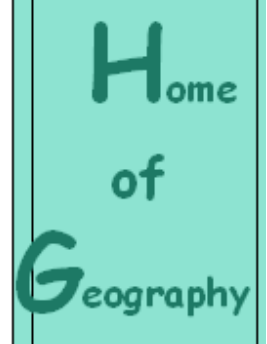




IGU/Home E-Newsletter

Quarterly

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13

July

2008

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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>

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Home of Geography Update



1) MESSAGE OF GIULIANO BELLEZZA, President of the HofG

Issue No 13 marks the beginning of the fourth year of the IGU-Home e-Newsletter, and I would like to quote here the opening lines of the first issue:

The IGU E-Newsletter

In the IGU General Assembly held in Glasgow in August 2004, an extensive discussion took place of how the IGU could optimise its internal communications. To respond to this demand, which concerns a strategic component of the IGU's organisation and activity, the Executive Committee decided:

- 1. to circulate electronically a quarterly IGU E-Newsletter with the aim of diffusing information and calls for collaboration;*
- 2. to consider establishing an international journal, with the essential aim of discussing the role of IGU and geography in the scientific and social arenas and of focusing on the Union's research and educational projects;*
- 3. to use the IGU Bulletin to document the official materials of the IGU, e.g., its statutes, the minutes of general assembly and executive committee meetings, and memoranda of understanding.*

The IGU E-Newsletter debuts with this issue. (omissis) The next issues will be announced by e-mail and will be available on the IGU (www.igu-net.org/) and Home of Geography (www.homeofgeography.org/) web sites.

In fact, it was only one year later, after the IGU EC Committee of April 2005, held in Venice (Italy), that the President, Adalberto Vallega, assigned point No 1 to the Home of Geography: the production and diffusion of the IGU e-Newsletter. During this meeting, moreover, Adalberto and the EC confirmed me Director of the Home of Geography. I was honoured by this confidence in me, and I would go so far as saying that during the following years, though without having been officially entrusted with the tasks, the Home has also performed points 2 and 3 to a great extent (in fact, due to some difficulties, the last number of the IGU paper Bulletin is still the 2002 one: at the moment, the IGU-Home e-Newsletter is our only widespread mean of information).

It proved impossible to engage the services of a professional webmaster to carry out the internet work for the newsletter, due to both cost and time issues, so I had to learn the basics of HTML language: this has been fundamental, not only for the e-Newsletter, but also for the website, which is now being updated almost daily.

Production of the first six issues of the e-Newsletter was quite an easy task, as several weeks ahead of schedule I would receive nearly all the texts from Adalberto, together with some other contributions, mainly from Past President Anne Buttimer and Secretary General Ron Abler. It sufficed to add a few lines about the recent activities of the Home of Geography: the Secretary Dawn Bissell was not only a wonderful proof-reader, but did a magnificent job of translating into 'proper English' what I had written (and in so doing, she was learning Geography at an incredible speed).

Some days after issue No 6 had been circulated, Adalberto, feeling very weak, was forced to renounce his duties as Chairman of the EC Meeting in Tunis, and asked me to stand in for him. When I came back he was admitted to hospital. I thought that this was for his usual

chemotherapy, but just six days later he died. The opening of the regular HofG update from issue No 7 reads:

Following the sad passing of our President in November 2006, the Home has been somewhat a ship without a rudder. With the loss of Adalberto, we have lost not only a friend but a tireless leader, full of enthusiasm and determined ideas about how to press forward with the various IGU initiatives. Every day, the Home would receive countless emails from him, with requests or instructions, but of course this guidance is no longer forthcoming.

But now we wish to celebrate the life of Adalberto: what more fitting way can there be than to continue his work in recognition of its worth and bring his goals to fruition?

I am afraid that I will never be able to express myself in written English such as this: these are, of course Dawn's words, offering a glimpse of the extent to which the three of us really had worked as a team.

Dawn was to remain at the Home only 6 more months, before her family moved to Milan. Since July 2007 I have had to undertake all the necessary work at the Home myself, and I have certainly tried. While continuing to receive help from Anne and Ron, I have sought greater input from the Geographers' community, and further afield. Mainly through the actions of Adalberto, Anne and Ron and the hospitality granted in Rome to the Home by the Società Geografica Italiana, a good number of meetings and conferences have been held at Villa Celimontana over the last few years by entities such as the International Year of Planet Earth, the International Polar Year, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, HERODOT, IMISCOE, ICSU Geounions, Earth and Space Sciences Information and others.

At a meeting in Taiwan (November 2007), I urged the participants to assist me in transforming the Home of Geography into a Home of Geographers: I am proud to say that the Home now helps to disseminate information which is not limited to the sphere of geography, but which also concerns related scientific fields of interest.

(P.S. I should admit that the preceding lines are not my English: in this occasion I once more asked Dawn for amendments, and she has been willing to help, as always).



2) COMMUNICATION FROM IGU SECRETARIAT GENERAL

Last May the IGU Secretary General and Treasurer sent a circular e-mail with the self presentation of all the candidates to the various IGU positions of President, Secretary General-Treasurer and Vice President. The complete letter is available in the HofG website (in News 2008/May), but the Tunis Congress is approaching, and the importance of the argument is such to deem it right to diffuse the information through this newsletter. Candidatures are made by the National Committee of the relative countries, and this guarantees about the scientific requisites of all candidates, so we report here only the part of the presentations relative to what they declare to be the priorities in their action, if elected.

International Geographical Union - 2008 Election Candidate Information Candidates for President

1) Manfred M. Fischer, Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration

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Nominated by Slovakia



Priorities for the IGU: The profound changes that are occurring in society are sources of great opportunity for the profession and the IGU. In recent years the basis has been laid in a stronger and more widespread appreciation of the value of geography and the insights of geographers. I see the role of the IGU Presidency as important in three ways in helping the IGU build on this momentum: in the role of a listener, as an important element in the process of ensuring that the IGU's activities accurately reflect the needs and desires of its members; as a leader, in nurturing current initiatives of the IGU and developing opportunities for new ones; and as a builder of bridges between the IGU and other organisations and activities in which professional geographers have a stake, or where opportunities lie for increased participation by geographers. It is especially

important for a small discipline like geography to have a strong interdisciplinary presence in areas such as environmental research and management, global change, public policy, demography, economics, and international studies.

As computer and information technology invade more aspects of our lives, we must be prepared to change as the world changes, and by doing so put ourselves in a stronger position to influence or to help initiate practice and policy. We must begin the process in which we are seen as leaders and innovators, not as followers and imitators in the advancement of science. The IGU can – via increased representation in the community of scholars, business and government – contribute to improving the practice of geography. Recent IGU Presidents have taken the Union well along this path towards improved imagery and improved respects by initiating programs designed to unify the discipline and enhance its image within the scientific community generally. As President I would continue that spirited march into the future.

2) Ronald F. Abler, Pennsylvania State University

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Nominated by USA, China-Beijing, and South Korea

Priorities for the IGU/ Priorités pour l'UGI. The challenges the IGU Executive Committee will face during its 2008-2012 term, include:

- *Participation.* Recent years have seen an increase in IGU Corresponding Members, but many member countries have been unable to pay their dues and therefore cannot vote on IGU matters. I fear that more countries will be non-voting Observers in the Tunis General Assembly than in Glasgow in 2004.

- *Shrinking Revenue.* The IGU now receives less income than it had in 2004 and 2000 because of declining dues payments. The IGU's Commissions and Task Forces deserve more financial support than the IGU provides. Additional non-dues funds for IGU operations must be secured if the IGU is to remain effective.
- *International and Interdisciplinary Scientific Leadership.* The IGU plays a prominent role in international science and in such coordinating international organizations as the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC). The increasing awareness of the value of traditional geographic concerns regarding human use and abuse of the earth will raise new opportunities for geographic leadership. The IGU must respond to as many as its limited capabilities permit, and should use Adalberto Vallega's Cultures and Civilizations for Human Development (CCHD) initiative as a means of achieving international scientific leadership.
- *Continuity.* There will be an almost complete turnover of the IGU Executive Committee in 2008. Over the long term, offset terms for members of the IGU Executive Committee will prevent such majority turnovers in the future. Over the short term, the death of Adalberto Vallega and the inability of current First Vice President José Palacio-Prieto and current Secretary General and Treasurer Woo-ik Yu to continue on the executive committee could impede IGU effectiveness.
- *Home of Geography.* The status of the Rome Home of Geography must be settled. The Home of Geography has been of value, but at an aggregate cost to IGU of more than \$100,000 since it was established in 2000. Sharply decreased funding from Italian sources and the inability of the IGU to support the Home of Geography requires quick resolution.
- *Priority for Priorities.* To avoid dissipating the energy and time of those who serve the IGU, the IGU Executive Committee must henceforth rigorously evaluate the benefits and costs (including opportunity costs) of each IGU program or project. We can best enhance geography's stature in international science by doing a few things well, rather than many things only adequately; we should reserve IGU energies for projects for which it possesses a strong comparative advantage.



