



IGU E-NEWSLETTER

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This Newsletter is circulated to more than 1800 individuals and bodies. Announcements, information, calls for participation in scientific events, programmes and projects are welcome.

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1) REMARKS FROM PRESIDENT VLADIMIR KOLOSOV

This is the year of the 33d International Geographical Congress in Beijing (August 21-25) which can become the largest in IGU history, in terms of number of participants. The first results of our union's Strategy, which has been recently adopted after a long discussion, become visible. We are committed to keep IGU a truly global organization and to involve in its activity new members from different parts of the world, especially from Asia, Africa and Latin America. After Kazakhstan, Serbia, Myanmar, we welcome one more new member: Oman. Colombia and Uganda renewed their membership. EC members negotiate with a number of other potential new members. Of course, we would like that this process is faster.

It certainly depends on the success of our conferences and other activities, image and visibility. After the 32d Congress in Cologne the scientific programme of IGU Regional Conferences has significantly improved and become more diverse. Its new "standard" supposes the sessions initiated not only by Commissions but also by consortiums of international projects and individual scholars, key lectures, special days or sessions for early carrier scholars and school teachers, meetings of geographical societies, geographers from particular regions, and, of course, geographical Olympiads. We just established a new format of IGU meetings – thematic and policy oriented conferences hold under the auspices of a number of commissions and focused on a particular interdisciplinary problem. In fact, we already have some experience of their organization, thanks to the efforts of IGU Vice-President R.B.Singh and other Indian colleagues. The Commissions on Biogeography and Biodiversity, on Land Use and Land Cover Change, on Geoparks and others sponsor the annual conference in India attended not only by some hundred Indian geographers but also by foreign participants. It was decided to give it the status of IGU

thematic conference. Another thematic conference devoted to energy and sustainable development should be held in August 2017 in Baku (Azerbaijan). We try to encourage early career scholars and participants from low income countries by travel grants offered by the local organizing committee and by IGU EC – modest, but hopefully useful. It is important that most Commissions regularly publish special issues of academic journals and monographs resulted from their meetings. Springer series of “IGU monographs” edited by Professor R.B. Singh has been recently founded and already includes several volumes.

The number of IGU Commissions is gradually growing. A new trend is the creation of commissions working on a particular world region. Commissions’ reports reviewed by EC members should form the basis for recommendation on continuation which should be approved by the General Assembly in Beijing. A couple of years ago IGU has established the annual award to the most successful commission, consisting in a prize, along with the right to present its work at a plenary session in the next Congress or Regional Conference. At the same time, we still lack a new interdisciplinary integrating project like *Our Sustainable Cities*, or the project on geographical journals which led to the creation of an open and regularly updated data base and a search machine on the IGU site. It is critically important to establish continuous working relations between IGU and *Future Earth*. But possible forms of such cooperation are not clear yet.

An important IGU objective is to better integrate geography in the international media space. The project of the International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU) coordinated by Professor Benno Werlen and backed by two major “unions of academic unions”, the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Council for Social Sciences (ISSC), is now on the way (see the previous issue of this Newsletter). It should contribute to the promotion of geographical science, its role in education and interdisciplinary studies. It certainly requires an everyday work. In particular, it is important to use the opportunities offered by IGU website and social networks. Thanks to IGU Secretary General Michael Meadows the site was renovated, is regularly updated, better related with other relevant sources and contains much more information than in the past. A page on Facebook was created. The Newsletter that you are reading now is distributed to more than 1,800 addresses all over the world due to continuous and disinterested efforts of former IGU Vice-President Giuliano Bellezza.

But it is certainly not enough for making IGU really relevant for all geographers. As my own experience shows, even in the countries which are since a long time active IGU members, many geographers have hardly heard or have a vague idea about it. We think that the IGU Centennial and the extraordinary congress in Paris scheduled in 2022 offer us a unique opportunity for better visibility in the global academic community and beyond it. Preparation of the Congress should help to lobby geography at international and national governmental organizations (UNESCO, EU, etc.) The Organizing Committee together with a special Task Force work on it. In particular, it is planned to publish two volumes. The first of them should be dedicated to IGU as a global association which survived different periods in its history and include personal testimonies and opinions of IGU veterans and leading geographers from many countries, documents, tables and pictures. The second one will concern internationalization and history of geography viewed through the lenses of IGU history.

Education should be in the focus of IGU activity. The Commission on Geographical Education chaired by Professors Joop van der Schee and John Lidstone is one of the most vibrant in IGU. Last years it was in particular working on the internationally approved minimum of geographical knowledge for each citizen in the XXI century and the dissemination of the best practices of teaching at secondary school and at universities. The EC, especially thanks to Professor Joos

Droogleever Fortuijn, pay now more attention to young and early carrier scholars in promoting a special programme and distributing travel grants. A number of commissions created groups of active young members. Their self-organization is the most important: the EC appointed few “founding” members of the new youth Task Force who will shape the rest of the team; it is supposed that this Task Force begins its activity after the Congress in Beijing. IGU and the organizers of our big meetings cooperate with the European Geography Association for students and young geographers (EGEA) and World Earth Young Scientists (YES).

