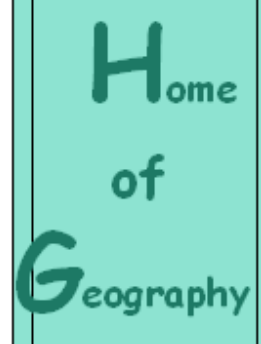




## IGU/Home E-Newsletter

Quarterly

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# 15

January

2009

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*This Newsletter is circulated to more than 1000 individuals and bodies. Announcements, information, calls for participation in scientific events, programmes and projects are welcome.*

*Please send them to <[g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org](mailto:g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org)>*

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Home of Geography update



## 1) MESSAGE OF RONALD ABLER, President of the IGU

### Thoughts on Priorities

As you will note in the minutes of the October IGU Executive Committee meeting included in this issue of the *E-Newsletter*, one of the first tasks undertaken by the new executive committee is a consideration of priorities for the IGU for the next several years. The discussion begun in Seoul will continue at the committee's early May 2009 meeting in Tel Aviv with the goal of achieving consensus by the conclusion of that meeting. As background for committee's deliberations on priorities, we reviewed the statements of all the candidates for seats on the executive committee in the recent election and the suggestions made in the priorities discussion at the general assembly held in Tunis.

The members of the committee seem to agree that finding a way to remove financial barriers to participation in the IGU should be a major priority, both as regards countries that have difficulties paying their dues and as regards participation of scholars in IGU meetings. The core of the IGU's comparative advantage with respect to domestic and regional geographical societies is its attempt to foster *global* access to the research and work of its commissions and task forces and active participation in the creation of research of worldwide interest and applicability. The continued existence of serious financial barriers to participation by all interested individuals in all parts of the world is not only sad and depressing; the failure to overcome those barriers betrays the promise inherent in the IGU's niche role as an organization of geographers that seeks global participation.

Further discussions within the executive committee will be guided by what appears to be a consensus that the IGU's priorities and resulting programs should be based primarily on a bottom-up approach. The IGU's priorities should, as much as possible, embody where international geography is going rather than where it is or where it has been. In its role as the board of directors of the global geographical organization, the executive committee should spend the majority of its time trying to identify the problems and questions that will attract geographers' attentions five, and ten years hence, and then determining what the IGU can do now and in the immediate future to make geography and the IGU maximally effective in addressing future problems, questions, and trends as they appear. In my prior experience in a number of organizations experience and seniority can advance that process, but they can also hinder foresight, being, as they are, rooted inherently in the past and the present. Close attention must be given to the topics and trends that are being formulated at the interface between theory and method on the one hand, and real world problems and applications on the other. I'll freely admit that I am conditioned by my North American background and especially my four years at the U.S. National Science Foundation, which, for the most part, funds only bottom-up science. But I remain convinced that more will be learned and accomplished by identifying and encouraging research by committed, innovative, and primarily young scholars than by attempts by senior scholars to direct others in addressing research questions the seniors have identified as salient. Similarly, attempts to organize or rationalize research structures should be viewed skeptically.

Organizations based on bottom-up research may appear messy and be duplicative at times, but they offer better chances of producing exciting, innovative results than do top-down organizations with neat, rational flow charts.

Accordingly, the IGU's priorities must include strong efforts to engage more young scholars, a point stressed by several delegates at the general assembly held in Tunis in August of this year. At this stage of international geography's ongoing evolution, active participation in the IGU and even holding leadership positions in commissions, task forces or as a member of the executive committee yields few benefits in the domestic reward schemes in which most geographers exist in most countries of the world. If the IGU does its work well, that will change for the better in the future. For the time being, however, we must face that fact that for most geographers in most parts of the world, participation and leadership in the IGU, however exciting and enjoyable they may be, are more luxuries than necessities. It is no accident that most members of the IGU Executive Committee in recent decades have been senior or retired scholars—an established career seems to be a prerequisite for the ability to devote significant time and energy to the IGU. Trying to change domestic academic reward structures to give greater weight to IGU participation is not realistic in the short run, but encouraging junior and mid-career scholars to become involved in the work of the IGU can increase their representation in our organization. Doing so, I am convinced, would go far toward enabling the IGU and the executive committee to formulate more clear views of the future, and would give us a livelier, more effective organization.

These are my thoughts at the moment. In preparation for the continuation of the priorities discussion by the executive committee, I would be happy to hear your suggestions for IGU priorities.

Thanks and best wishes,

Ron Abler, President

rabler@aag.org



## 2) IGU EC MEETING, SEOUL 10-14 NOVEMBER 2008: MINUTES

**Attending:** *President* Ronald Abler; *Secretary General and Treasurer* Woo-ik Yu; *Vice Presidents* Irasema Alcántara-Ayala, Giuliano Bellezza, Ruth Fincher, Aharon Kellerman, Vladimir Kolossov, Markku Löytönen, Michael Meadows, Dahe Qin, and Dietrich Soye; *IGU Executive Assistant* Sarah Kim.

### **Welcome, Meeting Logistics, and Introductions**

President Abler opened the meeting at 08:30 on 11 November 2008 by welcoming all the members of the executive committee to Seoul and the seven new members (Alcántara-Ayala, Bellezza, Fincher, Kellerman, Meadows, Qin, and Soyez) to their first International Geographical Union (IGU) Executive Committee meeting.

Secretary General Yu reviewed the meeting schedule and logistics, as well as the committee's appointments with distinguished individuals. President of South Korea Lee Myung-bak; Minister

of Foreign Affairs and Trade Yu Myung-hwan; Minister of Land Transportation and Maritime Affairs Chung Jong-hwan; Korea Foundation President Lim Sung-jun; Seoul National University President Lee Jang-mu; and Seoul National University President Emeritus Lee Ki-jun will receive the committee during its time in Seoul. Yu has also arranged visits to electronics companies SK and Samsung, and to two Korean cultural sites on 13 November.

