



**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. Happy New Year!

2007 was a remarkable year for the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics.

The XXIV General Assembly of IUGG was held from 2 to 13 July in Perugia, Italy. IUGG recorded its appreciation for the hospitality at the General Assembly. Despite the scientific and cultural success of the meeting, several problems related to the organization of this major Union event were reported by Union Associations. As a response to the reports, IUGG President, Tom Beer, requested the Site Evaluation Committee for the 2011 Bid to continue their work and to collaborate with the IUGG Secretary-General to review the Terms of Reference for IUGG General Assemblies and to ensure adequate incorporation of a guidelines document for Local Organising Committees. The Union will work hard to provide the best possible science and the best possible logistics in the future.

A new association, the International Association of Cryospheric Sciences, was formed and accepted into the family of Union Associations during the General Assembly. IUGG is now comprised of eight International Associations.



Georg Kaser, IACS President, during informal inauguration of the Association.

The IUGG Secretariat thanks Union Associations and Union Commissions as well as individuals who helped make the year 2007 exciting and productive in strengthening international geophysical science for the benefit of society. We look forward again to working with you all over the next year.

Best wishes to everyone for a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2008 Year (of Planet Earth)!

2. The IUGG Yearbook for 2008

The IUGG Bureau and Executive Committee agreed to cease printing of the Yearbook from 2008. Instead, the Yearbook is available electronically in PDF format. Also, the IUGG web-site maintains the directory of Union and Association officials and the archive of IUGG memberships and General Assemblies. Thus, nearly US\$ 10,000 to be spent annually for printing the Yearbook has been redirected for other purposes.

Thanks to all of the Adhering Body National Committees and the Associations for helping to update the information in the IUGG Yearbook!

Assistant Secretary-General Katina Rogers, completed the master copy of the 2008 Yearbook on 20 December. It was posted on the IUGG web-site (www.iugg.org) by web-master Dmitry Krupsky. During 2008, updates to addresses and other information in the Yearbook should be sent to the Secretariat (secretariat@iugg.org) as soon as they are known. Our goal is to update the Yearbook as needed throughout the year.

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

Sustainable Development

ICSU and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations have submitted a Discussion Paper to the 16th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16) as official input from the Scientific and Technological Community. IUGG took part in the preparation of the Paper. The Discussion Paper focuses on agriculture, land, rural development, and drought and desertification, which will be the topics under review by CSD-16 in May 2008. Throughout the paper special attention is paid to Africa, the regional focus of this CSD biennial cycle. (For more detail see the web-site:

http://www.icsu.org/1_icsuinscience/PDF/SUSTSD_CSD16_ST_Community_Discussion_Paper.pdf).

Grants Programme

A Grants Programme will be reinstated in 2008 while discussions with UNESCO continue for a new programme in 2009. The 2008 programme will follow the structure of previous years but with an emphasis on partnering with ICSU's Regional Offices. The deadline for receipt of applications is 1st March 2008.

Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Director of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean attended the third meeting of the ICSU Spanish Commission, which was held at the Ministry of Education and Science, Madrid, in November. Potential collaborations between the Spanish Commission and the Regional Office were discussed. The first meeting of the Scientific Planning Group on Natural Disasters took place in Manizales, Colombia, 5-6 December.

The Arab Region

The first ICSU Regional Meeting for the Arab Region will take place in Amman, Jordan on 16–17 March 2008. The location of the Regional Office will be a major item for discussion.

29th General Assembly of the International Council for Science

The 29th General Assembly (GA29) of ICSU and associated meetings will be held in Maputo, Mozambique, from 13 to 25 October 2008. These events are being hosted by the ICSU national Scientific Member in Mozambique, the Scientific Research Association of Mozambique (AICIMO) and in cooperation with the ICSU Regional Office for Africa. The formal opening of the 29th General Assembly will take place from 21 to 24 October. The Assembly will be accompanied by a Science Programme of workshops and lectures with international scientists participating in the Assembly, aimed at bringing science to locations in the various Provinces of Mozambique.

Uri Shamir, IUGG Past-President, is a member of ICSU's Executive Board for the period 2005-2008, on behalf of ICSU's eight Geo-Unions. Election of the Executive Board members for the next period 2008-2011 will take place at the GA29.

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

The IYPE Global Launch Event

On 12-13 February 2008, the International Year of Planet Earth will be officially launched at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. This event will be co-organized by the IYPE Corporation and the National Committee of the IYPE in France, together with IUGS and UNESCO. UNESCO's Director General Koïchiro Matsuura will host the Event and some Heads of State are invited to address the audience. During the Global Launch Event four conceptual issues on IYPE's subtitle 'Earth Sciences for Society' will be addressed: (1) Earth Resources, (2) Hazards, (3) Megacities and Soils, and (4) Where is System Earth heading to? These issues will be discussed by eminent scientists, CEOs of leading industries and leading politicians. These discussions will be preceded by selected essays or poems from a crowd of 350 invited, award-winning students across the globe. National Committees will play a key role in selecting the best students. Significant time has been scheduled for the participants to be involved in the discussions.

Other IYPE Launch Events

Another IYPE Launch Event has been announced for Africa and will take place in Arusha, Tanzania, on 22-23 May 2008. The main theme of the conference associated with the event is Earth Science for the benefit of society and sustainable development in Africa. IUGG will be represented at the meeting by Isabelle Ansorge, Chair of the South African National Committee for Geodesy and Geophysics.

