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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 website (<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. New Affiliate Members

The IUGG Secretariat received two applications for admission to IUGG as an Affiliate Member from *the American Geosciences Institute (AGI)* and *the International Association for Geoethics (IAGETH)*. The IUGG Executive Committee examined these applications. Considering that AGI and IAGETH have a well thought out program of activities that are appropriate and helpful in supporting geosciences, the Executive Committee approved both applications and recommended that AGI and IAGETH should be accepted as Affiliate Members. The applications were placed before the IUGG Adhering Bodies in regular status for a vote by correspondence. Based on the votes the applications were accepted. The Affiliate membership of AGI and of IAGETH is provisional until the next meeting of the IUGG Council in Prague, Czech Republic, on 22 June 2015, when the vote will be approved.

AGI was founded in 1948, under a directive of the National Academy of Sciences, as a network of associations representing geoscientists with a diverse array of skills and knowledge of our planet. The Institute provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in our profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of resources, resilience to natural hazards, and the health of the environment. AGI connects Earth science and people by serving as a unifying force for the geoscience community. With a network of 49 member societies, AGI represents more than a quarter-million geoscientists. No matter an individual's discipline, AGI's essential programs and services will strengthen their connection to the geosciences.

IAGETH is a rather young international organization formed in 2012. Geoethics is an interdisciplinary field between geosciences and ethics involving Earth and planetary sciences as well as applied ethics. It deals with the way of human thinking and acting in relation to the significance of the Earth as a system and as a model. The IAGETH's major activities are related to: (i) promote and encourage the advancement of geoethics – primarily through educational and publishing activities and research; (ii) foster geoethical ways of thinking and acting – especially in geosciences (because of their significance for any support and help in developing realistic sustainability concepts); (iii) improve teaching and training in geoethics; (iv) realize the goals defined by the International Declaration of Geoethics; and (v) collect, evaluate and disseminate the results of geoethical activities worldwide.

2. IUGG Council Agenda Book

The Council Agenda Book, including the reports of the Union officers, has been e-mailed to the Member Countries three months in advance of the Council Meeting. The IUGG Council meetings are open only to Adhering Body Delegates, Listeners designated by Adhering Bodies in Associate Status, the IUGG Executive Committee and Finance Committee, and IUGG President's guests. A report of the decisions of the Council, including the officers elected for the 2015-2019 term, will be presented at the General Assembly Closing Ceremony on 1 July 2015.

3. The United Nations World Conference adopts new international framework for disaster risk reduction

The United National (UN) Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) was held in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015. Policymakers gathered for a ten-yearly meeting on disaster risk reduction with hopes high that the conference held in the earthquake-tsunami-hit region of Japan might provide a springboard for efforts to tackle disasters related to natural events. "What we are discussing here ... is very real for millions of people in the world," UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon said in a speech at the Opening Ceremony of the conference. He stated that annual economic losses now exceed US\$ 300 billion annually. "We can watch that number grow as more people suffer. Or we can dramatically lower that figure and invest the savings in development. Six billion dollars allocated each year can result in savings of up to US\$360 billion by 2030, the Secretary-General said. He praised the existing global agreement on disaster risk reduction, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), which was adopted ten years ago in Kobe, Japan. He said it "has saved thousands of lives. Now we must respond to the world's growing needs by empowering individuals, supporting communities and backing promises with resources."

The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe, pledged \$US 4 billion to support implementation of the "Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction" over the next four years. Speaking at the Opening ceremony Mr. Abe said: "Disaster risk reduction is the most important challenge for both developed and developing countries. For developing countries in particular, where 90% of disaster victims are concentrated." The financial package will focus on the development of disaster-proof infrastructure, the promotion of global and regional cooperation and the training of 40,000 government officials and local leaders to play a leading role in national efforts for disaster risk reduction. Japan will make its expertise and knowledge available.



Mr. Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General (left panel) and Mr. Shinzo Abe, the Japanese Prime Minister



On the occasion of the WCDRR, the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Sciences Council released a synthesis paper “Disaster risks research and assessment to promote risk reduction and management”, which aims to highlight potential contributions of science to disaster risk reduction (<http://www.icsu.org/news-centre/news/disaster-risks-research-and-assessment-to-promote-risk-reduction-and-management>). The paper can be assessed at the webpage of ICSU http://www.icsu.org/science-for-policy/disaster-risk/documents/DRRsynthesisPaper_2015.pdf. Several IUGG experts took part in writing the paper, namely, Daniel Baker, Harsh Gupta, Alik Ismail-Zadeh, David Johnston, Gordon McBean, Kuniyoshi Takeuchi, and Guoxiong Wu. A summary for policymaker of the synthesis paper was distributed among the WCDRR National Delegates by the UNISDR Secretariat at the request of the Russian Federation.