Abler then asked each member of the committee to speak for ten to twelve minutes on four topics:

1. his or her background and specialties, especially those most relevant to the IGU and its objectives;
2. her or his prior engagement with IGU;
3. the most important thing the IGU does for geography; and
4. the most important thing the IGU *could* do for geography during the 2008-2012 cycle.

The subsequent presentations and discussion revealed a variety of emphases and perspectives that will prove invaluable in guiding the IGU plans and programs through the next four years. Abler thanked the continuing and new members of the committee for their dedication and for the time and effort they have committed to the IGU.

Abler provided a brief overview of the purpose and responsibilities of members of the IGU Executive Committee, noting that the executive committee functions as the board of directors for the organization. The IGU is a non-profit corporation chartered in the District of Columbia in the United States and registered in South Korea. The executive committee is its policy-making and supervisory body, answerable to the IGU General Assembly. Ideally, the executive committee should devote most of its time to identifying long term opportunities for geographers on a global scale and determining what policies and programs the IGU should implement now to take advantage of future opportunities; day-to-day operational matters are the responsibility of the IGU Secretariat. The overriding responsibility of the executive committee is to ensure that the IGU's financial affairs are in order and that the organization remains financially viable.

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

The committee approved the preliminary agenda circulated prior to the meeting with the addition of one item of other business, namely, languages used in IGU affairs and at IGU events.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the last IGU Executive Committee meeting held in Tunis, Tunisia on 6-9 August 2008 will be submitted to the members of the 2004-2008 executive committee for review and approval.

The committee agreed that that minutes or a summary of major decisions taken at its meetings will be distributed to the chairs of IGU Commissions and National Committees as a way to improve information flow within the IGU community.



*Seoul is always full of traffic, but it only rarely appears chaotic*

### **Organizational Matters**

***Election of the IGU First Vice President.*** The committee unanimously elected Vladimir Kolossov (Russia) First Vice President. The First Vice President performs the duties of the IGU President if she or he is unable to fulfill them.

***Commission and Task Force Liaison Assignments.*** The members of the committee divided among themselves responsibilities for serving as liaison between the executive committee and the IGU's Commissions and Task Forces. Appendix A lists the assignments. ***Member Country, Regional Network, and Miscellaneous Liaison Assignments.*** The committee's members divided among themselves liaison assignments for IGU member countries and for other units and organizations. Appendix B details these assignments.

***Executive Committee Meeting Calendar.*** The committee reserved dates and possible locations for meetings through May 2011:

- 3-7 May 2009 in Tel Aviv, Israel;
- 30 September-2 October 2009 in Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, France;
- 18-22 April 2010 in Washington, DC, USA;
- 7-10 July 2010 in Tel Aviv, Israel;
- 8-12 November 2010 in Cape Town; and
- 16-20 May 2011 in Köln, Germany.

It is likely that one or more of the later meetings will not be necessary, but committee members agreed to keep these dates free of other commitments in the event the meetings are needed.

***Executive Committee Internal Communications.*** Meadows described and demonstrated the VULA internet site and software used for courses taught at the University of Cape Town. It provides a convenient and efficient means of communication among members of specific groups and a way to make large quantities of information readily available to them. Meadows has subscribed all members of the executive committee to the site. The members of the committee agreed that the utility had considerable promise for use for IGU business, they agreed to try the site for committee matters, and to evaluate its effectiveness at the committee's next meeting.

**IGU Priorities for 2008-2012.** Returning to the topic of priorities for the IGU during the 2008-2012 period, the committee reviewed a summary of the priorities for the IGU identified by candidates for the IGU Executive Committee in the recent IGU election as well as those mentioned in the priorities discussion at the Tunis general assembly. The committee agreed to continue the discussion throughout the meeting and via the internet following the meeting, with the goal of selecting its priorities at its next meeting in May 2009. After the conclusion of this meeting, Abler will survey committee members regarding their considered opinions of the most pressing challenges facing the IGU and about their individual preferences for working to meet those challenges.

### **IGU Operations**

**IGU Country Membership.** Yu reported that the IGU lists 97 countries as members, including new regular members Armenia and Azerbaijan. The committee noted the 2008 Tunis general assembly's decision that country dues arrears incurred prior to 2004 are to be forgiven, but that the collection of arrears for 2004 and subsequent years is to be vigorously pursued. The secretary general and treasurer will adjust the arrears accounts accordingly.

**Developing Countries Membership.** Abler reviewed prior IGU efforts to assist countries that have difficulties paying their IGU country dues to maintain their memberships in IGU. Although individual country delegates often floated promises of financial assistance during the last decade, only Ireland actually transmitted funds to the IGU to pay the dues of a number of countries in Africa. From 2000-2008 a variety of assistance mechanisms were discussed within the executive committee, but none were brought into operation. Creating a pool of funds to be allocated to countries needing assistance avoids the patron-client overtones of direct assistance from well off to individual needy countries, but it requires the establishment of criteria for eligibility that may be complicated. Moreover, assistance with country dues should be supplemented by support for participation in IGU conferences and congresses where needed; there seems only marginal value in maintaining a country's membership in the IGU if nobody from that country can participate in IGU meetings and especially in general assemblies. The committee agreed that whatever other priorities for IGU emerged from its ongoing discussion, broadening participation in IGU affairs beyond the recent and current dominance by well-off countries should rank high among the IGU's goals for the next four years.