IGU is traditionally an active member of ICSU and ISSC. Few years ago we received an ICSU grant (the project was coordinated by Professor Irasema Ayala). The first steps were made toward better coordination of IGU activity with European international associations – *Eugeo* and *Eurogeo*, as well with the largest national professional geographical organizations – for example, the Association of American Geographers and others. IGU EC maintains good relations with “neighbouring” international academic associations, in particular, members of the Geounions’ cluster in ICSU, though they could be more practically oriented. Unfortunately, there is no progress yet in the establishment of contacts with international governmental and business organizations – particularly, in the field of tourism and GIS.

The EC tries to base its activity on three principles: succession, responsibility and transparency. A half of its members are now elected in the middle of the period between the congresses which allows avoiding discontinuity in the implementation of current plans and projects. Before each EC meeting its members submit a report on their personal activity accessible on the IGU site. No doubt that a lot more should be done for facing the challenges of our turbulent time. But the fact that four (more precisely, even five) national geographical communities have recently invited the 35th International Geographical Congress in the countries (Australia, Denmark and Sweden, Ireland and Czech Republic) can be considered as a sign of interest and appreciation of IGU activity.

Vladimir Kolosov
President of IGU



2) DRAFT MINUTES OF THE IGU EC MEETING, DELHI, 17-18 MARCH 2016

Indian National Science Academy, Delhi, India
17th to 18th March 2016
Welcome, Meeting Logistics and Introductions

The meeting was chaired by President Kolosov, who welcomed Secretary-General Mike Meadows and Vice Presidents Ron Abler, Dieter Soyez, Jarkko Saarinen, Iain Hay, Yukio

Himiyama, RB Singh and Zhou Chenghu. Former Vice-President Bellezza was invited to attend. Vice-Presidents Joos Droogleever-Fortuijn and Elena dell’Agnese tendered apologies.

Adoption of the Schedule and Agenda

The schedule was discussed and adopted with the addition of an item on Olympiad photographs.

Minutes

The minutes of the Yaroslavl meeting in August 2015 were previously approved via email, but were tabled for noting and reference following some additional minor corrections.

Organization and Operations

Executive Committee Member Reports. Members submitted written reports of their activities; it was agreed that a summary of these reports should be prepared in time for distribution at the General Assembly.

Executive Committee Meeting Calendar 2016 onwards. The second meeting of 2016 will be held prior to the IGU Congress in Beijing. Arrivals: Wednesday 17th August 2016, EC meeting: 18th and 19th and field excursion on 20th August 2016. The Congress opening ceremony is on Sunday 21st August 2016, closing ceremony on Thursday 25th August 2016. The need to hold a third EC meeting in 2016 was discussed and Saarinen agreed to explore the option of organizing a meeting in Oslo in association with the ISSC General Assembly; dates and venue to be confirmed at the next meeting. Several options exist for a possible first meeting of 2017 but final decisions on this would need to be made once the composition of the newly elected IGU Executive Committee members was known following the General Assembly.

IGU Financial Report and Projection. Meadows presented the financial report for 2015 prepared with the assistance of Abler. The long-term financial situation remains sound. The situation for 2016 will have to be carefully monitored, as the commission grants had been increased, and this year would likely be heavy on expenditure given that there is an ICSU Unions meeting, the IGU General Assembly and the ISSC General Assembly. The Moscow meeting had generated US\$11,000 for the Promotion and Solidarity Fund. Which has been deposited in the US account. Abler agreed to explore the option of relocating the Endowment Fund in an account with a higher yield (Abler).

IGU National Membership Update. Meadows presented an update on the national membership situation. An application from Oman has been received and this will be considered for formal admission via an email General Assembly ballot (Meadows). Applications from Luxembourg and UAE are pending and there have been approaches from Iran and Burkina Faso that are being followed up. Executive Committee members were again urged to continue to pursue connections with representatives of countries falling under their responsibility, at the very least in order to ensure that the IGU membership database is kept up to date.

IGU Commission and Task Force Reports 2012-16. Following the call in 2015 31 of the 42 reports have been received and several more are in an advanced state of preparation by the responsible chair. The reports should form the basis of a review and recommendation for continuation (or otherwise) by the Executive Committee, such recommendations being presented to the General Assembly in Beijing in August. It was suggested that a sub-committee scrutinize the reports and make recommendations to be tabled at the Beijing Executive Committee meeting. The 'Commission Excellence Award' sub-committee, supplemented by Kolosov and Meadows, is tasked with making such recommendations in Beijing. Meadows agreed to look in particular at the issue of steering committee membership. Droogleever-Fortuijn is to provide the Commission Excellence Award template to guide the assessment (Droogleever-Fortuijn). Meadows agreed to request the Commission Chairs to forward the email address list of their respective commissions for consolidation in a distribution list (Meadows). It was agreed that in future there should be a page restriction on the reports and that the publication listed should only be those that have emanated directly from IGU-related conferences, workshops and other activities.

