

Report on the 26th CODATA General Assembly

This report complements the preliminary news item in the IUGG Electronic Journal, Nov., 2008.

This 21st Conference of ICSU's Committee on Data for Science & Technology (CODATA, <http://www.codata.org>) was held at the National Technical University of Ukraine, Kiev, 5-8 October 2008. It continued the emphasis on the Information Society that has emerged in the last few biennial meetings. Conference details and program can be found at CODATA website: <http://www.codata.org/08conf/index.html>. The meeting attracted nearly 600 participants from 30 countries. CODATA Conferences are growing in popularity as the organization becomes an increasingly important forum for informatics developments internationally – covering data science, systems technologies, e-Science, data access, data preservation, data policy, and legal issues (intellectual property rights). CODATA covers all scientific disciplines, ranging from agriculture to health to archeology, and encompasses education and social issues. Geoscience is strong and growing, due in part to a close association with GEOSS. ICSU recognizes that CODATA is well-positioned to play a central role, consistent with the recommendations of the ICSU Strategic Committee for Data & Information (SCID). A special “ICSU Unions” session and discussion meeting were held to identify how CODATA can become more effective in meeting the needs of ICSU and its Unions.

The Conference was followed by a 2-day CODATA General Assembly (equivalent to an IUGG Council meeting). The Executive now comprises: President: K. Lal (India), Vice Presidents: S. Rossouw (South Africa) and G. Wood (Canada), Secretary General: R. Chen (USA), Treasurer: M. Sabourin (Canada), and members P. David (UK), M. Gaune-Escard (France), S. Graves (USA), Guo Huadong (China), F. Kuznetzov (Russia), R. Norris (Australia), A. Nowakjowski (Poland), and M. Zgurovsky (Ukraine). Australia and UK have been admitted as new member countries and IUGG has renewed membership.

Twelve Task Groups (<http://www.codata.org/taskgroups/index.html>) were approved, including one called *eGY: Earth and Space Science Interoperability* (chair: A. Gvishiani, co-chairs: E.Kihn and J. Bonnin). This group will continue some functions of the Electronic Geophysical Year beyond the end of 2008 when eGY ends. There continues to be a mismatch in CODATA between the ad-hoc set of Task Groups and the new strategic directions of the organisation. If CODATA is to capitalise on the new opportunities and become the principal international body and forum for informatics, it will need a formal internal structure that gives comprehensive coverage of all aspects of the business.

Received from C. Barton, IUGG liaison to CODATA