**IGU Finance.** The committee reviewed the IGU's financial accounts for 1992 through 2007, focusing especially on the 2001-2007 period. The IGU realized a small surplus (\$3,768) in 2007. As of 31 December 2007, the IGU's cash balance stood at \$119,184, less than one year's average operating expense. Since 1999, the IGU's cash position has decreased by \$84,000. Treasurer Yu and the committee agreed that in accord with instructions given the executive committee at the last two general assemblies and the committee's concern for the sustained financial health of the IGU, revenues must be increased, operating costs must be reduced, or, ideally, both.

**Corporate Memberships.** As was noted by Netherlands representative Ton Dietz in the August 2008 general assembly in Tunis, the IGU has not yet enrolled any corporate members although the 2004 general assembly in Glasgow changed the IGU Statutes to authorize the admission of members in that category. The members of the executive committee agreed to identify prospective corporate members in their respective countries and to report on their efforts at the next executive committee meeting. A committee led by Dietz with Abler, Kellerman, and Yu will work on implementing corporate memberships.

**Villa Celimontana-Home of Geography.** Bellezza presented an overview of the proposal for future operations of the Villa Celimontana-Home of Geography in Rome submitted by the Italian

Geographical Society. The committee noted that while the program was ambitious and potentially productive, sustainable funding for Home of Geography operations remains elusive. Abler summarized the history of establishment and subsequent operations of the Home of Geography, noting that IGU financial support for the Home of Geography from 2001 through 2007 totaled \$115,000, a substantial share of the deterioration in the IGU's cash position since 1999. Kellerman spoke to the value of the venue for meetings, which met with unanimous agreement from the other members of the committee. Kolosov noted the usefulness of the Home of Geography web site and the *IGU E-Newsletter*. Yu and others noted, however, that the Home of Geography has derived no revenue from its laudable role in hosting meetings of commissions and other groups. Yu reiterated his considered opinion that the IGU could not afford to sustain Home of Geography operations given its limited resources. If the Italian Geographical Society finds sustainable funding from Italian or other sources for most of the Home's budget, the IGU could make a modest annual contribution to its continuation, but more than that is not possible.

Upon a motion by Löytönen seconded by Fincher, the committee voted (eight in favor, three opposed) to cease funding for the Home of Geography after the current commitment of \$15,000 is remitted. Abler will convey the decision to the Italian members of the Villa Celimontana Committee, the Home of Geography governing body.

A related matter arose with respect to the propriety of having a member of the IGU Executive Committee serve simultaneously as Director of the Home of Geography. Although the committee took no formal vote on the question, the consensus of the committee was that such simultaneous service raises conflict of interest questions and muddles lines of authority, inasmuch as the Director reports to the Villa Celimontana Committee, three of whose members are members of the IGU Executive Committee. The IGU Executive Committee thus stands indirectly as employer of the Home of Geography Director, making it inappropriate for the same individual to act simultaneously as employer and employee.

***Cultures and Civilizations for Human Development/United Nations International Year.***

Kolosov summarized a recent memorandum from Benno Werlen of the University of Jena regarding progress in the program to establish a United Nations Year of International Global Understanding (UNIY), the continuation of the IGU Cultures and Civilizations for Human Development (CCHD) initiative launched in 2005 by then IGU President Adalberto Vallega. Werlen has obtained funding for UNIY Secretariat operations at Jena for one year and has been vigorously consulting relevant groups and organizations regarding the structure of the effort. The committee applauded Werlen's leadership and the progress achieved to date. Abler will convey the committee's appreciation to Werlen. The committee noted, however, the Anglo-European composition of the project's current steering committee and agreed that the steering committee must be broadened to include members from the rest of the world. Yu volunteered to help identify appropriate candidates from Asia and Alcántara-Ayala agreed to nominate suitable individuals from Latin America.

***Publications.*** Abler reported slow progress on reducing the backlog in the publication of the arrears issues of the *IGU Bulletin*; two volumes are ready for printing but three remain in various stages of preparation. He will engage at his own expense an editor to accelerate the work as it is clear that his own pace has been glacial to date.

Executive Assistant Sarah Kim reported that the IGU Secretariat is preparing an updated brochure for the 2008-2012 period, which should be printed in a month or two. A committee member suggested that the pdf file for the brochure be posted on the IGU web site, along with the pdf of prior brochures.

***Geographical Journal Evaluation Project.*** Netherlands delegate Ton Dietz proposed at the Tunis IGU General Assembly that the IGU undertake a project to publicize and assess the geographical journals similar to the scheme he initiated when he was Director of CERES, the Research School for Resource Studies for Development in the Netherlands. The committee agreed that such a program could be beneficial for the IGU and for geographers throughout the world. The project could also be used to engage IGU national committees if it asked national committees to identify the journals that should be included in the compendium. First steps toward formulating the project would be to link the IGU web site to the CERES site ([http://ceres.fss.uu.nl/component/option,com\\_wrapper/Itemid,7/](http://ceres.fss.uu.nl/component/option,com_wrapper/Itemid,7/)) and to individual geographical journals. Dietz volunteered to assist in formulating a journals valuing project, and Alcántara-Ayala, Kellerman, Meadows, Qin, and Soyez volunteered to form, with Dietz, an implementation committee to outline the project for further consideration by the executive committee at its next meeting in May 2009.

***Geographical Olympiads.*** Abler reviewed for the committee the recommendation of the Tunis general assembly that the organizing committees of future IGU conferences and congresses budget \$5,000 for partial support of Geographical Olympiads to be held at their meetings. The item will be included in the Congress and Conference Memorandum of Agreement template that is in preparation to clarify the responsibilities of local organizing committees.

