



**UNION GEODESIQUE ET GEOPHYSIQUE INTERNATIONALE
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF GEODESY AND GEOPHYSICS**

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This short, informal newsletter is intended to keep IUGG Member National Committees informed about the activities of the IUGG Associations, and actions of the IUGG Secretariat. Past issues are posted on the IUGG Web site (<http://www.iugg.org/publications/ejournals/>). Please forward this message to those who will benefit from the information. Your comments are welcome.

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1. News from the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE)

The IYPE Global Launch Event (GLE), UNESCO, Paris

On 12-13 February 2008, the International Year of Planet Earth was officially launched at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. Participants of the opening ceremony were addressed by Mr. Koichiro Matsuura (UNESCO Director General); Prof. Zhang Hongren (IUGG President); Dr. Larry Woodfork (Chair of the IYPE Board); and Ministers from France, United Republic of Tanzania, Norway, and Egypt; representative of Environmental Protection Agency of Italy; and UNEP representative. The meeting participants accepted the Paris Declaration. The launch of the IYPE was accompanied by symposia on three themes: 1. Population growth and climate change: challenges for planet Earth (speakers: Dr. R. Christ, IPCC Secretary; Prof. G. de Marsily, French Academy of Sciences; Prof. R. Lubbers, Former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, and Ms. A. Mehra, Mayor of Delhi, India); 2. Earth resources: threat or treat? (speakers: T. Desmarest, TOTAL, Chair of the Board of Directors; Dr. M. Myers, USGS Director; and Vice Minister W. Shouxiang, Ministry of Land and Resources of China); and 3. Geohazards: minimizing risk, maximizing awareness (speakers: Prof. P. Hoeppe, Munich Reinsurance, Germany; and Prof. S. Muhongo, Director, ICSU Regional Office for Africa). Video message by Sir Arthur C. Clarke closed the GLE in Paris.

Being a Founding Member of IYPE, IUGG was invited to present its activity in the UNESCO Exhibition Hall (see IUGG poster at http://www.iugg.org/about/IUGG_Poster.pdf). Those IUGG officers who attended the meeting included Vice President Harsh Gupta, Past President Uri Shamir, Secretary-General Alik Ismail-Zadeh, Assistant Secretary General Katina Rogers, IAG President Michael Sideris, IAHS Secretary-General Pierre Hubert, and IASPEI Secretary-General Peter Suhadolc. IUGG appreciates great efforts of Prof. E. de Mulder, IYPE Executive Director, and all those who contributed to the success of the GLE.



“International Year of Planet Earth will focus on the fundamental role of the Earth sciences in maintaining a healthy Earth system, thus enabling our modern society to plan for sustainable development within the context of global climate change”

Koichiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director General

Report of IYPE Board Meeting

The IYPE Board of Directors met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 14-15 February. The Board discussed the composition of the Board, evaluated the work of the IYPE Secretariat for 2007, estimated the financial condition of the Corporation, discussed and accepted reports by the chairs of the Outreach and Science programs. The importance for the IYPE legacy of having strong programs for both science and outreach was emphasised. The Board also discussed the relation between IYPE National Committees and the IYPE Corporation and the relation with concurrent initiatives such as IPY, IHY, eGY, and GEOSS. The next meeting of the Board will be held in August 2008 in Oslo, Norway.

2. Report of GeoUnions Meeting

A meeting of an informal consortium of 8 Unions belonging to the International Council of Science (ICSU) was hosted by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) at Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris on February 11. Unions represented included the IAU (Chair of this meeting) International Geographical Union (IGU), International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA), International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), IUGG, International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), and the International Union of Radio Science (URSI). Several topics of common interest were discussed: ICSU dues structure; ICSU grants programme; statement on climate change; a need to address the problem of interface with the public, policy makers and media. Uri Shamir, as ICSU Geo-Cluster Executive Board representative, reported on the geoscience activities in ICSU regional offices. GeoUnion members agreed to meet again on the occasion of the ICSU General Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique, in October 2008. Those IUGG officers who attended the meeting included IUGG Past President Uri Shamir and Secretary-General Alik Ismail-Zadeh.

3. News from the International Council for Science (ICSU)

Health and Well-being in a Changing Urban Environment

Human health is a relatively new priority area for ICSU as outlined in the Strategic Plan, 2006-2011. A large number of Scientific Unions began working together in 2002 to promote an initiative on Science for Health and Well-being. At the same time, a separate programme on Global Environmental Change and Health was being developed by the Earth System Science Partnership. In 2006, the ICSU Committee on Scientific Planning and Review established an ad hoc Scoping Group to liaise with and advise on these various activities and help define ICSU's future strategy in this area. The Scoping exercise identified the need for a more holistic/systems approach to health issues in the urban environment as being an area in which ICSU and its members might make a unique contribution. In 2007, a Planning Group was established with the aim of developing a new interdisciplinary programme focusing on "A systems analysis approach to health and well-being in the changing urban environment".

In order to initiate the programme planning process a workshop was held at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Laxenburg, Austria, January 24-25, 2008. This brought together around 40 scientists to explore how different disciplinary perspectives and knowledge might be integrated into a systems approach. Dr. Ania Grobicki (Research & Policy Co-operation, World Health Organisation, Geneva) represented IUGG at this meeting and delivered the talk entitled "Natural & Human-Induced Hazards Factors Related to Urban Health". The report on the meeting will be published in the next issue of the IUGG E-Journal.