There are no easy solutions to these dilemmas, and I cannot promise that all will be resolved, or resolved to everyone's satisfaction. If I am elected IGU President, however, I promise to do my best to build a stronger IGU by addressing these challenges by applying the lessons I have learned in 32 years of participation in IGU and in my many years of leadership in volunteer organizations similar to the IGU.

Candidate for Secretary General and Treasurer

Woo-ik Yu, Seoul National University

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Nominated by South Korea)



Priorities for IGU. It would be a great honor for me to be elected to continue my service as Secretary General and Treasurer of the IGU through 2010. If elected, I will do my utmost to carry out the duties entrusted in me by working in close cooperation with the IGU Executive Committee and with IGU Commissions and Task Forces. I will use the experience gained from serving in various positions in the Korean government, non-governmental organizations, Seoul National University, the Korean Geographical Society, among others, to:

1. find ways to strengthen ties among the IGU Commissions, Task Forces, and National Committees;
2. help organizing forthcoming congresses and regional conferences. I believe my experiences as an organizer for the 29th IGC held in Seoul in 2000 will be useful in this regard;
3. increase geographical contributions to people and the world, in particular, in the areas of environment, regional policies, tourism, and international cooperation. In order to achieve this goal, various activities will be geared to extending researches, education, and social services of geography;
4. find ways that will promote the activities of regional geographical societies in solving regional problems. For example, I will try to organize the East Asian Geographical Association. I will also try to encourage countries thus far excluded from international society to join the IGU; and
5. take initiatives in realizing 'Living with Diversity', the main theme of the Seoul IGC in 2000. A success of this spatial culture movement will contribute to making the culturally varied earth a better place to live for all people.

I believe that my skills, experience, and love for my work and for geography will benefit the IGU in the short and over the long term.

Candidates for Vice President

1) Ruth Fincher, University of Melbourne

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Nominated by Australia

Priorities for IGU. I have priorities for the IGU of two kinds: first, a priority about geographers' contributions to contemporary international debates on the interactions between social practices and environmental change, and how the IGU might facilitate this; and second, a priority about increasing the inclusiveness of the organisation.

Geography as a discipline is particularly well-placed to contribute to contemporary international discussions about the social contributions to, and effects of, environmental change. Intellectual conversations between social and environmental scientists are, after all, a central part of our discipline. This interface is something we understand. It follows that geographers have much to contribute to global research initiatives about society and environments. My first priority for the IGU is, therefore, to explore ways to encourage the participation of its members and Commissions in the work of international groups with this social-environmental charter. Perhaps some specific collaborations between IGU Commissions could be sought to give such research questions particular priority, too. My interest here is in seeing how the IGU could facilitate the voices of geographers being heard more clearly in international discussions about such matters, which are so very central to our discipline.



The IGU is already an organisation whose conferences and Commission meetings welcome participants, rather than selecting them. Of course this is a tradition in many of our national geographic organisations as well. However, there are always ways inclusiveness may be extended. My interest in extending the inclusiveness of the IGU's conferences and commissions suggests several areas for focus and action:

1. encourage Commissions and the IGU itself to propose meetings in an ever wider variety of world regions;
2. continue to think of ways to support geographers from areas with fewer resources to attend our meetings;
3. encourage the growth of participation in our meetings by postgraduate research students (in Australia we have established a special fund to support travel by young researchers to IGU conferences overseas – perhaps this could be replicated elsewhere and even centrally within the IGU);
4. consider expanding the number of languages treated as official for IGU conference purposes.

These complex matters of inclusiveness should always be important for a major international organisation, and I am particularly interested in keeping them at the forefront of our organisational endeavours, as is the IGU Commission for Gender and Geography with which I have long been associated.

2) Mark Rosenberg, Queens University

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Nominated by Canada

Priorities for the IGU. I am deeply honoured to have been nominated by the Canadian National Committee for Geography to be a vice-president of the IGU. Should I be elected, I will work as hard over the next four year as I have worked for the past eight years to promote geography around the world. My priorities for the IGU would be:

1. To develop and implement a strategy working with the commissions, task forces and

national committees to encourage a new generation of post-doctoral geographers to become active participants in the IGU;

2. To develop and implement a strategy working with the commissions, task forces and national committees to increase the participation of geography students in the IGU;



3. To develop and implement a strategy working with the commissions, task forces and national committees to see more IGU meetings in countries in the developing world;

4. To use the experience I have gained through national associations, the IGU and with the four global change programs to increase the participation of geographers in international research.

I am convinced that I can translate the successes I have had in leading the IGU Commission on Health and the Environment over the past eight years into new successes for the IGU. Together, we can increase the participation of a new generation of post-doctoral geographers, of geography students, and geographers from the developing and developed world to grow the IGU and increase its role in international research.

3) Qin Dahe, Academy of Sciences of China

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Nominated by China-Beijing

Priorities for IGU. If elected as a Vice-President of IGU, certainly I will play my role in the Executive Committee and devote myself to enhance the flourishing of the Union and the progress of geography internationally. My key objectives in the coming four years would be:

- To promote geographical studies and the study on global environment change worldwide. At present, with global environment change and globalization, more acute problems related human security will occur extensively. As a Chinese geographer, my main studies on present physical processes and glacial geomorphology, climate change with the impacts of human activities cooperated with international experts will be benefit for the integrated study on geographical sciences. I believe contribution from geographers all over the world will make more progress for the sustainable development of our Earth.
- To broaden the inter linkages among different regions in the world and to intensify the activities of IGU. The Geographical Society of China (GSC) is now in preparation for the 33rd IGC in China, if it could be decided to be held in China, as a Vice-President, I will try my best for the success of 33rd IGC working together with massive members of GSC.



- To strengthen collaboration between IGU and other international organizations. Based on my academic experience from service to many advisory committees and review panels for WMO, the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS) and IPCC, as an Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the past Administrator of the China Meteorological Administration, I could also play an important role to facilitate international co-operations on the study and application of geography.

4 Chang-Yi David Chang, National Taiwan University

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Nominated by China-Taipei



Priorities for the IGU. If I am elected to serve as an IGU Vice President, I shall do my best to promote all the IGU activities. Since Geography is an integrated discipline, the characteristics of Collaboration, Communication, Cooperation, and Coordination (4 Cs) are the most important essences in the process of geographical education and capability building. As geographers, we can apply and promote these abilities more appropriately.

1. *Communication:* Dialogues among geographers in various subfields and between geographers and colleagues in related disciplines are the musts for future research collaboration. With the experience of membership in several IGU commissions since 1982 and now as the chair of IGU Commission on Islands, I shall be delighted to communicate with all the related commissions and working groups for collaborative research.
2. *Collaboration:* Under the increasing globalization, collaborations among geographers and between geographers and colleagues in other related disciplines are becoming more important than ever before. As a member of IHDP (The International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change) in Taiwan, I shall promote both basic and applied research in the related topics and regions.
3. *Cooperation:* With my experience as member of the Taiwan National Committee for ICSU (International Council for Science) and the President of Geographical Society of China-Taipei(1999-2003), I shall enhance international cooperation among IGU National Committees and among Scientific Unions.
4. *Coordination:* As a board member of the Taiwan National Council for Sustainable Development and the president of a volunteer worker network associated with Taipei Yunho Community University, I shall try my best to coordinate some international sustainability research and training projects related to the conservation and management of environmental resources. I am confident of my ability to do this because of my experience in organizing The First Meeting of IGU Study Group of Marginal Regions (1993), The Fourth Asian Urbanization Conference (1994), Advanced Training Workshop

an Land Use and Land Cover Change for START (2002), the Inaugural Joint Meeting of IGU Commission on Islands and IGU Commission on Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights (2007); and various environmentally related interdisciplinary projects since 1977. It will be a great honor to be elected as a vice president to continue my service at IGU, and I will assist the newly elected IGU president and cooperate with the IGU Executive Committee, Commissions and Task Forces. If elected, I shall also gain supports for IGU from related international organizations and different agencies of Taiwan Government.