***Geography Festivals.*** Bellezza reported that there has been no action for more than one year on the agreement between IGU and the *Festival International de Géographie* (FIG) to promote annual geography festivals in other countries. Bellezza will continue his efforts to arouse interest in geography festivals in countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean.

***Geoparks Task Force.*** The committee reviewed the decision made by the IGU Executive Committee at its August 2008 meeting in Tunis, Tunisia that the 2004-2008 IGU Geoparks Task Force continue as a task force rather than a commission, as had been requested by the task force chairperson. IGU Task Forces are primarily action or programmatic bodies whereas IGU Commissions are primarily research groups. The committee agreed that the Geoparks group should continue as a task force through the 2008-2012 period, especially given its approval as such by the IGU General Assembly in Tunis. Abler will inform the task force chairperson of the committee's reaffirmation of the decision.

***Regional Networks.*** Committee members presented brief oral reports on individual regional networks. Kolossov has continued Glazovsky's efforts to reanimate participation in the IGU by former Soviet Republics, resulting in greater interest among those countries and in Azerbaijan becoming again an active IGU member. Alcántara-Ayala will undertake liaison with the Latin America network in place of Palacio-Prieto. The Pacific group established at the Brisbane Regional Conference in 2006 has held two meetings of East Asian young scholars. Yu will seek more information on the group's programs. Bellezza will maintain contact with the nascent European network as part of his liaison responsibilities with HERODOT. Each will prepare an update for the next meeting of the executive committee.

***Mediterranean Renaissance Program (MRP).*** The MRP will focus in the future on four topics: Environmental Change, Tourism, Migration, and the Information Society. The network held its first meeting in Cairo in 2006. Chairperson Ashour has scheduled a second meeting at the Home of Geography in Rome for January 2009 and asked for a special allocation of \$2,000 to help defray the cost of lodging for the meeting. The committee approved the request, with the recommendation that some portion of the meeting be devoted to identifying non-IGU sources of funding for the network's meetings and programs. As much as the executive committee wishes otherwise, IGU cannot regularly fund commission and regional network meetings and programs

at any significant level. The token funding IGU can provide for such events is appropriately viewed as a hunting license that enables organizers to report that the IGU is providing some support in their requests to other sources for the major funding they need.

**Commissions and Task Forces.** The commissions and task forces renewed or established by the Tunis General Assembly are now launching their programs for the 2008-2012 period. Accordingly, it is too soon for the executive committee to undertake any evaluation of their activities. Commission and task force review procedures will be discussed at the next executive committee meeting in May 2009 in order to acquaint the members new to the committee with past practices. In the meantime, the secretariat will place the 2004 and 2008 four-year reports submitted by commissions and task forces on the Vula web site so they may be consulted by new executive committee members.

**Commission on the Geopolitics of Sub-Alternate Knowledge.** The president and the secretariat received recently a proposal from a member of the national committee of Peru to establish an IGU Commission on the Geopolitics of Sub-Alternate Knowledge. The committee reviewed the proposal and noted several variances from the provisions in the IGU Statutes governing commissions. Abler will contact the author of the proposal and request a resubmission for consideration by the executive committee at its next meeting.

**Statutes Correction.** Soyez called the committee's attention to an inconsistency in the terminology used for IGU Congresses in the French version of the IGU Statutes. Section IX of the French version will be revised to read *Congrès International de Géographie* consistently.



*But one example of the spoiling hospitality received by the EC in Seoul*

### **Cooperation and Outreach**

**International Council for Science—ICSU.** ICSU held its 29<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique from 20-24 October 2008. Abler represented the IGU at the assembly. ICSU holds general assemblies of its union, national, and associate members every three years. Abler attended the two prior assemblies in 2002 and 2005. IGU is a charter member of ICSU and benefits greatly from its membership in the organization. In addition to the general assemblies, a

separate daylong caucus of the union members and meetings of such informal groups as the ICSU GeoUnions cluster provide opportunities for productive discussions with other scientific unions. Abler is preparing a written report on the assembly that will be included in the next issue of the *IGU E-Newsletter*.

***International Social Science Council—ISSC.*** The ISSC will hold its 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa on 25-27 November 2008. Abler will represent the IGU at the assembly. This ISSC is the major coordinating body for international social science unions, fulfilling much the same role for the social and behavioural sciences that ICSU fulfils for international natural science organizations. The IGU, with the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) and the International Union of Psychological Sciences (IUPsyS) is one of the three unions that hold membership in both ICSU and ISSC. Abler will prepare a summary of the ISSC General Assembly for distribution to the IGU community via the *IGU E-Newsletter*.

***Affiliation with the ICPHS.*** President Adalberto Vallega proposed prior to his premature death that the IGU join the International Council of Philosophy and Human Sciences. Membership in ICPHS could be helpful in promoting CCHD/UNIY initiative. A previous inquiry to ICPHS elicited no response. Abler will pursue the matter during the ISSC meeting in Cape Town as ICPHS will hold its general assembly concurrent with the ISSC general assembly.

***Festival International de Géographie (FIG).*** Collaboration with the Saint-Dié-des-Vosges annual International Festival of Geography requires renewal. Abler has written to Festival founder and organizer Mayor Christian Pierret proposing that the IGU Executive Committee meet at the festival in Fall 2009 and that the Memorandum of Understanding between FIG and the IGU be reviewed at that time. Members of the executive committee proposed that the executive committee mount an IGU Symposium devoted to Geography in the World if an invitation to meeting in Saint-Dié is forthcoming.