IGU Strategy. Kolosov presented a table indicating progress (or otherwise) in regard to the strategy and reviewed the various elements of IGU strategy. There are some positive signs in relation to membership (seven new member countries in the last four years) and encouraging signs from Latin America and Africa. In terms of developing contacts with IGU Commissions and Task Forces there are positive indicators with the introduction of the Commission Excellence Award and thematic conferences that are supported by the commissions. The status of IGU meetings does seem to have been improved and the diversity of activities at these meetings has increased, especially in relation to young geographers and teachers. The goal to involve more practitioners remains. Participation in the major international bodies (ICSU, ISSC, CIPSH) is a challenge, since our nominations for various positions on the executives has met with very limited success thus far. IGU is active within Future Earth at several levels but we continue to seek ways to improve this further and a special Task Force for this may be required. Contacts with other major international geographical organisations, in particular Eugeo and Eurogeo, are robust. Singh reported that the relations with Asian geographers in general and Indian geographers in particular are especially strong. The publication outputs are ongoing, especially the Springer series edited by RB Singh. In regard to promoting geography as a discipline and the IGU there has been only limited success, items here include *Oursus* and IYGU. Soyez tabled a German report that had been conducted on the image of geography in Germany and there was discussion as to whether or not this should be translated into English, how this could be facilitated and communicated. Singh agreed to ask Springer if they might be interested in publishing an English language version of this report (Soyez agreed to assess the cost implications of translating both the summary and the full version). Zhou agreed to ask the Beijing Congress organisers to schedule a round table discussion on the image of geography globally (Zhou). Relations with the business community have not really developed, although opportunities may well exist. The upcoming centennial volumes on the history of IGU are making progress. The Young and Early Career Task Force has been established and is actively participating at the Beijing Congress. Himiyama suggested that we need to give some attention to the sustainability of IGU regarding the EC workloads and that the appointment of an individual to support the secretariat. Hay noted that, if this is to happen, then there will be a need to substantially increase income and that this needs to be from sources over and above the usual annual membership subscription.

IYGU. RB Singh reported that there is strong regional activity in relation to IYGU in Asia in general, and in India in particular, which is launching a new South Asia Regional Action Centre. Himiyama, Abler, Soyez and Kolosov attended the successful opening ceremony in Jena in February. Many IYGU activities are planned in several localities on several continents, including those in association with the AAG annual meeting in San Francisco and the IGU Congress in Beijing. There are indications that IYGU is to be considered to be a long-term project, perhaps even ten years; there are potential financial implications to this proposal that will need to be considered carefully by the IGU. Werlen's suggestion that the Commission on Cultural Geography be disestablished in favour of a Commission or Task Force on IYGU was discussed; there is a strong view that the Commission should continue its activities subject to the standard review and it was felt that a separate administrative operation was not appropriate as IYGU has its own structure and is already working. IGU Commissions are to be encouraged to continue to participate in IYGU and their activities in this regard should form part of the annual reporting requirements. The lack of coordination between OurSus and IYGU remains a concern. The IYGU plans are to be forwarded to IGU Commissions (Meadows). Werlen is to be encouraged to keep providing up to date information about IYGU activities for distribution and circulation.

Young and Early Career Geographers Task Force. The inaugural members of this task force are as follows: Martina Angela Caretta (Sweden); Elena Darlington (UK), Alexander Sebentsov (Russia) and Komali Yenneti (China, USA) and are actively planning activities in association with the Beijing Congress.

Sesquicentennial and Centennial Task Force. Abler reported that there appear to be three active groups operating in this Task Force. One group is focusing on the Paris 2024 extraordinary congress and plans to publish a special volume in association with the Paris congress. A second group, led by Jacobo Alvarez-Garcia, had convened in Leipzig in early February and developed detailed plans to produce a two-volume publication. A third group is dealing with special lectures and events etc. The issue of a publication dealing with the 'future' for the IGU and Geography has not yet been considered; the idea of a focus on the 'Grand Challenges for Geography', especially in regard to Future Earth, would make an interesting platform but this still needs to be developed. There appears to be only limited coordination between these various groups and their activities, and this needs to be dealt with. Kolosov also reported that there are plans to video interview key geographers in Beijing and to post these alongside historical interviews that are currently available on the *You Tube* channel. Following the Beijing General Assembly, whereby Abler will step down from the Executive Committee, there is a need to appoint a new Vice-President to be responsible for this Task Force. An alternative Task Force member needs to be appointed due to the resignation of Professor Yoshikawa from the Task Force (Kolosov).

IGU Website. Meadows promised to attend to the French version of the website architecture in time for the Beijing Congress. RB Singh agreed to set up an IGU Twitter account (Singh) (Meadows).

IGU Journals Project. The data are currently being updated at the University of Cape Town.

IGU Bulletin. Volume 57-58 is currently being distributed. Volumes 59-60 will be compiled following the Beijing Congress.

IGU eNewsletter. Former Vice-President Bellezza attended for this item. The *e-Newsletter* appears regularly and is circulated widely. The role of Bellezza in editing and circulating this is absolutely central, greatly appreciated and should be continued. The issue of the *Home of Geography* website was raised and discussed. There is a strongly held view that there should be a single web presence for IGU and that a second website may ‘dilute’ or confuse the IGU brand. It was agreed, for a trial period, that Bellezza would send all news and events items that he puts on the Home of Geography webpage to Meadows for posting on the IGU website.