5 Ivan Bičík, Charles University

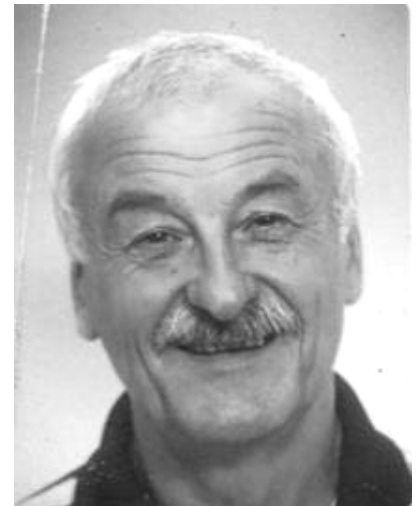
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Nominated by the Czech Republic

Priorities for the IGU. Region I come from has experienced very dynamic changes that are to a large extent specific and unrepeatable and they result from globalization trends and joining European Union as well, but they are also results of catch-up of processes in the developed world realized by long-term development. Hence it is necessary to pay attention to problems and to processes in Central and Eastern Europe. I believe that one of the possibilities of my personal activity in the case of election is to cooperate in larger integration of central- and east-European geographers in IGU activities. Beyond this I would like to contribute to better publicity of top-level research in this region in internationally respected journals with significant citation rating.

In light of my research interest I offer cooperation with IGU commissions which are focused on relative problematic as Land Use/Cover Change commission, which I am leading. Especially I prefer cooperation with Sustainability of Rural System and Local Development commissions, eventually with other commissions focused on local, regional and global level of nature-human interactions. My personal survey in the past made me possible to look at scientific activities of other international scientific organizations like European Society for Environmental History or International Association of Landscape Ecology respectively. I would like to conduce to coordination of mutual activities of conference and work commissions between IGU and above named organizations.

My specific personal interest and long-term experience is a long-term orientation to education systems in Czechia and especially in geography. I am very interested in the idea of my colleagues from chemistry which formulated „eurobachelors“ in chemical subjects; I think that similar heading in geographic fields of study would contribute for next development of geography. From this point of view it is possible to use my scientific and organization experience in these fields in IGU, eventually in relation with other scientific societies.



6 Christian Mathiessen, University of Copenhagen

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Nominated by Denmark



Priorities for the IGU: Face to face contact is of paramount importance to establish lasting and trustful relations between people. This is a general statement but is also the backbone for our subject, geography. Consequently meetings are the key to securing and forwarding geographical research and organisation. Congresses, regional congresses, symposia, meetings of commissions, working groups and task forces as well as interrelation to other subjects and programmes must be kept high on the agenda, and effort to secure and extend attendance for young and established and for rich and poor members of the geographical community should be increased. When this is said, it must also be stated that the potential of modern communication and information technology should be utilised to its limits in parallel with increasing development of face to face contact. Communication and networking within the geographical community must be of quality

and quantity. Recruitment to the global geographical research community should also be high on the agenda. Young scholar's programmes, cheap possibilities to attend meetings, competitions, Ph.d. courses (for example organised by commissions or working groups) should be expanded. Geographical institutions of developing nations should be interrelated with those of the developed world in a respectful way of mutual benefits (my own institute has for example access to laboratory facilities at the University of Ghana and provide guest facilities in Copenhagen for staff from Ghana). Tradition and renewal must go hand in hand. The International Geographical Union with all its institutions is and must be the most important global framework of reference for our subject, but must at the same time provide new departures for ideas and innovation. The IGU is a player on the international research scene and must take responsibilities, which range from addressing the climate debate to engaging in issues of peace and understanding between cultures and civilisations. Being an urban geographer I have a focus, but I am interested in the whole broad subject of geography and relates actively to all disciplines.

7) Mahmoud Mohamed Ashour, Ain Shans University

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Nominated by Egypt

Priorities for IGU: Besides fulfilling the general objectives of the IGU, It would be a great honor for me to be elected as vice president of the IGU through 2012. If elected, I will do my best to carry out the duties entrusted in me by working in close cooperation with the IGU Executive Committee and with IGU Commissions and Task Forces. I will use the experience gained from serving at international, organizations to:

- Encouraging and supporting Arab and African geographical societies to join the IGU.
- Developing academic and research networks in order to cooperate with them (e.g. Desert Net, UNCCD, ACACIA, IGCP, INQUA).

- Organizing meetings to bring together geographers, especially to reestablish better interactions with colleagues in the Arab world and Africa since these have not participated much in the IGU.
- Promote geographical international researchers particularly those related to global problems such as climatic changes, pollution, immigration and poverty related problems. In order to achieve this objective, various activities will be geared.

I believe that my experience through working with bi-national and international teams in research and teaching activities since 1964 and my excellent relations with many geographical and scientist all over the world will benefit the IGU and geography.

Besides fulfilling the general objectives of the IGU, my first tasks after election would be;

1. Instigating Arab and African geographical societies to join the IGU;
2. Developing academic and research networks in order to Cooperate with them (e.g. Desert Net, UNCCD, ACACIA, IGCP, INQUA);
3. Organizing meetings to bring together geographers, especially to reestablish better interactions with colleagues in the Arab world and Africa since these have not participated much in the IGU.



8) Gérard Salem, Université Paris-Nanterre

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Nominated by France



Priorities for the IGU: My personal trajectory attests to my interest in collaborating across disciplines, international collaborating, and a central role for geography in debates about the future of our planet. These aspects help to define three priorities for the IGU:

1. Geography that is open to other disciplines without losing its primary strength: an interdisciplinary dynamic depends on deepening our own approach and reinforcing the links between different components of the discipline (environmental, social, cultural) and developing quantitative and qualitative approaches that are complementary
2. Geography that is open to the world: the International Geographical Union is one of those privileged spaces for scientific, as well as personal, exchanges, in a multi-polar world, full of different currents. It is essential to maintain, and broaden, the scientific and cultural diversity of the IGU. Greater access to our meetings and debates, particularly of young teachers and researchers, is equally a necessity.
3. Geography attentive to pressing contemporary issues: the geographic community must affirm its expertise in matters of the environment, economy, food, health, etc., provide insight to the central debates and influence decision-making.

In this way, I intend to consecrate a significant portion of my time as Vice-President to attaining these objectives.

9) Professor Dietrich Soyez, University of Köln

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Nominated by Germany

Priorities for the IGU. The main motivation for my nomination by the *German Society of Geography* is to ensure the smooth co-ordination and co-operation of the IGC Cologne 2012 organisational committee with the IGU Executive Committee between 2008 and 2012. Thus my objectives for the potential mandate are clear: I will do my very best to act in a way that will enable both sides to make IGC 2012 a success, not only from a purely organisational point of view, but also regarding the conceptual and topical thrusts that will be considered crucial by all parties involved.

During the IGC Glasgow 2004 General Assembly, my Cologne colleague Frauke Kraas, now chairing the IGC Cologne 2012 Organisational Committee, and myself outlined crucial specifics for a 'down-to-earth' IGC Cologne 2012, such as cost-efficiency, a special focus on young geographers from Africa, South America and Asia as well as dedicated efforts to explain recently emerging spatialities in Europe, to mention just a few issues. However, much detailed interactive work remains to be done during the next couple of years, and new challenges relating to specific facets of the future organisation will most certainly emerge. I am very confident that the views of both the EC and the Cologne organisational committee can be harmonized by an interaction that will doubtless be both efficient and trusting.

This said, I would like to emphasize that I fully support the mission statements and statutes of the IGU, and that it would be my pleasure to contribute actively to other tasks, both general and specific, that the EC may wish to assign to me during a potential mandate.



