



## **The IUGG Electronic Journal**

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This 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. Greece a member of IUGG again**

On 7 July 2008 an application for re-admission of GREECE to IUGG as a regular member of Category 3 was received from the Hellenic National Committee for Geodesy and Geophysics. The IUGG Executive Committee welcomed this application, and it was placed before the IUGG Adhering Bodies in regular status (dues paid) for a vote by correspondence. The vote is now complete, and the application was accepted (22 affirmative and 1 abstain). According to the IUGG Statutes and By-Laws, the membership of Greece is provisional until the next meeting of the IUGG Council in Melbourne, Australia, 2011, when a final vote will be taken.

Congratulations to the new officers of the National Committee for Greece. They are G. Veis (President), I. Kolovos (Vice President), and H. Billiris (Secretary General). Correspondents to the Associations are A. Dermanis (IAG), C. Zerefos (IAGA), G. Tsakiris (IAHS), C. Zerefos (IAMAS), G. Chronis (IAPSO), V. Papazachos (IASPEI), and M. Fytikas (IAVCEI).

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### **2. GeoUnions Business Meeting**

ICSU GeoUnions Consortium was set up in 2004 to promote Earth sciences worldwide and to coordinate activities of 8 ICSU Unions dealing with the Earth and planets. The Consortium is comprised of the International Astronomical Union (IAU), International Geographical Union (IGU), International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA), International Society for

Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), and International Union of Radio Science (URSI).

The business meeting of the GeoUnions was held in Maputo (Mozambique) on October 19. Each Union reported on progress since the last business meeting in Paris (February 2008). The major topics for discussions were new ICSU hazards, ecosystem, and health programmes, data issue and policy, involvements of GeoUnions into the ICSU regional offices' activities. Nominations to ICSU officers and ICSU committees were considered. GeoUnions reviewed their major focus programs: Natural and Human-Induced Hazards and Disasters, Health, and GeoScience in Africa. Another topic for discussion was the International Year of Planet Earth and GeoUnions activity. Sospeter Muhongo, Chair of the IYPE Science Program, reported on the progress and activities of the Year. Possibilities to hold GeoUnions Open Forums were considered.

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### **3. International Council for Science (ICSU): Union Members Forum**

The International Council of Science (ICSU) has both national members and Union members. On 21 October ICSU organized two separate all-day Forums in Maputo (Mozambique): one for Union Members and one for National Members. The Union Members Forum provided an opportunity to raise issues for clarification prior to the GA plenary sessions. Several topics were considered at the Forum, among them: (i) Union involvement in new interdisciplinary initiatives, such as Hazards (H. Gupta, IUGG Vice-President, presented the report on behalf of the Hazards Planning Group and CSPR), Ecosystem services (T. Rosswall, ICSU Executive Director), and World Data System (B. Minster, Chair of the Panel of the World Data Centers); (ii) Union involvement in ICSU Committees (T. Rosswall presented a draft evaluation report on Union involvement in ICSU activities. The report showed that IUGG is the leader among the ICSU Unions in submission of nominations and acceptance of the nominations by ICSU Executive Board); and (iii) Union involvement with ICSU Regional Offices (N. Hassan, Director of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and S. Muhongo, Director of the Regional Office for Africa, placed IUGG as an ICSU Union with strong involvements in their regional activities, whereas A. Abreu, Director of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, noted that IUGG had designated a liaison officer).

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### **4. ICSU General Assembly**

The ICSU General Assembly (GA) was held in Maputo (Mozambique) from 21 to 24 October. IUGG was represented by the Union President (Tom Beer) and Secretary General (Alik Ismail-Zadeh). The IUGG Vice-President (Hars Gupta) and Immediate Past President (Uri Shamir) were also in attendance because of their role on ICSU Board and Committees.

The President of Mozambique arrived for the formal opening ceremony. ICSU launched a new programme to understand the human impact on Earth's life-support systems. ICSU - along with UNESCO and the United Nations University - has taken the lead on this and will establish "Ecosystem Change and Human Well-being", a major international programme to help fill some of those knowledge gaps.

In response to the urgent need to reduce the impacts of natural disasters, ICSU also launched a new, 10-year, international research programme “Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR)” designed to address the gaps in the knowledge and methods that are preventing the effective application of science to averting disasters and reducing risk.

The report “Enhancing Involvement of Social Sciences in ICSU” identifies social sciences as being essential for the implementation of the ICSU Strategic Plan 2006-2011. The ICSU General Assembly decided to encourage the participation of social sciences on its committees, task forces and collaborative research initiatives; stimulate more social sciences unions to join ICSU; and to work with the International Social Sciences Council (ISSC) as a key partner in strengthening international social science of relevance for implementing ICSU's Strategic Plan.

The existing networks for collecting, storing and distributing data in many areas of science are inadequate and not designed to enable the inter-disciplinary research that is necessary to meet major global challenges. These networks must be transformed into a new inter-operable data system and extended around the world and across all areas of science. The GA decided to establish a new ICSU World Data System as an Interdisciplinary Body to replace the World Data Centers and Federation of Astronomical and Geophysical Data Services and to set up an ad hoc Strategic Coordinating Committee for Information and Data.

