

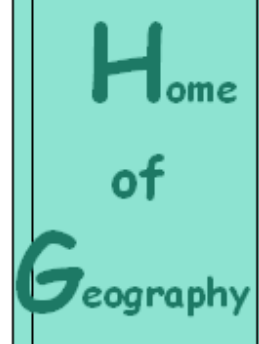


IGU E-Newsletter
*From the Rome Home of
Geography*

Quarterly

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Editor: *Giuliano Bellezza*

This Newsletter is circulated to about 1500 individuals and bodies. Announcements, information, calls for participation in scientific events, programmes and projects are welcome. Please send them to g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org or giuliano.bellezza@uniroma1.it



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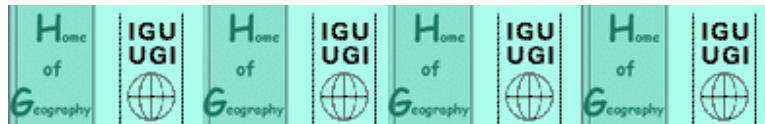
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1) PRESIDENT ABLER's REMARKS

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from Wisconsin, where the northern hemisphere winter has finally started giving way to our spring season. Our winter this year was comparatively mild, but it has seemed exceptionally long. As soon as the trees stop pollinating, I'll stop complaining and start enjoying the annual renewal of plant life (and the opening of fishing in Lake Michigan).

The IGU Executive Committee held a meeting in Washington, DC on 19-20 April. A number of us planned to be in Washington for the 12-18 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers so it seemed sensible to schedule an executive committee meeting in conjunction with the AAG gathering. All members of the committee attended the meeting except Vice President Markku Löytönen who was unable to travel to Washington because of the closure of European airports following the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland. We were sad that Markku could not participate, but grateful that Secretary General and Treasurer Woo-ik Yu was able to take time from his responsibilities as South Korea's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to China-Beijing to participate in the meeting. The minutes of the meeting will be included in the next issue of the *IGU E-Newsletter*.

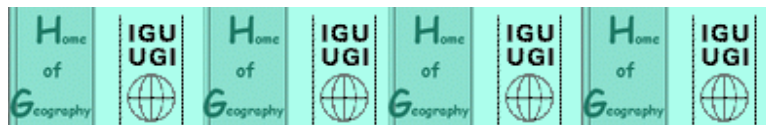
As many of you know, Woo-ik Yu's term of office as Secretary General and Treasurer expires at the conclusion of the IGU Regional Conference in Tel Aviv, that is on 16 July 2010. Owing to his duties as Ambassador, Woo-ik chose not to stand for re-election. The December 2009 Call for

Nominations yielded a single nomination, that of Vice President Michael Meadows of South Africa. I'm looking forward to working with him in his capacity as Secretary General for the last two years of my term as IGU President. I'm confident the IGU will benefit greatly from his dedication and energy in the longer term; they have been abundantly evident in his work in preparation for the 2002 IGU Regional Conference in Durban, South Africa and during his two years on the current IGU Executive Committee.

The Tel Aviv IGU Regional Conference is now but ten weeks off. If you have not yet registered from the meeting, do so soon; the early registration period ends on 17 May 2010 and registration fees will increase thereafter. Vice President Aharon Kellerman provided the IGU Executive Committee at the Washington meeting with a comprehensive report on preparations for the conference. More than 550 colleagues from 54 countries were registered for Conference as of mid-April. Arrangements for a variety of accommodations, a superb suite of field excursions, exciting plenary sessions, and convivial social events are all well in hand. Check the conference web site (<http://www.igu2010.com/siteFiles/3/44/51417.asp>) for details. I'm confident that delegates to the Tel Aviv Regional Conference will enjoy a superbly organized and professionally executed meeting, and I hope to see you there.

Best regards,

Ron Abler, President
rabler@aag.org



2) IGU SAINT DIE' EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES 30 September-1 October 2009

Participating: Ronald F. Abler, President; Vladimir Kolossov, First Vice President; Woo-ik Yu, Secretary General and Treasurer; Vice Presidents Irasema Alcántara-Ayala, Giuliano Bellezza, Ruth Fincher, Aharon Kellerman, Michael Meadows, and Dietrich Soyez; IGU Executive Assistant Sarah Kim.