10) Professor Aharon Kellerman, University of Haifa

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Nominated by Israel

Priorities for the IGU. In my view, the IGU has two major potential spheres of activity: first, the worldwide geographical community, and, second, the global academic community at large, as well as world public opinion and affairs. Traditionally, the IGU has accentuated the first, and more internal, sphere of activity, but more recently it has moved also into the second, wider and more external, one, and I think that this trend should continue to develop.

I believe that IGU activity within the global geographical community has been stabilized over the years through regional or world meetings every two years respectively, and through continuous work by some 34 specialty commissions. I would like to see these activities complemented by the following directions:



1. *New fields*: Continued encouragement of new specialties in order to assure a healthy expansion of the field into new areas of geographical inquiry.

2. *Geography teachers*: Assistance to be provided to geography teachers at large and to those in developing countries in particular, maybe using communications media recently becoming widely available, notably SMS.

3. *Publications exposure*: Exploration of possibilities for the enhancement of international dissemination of academic geographical knowledge, notably by facilitations of mutual exposures of publications in English and French.

4. *IGU website*: This website should provide extensive links to the widest variety of geography websites and resources, so that it will turn into a major working tool for geographers worldwide.

5. *IGU Communications with individual geographers*: Executive Committee minutes should be distributed to IGU Commission chairs, and through their mailing lists to geographers worldwide, in order to foster bonds between individual geographers and their representative world organization in a globalizing world.

At the wider global sphere, I think that IGU should present a visible prominence. This objective could be achieved, for instance, through the following actions:

1. *Interdisciplinary projects*: Such projects should be of general public value accentuating timely global concerns, such as the IGU Cultures, Civilizations, and Human Development (CCHD) project, initiated by the late IGU President Adalberto Vallega. Another such project should focus on the environment and sustainable development. Alternatively, the IGU should be involved, as such, in already existing global projects.

2. *Geographical expertise*: This should be made available to global media and decision making through the development of lists of geography experts in various fields and specialties, who will be available to the media for geographical interpretations of news and world events, as well as to decision makers for consulting and study.

11) Professor Giuliano Bellezza, University of Viterbo

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Nominated by Italy

Priorities for the IGU. Since the IGU Congress of 2000 in Seoul I began giving co-operation to the IGU Executive Committee (EC), and after my appointment as Director of the Home of Geography I participated to nearly all of the EC Meetings. This gave me a good knowledge of the working of the organisation, and some ideas in order to improve our action. One of the main goals should be the diffusion of the work of the Geographers: to better say, the common people should know the practical potential importance of our research. Territorial planning or environmental impact assesses are but two of the many initiatives taken all over the world by research groups including no geographers: and the results are all but brilliant. On the other hand, the results of our research are often used by other specialists (architects, engineers, economists, geologists, sociologists ...). It is time to take a strong action in this direction in order to receive assignments from entities like UN Agencies, World Bank, IMF so on. Let us see how the EC can

help, proposing to these bodies big themes of practical research on environment, real sovereignty of small States, unequal exchange, human rights in the minorities and so forth.

First of all, we must improve the efficiency of our own organisation, where we find the EC, the National Committees (NC) and the Special Committees (SP). The last are only two, Ocean 21 and World Map on the State of the Environment: very interesting issues, but what is being done? The second one's director Nikita Glazovsky, died in 2005: did something happened ever after?

About the NCs, they are the base of IGU, which lives on their contribution. Just a minority fulfil this duty, as many Countries simply can't afford expenses. But in the HofG I receive back many of the IGU-Home e-newsletter which I am composing and sending, because the address they gave to the IGU Secretariat doesn't exist. Possible explanation: I have been told that some local NC's Chair is appointed by the government for political reasons, to non-geographers. Put order in the NC situation should be one of the main tasks of the Tunis Congress 2008: IGU shouldn't honour as member any useless entity.

Then there are the Commissions and Task Forces, working on a better standard. In November 2005 I participated in the Meetings of two commissions in Taiwan, and I asked the Chairs to help me strengthening a bottom-up way of information. Great success: I received reports on their meetings on November 12th, and 5 days all has been diffused with the newsletter #10. Diffusing the results obtained by the geographical research: this is the best way to stop the irritating and interrogative expression on the face of people asking "what is your profession", when we answer "I am a geographer".

If elected I'll try to fulfil whatever the EC will ask me; if I were to choose, I will try to pursue and help the efficiency improvement of all of the IGU branches.



12) Professor Yukio Himiyama, Hokkaido University of Education

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Nominated by Japan



Priorities for IGU : The people in the world are divided in various ways. There are gaps between the haves and have-nots, misunderstanding between different regions or cultures, and barriers between social and natural scientists. If the world is to overcome its crucial problems such as global environmental problems, coordination and cooperation of the people are of particular importance. Geographers are supposed to be well prepared to tackle the global problems by overcoming these gaps, and IGU has in fact been making such efforts, if not always successfully. The world and the global environment are changing very rapidly, and the roles geographers are expected to play are ever increasing. I

believe that IGU assumes new and heavy duty to meet these expectations of the society. Therefore, if elected as a Vice President of IGU, I will do my best to pursue the following:

1. To strengthen geographers' involvement in global issues, particularly global environmental problems. Geographers can, and should, do much more in tackling various global environmental problems, with their global-local, multi-disciplinary, spatial and regional views. The IGU Executive Committee can take active roles in initiating or promoting relevant projects, with recognition of extreme urgency of the problems.
2. To promote cooperation of geography with the other disciplines. IYPE (UN International Year of Planet Earth) is a good opportunity for geographers to cooperate with other earth-scientific communities with a common goal, namely "Earth Sciences for Society".
3. To realize the ideal of "Geography for Society" at local, national, regional, and global levels. Outreach activities are becoming increasingly important throughout the world, and IGU should put higher priority on it. Much can be learned from the experiences of IYPE.
4. To help national and regional efforts to promote geography and geography education. One way of realizing it will be to increase the number of regional conferences and thematic meetings which IGU sponsors, so that more countries are given a chance. It also helps geographers to visit and see the countries/regions which otherwise they may not have a chance to visit.
5. To make IGU meetings more open and accessible to all who wish to attend. International Geographical Congresses and Regional Conferences are often too expensive to attend for the majority of geographers in developing countries and senior and younger geographers. This situation has to be changed by all means.

13) Professor Irasema Alcántara Ayala, National Autonomous University of Mexico

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Nominated by Mexico

Priorities for the IGU. Perceptibly, at this moment, I cannot offer as most of my senior colleagues, a lifetime erudition to IGU, although I sincerely hope for a relentless feedback from other scholars and students during my entire life. Nonetheless, from my petite experience, I strongly believe that some of the new routes to be drawn for the geography of the XXI Century's need to be delineated by young geographers. Therefore, the main objective of my candidature, would be to work in the integration of the Young Geographers Network of IGU in order to develop national-regional and international cross-cutting collaboration research projects. Such projects would consider significant issues that would be established by the priorities of the working groups. Among those topics, given its geographical nature, disaster prevention and management would be a main concern.



Pertaining to the last point, undoubtedly the number of disasters and people affected by them have increased considerably in the last decades, in both developing and developed countries. Examples such as the aftermath derived from the Tsunami of Southeast Asia in 2004, and hurricane Katrina a year later in New Orleans, illustrate precisely the complexity of the

interactions among all elements that determine risk. Risk results from coupling the potential impact of a natural hazard with the vulnerability of the exposed community. Geographers can indeed contribute to a major extent to the understanding of the spatial-temporal dimensions of such complexity, as specifically the impact of disasters calls the attention of scientists -from both social and “pure” sciences- towards undertaking a closer look at the disaster construction process, and a better comprehension of the duties and rights of all concerned actors. As a result of the lack of simplicity of disasters, development and implementation of prevention strategies, in addition to risk management, would be only achieved by getting involved into an holistic approach reinforced above all, with solid and down-to-earth actions to reduce vulnerability; the latter being indeed the challenge of the present, derived from the lessons of the past, in light of the wisdom of the future. All of it is an endeavour and commitment that can and must be undertaken by our IGU community.

Besides all the successful activities carried out hitherto by IGU members, definitely the challenge at the threshold of the new millennium requires a global action not only among geographers, but surrounded by Earth scientists and experts from other disciplines to work together building a safe world.