On 18 March, representatives from 187 UN member States adopted the major agreement of the Post-2015 development agenda, *the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 – the new international framework for disaster risk reduction*, a far reaching new framework for disaster risk reduction with seven targets and four priorities for action. Margareta Wahlström, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, said: “The adoption of this new framework for disaster risk reduction opens a major new chapter in sustainable development as it outlines clear targets and priorities for action which will lead to a substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health”.



The framework outlines seven global targets to be achieved over the next 15 years: a substantial reduction in global disaster mortality; a substantial reduction in numbers of affected people; a reduction in economic losses in relation to global GDP; substantial reduction in disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, including health and education facilities; an increase in the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020; enhanced international cooperation; and increased access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments.

The World Conference was attended by over 6,500 participants including 2,800 government representatives from 187 governments. IUGG, as a non-governmental organization, was represented by Secretary General A. Ismail-Zadeh, IAVCEI Secretary General J. Marti, and IUGG GeoRisk Commission Chair K. Takeushi although many experts of IUGG attended the conference in various capacities. The Public Forum had 143,000 visitors over the five days of the conference making it one of the largest UN gatherings ever held in Japan. For more details visit <http://www.wcdrr.org>.

4. Sendai Partnership for 2015-2025

Many scientific and academic institutions and governmental and non-governmental organizations proposed that the Sendai Partnerships 2015-2025 for Global Promotion of Understanding and Reducing Landslide Disaster Risk be established. These partnerships will engage major stakeholders concerned with the challenge of understanding and reducing disaster risk, including relevant international, national, local, governmental, and non-governmental institutions, programs and initiatives, in order to mobilize and coordinate their efforts to pursue prevention, to provide practical solutions, education, communication, and public outreach in reduction of landslide disaster risk. The Partnerships will focus on delivering tangible and practical results that are directly related to the implementation of the goals and targets of the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

IUGG was invited to join the Partnership in promoting scientific understanding of the processes leading to landslide disasters. The ceremony of signing the Sendai Partnerships 2015-2025 for Global Promotion of Understanding and Reducing Landslide Disaster Risk was held in Sendai, Japan on 16 March 2015.



During the ceremony

The document was signed by *Kyoji Sassa*, Executive Director of the International Consortium on Landslides; *Margareta Wahlström*, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UN Office for Disaster risk Reduction (UNISDR); *Qunli Han*, Director, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences of UNESCO; *Dominique Burgeon*, Director Emergency and Rehabilitation Division Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; *Kazuhiko Takeuchi*, Senior Vice-Rector, United Nations University; *Gordon McBean*, ICSU President; *Toshimitsu Komatsu*, Vice President, World Federation of Engineering Organizations; *Roland Oberhänsli*, IUGS President; *Alik Ismail-Zadeh*, IUGG Secretary General; *Kaoru Saito*, Director, Disaster Preparedness and International Cooperation Division, Disaster Management Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan; *Hideaki Maruyama*, Director, Office for Disaster Reduction Research, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan; *Takashi Onishi*, President, Science Council of Japan; *Kayo Inaba*, Executive Vice President of Kyoto University; *Franco Gabrielli*, Head, National Civil Protection Department Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Government of Italy; and *Jadran Perinic*, Director General, National Protection and Rescue Directorate, Republic of Croatia. The text of the Sendai Partnership declaration can be found at <http://www.iugg.org/about/special.php>.



5. Frontiers in Earth Science

Many of the most critical issues for the coming century depend on a deeper understanding of the inherently complex Earth system. Earth Science investigates not only the fundamental questions of - but also the relationships between - the hydrosphere, atmosphere, cryosphere, biosphere, and solid Earth. It spans time and length scales, from instantaneous changes in crystal lattices to tectonic processes across millions of years. *Frontiers in Earth Science* embraces and encourages the interdisciplinary nature of the field, and promotes co-operation between researchers from fields spanning physics to marine science to chemistry, and integrating methods from remote sensing to field work to microscopy.

Frontiers in Earth Science is a Gold Open Access publisher. Manuscripts can be submitted directly to the journal Frontiers in Earth Science (http://www.frontiersin.org/Earth_Science) where they are subject to peer-review in an innovative, interactive review forum. Queries should be directed to: earthscience.editorial.office@frontiersin.org (received from Gearóid Ó Faoleán, Editorial Office).