OurSus (Soyez, Droogleever-Fortuijn). Soyez reported on this matter. This is a flagship development for IGU initiated by Ton Dietz and a team in Hunan, China in 2012. The platform is managed from Changxia under the leadership of Qui Li. The aim of the project has been to highlight sustainable city approaches and there is a website structure that functions well in China with some 100 cities there actively participating along with many NGOs. The original idea was that this could generate revenue for IGU but this has never materialized. The mirror site in English has been established with the expectation that this would function in the same way as it does in China but there are very few activities and no really current information. Soyez met the team in November and discussed the way forward. In February, Dietz and Droogleever-Fortuijn have established a new initiative to make attempts at populating the English language version of the website. The Beijing LOC has accepted the proposal for three *OurSus* sessions at the Congress for Chinese, International and for IGU Commission contributions respectively (Dietz has undertaken to contact commission chairs in this regard). Soyez highlighted some problems that arise from the fact that the website structure is not very clear to potential contributors and that the Chinese site, which is very active, is not accessible to non-Chinese readers. He also noted that there are a number of alternative platforms globally dealing with the issue of sustainable cities, although *OurSus* could possibly make a unique contribution by highlighting geographical aspects for cities. It was suggested that one of the IGU Vice-Presidents needs to be appointed to liaise with and promote the project and that the geographical content needs to be identified more clearly as part of the brand. There needs also to be better communication between this initiative and IYGU. The future of the non-Chinese website element of the project needs to be reconsidered after Beijing. Soyez will continue to work with Dietz and Droogleever-Fortuijn regarding the viability of the sessions at Beijing.

Geographer’s Biobibliographic Studies. Meadows reported that the online version of this publication is now available free of charge to EC members on application to the publishers.

Africa initiative. Soyez reported on this matter and reviewed the situation regarding African membership; there are large gaps remaining. This situation arises in part relates to the perceived ‘anglophone’ nature of IGU but there are other factors also. The proposal from Gabon to host a 2014 meeting eventually stalled due to budget cuts and interaction with these colleagues is now minimal. Burkina Faso has approached the IGU with a view to membership and this clearly suggests new opportunities. Soyez met the former CIPSH President, Professor Samassekou, and suggested that this may result in a second chance to resurrect the idea of an IGU meeting in francophone Africa. The suggestion of an Africa Task Force was again raised but there is no clear view as to whether or not this would help. There will be a further meeting of African delegates at the Beijing Congress (with a separate one for Latin America) where this suggestion could be discussed.

IGU Thematic Conferences. The Baku local organization has requested help with contact to the IGU Commissions and National Committees. Kolosov will continue to liaise with them in respect of geographers but there is a clear need, given the theme of the conference (energy and sustainable development) to establish links with other professionals and practitioners beyond the discipline. Dell’Agnese has contacts with the ‘Geography of Peace’ thematic conference in La Paz, Bolivia. The ‘Urbanisation: Health and Wellbeing’ conference in Hyderabad, India, in March 2017 represents another opportunity to promote the ‘thematic conference’ concept. It was agreed to label this officially as an ‘IGU Thematic Conference’.

IGU Executive Committee elections 2016. Meadows reported that one nomination has been received for the IGU Presidency and eight for the four vacant Vice-Presidency positions, all up for election at the General Assembly.

Cooperation and Outreach

Festival International de Géographie. Soyez reported on the history of the relationship between FIG and IGU. Kolosov met with key members of the FIG leadership in Paris in 2015 but the result of this proved to be disappointing and there seems to be waning interest from FIG in respect of IGU. The IGU lecture could form part of the FIG programme, although with no financial subsidy from the organisers. Kolosov will attend the event only.

IGU Representatives on International Bodies. There was nothing to report on this matter.

ICSU (incl. GeoUnions) (Kolosov, Abler, Meadows) There was discussion regarding the proposed new voting procedure from ICSU and it was decided at this stage not to support the proposal but to participate in discussion at the upcoming Unions meeting in Paris. Kolosov had written a letter to ICSU on behalf of IGU encouraging the cooperation initiatives between ICSU and ISSC. Soyez suggested that IGU should consider mounting a project under the umbrella of Future Earth and that the cooperation with other Unions should be sought in this regard. Meadows agreed to approach the other GeoUnions at the Paris meeting with a view to assessing interest. Himiyama suggested that as many IGU Commissions as possible should be encouraged to be involved in Future Earth; the Beijing Congress will represent an opportunity to promote this.

ISSC (Meadows, Kolosov). There are ongoing sound relations between IGU and ISSC; Kolosov met recently with the new ISSC President, Matthieu Denis. The ISSC General Assembly is in October and will be attended by Kolosov and Meadows.

CIPSH (Himiyama, Meadows). Meadows reported that the formal application to CIPSH had been approved at its General Assembly in Beijing. Kolosov is invited to the World Congress in Liege, Belgium and is on the scientific committee. Himiyama had attended the Beijing CIPSH meeting on behalf of IGU. It was agreed to encourage relevant IGU Commissions to participate in CIPSH activities (Meadows).