More substantive matters dealt with during the three days included a decision to discontinue ICSU endorsement of SCOPE (that was carried), and the agreement of the GA to set up a planning committee for a research program “Science of Health and Well-being in Urban Environments”. The GA also voted to change the method by which ICSU collects dues. In the case of national members it is to be done on the basis of national GDP. In the case of Union members it is to be done on the basis of dues income.

IUGG had submitted two resolutions: one on the maintenance and archiving of data from the International Polar Year and another on the digital divide in Africa (both prepared by IUGG Union Commission on Data and Information). The ICSU GA accepted modified versions of the initial resolutions.

The new ICSU President C. Brechignac (France) took office at the end of the GA as did the newly elected President-Elect of ICSU, Yuan T. Lee (China – Taipei), a winner of the 1986 Nobel Chemistry Prize. K. Raivio (Finland) and R. Kuroda (Japan) were elected Vice-Presidents of ICSU, M. Tchente (Cameroon) and H. Ott (Switzerland) the Secretary General and Treasurer, respectively. The GA elected also four Ordinary Members from the Union Members and four Ordinary Members from the National Members on to the Executive Board. Uri Shamir was re-elected to the ICSU Executive Board from the GeoUnions cluster.

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## **5. Report on the International CODATA Conference**

CODATA is an ICSU interdisciplinary committee on Data for Science and Technology, which works to improve the quality, reliability, management and accessibility of data of importance to all fields of science and technology. The International CODATA Conference “Science Information for Society – from Today to the Future” was held on 5-8 October in Kiev (Ukraine). Several sessions were related to Earth Sciences, namely:

- (i) *Global Climate Change and the Data to Inform.* The session addressed the problems in remote sensing and Earth observations data required for studies of climate dynamics and changes.
- (ii) *Geophysical Data Systems and Analysis.*
- (iii) *Grid Technologies for Earth Observations.* The session discussed advanced technologies for data storage and dissemination.
- (iv) *International Geoscience Data Initiatives and Programs.* The session was composed of several progress reports on major international projects, e.g. OneGeology, eGY, GEOMIND (new geophysical multilingual Internet driven information service).
- (v) *Natural Disasters and Risk.*
- (vi) *International Polar Year.*
- (vii) *Geosciences and Spatial Data Management.*
- (viii) *Emerging Technologies and Opportunities for Global Data Management and Exchange.* The program of the session was comprised of the presentations several World Data Centers dealing with geophysical data and information.

IUGG was represented at the Conference by a strong team: C. Barton (the IUGG liaison to CODATA), R. Neilan (IUGG liaison to FAGS), P. Fox (Chair of the IUGG Commission on Data and Information), and A. Ismail-Zadeh (IUGG Secretary General).

The CODATA General Assembly was held on 9-10 October. A report on the General Assembly will be published in the next issue of the journal.

## **6. Report on SCAR Conference and Delegates Meeting**

SCAR, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, is an ICSU interdisciplinary committee, and it is charged with the initiation, promotion and co-ordination of scientific research in Antarctica. SCAR evolved from the Special Committee on Antarctic Research established by ICSU to co-ordinate the scientific research of the twelve nations active in Antarctica during the International Geophysical Year 1957-58. The membership of SCAR comprises the National Committees of national scientific academies or research councils of those nations which are active in Antarctic research, relevant ICSU Scientific Unions, and Associate Members which are those national scientific organizations planning to become active in Antarctic research.

SCAR Delegates meet biennially to determine SCAR policy and strategy. The Delegates elect a President and four Vice-Presidents from amongst themselves who, together with the Immediate Past President, constitute the Executive Committee, which is responsible for conducting the day-to-day administration of SCAR through its Secretariat and Executive Office at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, United Kingdom. SCAR also holds, prior to the Delegates Meeting, a major Open Science Conference to draw attention to Antarctic issues, along with meetings of the Standing Scientific Groups that are designed to finalize the Science Programmes for eventual approval by the Delegates.

The XXX biennial meetings of SCAR were held in Saint-Petersburg and Moscow (Russia). The business meetings of SCAR subsidiary bodies, the SCAR Open Science Conference and the annual meeting of the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programmes (COMNAP) and its Standing Committee on Antarctic Logistics and Operations (SCALOP) were held in Saint Petersburg during the first week (5-11 July 2008). The Delegates Meeting was scheduled in Moscow for the second week, 14-16 July 2008.

The SCAR Second Open Science Conference was well attended with about 1150 participants. The programme comprised 550 oral presentations and 670 posters. There were 29 thematic sessions altogether, including one on education and outreach and up to 11 parallel sessions each day. The SCAR medals were awarded as part of the Opening Ceremony. The 2008 medal for Excellence in Antarctic Research was awarded to Angelika Brandt (Germany), the medal for International Scientific Coordination to Claude Lorius (France), the President's Medal to Vladimir Kotlyakov.