***International Year of Planet Earth—IYPE.*** The IGU is a charter member of the International Year of Planet Earth, which the United Nations General Assembly decreed for 2008-2009. The IYPE Board of Directors is now considering what kind of long-term programs should follow on from the IYPE and the efforts leading to the establishment of the year. Abler will monitor these continuing discussions and keep the IGU Executive Committee informed.

***Geography Awareness Week.*** Barry Wellar, Canada's coordinator of Geography Awareness Week (GAW) activities, suggested that the IGU consider participating in GAW and promoting it on a global scale. The United States Congress decreed the annual Geography Awareness Week in 1987. It is widely observed by geographers in Anglo America as a time to publicize geography and its contributions in schools and to the lay public. The executive committee agreed that the suggestion was sound, but decided by consensus that further development of the idea should await the outcome of the IGU's efforts to institute a United Nations International Year (UNIY) devoted to geography, of which, of course, a Geography Awareness Week might be a component.

***ISPRS Beijing Declaration.*** The International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) asked the IGU to endorse a declaration regarding the applications of imagery in natural and social science research and in sustainable development programs. The committee unanimously approved IGU endorsement of the declaration, the text of which is included in these minutes as Appendix C.

## **International Geographical Congresses and IGU Regional Conferences**

**Tunis, Tunisia International Geographical Congress 2008.** The IGU Secretariat has received no report from the local organizing committee to date.

**Tel Aviv Regional Conference 12-16 July 2010.** Kellerman provided an overview of planning for the conference and its associated field excursions and cultural events. Contacts to date with IGU Commissions and Task Forces have been productive; 22 have committed to holding their meetings within the framework of the conference.

**Santiago, Chile Regional Conference 2011.** The organizers should fix the dates for the conference as soon as possible. The secretariat will contact the organizers to determine whether the dates are yet available.

**Köln, Germany International Geographical Congress, August 2012.** Soyez reported that arrangements and plans are proceeding well. A final decision on the exact congress dates for the congress will be forthcoming shortly.

Subsequent Conferences and Congresses. IGU Regional Conferences and the Congress following Köln are:

- Kyoto, Japan Regional Conference, 2013;
- Krakow, Poland Regional Conference, 2014;
- Moscow, Russia Regional Conference, 2015; and
- Beijing, China International Geographical Congress, 2016.

The IGU Executive Committee requested no reports on these meetings prior to its meeting. The IGU Secretariat will seek updates from their local organizing committees at appropriate dates in the future.

**The Future of IGU Congresses and Conferences.** Delegates at the Tunis IGU General Assembly and individual members of the IGU Executive Committee have noted with increasing alarm a continued decline in registration for IGU Regional Conferences and International Geographical Congresses over the last three decades. There may be a number of idiosyncratic or general causes for waning participation in the IGU's meetings, but the deterioration in attendance and its implications seem clear: the IGU make its meeting more attractive intrinsically and in comparison with competing meetings, or face continued erosion of participation in its gatherings.

The committee agreed unanimously that the IGU's conferences and congresses fulfill a distinctive and valuable function for the world's geographers. The subsequent discussion explored possible reasons for declining participation, identifying registration and lodging costs, the location of concurrent or related commission and task force meetings, and the composition and structure of conference and congress scientific programs as salient meeting features the over which the executive committee might exert some influence. The IGU does not in any realistic way own the meetings to which it lends its name, and therefore ultimately cannot control them.

The committee agreed to continue the discussion at its next meeting. Abler suggested that the committee go beyond the past practice of exhorting commissions/task forces to meet concurrently and at the same location as the main sessions of conferences and congresses to offering modest financial incentives to do so. The committee agreed to include that possibility in its continuing consideration of the problem.

### **Other Business**

**IGU Languages.** Reports of francophone discontent with the growing dominance of English in IGU events and affairs led the committee to hold a brief discussion of language. The discussion led to no conclusion, but the committee agreed that a first substantive step in addressing language issues was to inventory the IGU's current practices regarding making information available in

languages other than English. The secretariat will prepare a summary for the next meeting of the committee.

**Adjourn**

The time allocated for the meeting having expired, and there being no further business at hand, the president adjourned the meeting at 09:30 on 13 November 2008 after he expressed, on behalf of the committee, deep and warm appreciation for the superlative arrangements Secretary General and Treasurer Yu and his staff made for the comfort, convenience, and edification of the members of the executive committee during the Seoul meeting.



*Visiting the guide dog training school, one of the social activity sponsored by Samsung*

**Appendix A - IGU Executive Committee Commission and Task Force, Liaison Assignments 2008-2010**

C08.01	Applied Geography .....	Abler
C08.02	Arid Lands, Humankind, and Environment .....	Bellezza
C08.03	Biogeography and Biodiversity.....	Meadows
C08.04	Climatology .....	Qin
C08.05	Coastal Systems.....	Meadows
C08.06	Cold Region Environments .....	Qin
C08.07	Cultural Approach in Geography .....	Kolossov
C08.08	Dynamics of Economic Spaces .....	Soyez
C08.09	Environment Evolution .....	Kolossov
C08.10	Gender and Geography.....	Fincher
C08.11	Geographical Education .....	Löytönen
C08.12	Geographical Information Science.....	Löytönen