Finally, in joint effort with all the EC-IGU members, I would be delighted to actively participate in the establishment and fulfilment of the strategic goals for the period 2008-2012, which with no hesitation must be based on an spherical communication flow among the four hemispheres.

14) Professor Jef Vandenberghe, Free University of Amsterdam

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Nominated by Netherlands



Excellent disciplinary knowledge, established during the past decades, has a narrow scope and lacks the capacity to solve multi-faceted problems. Therefore, it should be assembled in *transdisciplinary* frameworks where scientific excellence can meet societal and environmental needs, economic potentials, and political decision making. My contribution in the progressing development of geography within IGU will be in crossing disciplinary limits and opening perspectives for embedding socio-cultural and physical geographical research in such frameworks.

What are the incentives for such a broad orientation and what are the barriers? *Geographical environments* are heterogeneous, and have different internal dynamics. Therefore the individual physical processes, institutional management and societal impact are environment specific. Sustainable living in specific geographical environments needs adequate scientific knowledge of the processes that (inter-)act in them. But knowledge of the physical processes has to be incorporated in its economic infrastructure, and has to be associated with new perceptions in socio-cultural institutions and management policy. However, intertwining between natural dynamics and human activities within a geographical environment is non linear and not

systematically structured. Integrating this diversity and complexity is a challenging job for which geographers are best equipped.

I will promote the development of initiatives that develop such interactions. Organisation of transdisciplinary operations are by definition complex, risk full and poorly structured, while crossing of traditional disciplinary borders is appealing and challenging. Therefore, the development of design and set-up of such novel forms of scientific co-operation need the inspiration, stimulation and support from a large, interested organization like IGU. In my opinion, IGU must help to create networks, submit proposals at the international scene, and initiate joint publications both in research and popular magazines.

The practical realization of this theoretical consideration is illustrated for two geographical environments. First, the desert margin is a particular landscape where both climatic changes and economic (agricultural) exploitation may disturb subtle geomorphological and hydrological equilibriums. Potential risks for soil erosion, river flooding, desertification and ecological degradation regard directly society and geo- and ecodiversity. They are addressed by an active IGU Commission (COMLAND). Second, the implications of both human actions and natural climate changes on physical properties, natural resources (including energy supply) and living conditions of specific environments are highly relevant. Such natural or human induced changes may concern, coastal defense, floodplain occupation, permafrost degradation, etc. A few IGU Commissions touch(ed) such interrelationships.

What is my *background and expertise* in this respect? After graduation in geography and geomorphology I am now professor in Physical Geography and Quaternary Geology. I initiated recently a new educational programme 'Earth and Economics' at my university to create the opportunity for students to become experts in a specific discipline (economy, earth science), but with a basic knowledge and fully aware of the potentials of the 'other geographical discipline(s)'. It is a new geography, not anymore in the tradition of the geographer 'who knows something from everything', but an 'integral geography' *where process integration is becoming a science*. In my opinion IGU could develop in a comparable way.

15) Professor Michael O. Filani, University of Ibadan

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Nominated by Nigeria and USA

Priorities for IGU. It would be a great honour and privilege for me to be elected as a Vice – President of the IGU. If elected, I will do my very best to carry out all the duties and responsibilities assigned to me by working effectively in cooperation with the Union's Commissions and Task Forces. I will utilize the experience gained from serving in various positions at the University of Ibadan and in the national and international organizations and also the Nigerian Geographical Association to:

1. contribute effectively and in various ways to the workings of the IGU Commissions and Task Forces;
2. find ways to promote and coordinate the activities of regional geographical associations most especially in developing countries in general and Africa in particular;
3. motivate and mobilize geographers in conjunction with



other social scientists to devise ways of making developing countries understand better the concepts of globalization and sustainable development, their usefulness and attendant problems; and

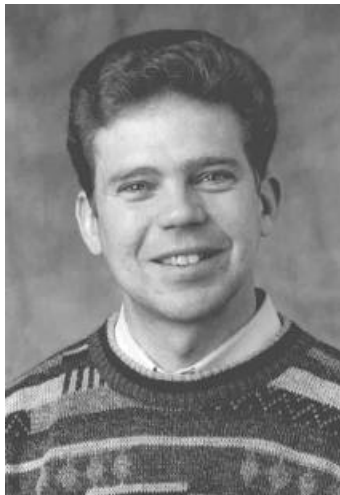
4. develop a feasible agenda for sustainability of geography as a discipline in African countries.

I am convinced that, using my experience, skills and commitment to the discipline of geography in particular and Social Sciences in general, will benefit the International Geographical Union and the world at large.

16) Professor Vladimir Kolosov, Russian Academy of Sciences

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Nominated by Russia



Vladimir Kolosov acquired an extensive experience of teaching and research at foreign universities and laboratories. He got the scholarship of Brussels Capital Region (1991) and International Boundaries Research Unit (University of Durham, UK, 1992), the Fulbright Scholarship at the University of Colorado at Boulder (1997). In 1999-2003 Vladimir Kolosov was nominated as Professor at the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail (France). He was also visiting professor in the universities of Paris-Sorbonne IV, Paris-I Panthéon-Sorbonne, Bordeaux and Tampere, and lectured in Russian, Ukrainian, Dutch, British, and American universities. He is on the editorial boards of *Political Geography*, *Geopolitics*, *BelGéo*, *Eurasian Geography and Economy*, *Annales géographiques*.

Since 1991 he is involved in IGU activities – first as a member and in 1996-2004 – as Chair of the Commission on Political Geography. In this period the commission was one of the most active in IGU, met three times a year. Each conference resulted in the publication of a monograph and/or a special issue of an international journal. Vladimir Kolosov organized in Russia three conferences of the Commission and participated in the organization of several conferences abroad, and in the editing of their proceedings. In October 2006 he was elected Vice-President of the International Geographical Union. As a member of IGU Executive, he has been the liaison with the programme “Cultures and Civilisations for Human development” initiated by IGU President Adalberto Vallega and tried to establish its contacts with UNESCO, made a presentation on behalf of IGU at a conference of its international experts. In 2008 he organized a meeting of the Executive in Moscow, where they discussed in particular the perspectives of IGU Congresses and regional conferences. Vladimir Kolosov initiated the invitation of the 33d IGC to Russia and was the main author of this application. He is Deputy Chair of IGU Regional Network of New Independent States and IGU liaison with this network.

17) Professor Mohammad S. Makki, King Saud University
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Nominated by Saudi Arabia

Priorities for the IGU: I feel that the establishment of the IGU is one of the outreaching products of recent history. Although the IGU was very successful in several aspects, one of which is developing interaction with world systems and organizations through geographer members in the IGU, I feel there is more to be done to participate equally in such interaction, especially with the developing world. During the 85 years of the IGU history the IGU international conferences were held only once in the Arab world, and the second one is coming in Tunisia in 2008, while it has assembled, for example, more than six times in Europe. However, the broad vision of my nomination, if I am elected for the job, will concentrate, in addition to what is required and decided by the IGU Executive Committee, on the following aspects:



1. To focus on changing inferior attitudes toward geography in developing world, and shedding more light on geography's potential as a problem-solving science.
2. Putting the geographical and environmental problems of the Arab World in the context of the IGU international interest. These problems include desertification issues, water consumption, and environmental awareness to reach sustainable development, land use reservation in rural areas, population growth and immigration.
3. Encouraging the active committees of the task forces in the IGU to facilitate the involvement of non-English speakers to participate in their activities by, for example, making the whole exam or, at least, the question, in native languages of the participants, and keep the answers in English. I believe such step, will enhance the cooperation between nations and encourage more participation which is very beneficial to confirm and develop geographical thought and approaches throughout the whole world.
4. Encourage the study groups in the IGU to stick to their scientific goals and give more attention to diverse areas of the world, especially the Arab geographers, to participate in their projects. I believe that the engagement in the IGU activities, through these groups and task forces, will enhance self-confidence about the importance of geography as a field which can contribute positively in development of natural and human resources with no discrimination based on region, country, race or religion.
5. Encouraging Arab countries to be members of the IGU.
6. Encouraging Arab geographers to be corresponding members of the IGU.
7. Encouraging Arab countries to participate in activities which broaden the vision of the young generation towards geography through for example, the geographic Olympiads. This participation should be regarded as an important step in the implementation of a strategy to optimize and enhance the visibility of Arab geography in the international arena.
8. Encouraging more involvement of female geographers, especially in the Arab World, in the wide spectrum of activities and organizations in the IGU.