4. News from the Electronic Geophysical Year (eGY)

Earth & Space Science Informatics Summit

Earth & Space Science informatics (geoinformatics) bodies and programs are growing up all around the world in response to three drivers (i) modern ICT capabilities, (ii) demand for ready access to data and services in order to tackle modern cross-disciplinary, complex problems as well as traditional ones, (iii) greater readiness by governments to support a science information commons to serve societal benefit area. A Summit will help to produce a unified approach to common issues, and reduce replication of effort. The Summit to be held on 13-14 March 2008 at Villa Celimontana (IGU's Home of Geography) in Rome, Italy, is organized by IUGG-eGY, IUGS-CGI, SEEGrid (Australia), EGU-ESSI, AGU-ESSI, and GSA-Geoinformatics Division.

The objectives of the meeting are to learn about activities and plans of various organizations on informatics; to identify and understand different users (e.g. scientists, decision makers, educators, private sector); to identify and understand user-driven needs for informatics and where these needs are not being met; to identify areas of common needs and overlap where the synergy of cooperation will save effort and produce a better result; to identify current systems of leadership/governance that are successfully establishing best-practices, and areas where leadership/governance is needed; to prepare a declaration of intent; and to plan next steps (actions).

Received from Charles Barton (eGY)

5. Report on the International Symposium on the Restoration Program from Giant Earthquakes and Tsunamis

The Symposium on the Restoration Program from Giant Earthquakes and Tsunamis was held at Phuket, Thailand from 22 to 24 January 2008. The Symposium had three keynote lectures delivered by Seree Supharatid, Harsh Gupta and Eddie Bernard, and nine sessions on various aspects of giant earthquakes and tsunamis. A total of about sixty oral presentations and about 20 posters were included. Most of the 80 odd participants were from Asia and Pacific region. Seree Supharatid noted that Thailand has dramatically recovered from the disastrous December 26, 2004 tsunami. Eddie Bernard talked about the concept of a tsunami-resilient community. Harsh Gupta informed the symposium about the successful commissioning of India's Tsunami and Storm Surge Mitigation System. This end-to-end system is based on identification of two tsunamigenic zones extending from Sumatra to Andaman group of island and the other off the coast of Makaran in the Arabian Sea, which are capable of generating tsunamis that could effect the Indian Ocean rim countries. It has all the necessary elements including ocean bottom pressure recorders placed strategically to cover both the zones of tsunamigenic earthquakes. The system was successfully commissioned in August 2007 and performed well during the September 12, 2007 earthquakes. A field trip was organized to Khao Lak resort, which suffered heavily during 2004 and has now totally recovered. T. Kato and his team of organizers from Japan and Thailand deserve appreciation for a well-planned symposium.

Received from Harsh Gupta

6. Honors and Awards

The German President Horst Koehler awarded IAG Secretary General Prof. Dr. Hermann Drewes (German Geodetic Research Institute, Munich) the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. On February 11 the decoration was handed over by Dr. T. Goppel, Bavarian Minister for Science, Research and Arts. The ceremony was taken as a good opportunity to present geodesy to the public and to policy makers.



Prof. Dr. H. Drewes and Dr. T. Goppel during the ceremony



Prof. David S. Chapman (University of Utah, USA), Chair of the IASPEI/IAVCEI/IAPSO International Heat Flow Commission, was elected an AGU fellow.



Prof. Stephen J. Sparks (University of Bristol), past President of IAVCEI (1999-2003), was elected the President of AGU Section – Volcanology, Geochemistry and Petrology.

7. Conference on Mathematical Geophysics (CMG 2008)

The 27th IUGG Conference on Mathematical Geophysics will be held 15-20 June 2008 in Longyearbyen on Spitsbergen, Norway. The theme is Dynamics in Earth System: Flow, Fracture and Waves. All researchers using quantitative methods to study evolving Earth systems are invited. Studies that integrate field observations, laboratory experiments, and theoretical models are especially welcome. Particular focus will be given to new quantitative methods that offer the possibility of significant progress in our understanding of Earth processes. Problems of interest include (but are not limited to) fracture, ranging from ice sheets to earthquakes; geophysical fluid dynamics, ranging from internal flows to oceanic and atmospheric dynamics; and quantitative aspects of the earth's biological, chemical, and climatic evolution. Information regarding the program, registration, accommodation, etc., is available at <http://www.fys.uio.no/cm2008/start.html>.

8. IUGG-related meetings occurring during March – May 2008

A calendar of meetings of interest to IUGG disciplines (especially those organized by IUGG Associations) is posted on the IUGG web site [www.IUGG.org/calendar]. Specific information about these meetings can be found there. Individual Associations also list more meetings on their web sites appropriate to their disciplines.

- March 3-6, German Geophysical Society, Freiberg, Germany, 68th Annual Meeting.
 - March 26-28, IACS, Skeikampen, Norway, International Workshop “Mass balance measurements and modeling”.
 - April 13-18, Vienna, Austria, General Assembly of the European Geosciences Union.
 - May 6-8, IAHS, Toronto, Canada, 4th International Symposium on Flood Defence.
 - May 5–9, Liege, Belgium, 40th International Liege Colloquium on Ocean Dynamics, and Advanced Research Workshop on Oceanography of the rapidly changing Arctic and Sub-Arctic.
 - May 18-24, IAGA, Crete, Greece, 12th International Symposium on Equatorial Aeronomy (ISEA 12).
 - May 19-23, IAMAS, Gijon, Spain, International Symposium “Effects of Climate Change on the World’s Oceans”.
 - May 27-30, AGU, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA, Joint Assembly.
 - May 27-31, IAHS, Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia BALWOIS 2008 - Third International Conference on Water Observation and Information Systems for Decision Support.
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End of IUGG Electronic Journal Volume 8 Number 3 (March 1, 2008)

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