Other such continent-wide events are currently being organized in South America and North America. Many IYPE Launch Events on a national level are scheduled for 2008, while such national events have taken place already in Brazil, India, Japan, Portugal, UK, and Norway.

New Chair of the IYPE Science Programme Committee

Sospeter Muhongo (ICSU ROA) was elected as the Chair of the IYPE Science Programme Committee.

5. News from the International Polar Year (IPY)

The second International Polar Day, dedicated to Ice Sheets and their future in the face of global climate change, was held on 13 December. The International Polar Days generate an enormous amount of interest from educators and media around the world and are proving to be an excellent tool for raising awareness of IPY. More information on Ice Sheet Day and other activities is available on the IPY web-site (<http://www.ipy.org/index.php>)

The first in a series of major interdisciplinary IPY global conferences will be held in St Petersburg, Russia, 8–11 July 2008. The conference will explore changes in the Polar Regions, people and resources at the poles, the poles as a vantage point for observations and the latest polar discoveries. Details are available on the conference web-site (<http://www.scar-iasc-ipy2008.org/>).

6. IUGG Liaison's Report on ICSU ROAP Regional Consultation on Science Plans (21-22 November 2007, Chiang Mai, Thailand)

The ICSU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) consultation on science plans was attended by various participants including regional committee members, invited speakers, ICSU staff, the science plan group members, scientists from developing countries, and liaisons from several scientific unions. The priority areas of the work of ROAP in the medium-term (3 to 6 years) are as follows: (i) Natural and human induced environmental hazards and disasters; (ii) Ecosystem approach to water and food systems; and (iii) Sustainable energy.

A comprehensive draft of science plans related to hazards and disasters in Asia and the Pacific especially related to earthquakes, floods and landslides has been prepared. A final document of science plans will be sent to IUGG and other unions. An intriguing question raised during a plenary session was how to turn research into actions. It is an opportunity for IUGG to help the ICSU ROAP achieve their goals. In this case, IUGG actually has been very supportive as Prof. H. Gupta, IUGG Vice President, has been involved in the activity of ROAP. Associations under IUGG such as IASPEI and IAMAS can perhaps participate in the ICSU programs more effectively.

Submitted by Sri Widiyantoro, the IUGG liaison for ROAP.

7. Report on the Business Meeting of the German National Committee on Geodesy and Geophysics

The business meeting of the German National Committee on Geodesy and Geophysics (NKGG) was held on 30th November 2007 in Leipzig, Germany. By invitation of Rainer Kind, the NKGG President, IUGG Secretary-General Alik Ismail-Zadeh attended the business meeting and presented the current and planned IUGG activity. Representatives of Union Associations reported on their activities. It was proposed to organize an NKGG-IUGG Conference on Natural Hazards Research in Germany in 2008. The minutes of the meeting will be placed on the web-page of the Committee

(in German, <http://www.i-sight-media.de/nkgg/>)

8. IUGG and AGU to Strengthen Relationships

IUGG Secretary-General Alik Ismail-Zadeh (AIZ) participated at the Fall Meeting of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) held in San Francisco from 10 to 14 December 2007 and attended the following business meetings.

- *Business meeting of the AGU Committee for International Participation (CIP)*. The AGU International Secretary Urrutia Fucugauchi invited AIZ to attend the meeting. During the meeting Fucugauchi suggested establishing a relationship between the IUGG and AGU CIP on several topics of common interest (e.g., dissemination of information, organization of research meetings outside of North America, etc) and agreed to draft a memorandum of understanding.
- *Short business meeting with the AGU Executive Director*. Fred Spilhaus expressed his hope for future positive relationships between IUGG and AGU. He offered a space in EOS for publications of announcements about the meetings organized by IUGG and Union Associations. AIZ thanked Spilhaus and indicated that he would also work for positive future relationships between IUGG and AGU.

- *Business meeting with Chair of the AGU Panel on Natural Hazards* Mary-Lou Zoback. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the future of the Panel and the relationship between the Panel and IUGG GeoRisk Commission. Two members of the AGU Panel (IUGG Vice President Harsh Gupta and AIZ) are members of the IUGG GeoRisk Commission as well. The Union Commission concentrates its efforts on bridging research problems in natural hazards and risk with societal needs and hence could assist in setting up the AGU focus group on natural hazards.
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9. Honors and Awards

Christian Tscherning, past IAG Secretary-General, was awarded the 2007 Levallois Medal of the International Association of Geodesy in recognition of his outstanding contribution to geodesy. The medal, which is awarded at four-year intervals, is given in recognition of distinguished service to the Association and/or to the science of geodesy in general. The medal honors former IAG General Secretary Jean-Jacques Levallois.

10. IUGG-related meetings occurring during January – March 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.

- February 18-22, IASPEI, Wellington, New Zealand, Evison Symposium on Seismogenesis and Earthquake Forecasting
 - March 3-6, German Geophysical Society, Freiberg, Germany, 68th Annual Meeting
 - March 26-28, IACS, Skeikampen, Norway, International Workshop “Mass balance measurements and modeling”
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End of IUGG Electronic Journal Volume 8 Number 1 (January 1, 2008)

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