I believe that intensifying work to achieve the scientific and social goals of the IGU will verify the fact the geography can lead to peaceful life, enhanced relations between societies, and contribute to the dialogue of civilizations.

18) Professor Michael Meadows, University of Cape Town

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Nominated by South Africa



Priorities for the IGU. Professor Meadows sees his potential role in the IGU Executive Committee as contributing to the objectives and outcomes of the Union through the promotion and encouragement of the existing fundamental goals and objectives of the IGU as prescribed in its charter, in particular in promoting Geography through study, research, knowledge and discourse, as manifested by its commissions and task forces. In particular Professor Meadows would seek to foster these goals in the African continent and further develop networks between African nations in the name of Geography. Although many Geographers in Africa are at a disadvantage with respect to their ability to access resources that enable them to participate fully in the activities of the IGU, Professor Meadows aims to use his communication skills and existing network of contacts to develop and extend the capacity of

the continent's Geographers in the context of the academic teaching, research and social responsibility roles of the discipline. He is especially keen to see Africa's major social, economic, political and environmental problems gain a higher profile on the agenda of the various IGU instruments.

Professor Meadows has research expertise in the field of human interactions with the environment, particularly as this relates to land degradation, and this is a critical problem in Africa that contributes to the continued marginalisation and vulnerability of a very substantial proportion of its population. Professor Meadows would aim to bring such issues into focus for relevant IGU Commissions and Task Forces and encourage them, where appropriate, to engage with geographical research problems related to poverty alleviation in Africa and in other parts of the developing world.

19) Professor Habib Dlala, University of Tunis

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Nominated by Tunisia



Priorities for the IGU. Fully supported by the Tunisian geographers' community, I present myself as a candidate for the IGU executive bureau. I do so believing in the permanent aims of

the union, the same belief that motivated me to actively participate in Glasgow 2004 and make Tunis 2008 happen. Once elected, I will do my best, with your help to fulfil the following aims:

1. Broaden the IGU action specially in poorly represented areas by encouraging the following:
 - a. Promote the adhesion of geographers of the Mediterranean, Arab and African regions and favour their participation in different committees and task forces.
 - b. Advance the debate on promoting condition for sustainable development for the Mediterranean, Arab and African regions.
2. Deepen the IGU cooperation with different international organisations and associate the Union to different world debates such as global warming, technological risks and culture dialogue.
3. Strengthen the position of geography as a science and its contribution to knowledge and human welfare.
4. Diversify the discipline's areas of expertise by helping national associations of geographers to actively take part in education reforms and planning policies
5. Value and strengthen different programs made to encourage women geographers, young geographers and geographers from developing countries to take part in international scientific networks.
6. Establish an online academic review that publishes scientific research and research on teaching methods.

Once elected, I will try my best to broaden and deepen the IGU scope and quality of action using the international network of Tunisian geographers. So if you vote for me, you vote for all other Tunisian geographers who will be glad to contribute to the union's glow.

I sincerely hope that once elected and with your help, I can realise all of these objectives.



3) NEXT IGU INITIATIVES

3.1) Tunis International Congress, 12-15 August 2008



the Congress URL is <http://www.igc-tunis2008.com/>)

3.2) Tel Aviv Regional Conference, 2010

Dear colleagues:

Kindly be advised that printed copies of the First Circular for the IGU 2010 Tel Aviv Regional Meeting will be available at stand No. 45 in the Exhibition Hall of the IGU Tunis Congress next month. Additional printed copies will be sent to National Committees after the Congress.

The website for the 2010 meeting is up and it's URL is: <http://www.igu2010.com>. The website includes also the first circular and the non-committing participation intention form. I would be most grateful to you if you would encourage our colleagues to fill out the form and send it either through the website, via e-mail or by postal mail.

At the General Assembly in Tunis I'll present a short PowerPoint presentation with some details on the venue for the information of the national delegations.

Thank you very much for your attention and cooperation, and looking forward to meeting you soon in Tunis.

Best wishes,

Prof. Aharon Kellerman

Chair, Israeli National Geography Committee



4) REPORTS FROM CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

4.1) Theoretical approaches in labour geographies, Oslo, 14-15 May 2008

Organised by the Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo and the IGU Commission on the Dynamics of Economic Spaces

Introduction

The analysis of labour and its geographies has gained momentum in recent years, but there are still quite a few issues to be addressed, and this challenge formed the backdrop for the conference on 'Theoretical approaches in labour geographies' at the University of Oslo. The conference brought together 35 participants from many different countries, including postgraduate students, researchers, faculty and practitioners. The conference was divided into seven sessions focusing on the following key themes: the agency of labour, trade unions, labour market challenges and labour regimes.

The conference was opened by key note speaker Andrew Herod, whose work has been crucial in bringing labour into the heart of economic geography. The speech outlined his central argument regarding workers' agency and how the collective struggles of workers actively contribute in shaping economic landscapes. He described different ways that the concept of scale can be operationalised and argued that this has implications for mental images of the possibility of collective mobilisation. He also pointed out that labour geographies should now move from focusing mainly on unionised labour to address workers in a broad sense and to include various forms of organising.

The agency of labour

The first session focused on the agency of labour. Ben Rogaly from the University of Sussex highlighted the need to bring unorganised workers and individual agency into labour geographies. This argument was illustrated by research on how migrant workers reshape workplace regimes in India and the UK, and how the stretched lives of migrant workers have implications for understandings of place-embeddedness, scale and class. In their presentation, David Christoffer Lier and Neil Coe from the University of Manchester suggested that a 'fourth phase' of labour geography is emerging. They pointed out that early labour geography had a tendency to give analytical importance to selective success stories, and argued that the agency of labour needs to be re-embedded with the community, the state and capital, in order to capture the variable and constrained agency of workers in different contexts. Andrew Cumbers from the University of Glasgow, and colleagues focused on the continued under-theorisation of labour in the Global Production Networks (GPN) approach. Their presentation showed how European trade unions tend to dominate international union federations and that senior union officials may have closer ties to business leaders and politicians than to local union activists. Moreover, unions can be co-opted into global production strategies and thereby reinforce exploitation. It was concluded that horizontal strategies with effective grassroots organisations are essential to improve employment relations in GPNs. Claiming that the role of labour and social movements in the restructuring of the East Asian economies has largely been overlooked, Jamie Doucette from the University of British Columbia conceptualised how workers' agency can be brought into theories of state-spatial reform.

Trade unions

The second and third session discussed the opportunities and constraints of trade unions. Ann Cecilie Bergene from the University of Oslo challenged the dichotomous positions regarding trade union consciousness and the revolutionary potential of unions found in the classic literature. Illustrated by interviews with union leaders, she showed how this debate is still relevant, but emphasised that these leaders are embedded in a variety of structures which needs to be taken into consideration when analysing the political potential of workers' organisations. Renewal and rescaling of union activity was highlighted by several presenters. Drawing on research on hospitality sector unions in Canada, Steve Tufts from York University proposed the concept 'Schumpeterian Unionism' in order to incorporate complex and contradictory initiatives of union

renewal as well as multi-scalar union strategies. The need to move beyond local/global binaries of labour strategies was also raised by Mario Novelli from the University of Amsterdam. He illustrated this by research on the spatial praxis of the teachers unions in Columbia, which includes a variety of strategies from community alliances to transnational solidarity networks. Rebecca Ryland from the University of Liverpool and colleagues argued that membership understandings of trade union internationalism have received less attention. Using a public sector union in the UK as a case, they explored the possibilities for building collective identities and solidarity that transcend national borders. The potential for interregional union collaboration was addressed by Micha Neunzig from the German Trade Union Federation, and he reflected on collaboration across the German-Polish border region in light of the Europeanization of capital. Martina Fuchs and Dorit Meyer from Cologne University approached unions as 'learning organisations'. They talked about German unions' attempts to attract temporary workers as members and explored variations in learning processes between spatial units and at different scales. These two sessions also highlighted challenges of unions in Southern Africa. Jan Theron from the University of Western Cape addressed workplace segmentation in South Africa and argued that the unions mainly represent core workers. He then discussed the role unions could and should play in protecting the interests of temporary and informal workers. Xolani Simelane from the Human Science Research Council, Pretoria, analysed the limitations of unions in Swaziland when it comes to improving working conditions in the textile industry. Herbert Jauch from the Labour Resource and Research Centre in Windhoek was inspired by Gramsci's concept of hegemony in his explanation of the crisis of the Namibian labour movement following the acceptance of social partnership.