EUROGEO, EUGEO (Kolosov). Kolosov reported that dell’Agnese, as EC representative, attended the EUGEO Congress in Budapest on behalf of IGU. Kolosov agreed to write to the

chairs of both organisations inquiring if they would be attending the Beijing Congress (Kolosov). There is a Memorandum of Agreement in the field of geographical education and in this sense is supportive of IYGU.

International Association for Promoting Geoethics MoU (Kolosov, dell’Agnese). There was nothing further to report on this item at this stage.

EGAL (dell’Agnese). In the absence of the liaison Vice-President (dell’Agnese) there was no discussion on this item.

IAG MoU (Meadows). There is strong support for the formalization of contacts with the International Association of Geomorphologists. Meadows agreed to consider editing the documents and will circulate for further comment and signing at the joint IAG IGU workshop at the Beijing Congress., where the possibility of developing a Future Earth project could be further developed.

Relations with other organisations (e.g. AAG, RGS, ICA (All)). Singh noted that IGU has no formal contact with IAP (International Academy Partnership). Singh attended the recent meeting of IAP in South Africa and suggested that it would be useful for IGU to have closer contact, since there are more than 100 national academy members and there are opportunities to extend the international network through this organization. This was agreed and Singh is to write to the Secretary to indicate this (Singh). Singh further noted that ISDR would like to receive reports from IGU regarding its work and this would be particularly relevant to the Commission on Hazard and Risk who should be informed of this this (Singh). There is ongoing cooperation with AAG and there will again be an IGU booth at the annual conference in San Francisco and there are joint AAG/IGU sessions there. Himiyama reported that he had attended the RGS annual meeting in Exeter in 2015 and met with Dr Catherine Souch, the Secretary, and will again attend the meeting in August. Georg Gartner has been re-elected as Chair of ICA and there has been a suggestion of a joint ICA/IGU Working Group/Commission on Sustainable Cities.

International Geographical Congresses and IGU Regional Conferences

Moscow, Russia, Regional Conference 2015. The final report of the Moscow Regional Conference has been submitted and the contribution to the Promotion and Solidarity Fund has been made.

Beijing, China, International Geographical Congress and General Assembly 2016. Xiaoyi presented a brief update from the perspective of the Local Organising Committee. Kolosov and Meadows had visited the local organisers in November 2016 and signed the MoU. The call for abstracts was extended to March 31st and notifications of acceptance will now go out from 10th April 2016. More than 1810 abstracts have been submitted, with 2200 participants from 86 countries registered to date. Organisation for iGeo is well underway. The draft programme has been prepared., including seven pre-conferences to be held at various centres around China. The website www.igc2016.org has all current information. More than 260 sessions in all have been proposed, including at least one from every commission, 11 joint commission sessions, as well as several key theme topic sessions, round tables, symposia, workshops, special sessions, exhibits etc.. The General Assembly sessions will be in the afternoons of 22nd, 23rd and 24th August 2016.

Several kinds of grant are on offer, including some that will cover all expenses. Five post-congress excursions are planned. A special programme is organised for young scholars but as yet there is no event for schoolteachers. Zhou agreed to approach the local organisers in this regard (Zhou). Final decisions on the keynote speakers are still to be made. Additional suggestions were made concerning an additional round table on the image of geography, as well as an event for IGU past and present executive members. Celine Rozeblat has proposed an e-event, whereby some sessions of the conference would be retransmitted online and any scientist in the world can ask questions. The talks would be recorded and accessible for a long period via a website. She proposes to utilise this system in sessions of the Urban Commission. The suggestion to make available a studio to facilitate recordings of interviews with key geographers at the congress was accepted (Zhou).

Regional Conference, Quebec, Canada, 2018. There is no further news from the LOC at this stage. They should be invited to meet with the Executive Committee in Beijing (Meadows). A special theme issue of the Cahiers de Geographie will be presented at the conference.

Istanbul, Turkey, International Geographical Congress 2020. Nothing to report at this stage; the local organisers will present at the closing ceremony of the Beijing Congress.

Extraordinary International Geographical Congress, Paris 2022. Kolosov reported that he had met recently with Antoine Leblanc and Nathalie Lemarchand and that the organization is underway.

Congress bids 2014. Proposals have been received from four National Committees. Representatives of the Local Organising Committees will be invited to present to the Executive Committee prior to the Beijing Congress. The Executive Committee will convey its recommendation to the General Assembly and all four parties will present their cases to the General Assembly for the vote. This is to be conveyed to the respective local organizing committees (Meadows) who will be given an opportunity to present to the EC at its meeting immediately prior to the Congress (Meadows).

Other Business

IGU Lauréats d'Honneur. Several nominations were received by the Honours and Awards Committee and the chair, Ruth Fincher had submitted a report with recommendations for the awards to be made at the Beijing Congress. The report was accepted.

IGU Planet and Humanity Award 2016. Several nominations were received and considered by the Honours and Awards Committee and Fincher conveyed their recommendation, which was accepted.

Olympiad proposal for photograph archive. It was suggested that these should be archived in Leipzig.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 17h30 on 18th March 2016.