C08.13	Geography of Governance.....	Kolossov
C08.14	Geography of the Global Information Society .....	Kellerman
C08.15	Geography of Tourism, Leisure, and Global Change .....	Soyez
C08.16	Geomorphic Challenges for the 21st Century .....	Meadows
C08.17	Global Change and Human Mobility .....	Kellerman
C08.18	Hazard and Risk .....	Alcántara-Ayala
C08.19	Health and Environment.....	Löytönen
C08.20	History of Geography .....	Bellezza
C08.21	Indigenous Knowledges and Peoples' Rights.....	Soyez
C08.22	Islands.....	Bellezza
C08.23	Karst .....	Alcántara-Ayala
C08.24	Land Degradation and Desertification .....	Meadows
C08.25	Land Use and Land Cover Change.....	Alcántara-Ayala
C08.26	Local Development .....	Kellerman
C08.27	Marginalization, Globalization, and Regional and Local Responses .....	Fincher
C08.28	Modeling Geographical Systems.....	Löytönen
C08.29	Mountain Response to Global Change.....	Qin
C08.30	Political Geography .....	Kolossov
C08.31	Population Geography .....	Fincher
C08.32	Sustainability of Rural Systems .....	Bellezza
C08.33	Urban Commission: Emerging Urban Transformations .....	Kellerman
C08.34	Water Sustainability .....	Meadows
T08.01	Geoparks: Alcántara-Ayala	
T08.02	Megacities: Soyez	
T08.03	Olympiad: Bellezza	

## **B - Executive Committee Country Liaison Assignments**

		China-Beijing	Qin
Albania	Kolossov	China-Hong Kong	Qin
Algeria	Kellerman	China-Taipei	Qin
Argentina	Alcántara- Ayala	Colombia	Alcántara-Ayala
Armenia	Kolossov	Comoros	Soyez
Australia	Fincher	Congo,	Democratic Republic
Austria	Soyez		Meadows
Azerbaijan	Kolossov	Congo, Republic	Meadows
Belarus	Kolossov	Croatia	Kolossov
Belgium	Kolossov	Cuba	Alcántara-Ayala
Benin	Soyez	Cyprus	Kellerman
Brazil	Alcántara-Ayala	Czech Republic	Kolossov
Bulgaria	Kolossov	Denmark	Löytönen
Burundi	Soyez	Egypt	Kellerman
Cameroon	Soyez	Estonia	Löytönen
Canada	Abler	Finland	Löytönen
Chad	Soyez	France	Kolossov
Chile	Alcántara-Ayala	Georgia, Republic of	Bellezza

Germany	Soyez	Norway	Löytönen
Ghana	Meadows	Pakistan	Qin
Greece	Kellerman	Papua-New Guinea	Fincher
Hungary	Kellerman	Peru	Alcántara-Ayala
Iceland	Löytönen	Philippines	Fincher
India	Bellezza	Poland	Kolossov
Indonesia..	Fincher	Portugal	Bellezza
Iran	Kellerman	Romania	Kolossov
Ireland	Kellerman	Russia	Kolossov
Israel	Kellerman	Saudi Arabia	Kellerman
Italy	Bellezza	Singapore	Fincher
Ivory Coast	Soyez	Slovakia	Kolossov
Japan	Löytönen	Slovenia	Kolossov
Kenya	Meadows	South Africa	Meadows
Korea, South	Yu	Spain	Alcántara-Ayala
Latvia	Löytönen	Sri Lanka	Bellezza
Lesotho	Meadows	Sweden	Löytönen
Lithuania	Löytönen	Switzerland	Soyez
Macedonia	Kellerman	Tanzania	Soyez
Madagascar	Meadows	Thailand	Bellezza
Malaysia	Fincher	Togo	Soyez
Mauritania	Soyez	Tunisia	Kellerman
Mexico	Alcántara-Ayala	Turkey	Kellerman
Mongolia	Qin	Ukraine	Kolossov
Morocco	Kellerman	United Kingdom	Meadows
Mozambique	Meadows	United States	Abler
Netherlands	Bellezza	Vietnam	Bellezza
New Zealand	Fincher	Zimbabwe	Meadows
Niger	Soyez		
Nigeria	Meadows		

### Other IGU Liaison Assignments

CODATA .....	Qin
IGU-Asia .....	Yu
IGU-CIS .....	Kolossov
IGU-Latin America .....	Alcántara-Ayala
IGU-Mediterranean Renaissance .....	Abler/Bellezza/Kellerman
HERODOT .....	Bellezza
International Council for Science (ICSU).....	Abler/Yu
International Social Science Council (ISSC) .....	Abler/Yu
International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE) .....	Abler
ICSU Africa.....	Meadows
ICSU Latin America.....	Alcántara-Ayala
ICSU Asia .....	Qin
Köln Congress Local Organizing Committee .....	Soyez
Pan-American Institute of Geography and History .....	Alcántara-Ayala

Tel Aviv Regional Conference Local Organizing Committee.... Kellerman  
Villa Celimontana Committee..... Abler/Löytönen/Yu

**Appendix C**  
**ISPRS Beijing Declaration**  
**9 July 2008**

We, members of The International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) and participants of the XXIst ISPRS Congress in Beijing, recognize the importance of imagery to measure and monitor the natural and man-made features on planet Earth and to explore other planets of the solar system, especially after witnessing the important role of photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information systems in the rescue operation and damage assessment of the recent devastating natural disasters.

We note scientific developments reported during the technical sessions of the Congress and the great progress made in the use of imagery from many different platforms, with numerous sensors, for a wide variety of applications. We particularly note:

1. Wide applications of Earth observation technologies and tools to the fields of socio-economic sustainable development, natural disaster prediction, mitigation and response, maintenance of biodiversity, cultural heritage conservation, global and environmental climate change monitoring, energy exploration and management, land use and land cover inventory, food security, sustainable use of water resources, and human habitat, environment and health.
2. Significant technological achievement in the acquisition, processing, interpretation and analysis of aerial and satellite imagery, advances of airborne and terrestrial lidar, development of imaging radar technology, increased maturity of small satellites and of geo-sensor networks, validation, calibration and certification of digital cameras and other types of sensors, automated information extraction from all forms of imagery, distributed data processing for information services, and multidimensional data modelling.
3. Great progress in developing new forms of cooperation and knowledge sharing, including the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) and its program to establish a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), and the International Council for Science (ICSU) Geo-unions and its activities in Africa, and the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies.

