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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. IUGG Annual Report for 2009

The IUGG Annual Report provides a summary of the activities of the Union, IUGG Associations and Union and Inter-Unions Commissions. Thanks to the input from the Union Associations, Union Commissions, and the International Lithosphere Program. The 2009 IUGG Annual Report is now completed and posted on the web page: <http://www.iugg.org/publications/reports/report2009.pdf>. We invite you to download this impressive summary of last year's activities. The report will be printed together with the 2010 IUGG Yearbook and will be mailed to the Adhering Organizations, National Committees, International partners, and major libraries in May 2010.

2. IUGG awarded an ICSU grant

ICSU announced the 2010 awardees to be funded from the ICSU Grants Programme. The project proposal "Extreme Natural Hazards and Societal Implications (ENHANS)", submitted by IUGG, has been awarded EUR 30,000. The project is supported by the ICSU GeoUnions (International Geographical Union, International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, International Union of Geological Sciences, International Union of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics), the ICSU Scientific Committee "Integrated Research on Disaster Risk", the ICSU-UNESCO Interdisciplinary Body "Global Ocean Observing System", the ICSU Regional Offices for Asia and the Pacific and for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the American Geophysical Union.

The principal goals of the project ENHANS are (i) to improve the understanding of critical phenomena associated with extreme natural events and to analyse impacts of natural hazards on the

sustainable development of society; (ii) to promote studies on the prediction of extreme events reducing predictive uncertainty and on natural hazards mitigation; to bring the issues into the political and economical policies; (iii) to disseminate knowledge and data on natural hazards for the advancement of research and education in general and especially in developing countries; and (iv) to establish links and networks with the international organizations involved in research on extreme natural hazards and their societal implications. Three major events are planned within the project framework: (1) scientific sessions on natural hazards and disaster risks in Latin American and the Caribbean (Brazil, August 2010), (2) a workshop on natural hazards in Africa (Pretoria, January 2011), and (3) a symposium on grand challenges in natural hazards research and risk analysis and Open Forum “Natural Hazards: From Risk to Opportunity by Partnership of Science and Society” (Melbourne, July 2011).

3. Report on the IUGS Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee (EC) of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) met in Paris, France, on 22-25 February. In the tradition of collaboration among the ICSU GeoUnions, IUGG was invited to the meeting. IUGG Secretary General Alik Ismail-Zadeh attended the EC meeting on behalf of Union President Tom Beer. Matters of common interest to the two Unions were discussed. Among them were the discussion on the International Lithosphere Program (IUGG-IUGS Commission on Lithosphere), the ICSU GeoUnions Consortium, the relationship with UNESCO, and the 2012 International Geological Congress to be held in Brisbane. Particularly, it was mentioned that IUGS and IUGG should work together on the planning of big geoscientific events (like international geological congresses and IUGG general assemblies) and discuss possibilities for holding joint world geosciences congresses biennially.

4. News from the International Council for Science

ICSU Unions Meeting

The meeting of ICSU's Scientific Unions will be held on 7–8 April at the Institut Pasteur in Paris. The meeting will focus on 'Strengthening the involvement of Unions in ICSU activities. A reception will be hosted by the French Academy of Sciences. The ICSU GeoUnions will hold their business meeting on 6 April at the French Academy of Sciences and meet with UNESCO representatives on 9 April.

ICSU Grants Programme

Seven projects have been awarded funding from the ICSU Grants Programme 2010 (one of the projects is ENHANS, see above). The grants support collaborative scientific initiatives of relevance to science and society.

The project “MicroPerm - An international workshop to initiate the circumpolar integration of permafrost microbiological studies” submitted by the International Union of Geological Sciences and supported by IUGG, the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), and the ICSU Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), was awarded EUR20,000. MicroPerm main objectives are to (1) organize a process leading to the establishment of a panarctic study programme on permafrost microbiology under the auspices of the International Permafrost Association; (2)

convene a kick-off workshop to gather the leaders in the field of permafrost microbiology and qualify the framework of the programme; and (3) to seek additional endorsement and sponsorship through the supporting applicants to firmly embed the future program in global scientific and observing efforts.

IUGG via the International Association of Cryospheric Sciences (IACS) will contribute to this project through the joint IACS-IPA scientific working group "Glacier and Permafrost Hazards in Mountains". IUGG/IACS will provide scientific expertise in all aspects of cryospheric sciences related to the project and providing assistance in search of relevant experts to be invited to attend the proposed kick-off workshop.

UNESCO and ICSU

In February ICSU and UNESCO initiated discussions to define priorities and activities for cooperation over the next two years. Areas of common interest include Earth system visioning and the new programmes on disaster risk and ecosystem change. The importance of collaboration between the ICSU Scientific Unions and UNESCO was also strongly emphasised, particularly in the context of the international years for Planet Earth, Astronomy, Biodiversity and Chemistry.

Hazards and Disasters

A Letter of Cooperation to establish the International Programme Office of the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) programme (http://www.icsu.org/1_icsuinscience/ENVI_Hazards_1.html) has been signed by the programme's sponsors and Chinese counterparts. The IRDR co-sponsors—ICSU, the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN ISDR)—signed the agreement in Beijing in February. The China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) will provide annual financial support to the office for 10 years. The office will be located in the new headquarters of the Center for Earth Observation and Digital Earth (CEODE) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), situated on the edge of Beijing. An announcement on the appointment of the Executive Director of IRDR is expected shortly. A priority activity of the Scientific Committee for IRDR (http://www.icsu.org/1_icsuinscience/ENVI_Hazards_1.html#SC) has been establishing working groups for the planning and implementation of the programme's first three years. A workshop organised by one of the working groups was held in Toronto, Canada, in February to develop a template for the case study approach to past disaster events that is being adopted by IRDR. The findings from the group will be on the agenda of the third meeting of the Scientific Committee scheduled for 14-16 April in Paris.