Out of the official Minutes



On 16 March the IYGU Indian Regional Action Center has been inaugurated by Professor Harsh Gupta, President of the Geological Society of India



The Executive Committee visiting the Bahai Lotus Temple, open to believers of any faith.



In the heavy Delhi traffic, Prof. Meadows and Mrs. Bellezza have been brave enough to disturb motorbikes on the sidewalks



3) REPORTS FROM CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

3a) 9th INDIA-IGU Conference, New Delhi, 18-20 March 2016

The Department of Geography, Shaheed Bhagat Singh College, University of Delhi, New Delhi organised the 9th India International Geographical Union (IGU) conference on Land Use Change, Climate Extremes and Disaster Risk Reduction on March 18-20 March 2016. Four of the IGU Commissions – Commission on Biogeography and Biodiversity, Commission on Land Use and Land Cover Change, Commission on Hazards and Risk, Commission on Geopark –collaborated in this conference. A total of 35 oral presentation sessions and 2 poster sessions were organized. Besides, more than 40 international delegates (including IGU Executive members) from about 20 countries and more than 350 Indian delegates representing 27 states and UTs attended the conference. The conference had the representation of major science and research academies of India and abroad, including 1) International Geographical Union (IGU), 2) International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), 3) International Academic Partnership (IAP) - Global Network of Science Academies, 4) Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO-Australia), 5) Chinese of Academy of Sciences, 6) Polish Academy of Sciences, 7) Russian Academy of Sciences, 8) National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad, 9) Indian National Science Academy, 10) Defense Research and Development Organization and 11) Geological Survey of India etc.

The dignitaries for the inaugural session were Dr. Krishan Lal, Co-Chair, International Academic Partnership (IAP) - Global Network of Science Academies and Ex-President, Indian National Science Academy (INSA) as Chief Guest; Dr. Harsh Gupta, President, Geological Society of India and Ex-President, IUGG; Prof. Vladimir Kolossov, President, IGU; Prof. R.B. Singh, Vice-President, IGU as Guest of Honor and Prof Tom Beer, Ex IGU President as Keynote Speaker; Dr. P.K. Khurana, Patron and Dr. Suraj Mal, Convener. Dr. Krishan Lal quoting the present climate change and impending problems due to it asked for an interdisciplinary platform to mitigate these problems. Dr. Harsh Gupta in his address emphasized on role of geography in reducing the risk of disasters. Citing the examples of various earthquakes in past he asked geographers to contribute towards Disaster Risk Reduction for future sustainability. Prof. Vladimir Kolossov talking about IYGU emphasized on bridging the gap in awareness between local actions and global effects, to encourage everyone to make daily decisions in light of global challenges and to contribute to bottom-up initiatives that connect individual, local action to global sustainability. Prof. Tom Beer delivered the keynote address on the Impact of Extreme Weather Events on Food Security. Prof. Beer examined the historical link between weather, food supplies, and food distribution; examine the Asian and international situation; summarise the response of the scientific community and point out the direction for future research.



Inaugural Session



Address by Dr. Harsh Gupta

Prof. RB Singh and Prof. Michael Meadows were two keynote speakers in the plenary session presided by Prof. D. Soyez, Vice-President, IGU. Prof RB Singh, delivering his address on Urban Health and Well being suggested the researchers to understand the relationship between urbanization, environmental degradation and health, and suggested that regression analysis under the systems approach is useful in identifying the major urban health challenges due to air pollution. He also focussed on various recent global initiatives like Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction, Sustainable Development Goals, UNFCCC COP21, Future Earth, Habitat III and about the role geographers can perform to contribute to these initiatives.

Prof. Michael Meadows in his key note addressed the Global Environments in the Anthropocene: Challenges for Future Earth. He emphasized on need to systematically incorporate a stronger physical geography perspective into global change science; the Anthropocene represents an appropriate platform from which to inject that perspective.



Cultural Programme



Valedictory Session

Out of the total 35 oral presentation sessions, six sessions were on Land Use Land Cover Change and Climate Change, Five sessions on Human Health and Wellbeing, Four sessions on Environmental Sustainability and Developmental Concerns, Three sessions each for Resource Conservation and Management, Extreme Environment Events, Environmental Change, Two presentation each on Disaster Risk Reduction, Ecological Modelling, Governance and Policies, Land use land cover change and Biodiversity, One session each on Himalayan Environment, Challenges and Strategies to Climate Resilient Livelihoods and Geoparks Potential in South Asia. The sessions on Land use land cover change encompassed the issues of Geo-Spatial Technologies in LULC, Climate Change and LULC in Arid Ecosystems, LULC in Urban areas and LULC and Biodiversity. The sessions on Human Health and Wellbeing had presentations on Health and Diseases, Geography of Gender and Marginalised, Environmental Quality, Urban Environment and Human Development. The sessions on Environmental Sustainability and Developmental Concerns encompassed issues on Water Issues and Hydropower Projects, Environmental Concerns and Urban Sustainability. The theme of Resource Conservation and Management had paper presentation on Natural Resource based Livelihood, Water Resource Management and Land based Resources. The broad topics for presentation in the sessions of Extreme Events were Landslides, Earthquake, Urban Environment Change and Rainfall and Floods. The sessions on Disaster Risk Reduction focussed on Analysis and Assessment of Disasters and Disaster Management. Geo-Spatial Modelling, Monitoring and Management were the major themes for the sessions of Ecological Modelling.