Labour market challenges

The fourth and fifth sessions addressed various labour market challenges. Ragnhild Steen Jensen from the Institute of Social Research and and Kåre Skollerud from the Institute of Transport Economics in Oslo, challenged the dominating explanation based on national aggregate data stating that increasing participation of women in the labour market is due to growth in service sector jobs. They argued that more specific explanations at the scale of the local labour market are required so that crucial social processes are not missed. Sally Weller from Victoria University used data from Australia to illustrate the increased tendency to approach employment relations and labour market processes within a medicalised discourse which draws attention away from workers' material conditions and labour rights. The need to bring unemployed and retired workers into labour geographies was highlighted by Sue Easton from the University of Sheffield who explored mortality among working age benefit claimants across Britain. Mike Taylor from the University of Birmingham discussed labour and manufacturing sustainability in the West Midlands, where earlier successful niche production is being eroded from below by a dwindling supply of skilled labour. The labour force is aging, but there is no training and workforce development. The firms seek to avoid this form of sunk costs and the jobs are unattractive to the young generation. Susan Thieme from the University of Zurich addressed the livelihoods of illegal immigrants from Central Asia. She proposed a framework based on Bourdieu's theory of practice to analyse the global labour market as a social field in order to capture people's access to and use of resources. The issue of labour and alienation was raised by Sylvi Endresen from the University of Oslo. Drawing on research from Namibia, she argued that labour hire through agencies increases the distance between employer and worker and the alienation of both parties, which facilitates the reproduction of this hiring practice. Niels Beerepot from Amsterdam University addressed labour market segmentation and employability in the Philippines. He demonstrated how workers who lose their job due to decline in manufacturing industry have

limited access to new jobs created through the off-shoring of service sector activities. This contributes to increased duality in the labour market. The limitations of theories based on the experiences of Western countries in explaining the diversified and multifaceted characteristics of labour markets in developing countries undergoing economic reform, was raised by Tapati Mukhopadhyay from the University of Mumbai. She underpinned this point by presenting comparative data from Mumbai and Shanghai.

Labour regimes

The fifth and sixth sessions were dedicated to labour regimes. Gunilla Andrae and Björn Beckman from Stockholm University argued that although the ‘union-based labour regime’ in the Nigerian and South African textile industry has been weakened with globalisation, the role of organised labour could be strengthened by forming alliances with informal producers. They also argued that unions are important in the struggle to achieve a productive institutional environment in contexts where existing public institutions are weak. Following up on Namibia, Ola Magnusson from the University of Oslo outlined different workplace regimes in the retail sector and explained these variations by analysing the power struggles between capital, labour and the state. Jamie Gough from Sheffield University argued that space is integral to labour process dynamics and pointed to the implications this holds for the politics of production and workers’ strategies. A statistical evaluation tool to categorise Chinese enterprises according to harmonious labour relations was presented by Jufen Wang and Qun Zeng from Fudan University. Hege M. Knutsen from the University of Oslo and Eva Hansson from University of Stockholm highlighted some dimensions of the concept of labour regimes that could be of particular relevance in studies of agency and working conditions in transformation economies.

Discussions

One question which was raised in the discussion was whether scale is over-fetishised, or given too much importance in geography. It was argued that taking away the importance of scale has a disempowering effect and that scale is crucial to understand different ways of organising. Regarding unions, it was emphasised that although a small proportion of workers are unionised, they are influential because of their organisational structure. However, class tensions, diminishing democracy and interest conflicts within unions, as well as workers’ multiple identities and contradictory actions must be given analytical importance. Another issue which was brought up was the tendency to portray capital as hegemonic and the need to unpack the agency of business. This applies to labour intermediaries as well, which include a variety of different firms and agents, it was argued. The conceptual integration of human rights and labour rights was also discussed.

A significant number of participants remarked on the success of the conference and the lively and thoughtful discussion it generated. It was suggested that a follow-up meeting should be organised in one or two years’ time.

Annika Wetlesen

(Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo)

4.2) Report on the 15th Congress of ISCO, Budapest, 18-23 May 2008

The theme of the 15th Congress of ISCO (International Soil Conservation Organization) was „Soil and water conservation, climate change and environmental sensitivity”. At the 14th ISCO Congress in Marrakech it was decided that the 15th Congress would be held in Budapest and

Ádám Kertész was asked to be the chairman of the Organizing Committee. The reason for Hungary is the long and fruitful history of soil conservation and the important scientific results on this field.



Adam Kertész welcomes the participants during the opening speech

The Congress was organized in the Budapest Congress & World Trade Center. Four days of papers and posters were presented in 10 thematic sessions. 162 participants took part in the Congress from all over the world.

The thematic sessions presented the newest results on climate change and environmental sensitivity, land use change, soil erosion, water management and agronomy, salinization and other land degradation processes, desertification, soil rehabilitation and management, socio-economic aspects of land degradation, legislative and institutional aspects of soil and water conservation and a special session was organized on soil conservation in China.

During the Mid-Congress Excursion congress participants visited the Soil erosion experimental station of the Geographical Research Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences at Szentgyörgyvár, near Lake Balaton where the results of the SOWAP (SOil and WATER Protection) project were presented. The main objective of the SOWAP Project was the comparison of conventional and conservation agriculture from the point of view soil loss and runoff. Ecological aspects of conventional and conservation agriculture were also included in the objectives of the project. The second stop was at the Research Institute for Viticulture and Oenology, Centre for Agricultural Sciences, Pannon University in Badacsony where soil conservation experiments of the Institute were introduced followed by wine tasting. The third stop was on the Tihany Peninsula to enjoy the panoramic view of Lake Balaton.



Szentgyörgyvár (SOWAP Project - Soil erosion experimental station): Prof. Ádám Kertész and Dr. Béla Csepinszky present the experimental station to the participants

The main scientific topic of the Pre-Congress Excursion were salinization processes and problems of the Great Hungarian Plain. The Post-Congress Excursion took the participants to the Eger and Tokaj wine-growing region where volcanic soils as well as the wine-growing areas were shown to the participants.

We feel that all participants have a good memory of a well-organized congress with high scientific level and interesting excursions.

Ádám Kertész

4.3) 15th Conference on Studying, Modeling and Sense Making of Planet Earth

*Organized by the Department of Geography, University of the Aegean
Mytilene, Lesvos, Greece, June 1-6, 2008*

CONFERENCE REPORT

The United Nations designated the year 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth. On this occasion, the Department of Geography of the University of the Aegean organized the international conference “Studying, Modelling and Sense Making of Planet Earth” between 1 and 6 of June 2008. The UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector granted support to the conference. The conference brought together geographers, natural scientists, social scientists and modellers all engaging in theoretical and applied research relating to the natural and social phenomena occurring on planet earth. The conference took place in the premises of the Department of Geography in Mytilene, Lesvos Island, Greece. More than 100 participants from various countries of the world attended the conference. A thematic workshop on “Seismic Hazard in the North Aegean” took place also on June 4. In the afternoon hours, documentaries and videos on

various geographic themes were projected. A guided tour to the Petrified Forest of Sigri, crossing the island of Lesbos, closed the conference on June 5.



Prof. Faludi presenting his keynote speech

On June 1, during the opening ceremony Prof. Emeritus of Philosophy and Logic, Dr. D. Nianias (National Technical University of Athens) reflected on the philosophical and political facets of the relationship between people and nature. Six invited speakers offered keynote addresses relating to the main themes of the conference. All speeches adopted a holistic outlook and placed emphasis on the integration of the biophysical and socio-economic aspects of socio-environmental phenomena.