Regional Office for Africa

Dr. Rocky Skeef has been appointed as the Acting Director of the Regional Office for Africa (ROA) to maintain continuity in the operation of the office while the search for the new Director is ongoing. Dr. Skeef is currently an executive at South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF), and has been a key figure driving the establishment of and providing support for the Regional Office. Dr. Skeef took up his appointment on 1 March 2010, following the departure of the previous Director Dr. Sospeter Muhongo, who vacated the post on 28 February. In 2010–11 the office will focus on implementing the projects of the four science plans—sustainable energy, natural and human-induced hazards and disasters, health and human well-being, and global environmental change (including climate change and adaptation). ROA will begin implementing the second phase of the African Diaspora Project in collaboration with South Africa's NRF.

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

The Terms of Reference for the mid-term review of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) were approved by the ICSU Committee on Scientific Planning and Review in February. The Review Panel will meet for the first time in May, followed by a site visit in July. The review will be high on the agenda at the 9th meeting of the Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific when they meet in Kuala Lumpur, 29-30 April. The Regional Office is establishing a Science Planning Group on Human Health and Wellbeing in the Urban Environment. The group will develop the final science plan for ROAP, which is scheduled for publication in January 2011.

Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

The mid-term review of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) is underway, with an online consultation of ICSU Members receiving more than 60 responses. The responses will be discussed at the first meeting of the Review Panel, 19-20 March. The 8th meeting of the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean will take place in Rio de Janeiro, 14-15 May. The Regional Committee will engage with the Review Panel who will be making a site visit 17-18 May.

Source: ICSU Newsletter, March 2010, vol. 8, no. 1

5. Awards and Honours

The 2010 Vening Meinesz Medal of the European Geosciences Union is awarded to ***Philip Woodworth*** (Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory, Liverpool, UK) in recognition of his outstanding contributions to sea level research. Woodworth is the President IAPSO Commission on Mean Sea Level and Tides and the past Secretary of the ICSU Federation of Astronomical and Geophysical Data Analysis Services (FAGS).

Michael J. McPhaden (NOAA/Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, Seattle, Washington) is awarded the Fridtjof Nansen Medal for his leadership in developing ocean observing systems for climate research and forecasting and for fundamental contributions to our understanding of the ocean's role in climate. McPhaden is President-elect of the American Geophysical Union and was a lead convener of the IUGG Symposium on Inter-annual to Inter-decadal Climate Variability (Perugia, 2007).

The Beno Gutenberg Medal is awarded to ***Jean-Paul Montagner*** (Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris) for his influential contributions to the study of seismic anisotropy in the earth's mantle and for services to global seismology. Montagner was an organiser of several IUGG and IASPEI symposia.

6. IUGG-related meetings occurring during April – June 2010

A calendar of meetings of interest to IUGG disciplines (especially those organized by IUGG Associations) is posted on the IUGG web site, where specific information about these meetings can be found (<http://www.IUGG.org/calendar>). Individual Associations also list more meetings on their web sites according to their disciplines.

- May 2-7, EGU, Vienna, Austria, General Assembly of the European Geosciences Union.
- May 8-16, AGU, Agros, Cyprus, AGU Chapman Conference “Detachments in Oceanic Lithosphere: Deformation, Magmatism, Fluid Flow and Ecosystems”.
- May 17-21, IAHS, Taormina, Italy, Advances in statistical hydrology.
- May 17-24, AGU, Valparaiso-Vina del Mar & Valdivia, Chile, AGU Chapman Conference “Giant Earthquakes and Their Tsunamis”.
- May 24-28, IASPEI, IUGG, Zelenogorsk Town, Russia, VIII international workshop “Physics of forecasting of rock destruction”.
- May 25-28 UN-SPIDER, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Regional Workshop “Building Upon Regional Space-based Solutions for Disaster Management and Emergency Response for Africa”.
- May 25-29, IAHS, IUGG, Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia, Conference on Water Observation and Information System for Decision Support (BALWOIS 2010).
- May 27-28, UN-SPIDER, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, Fourth Central Asia GIS Conference - GISCA 2010: Water: Life, Risk, Energy and Land Use.
- May 31 - June 4, CGU, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Congress of the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society (CMOS) and the Canadian Geophysical Union (CGU): "Our Earth, Our Air, Our Water: Our Future".
- June 7-11, CMG, Pisa, Italy, 28th IUGG Conference on Mathematical Geophysics - Modelling Earth Dynamics: Complexity, Uncertainty and Validation.
- June 7-15, IACS, IUGG, Fairbanks & McCarthy, Alaska, USA, International summer school/workshop in glaciology.
- June 8-12, IPY, Oslo, Norway, International Polar Year Science Conference.
- June 13-18, IAHS, Zurich, Switzerland, Groundwater Quality 2010 Conference.
- June 14-18, IAHS, Warsaw, Poland, International Symposium on sediment dynamics for a changing future.
- June 15-18, IAGA, Boulder, Colorado, USA, 6th Workshop on Long-Term Changes and Trends in the Atmosphere (TREND 2010).
- June 16-19, IAHS, Constantza, Romania, Water 2010.
- June 23-25, IAHS, Coimbra, Portugal, Tenth International Conference on Precipitation (IPC10).

End of IUGG Electronic Journal Volume 10 Number 4 (1 April 2010)

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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.