The valedictory session was graced by Dr. M.R. Bhutiyani, Director, DTRL, DRDO as the Chief Guest, Prof. Iain Hay, Vice-President IGU and Prof. R.B. Singh, Vice-President, IGU as Guest of Honor and Presided by Prof. Tom Beer. Dr. Bhutiyani citing the examples from Himalaya emphasized on promoting research on Climate Change and Himalayan Glaciers as the sustainability of low land depends on the sustainability of highlands. Prof. Iain Hay emphasized on the need of geographical education as a solution to various global problems. As recommendations for policy makers from this international conference, IGU-SBSC 2016 Delhi Declaration was also announced.



Prof RB Singh and Dr PK Khurana announcing Delhi Declaration, 20 March, 2016

Dr. Suraj Mal, presented the vote of thanks. A post conference field visit was organised to the state of Uttarakhand (Haridwar-Dehradun-Mussorie- Dhanaulti-Tehri Dam-Rishikesh) during 21-24 March, 2016. There were a total of 27 participants to the field trip, of which there were 10 foreign academicians, 10 Indian researchers and 7 undergraduate students.

Dr. Suraj Mal, Convener, IGU Conference.

IGU-SBSC 2016 DELHI DECLARATION

Resolved unanimously that 9th IGU three day Regional Conference on “Land Use Change, Climate Extremes and Disaster Risk Reduction” being organized by the Department of Geography, Shaheed Bhagat Singh College, University of Delhi, makes the following policy recommendations for the consideration of various stake holders.

1. Land use study is emerging interface of biophysical and human environment which requires careful geographical and geospatial inquiry.
2. Geo-spatial technology should be disseminated to deal with emergency situations particularly identification of safer areas special needs of vulnerable groups like children, old people, women and disabled.
3. Food and water availability is threatened by extreme climate and we need to take all possible steps to ensure food, water-energy security within the framework of sustainable of future earth.
4. Geospatial technology based environment education should be promoted to find appropriate local solutions to regional imbalances and diverse issues.

5. The return period, as a tool to forecast earthquake, has been effective at the medium and long term. Mock drills at various levels should be considered as an effective tool for disaster mitigation.
6. Human health and wellbeing should be continued to the focal point of research for sustainable future.
7. Geoheritage sites are neglected in India and other developing countries. This should be linked to the tourism development and community empowerment.
8. Earth science governance needs to be promoted among community stakeholders through better information and amalgamation using spatial and temporal scales.
9. IGU India Foundation, an academic body was initiated in the Inaugural Function on 18th March 2016. This foundation will be responsible for planning, organization, execution and implementation of workshops and conferences as well as publications, as part of IGU India Series.

3b) Highlights from the AAG Annual Meeting, San Francisco, April 2016

The Association of American Geographers 2016 Annual Meeting in San Francisco, California, hosted more than 9,000 geographers, GIS specialists, environmental scientists, and other registrants from around the world sharing the very latest in research, policy, and applications in geography, sustainability, and GIScience. Of those attending, thousands, representing approximately 37 percent of all attendees came from countries other than the U.S.A., which continues a steady trend toward increased international participation at AAG Meetings. For comparison, the 2007 meeting in San Francisco registered approximately 24 percent international attendees.

This year, attendees came from 87 different countries. The largest participation of scholars from outside of the U.S. came from the UK, Canada, China, Germany, Australia, France and Sweden with strong representation of numbers of geographers from the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Norway, Italy, Finland, Japan, among many others. The international attendance greatly enriched the intellectual and social events throughout the week-long conference.



Left: AAG President Sarah Bednarz's opening presidential plenary included Jenny Zorn, Elizabeth Wentz, Kavita Pandit, Yonette Thomas and Kristopher Olds.

Right: Mona Domosh presented the Presidential Achievement Award to Audrey Kobayashi

The AAG Annual Meeting also featured several diversely themed research tracks and special events, many with strong international dimensions. The Opening Presidential Plenary organized by AAG President Sarah Witham Bednarz, titled "[Thriving in a Time of Disruption in Higher Education](#)," in which panelists discussed the challenges facing scholars and departments within the discipline of geography.

Mona Domosh's past presidential address "[Genealogies of Race, Gender, and Place](#)," was well received with key discussants including, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Caroline Bressey and Derek Alderman. She also presented this year's AAG Presidential Achievement Award to Audrey Kobayashi, Queen's University, for her foundational contributions to understanding the intersectionality of gender, race, class and all forms of socio-economic difference that have reshaped what geography is and can be, and for her insistence that geography and geographers reflect critically on their whiteness. Through her tireless work as editor, mentor, teacher, colleague, and friend she has strengthened geography by encouraging new and often challenging ways of seeing and understanding our world. Additional distinguished awards, including AAG Honors, were conveyed during the [AAG Awards Luncheon](#) (*coverage coming soon!*) on the final day of the conference.



Left: AAG's International Reception connected friends and colleagues from around the globe.



Right: Poster sessions were held during three days of the annual meeting.