Prof. Helen Couclelis, Department of Geography, University of California at Santa Barbara, USA	Modelling the Earth System: ... but where are the people?
Dr. Virginia H. Dale, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, USA	Insights into Environmental Aspects of Bio energy via a Systems Perspective
Prof. dr. A.K.F. (Andreas) Faludi, Professor of Spatial Policy Systems in Europe, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands	Making Sense of Europe's Territory: Spatial Planning in the EU
Prof. Ray Hudson, Wolfson Research Institute, Durham University, U.K.	Material matters and the search for resilience: Re-thinking regional and urban development strategies in the context of global environmental change
Prof. Joseph Stefanou, School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens, Greece	Our Home: Planet Earth
Prof. dr. IR A. Veldkamp, ALTERRA - Research Institute for the Green World-Landscape Centre, Wageningen University, The Netherlands	Land change modelling: the issue of cover and multiple use

The conference presentations were broadly organized into three streams: (a) *Studying the earth system*, exploring resource and environmental phenomena and issues, (b) *Modeling the earth*

system, dealing with methods and techniques for the geographic analysis of biophysical and socio-economic problems and (c) *Sense making of the earth system*, negotiating socio-economic phenomena and issues. Most papers were characterized by an integrated outlook of varying degrees and an emphasis on environmental management for sustainable development.

Papers in the *Studying the earth system* group negotiated topics in geomorphology, hydrology, coastal systems, natural hazards, environmental risks, past environments, global change, land use change, geo-conservation (the system of Geoparks), management of hydrological and coastal systems, and environmental education. The *Modelling the earth system* group of papers presented several methods, models and Geomatics tools and techniques in environmental and resource modelling (air, water, coasts and ecosystems) as well as in modelling land use and land cover change. The *Sense making of the earth system* group included a wide variety of presentations that addressed the diverse perspectives through which people make sense of the earth system. The topics discussed concerned socio-spatial development issues at all geographical levels, from the global to the local, and contexts, policy and planning issues in rural, suburban and tourism development, cultural and political geography, poverty, migration, and the society-environment interface.

The breadth and diversity of topics presented in this conference highlights once again the integrative potential and the unique role that Geography plays in the study and management of socio-spatial phenomena. This owes to the holistic outlook, comprehensive approach and interdisciplinary character of the discipline that respects the integrity of the earth system and recognizes the unity of people and their home, planet earth.

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HOME OF GEOGRAPHY UPDATE

1) Visitors to the HG

In June and July 2008 the Home received two distinguished visitors, Prof. Yehuda Gradus (Department of Geography, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel) and Prof. Ton Dietz (Department of Geography, Planning and Development Studies, University of Amsterdam, Chair of the Nederland IGU National Committee).

2) Following with CCHD & MRP

2a) From the Report of the Meeting on MRP held in Villa Celimontana, 13 May 2008.

MRP members of the steering committee present in Rome were: Mahmoud Ashour, Maria Paradiso, Antoine Bailly, Giuliano Bellezza, Annick Douguédroit, Aharon Kellerman, Ali Toumi. Guest listener and speaker was Dr Paolo Giaccaria, delegated by Sergio Conti, Italian National Committee Chair.

Past MRP activities

The Mediterranean Renaissance Program (MRP) is a special project of the IGU, initiated in 2005 by its late President, Prof. Adalberto Vallega. MRP has been active in the past 3 years in making initial networking with IGU Commissions and National Committees, organising a business meeting during the IGU conference in Brisbane, and two other ones in Rome, graciously sponsored by the Italian Geographical Society and hosted by the Home of Geography. In addition, MRP held a scientific-business meeting jointly sponsored by the IGU and the Egyptian Geographical Society (April, 2006), and having 3 components: IGU Commission on Arid Lands, MRP, and Culture and Civilisation Program for Human Development (CCHD).

MRP actively cooperated with the organizers of the IGU Tunis Congress, in both the preparation of a draft for a tutorial for young geographers on the use of GIS (delivered in September 2005), and in co-sponsoring an impressive series of seven sessions, jointly with Commissions and thematic groups. These sessions are dedicated to the blessed memory of Adalberto Vallega.

Future plans for MRP

MRP is still in a rather initial phase due to some constraints. In the meeting in Rome a clear vision for its future role and consequent future activities within the broader IGU strategic goals, has been charted hoping to strengthen geography in its networking and external involvements. MRP is committed to keep the Mediterranean accent in the IGU beyond the Tel Aviv Conference as well as looking for external support and networking for its activities.

The following initiatives were decided on:

A letter to the IGU President for official financial support from the IGU as a principle.

We will also ask for support from foundations, research centres, and institutions. To do so we have to show that IGU supports officially the program.

Contacts will be established with foundations or the EU in order to cooperate and raise funds also for conference or workshop preparation. The following options have been discussed in the meeting.

1. CERES Institute, Tunis and French Cultural Centres in Tunis and Casablanca. Contacts will be made by Ali Toumi.
2. Green Cities project, Mediterranean Portal of Peres Center. It was agreed to call for interested geographers to provide references for the portal, but financial support will be asked for, if MRP is to be listed in their list of supporters. Contacts will be made by Aharon Kellerman.
3. Gates Foundation. Contacts will be made by Antoine Bailly
4. EU INTERREG. Contacts will be made by Antoine Bailly in cooperation with Giuliano Bellezza and Home of Geography to support Festivals of Geography in Mediterranean Region.
5. Enrico Mattei Foundation in Venice (Energy, climate change, sustainable development). Contacts will be made by Maria Paradiso.

MRP recommends that a secretary be appointed at the Home of Geography to support correspondences and updating mailing lists.

2b) CCHD Meeting, held in Villa Celimontana, 20-21 June 2008

Participants to the Meeting dedicated to CCHD on 20-21 June and organized by Benno Werlen were: Ron Abler, Anne Buttimer, Giuliano Bellezza, Vladimir Kolossov, Jacques Levy, John Pritchard, Ola Soderstrom.

Since the beginning was noticed that the terms *cultures* and *civilisations* were leading to many misunderstandings, so the decision was taken to modify the name of the initiative as *Internationjal UN-Year on Global Understanding*, with particular focus on people's everyday practices, the basis of the globalisation of local contexts and the globalising practices of so-called global players. Then it has been decided that to obtain the declaration of an official UN International Year, it is realistic to allow a time of 6-8 years.

As topical core aspects of the lived experienced of globalisation in its many guises (cultural, social, economic, natural) and accordingly transformations of the natural basis of human life, many fields as the focus of activities were taken in exam.

In conclusion it was decided to prepare drafts of dossiers to begin research activities, in the light of some possible (formal) key dimensions, including formulation of the goal, possible programmatic research orientations as anchoring or starting points for research projects and give an outline of the (medial/didactical) outreach.

Each dossier should start with a short outline of topical field in perspective of globalised geographies and suggestions of approaches of global understanding. The following drafts are to be presented in dedicated Sessions in Tunis:

Unity – Diversity, Jacques Levy and Giuliano Bellezza

Cosmopolitics – Cosmology, Vladimir Kolossov

Locality – Globality, John Pickles

Mobility – Identity, Ola Soderstrom

Cultural – Natural, Anne Buttimer

Mapping – Acting, Ron Abler, Vladimir Kolossov, John Pickles

Subject to Tunis discussion. more Dossiers could be added (i.e. Gendred Spaces, Food and Health, etcetera).

3) Financial Situation

It has been said in the previous point that the Home is engaged in several projects and, together with different partners, is asking for funds. At the moment the IGU also has financial problems, therefore for the past half year our mere survival relayed on the help of the Società Geografica Italiana. Apart from the usual in kind facilities, as the availability of meeting rooms and of one of the best geographical library of Europe, it consisted in some banal but indispensable money.

Home of Geography Publications Series: Sales

An exceptional sale will take place during the Tunis Congress: until the stock will be finished the prices will be as follows: Volume V will be sold at 7 euros, all the others (see the list below) will be sold at 12 euros.

In any case, a reduction will be applied to all the orders placed in Tunis, but we will obliged to apply the postage costs.

After the Congress the usual sale will restart, and 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)

Vol VI – *Gendered Cities: Identities, Activities, Networks – A Life-course Approach* (2004) G. Cortesi, F. Cristaldi & J. Droogleever Fortuijn ; (EU: €20 / non-EU: €26)

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 contact Giuliano Bellezza at: g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org. Payment can be made directly by bank transfer, while to pay by Visa or Mastercard you should ask the IGU Secretary General and Treasurer.