and industry to reduce the spread of the virus. As a result, it is not possible to conduct the *16th Multidisciplinary Conference on Sinkholes and the Engineering and Environmental Impacts of Karst* (more commonly called *The Sinkhole Conference*) as originally planned for next month from 20-24 April 2020 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. However, we have arranged with our partners and hotel to reschedule it for 12-16 April 2021.

We have selected April 2021 as the most assured date when the conference can be held with minimal health risks associated with the COVID-19 virus, while meeting our logistical obligations to our participants and partners. This later date also avoids conflict with other conferences scheduled at the end of this year that many of you are already planning to attend.

Here are the most important things you need to know about this change:

- The extra time allows us to accept more papers! The proceedings with the papers we have received already will be published and posted digitally as scheduled by the end of April 2020. New abstracts and papers will be accepted for a second edition of the proceedings that will be released during the conference next year. We will soon post a schedule for submitting new abstracts and papers.
- If you are a potential sponsor or exhibitor, you now have more time to join us and meet a large group of professionals and practitioners interested in your organization.
- The hotel will soon set up an updated registration page where you can reserve your rooms for 2021 at a discounted rate.

On behalf of everyone on the 16th Sinkhole Conference Organizing Committee, we are sensitive to the extraordinary circumstances posed worldwide by the spread of the COVID-19 virus. We hope you and you loved ones are well. We made these adjustments to the Sinkhole Conference to maximize protection of your health and ability to attend, enjoy, and benefit from this great meeting, with excellent colleagues, amid the spectacular karst of Puerto Rico. We appreciate your understanding as we strive to overcome this challenge. For more information and to register, go to www.sinkholeconference.com.

16th Sinkhole Conference Co-Chairs:

Dr. George Veni
Dr. Ingrid Padilla

Dr. Brian Smith
Dr. James LaMoreaux