The AAG sponsored an International Reception to celebrate the global character of the conference and emphasized the importance of international collaboration. Live top hits through the decades were performed by the Richard Olsen Orchestra, while a record number of attendees reunited with friends and met new colleagues from around the world.

Other themes developed for the San Francisco meeting were: [Thriving in a Time of Disruption in Higher Education](#); [International Geography and Urban Health Symposium](#); and [Symposium on Physical Geography: Challenges of the "Anthropocene."](#) [Poster session themes](#) included Human Geography, Physical Geography and Geographic Information Science and Technology (GIS&T).



Left: AAG Honorary Geographer Judith Butler addressed a packed house and encouraged a fascinating question-and-answer with attendees.



Right: Authors Rebecca Solnit, Joshua Jelly-Shapiro and David Lowenthal met in between their back-to-back sessions.

Wide-ranging plenaries and special events included notable speakers, such as [2016 Honorary Geographer Judith Butler](#), authors [Rebecca Solnit and Joshua Jelly-Shapiro](#), and author [David Lowenthal](#). Attendees learned the [changing and future trends at leading geography organizations](#) during a conversation with AAG's Doug Richardson, Esri's Jack Dangermond and National Geographic's Gary Knell. Those notable folks also appeared on a panel with Benno Werlen, Farhana Sultana, Ronald Abler and Lee Schwartz discussing ["The International Year of Global Understanding."](#) Other sessions included ["The AAG-Esri GeoMentors Program: Increasing GIS and Geography in K-12 Education"](#) with AAG's Candice Luebbering and Esri's Jack Dangermond, David DiBiase and Joseph Kerski, along with Sarah Bednarz; ["Transformational Research in Geography"](#) with Glen MacDonald, Michael Goodchild and Amy Glassmeier; and ["The American Arctic: The United States as an Arctic Power in Science, Technology and Security"](#) with Andrey Petrov, Coast Guard Vice Admiral Charles Ray, Fran Ulmer and AAG's John Wertman. Friends and colleagues also gathered to remember William Garrison, Daniel Gade, Susan Hardwick, Ruth Shirey, Edward Soja, H. Jesse Walker, among others, during several special tributes.



Left: A participant traces a road within OpenStreetMap's satellite imagery to contribute to the massive online effort.



Right: The AAG-ISUH Keynote Plenary Session included Doug Richardson, Mei-Po Kwan, Alex Ross, Andy Haines, Yonette Thomas, Jo Ivey Boufford and Shamim Talukder.

The AAG held its first-ever three-day [Mapathon](#) with 17 sessions, including an introduction, a keynote on mapping Second Cities with Lee Schwartz and Michael Goodchild, morning map exercises, a mappy hour and capped off with a review of progress, just to name a few. Using satellite imagery and editing platforms, participants traced, edited, and labeled key infrastructure (buildings, roads, etc.), environmental features and other objects for the creation of openly available real data producing maps that assist humanitarian and community efforts.

Another AAG first was a joint international symposium on Geography and Urban Health with the International Society for Urban Health (ISUH) to foster interdisciplinary and international collaborations in team science, geodesign for healthy urban environments, GIScience advances in health research and technology transfer, and geographic or biomedical research which addresses global health needs. It brought together national and international scholars, practitioners, and policy makers from different specialties, institutions, sectors, and continents to share ideas, findings, methodologies, and technologies, and to establish, and strengthen personal connections, communication channels and research collaborations and networks.

The above summary represents only a few of the many exciting sessions and international activities that took place at the 2016 AAG Annual Meeting. More than 1,700 paper, poster, and panel sessions and presentations, including more than 6,600 abstracts highlighting geographic work organized by AAG members and AAG Specialty and Affinity Groups. Field trips, workshops, and a special emphasis on Careers in Geography also greatly enriched the experience of AAG conference participants.

Text and photos by Becky Pendergast, American Association of Geographers



5) FORTHCOMING EVENTS

(more information in the Home of Geography website, Events 2016)

- 5.1) IGU COMB Conference, Antalya, Turkey, 1-5 May 2016
- 5.2) Food, Geography and Security Policies, Turin, 3-4 May 2016
- 5.3) 6th Ethnography and Qualitative Research Conference, Bergamo (Italy), 8-11 May 2016
- 5.4) GEOMED 2016, Antalya, Turkey, 23-26 May 2016
- 5.5) Borders, Walls and Violence, Conference in Montreal, May 2016
- 5.6) Utrecht, Geo Future School, 13-17 June 2016
- 5.7) Workshop on Critical Geography, Leipzig 16-19 June 2016

5.8) Taipei-Matsu, 25-30 June 2016

5.9) Design and Decision Support Systems, Conference, Eindhoven, 27-28 June 2016

5.10) The impact of regionalisation, joint administration and metropolisation over local, regional and central authorities in Europe 2016, Bratislava, 30th June-1st July 2016

5.11) Balancing Heritage and Innovation in Agriculture, Liege, 17-22 July 2016

5.12) International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, 23rd Conference, Prague, 12-19 July, 2016

5.13) 26th World Congress of Political Sciences, Poznan 19-24 July, 2016