Recalling that the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) stressed the importance of Earth observation for advancing sustainable development, we strongly believe that photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information sciences are essential to ensure sustainable development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We further recognize that non-governmental organizations, especially ISPRS, have the responsibility to promote the peaceful use of space, airborne and terrestrial technology and the realization of the full potential of imagery for the benefit of society and for the maintenance of sustainable growth in all nations.

We reaffirm our commitment to implement the vision for the 21st century of ISPRS, which aims to realize the full potential of information from imagery by encouraging and facilitating research

and development, advancing knowledge by scientific networking, promoting international cooperation, pursuing inter-disciplinary integration, facilitating education and training, enhancing and exploring new applications, developing public recognition of photogrammetry, remote sensing and the spatial information sciences. We therefore call on international communities to support the Cape Town declaration of GEO and:

1. to commit adequate investment and active engagement in scientific research and development, education and training, and capacity and infrastructure building;
2. to promote the sharing of imaging and ranging technology and data for scientific research and peaceful applications; and
3. to encourage constructive dialogue and close cooperation and collaboration between scientists, governments, public and private sectors, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations and institutions.

We further call for a contribution from everyone to establish and operate a new silk road for information from imagery, leading to a people-centered and sustainable development-oriented information society.



### 3) REPORTS FROM CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

#### 3.1 – First World Landslide Forum,

Following the establishment of the 2006 Tokyo Action Plan, the International Consortium of Landslides (ICL) decided to implement within the scope of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, “Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters” (adopted at the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan in 2005), an Action Plan to organize a World Landslide Forum in order to bring together academics, practitioners, politicians, and other stakeholders to a global, multidisciplinary, problem-focused platform. In this context, 430 participants from 48 countries gathered together at the United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan from 18 to 21<sup>st</sup> of November, 2008.

The objectives of the First World Landslide Forum, chaired by **Prof. Kyoji SASSA (Former-President of ICL, IPL World Centre)** were directed towards three particular issues:

**1. Promotion of research and exchange of experience through open Forums, Symposia and Workshops.**

**2. Discussing the advances and achievements of International Program on Landslides (IPL)** in terms of technology development (*monitoring and early warning, and hazard mapping, vulnerability and risk assessment*), targeted landslides: mechanisms and impacts (*catastrophic*

*landslides and landslides threatening heritage sites*), capacity building (*enhancing human and institutional capacities and collecting and disseminating Information/knowledge*), and mitigation, preparedness and recovery.

### **3. Designation of World Centres of Excellence on Landslide Risk Reduction**

After having enjoyed 19 parallel sessions, several public forums and national and international initiatives, one of the main results from the forum was the adoption of the **2008 Tokyo Declaration, Strengthening the International Programme on Landslides (IPL) with UN-ISDR** (see above, the Appendix C to the Minutes of the Seoul Meeting of the IGU Executive Committee).

*Irasema Alcántara-Ayala, International Geophysical Union, Vice-President*

### **3.2 – School Geography. Syllabus, Textbooks, and Maps in the Light of the Geopolitical Discourse**

**University of Milano-Bicocca, Milano, 20-21 October 2008**

The Convention was organized by the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Milano-Bicocca in conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. The meeting was conducted through six sessions: 1) syllabus and theoretical outlook; 2) cartographies; 3) the discourse in textbook; 4) geographical images and imaginary; 5) tourism, travel, and interculture; 6) beyond syllabus.



*Convener Squarcina giving the introductory speech*

The contents were initially introduced, in the round table discussion, by Enrico Squarcina, the convener. He opened the first of the two-day meeting introducing his guests and proposing a reflection on the generative idea of the Convention. He stressed “the role geography plays in the educational field by building stereotypes and boundaries all over the world.” These very concepts are stuck in our minds and in the way we teach the discipline. “For this reason”, the convener went on, “geography needs to be examined in the light of a critical prospective.”

**GEOGRAFIA SCOLASTICA:  
PROGRAMMI, LIBRI DI TESTO, CARTE NELLA  
PRODUZIONE DEL DISCORSO GEOPOLITICO**



20-21 ottobre 2008

Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca  
Piazza Ateneo Nuovo 1 MILANO  
Edificio Di Aula Mattei

Info: [www.formazione.unimib.it](http://www.formazione.unimib.it) (versione event)

*Poster for the Conference: P.Longhi, "Lesson of geography", 1752*

A wide range of lectures were delivered during the first day. From textbooks to their interpretation, the average of the speeches has been high in terms of current matters and criticism. It is worth pointing out Franco Farinelli's speech in which he gave the audience an original outline of the theoretical aspects in the educational field. Also, Mariella Balducci and Maria Teresa di Palma's papers have shown a significant frame about the Italian scenario. More specifically, the first one carried on her examination through a chronological analysis of the national regulation while the latter focused more on the strategic role played by teachers. She stated that nowadays teachers need to be extremely competent to guide students towards a critical reading of the world. What is more, Elena dell'Agnese proposed a creative example in American education due to the influence of Samuel G. Goodrich's work. During most of nineteenth century, the author -under the pseudonym of Peter Parley- was able to build -sometimes misleading perceptions mostly with a capable use of cartography.