At the Delegates Meeting in Moscow Malaysia has been admitted as a Full Member of SCAR and Romania has been admitted to Associate Membership. The International Astronomical Union (IAU) was admitted for Union Membership. The total membership of SCAR numbered now, 31 Full Members, 4 Associate Members and 9 ICSU Union members. On the Executive Committee Chris Rapley (UK) became Past-President for a term of two years and was replaced by Mahlon C. Kennicutt as President. Z. Zhang and M. C. Kennicutt have completed their terms of Office as Vice-President and were replaced by Ad Huiskes (The Netherlands) and Rasik Ravindra (India). Reports on and reviews of the five SCAR Scientific Research Programmes were presented by the leaders of these programmes. Delegates approved the ACE, AGCS, EBA, and SALE programmes for four additional years. ICESTAR was approved to the end of 2009, after which it will become an Expert Group. Based on advice from the Fellowship Review Panel the Executive approved the award of four SCAR Fellowship for the 2007-2008 season and three SCAR Fellowships for the 2008-2009 season. Sergio Marensi, the Chairman of the Standing Finance Committee, presented the financial statements for 2006 and 2007 which were approved by the Delegates. The 2008 provisional budget was revised making a number of cuts as recommended by the Finance Committee. The 2009 and 2010 provisional budgets were tabled and approved. The next SCAR Executive Committee Meeting will meet in association with COMNAP in summer 2009 in Punta Arenas. The XXXI SCAR meeting will be in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in August 2010 with the Open Science Conference being held back-to-back. The USA offered to host the XXXII SCAR meeting in 2012 and Spain offered to host a future SCAR meeting in 2014.

During the St. Petersburg Conference, Ian Allison, President-Elect of the International Association of Cryospheric Sciences (IACS), signed a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of IACS that determines future cooperation between SCAR, IASC (International Arctic Science Committee), and IACS. Such arrangement builds the foundation for IUGG's organized and sustained attention to cryospheric sciences. IACS was invited to attend the SCAR Delegates Meeting in Moscow, and G. Kaser, Association's President, attended the meeting as an observer.

Received from R. Schlich, acting liaison officer of IUGG to SCAR and  
from G. Kaser, IACS President

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## **7. Executive Director of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) to step down**

AGU President T. Grove announced that Fred Spilhaus will step down as AGU's Executive Director in mid-2009. AGU is preparing to undertake a worldwide search for Spilhaus's successor.

Fred Spilhaus, 70, joined the AGU staff in 1967 after a little more than two years in the government employment that followed his PhD in oceanography from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Three years later he succeeded the first AGU Executive Director, Waldo Smith, who himself had served over a 20-year span. Under Spilhaus's leadership, AGU went from being what was formally the 8,000-member U.S. National Committee for IUGG to an

independent, widely recognized scientific society with a worldwide membership of nearly 55,000. The annual budget grew from about \$750,000 to over \$33 million; the journals operation grew and evolved from approximately 854 articles per year to more than 5300 per year, with online publication of 20-30 articles daily; the meetings program grew from a single annual event with 2000 attendees to multiple meetings and conferences around the world, the largest attracting 15,000 scientists annually from over 100 countries. When asked what he felt was most important among his contributions to AGU, Fred Spilhaus noted "the openness of AGU and the ability for anyone involved in the Earth and space sciences to join and stay a member. Of equal importance to me is the fact that AGU always puts the integrity and quality of science first." Spilhaus also said that he hoped to continue through his life to support AGU and the scientific community in whatever ways he could.

Fred Spilhaus was elected to the IUGG Finance Committee in 1987 and served for the Committee till 2003 as its member, Secretary, and Chair.

(Based on the AGU press release, 24 October 2008)

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## 8. IUGG-related meetings occurring during November 2008 – January 2009

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](http://www.IUGG.org/calendar)]. Specific information about these meetings can be found there. Individual Associations also list more meetings on their web sites according to their disciplines.

- November 7-9, IAHS, Chengdu, China, International IAHS-PUB symposium and the Second International China-PUB symposium on hydrological modeling and integrated water resources management in ungauged mountainous watershed.
- November 10-13, eGY, Tsukuba, Japan, International Symposium: Fifty Years after IGY- Modern Information Technologies and Earth and Solar Sciences.
- November 24-27, IASPEI, Tsukuba, Japan, 7th General Assembly of Asian Seismological Commission.
- November 24-28, EGU, Santiago de Chile, The Andes: Challenge for Geosciences, 4th EGU Alexander von Humboldt International Conference.
- December 15-19, AGU, San Francisco, California, Fall Meeting.
- January 10-16, IASPEI, Cape Town, South Africa, IASPEI General Assembly.

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End of IUGG Electronic Journal Volume 8 Number 11 (November 1, 2008)

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**Note: Contributions to IUGG E-Journal are welcome from members of the IUGG family. Please send your contributions to Alik Ismail-Zadeh by e-mail (insert in Subject line: *contribution to E-Journal*). The contributions will be reviewed and may be shortened by the Editor.**