6. Call for symposia at the International Geological Congress in 2016

The 35th International Geological Congress (IGC) will be held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 27 August to 4 September 2016. The IGC's Local Organizing Committee invites proposal submissions for scientific symposia, workshops or short courses at this meeting. The proposals should be submitted electronically (<http://www.35igc.org>). The second circular that will be released soon includes detail regarding more than 50 themes that are being considered for the scientific program.

7. Technologies for sustainable use of the sub-surface to serve the energy transition (SES2015)

To meet the challenges of present and future energy demand, the geosciences play an increasingly important role in the sustainable use of the Earth and its resources and in the conservation of our environment. As an association representing a large group of geoscientists, the European Association of Geoscientists and Engineers (EAGE) wishes to promote the development of applied geosciences and technology with regard to the sustainable use of the Earth and its limited resources. SES2015 will be held on 13-15 October 2015 in Celle (Germany) and linked with the Second EAGE Workshop on Geomechanics and Energy, and the participants will have the opportunity to visit both events. In 2014 EAGE invited IUGG to be a scientific collaborator of the Workshop, and the Bureau accepted the invitation to promote the collaboration of geoscientists and engineers. The technical program of the Workshop covers the following topics: (i) Geothermal energy, a non-intermittent renewable energy; (ii) CO₂ storage, for massive reduction of CO₂ emissions; (iii) Energy storage, for enabling massive storage of electricity and heat; (iv) Hydrocarbon energy: improving the environmental footprint; (v) Reservoir stimulation, for a better efficiency of fluid injection and production; (vi) Seismicity: how to manage it; (vii) Managing various uses of the subsurface; and (viii) Environmental, economic and societal impacts. The deadline for abstract submission is 30 April 2015. More information can be found at the webpage: <http://www.eage.org/event/index.php?eventid=1259> (received from B. Müller, Workshop Steering Committee Member).

8. Meeting calendar

A calendar of meetings of interest to IUGG disciplines (especially those organized by IUGG Associations) is posted on the IUGG website (<http://www.IUGG.org/calendar>). Specific information about these meetings can be found there. Individual Associations also list more meetings on their websites according to their disciplines.

April

- 12-17, EGU, Vienna, Austria, EGU General Assembly 2015. Web: <http://www.egu2015.eu>
- 18, IUGG, Vienna, Austria, IUGG Extraordinary Executive Committee Meeting.
- 13-16, IAHS, Vienna, Austria, HydroEco2015: 5th International Multidisciplinary Conference on Hydrology and Ecology. Web: <http://web.natur.cuni.cz/hydroeco2015/>
- 21-23, IASPEI, SSA, Pasadena, CA, USA, SSA Annual Meeting.
Web: <http://www.seismosoc.org/meetings/2015/>

May

- 3-7, AGU, CGU, GAC, MAC, Montreal, Canada, 2015 Joint Assembly. Web: <http://ja.agu.org/2015/>
- 11-13, IAG, Potsdam, Germany, GNNS+R 2015 Workshop. Web: <http://www.gnssr2015.org>
- 11-15, IAU, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, Young Stars & Planets Near the Sun, IAU Symposium 314. Web: <http://youngstars.gsu.edu/>
- 11-15, ISPRS, Berlin, Germany, 36th International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment (ISRSE-36). Web: <http://www.isrse36.org/>
- 18-22, URSI, Gran Canaria, Spain, URSI AT-RASC 2015 (URSI Atlantic Radio Science Conference 2015). Web: <http://www.at-rasc.com>
- 25-26, IAHS, Blida, Algeria, 6th International Conference - Water Resources and Sustainable Development. Web: <http://ciredd2015.ensh.dz/en/>

June

- 1-4, IUSS, Madison, WI, USA, IUSS Global Workshop on Digital Soil Morphometrics. Web: <http://digitalsoilmorphometrics.org/inaugural-global-workshop-2015/>
- 2-4, IUSS, Keszthely, Hungary, Land Quality and Landscape Processes Conference and Workshops. Web: <http://lq2015.georgikon.hu>
- 14-19, AGU, Hong Kong, China, AGU Chapman Conference on Evolution of the Asian Monsoon and its Impact on Landscape, Environment and Society: Using the Past as the Key to the Future. Web: <http://chapman.agu.org/monsoon/>
- 15-20, IAGA, Prague, Czech Republic, 2nd IAGA Summer School. Web: http://www.iugg.org/IAGA/iaga_pages/assemblies/iaga_assemblies.htm
- **June 22 - July 2, IUGG, Prague, Czech Republic, IUGG General Assembly 2015, Earth and Environmental Sciences for Future Generations.**
Web: <http://www.iugg2015prague.com/>

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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.