One of the central goals of the second day was to examine how the discourse -broadly defined as a web of meanings that textbooks are usually based on- might produce confusion and dangerous misunderstandings in students' minds. Margaret Roberts, from the University of Sheffield, proposed the South of Italy case. Indeed, the South is often introduced by foreign textbooks as it may have been pictured during the 1970s. Poverty and country landscape are basically the way in which the South is still perceived. An anachronistic frame supported by stereotypes, mostly unreal, that smudge and reduce Italy's image. Also, Tatiana Sekulić proposed the case of Bosnia Herzegovina where teaching geography might in fact support a future of integration in new

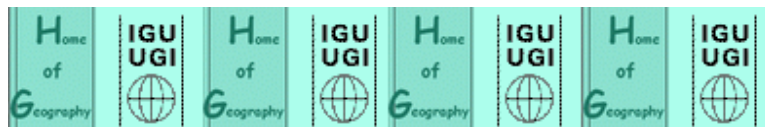
generations. Sekulić denounces the weak commitment in renewing and re-editing textbooks in order to spread a new cartography of peace.

The second main reflection of the day was focused on alternative tools to teach the discipline. To this end, Grottanelli de'Santi's paper looked at guidebooks as a good means to teach geography. According to the scholar, as well as textbooks, guidebooks illustrate contents but unlike them - because their narrative style of telling stories- they gain more chances in keeping students engaged in the content.

Broadly speaking, the Convention was versatile -because of the wide range of presented papers- and at the same time, capable of offering a rather comprehensive outline of the current Italian scenario, as far as geography education is concerned. Yet, the impression was that sometimes, the debate was carried out keeping their distance from a wider scientific context in which the discussion should have been positioned .

However, the wish is to aspire to more and more such a meetings in order to improve the Italian educational field in geography.

***Anna Carrabetta***



## **Home of Geography Update**

### **a) Workshop of the Mediterranean Renaissance Project: Contemporary challenges for the Mediterranean basin**

The Mediterranean Renaissance Programme-MRP of the IGU-International Geographical Union organizes a one-day workshop which includes invited presentations on crucial topics for the Euro-Mediterranean area. The general topic "Contemporary challenges for the Mediterranean basin", will be devoted to: environmental changes; migration; information society and tourism.

Structured in 4 sessions, it has been organized by Maria Paradiso, MRP Executive Secretary (mail: [paradiso@unisannio.it](mailto:paradiso@unisannio.it)), and Workshop will take place in Villa Celimontana on 24th February 2009, and is structured with the following program:

9.15 Welcome address: Mahmoud Ashour, Coordinator, MRP

9.30-11.00 Session n.1 "Environmental climate impacts". Chair and organiser: Annick Douguédroit

11.30-12.30 Session n.2 " Migrations" Chair and organiser: Ali Toumi

13.30-15.00 Session n.3 "Information Society" Chair and organiser: Maria Paradiso

15.30-17.00 Session n.4 "Tourism" Chair and organiser: Giuliano Bellezza

At the end of the works a MRP steering committee business meeting is scheduled

### **b) Visit in the Home of Geography**

The first winter visit missed the Home of Geography, because of restructuring works done in Villa Celimontana. So it has been only in the Department of Geography of the University of Roma "La Sapienza" where I could receive Professors Mats Widgren (University of Stockholm and Chair of the IGU National Committee of Sweden), William E. Doolittle (University of Texas at Austin) and William I. Woods (University of Kansas). Prof. Widgren told me that in a few weeks a new Chair would have been appointed in the Swedish EC, which has come true in January. The new Chair is Lennart Olsson, Lund University, professor of physical geography and the founding director of LUCSUS (Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies) since 2000. Prof. Olsson e-mail is: [lennart.olsson@lucsus.lu.se](mailto:lennart.olsson@lucsus.lu.se).

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, though the works were not yet finished, I could receive in the Home the visit of Prof. Nathalie Gravel, Joined Professor of Geography in the Laval University, Quebec. Our first "electronic" contact dates from late 2006, due to Nathalie's positions as President of the Société de Géographie de Québec and Editor of the Société's e-Bulletin. As such, she wrote me to tell that editing the first number of 2007 she was preparing an obituary to remind Adalberto Vallega. I immediately posted it in our website, where it can be seen in the News 2007. During this visit also, I was told a new, so I can tell our readers that the URL of the Société de Géographie de Québec, , has been changed to [www.socgeoquebec.org](http://www.socgeoquebec.org): good to know that all the issues of their e-Bulletin can be downloaded from the site.

### **Home of Geography Publications Series: Sales**

**a 10% discount will be applied when ordering 2 books, and 15% when ordering 3 books or more. Costs (including postage and packing) are as follows:**

(Vol I - *Human Mobility in a Borderless World?* (2002) and Vol II – *Food and Environment – Geographies of Taste* (2002) are OUT OF PRINT)

**Vol III – *Rights to the City*** (2005), D Wastl-Water, L. Staeheli & L. Dowler Eds (EU: € 18 / non-EU: € 24)

**Vol IV – *The New Geography of Human Mobility – Inequality Trends*** (2003), Y. Ishikawa & A. Montanari Eds; (EU: € 20 / non-EU: € 26)

**Vol V – *Migrations in Europe – The Four Last Decades*** (2004) C. Vandermotten, G. Van Hamme, P. Medina Lockhart & B. Wayens Eds; (EU: € 13 / non-EU: € 19)

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**Vol VII – *Managing Water Resources in a Changing Physical and Social Environment*** (2007) P. J. Robinson, J. A. A. Jones & M-K. Woo Eds; (EU: € 18 / non-EU: € 24)

**Vol VIII – *Migration in a new Europe: Peoples, Borders and Trajectories*** (2007) T. van Naerssen and M. van der Velde Eds; (EU: € 18 / non-EU: € 24).

To obtain copies of the volumes, please send e-mail to [g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org](mailto:g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org).

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