Excused: Vice Presidents Markku Löytönen and Dahe Qin.

Visitors: Alexandre Moine, Scientific Director, Festival International de Géographie (FIG); Jean-Robert Pitte, President, ADFIG/Association pour le Développement of FIG and President, Société de Géographie; and Christian Pierret, FIG President and Founder.

Alexandre Moine, Scientific Director of the *Festival International de Géographie* (FIG) visited the meeting to welcome IGU Executive Committee members to Saint-Dié-des-Vosges and to the FIG. Moine presented a brief history of the festival from 1990 to the present, highlighting salient events that have occurred since 1990, this year being the 20th anniversary of the festival. Moine also outlined the ways the festival's scientific program is organized and structured, and noted that the festival has had profound and positive effects on academic geography in France. FIG has raised the visibility of academic geography by publicizing its accomplishments and interacting in innovative ways with the general public, and academic geographers have become much more open to the media in France as a result of the publicity they have received at FIG during the last 20 years.

Welcome and Meeting Logistics

Abler welcomed the members of the executive committee to Saint-Dié. He reviewed the schedule for the meeting and events following and suggested ways the executive committee members should participate in the festival.

Adoption of the Agenda

The committee approved unanimously the agenda Abler had submitted to the committee in advance of the meeting with two additions:

- the appointment of Charles Withers to the Commission on the History of Geography steering committee; and
- IGU contacts with the International Association of Geomorphologists.

Minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes of its May 2009 meeting in Tel Aviv. The minutes were approved by the committee via e-mail in July 2009. Two incomplete action items were noted:

- preparation of a set of guidelines for national committees regarding the importance and role of international collaboration in academic careers; and
- formulation of a protocol for session chairpersons at IGU congresses and conferences to guide them in keeping their sessions on schedule and in responding to unexpected events, especially no-show speakers.

Abler announced that the minutes would stand as submitted if he received no corrections or amendments by 15 October 2009

Operations

IGU Country Membership. Secretary General and Treasurer Woo-ik Yu reviewed the current roster of country members. Attempts to re-establish contact with some countries that were formerly active have often been fruitless owing to outdated e-mail addresses, deaths, and retirements. The secretariat will try making contact through the national committees of adjacent countries where possible. Noting that a few commissions were using their 2004-2008 numbers, Meadows asked that the secretariat remind commission chairs to use the 2008-2012 numbers assigned to commissions at the Tunis General Assembly. In response to a query about dues invoices, Yu reported that dues invoices had been sent in January and August and would be sent again at the end of October to those who had not paid their 2009 dues and any earlier arrears. Dues are invoiced separately for each year.

A discussion of differences in voluntary dues levels among similar countries led to a decision that a committee consisting of Abler, Fincher, and Yu will explore the establishment of fixed dues using a schedule used by the International Council for Science (ICSU) as a basis for a similar IGU dues scheme. The committee will prepare a proposal for consideration by the executive committee at its next meeting.

IGU Financial Report and Projection. Secretary General and Treasurer Yu reviewed 2009 IGU income and expenditures through August. Expenses are consistent with the projection for the year approved by the executive committee at its October 2008 meeting of income of \$303,000 and expenses of \$222,000. Projected financials for 2101 are income of \$282,000 and expenses of \$182,000.

Several members of the committee asked for explanations of specific secretariat expenditures which Yu provided. The secretariat continues to benefit from generous financial support from Seoul National University and from Professor Yu's personal funds.

IGU Cultures and Civilizations for Human Development/United Nations International Year Initiative (UNIY). The committee undertook a lengthy discussion of the progress of the initiative begun by Adalberto Vallega and subsequently taken over by Benno Werlen, Chairperson of the IGU Commission on the Cultural Approach in Geography (C08.07). After a thorough review of the challenges and opportunities presented by the program, the executive committee:

- affirmed its earlier designation of Kolossov as the primary point of contact between the IGU Executive Committee and the UNIY project;
- reiterated the need to form a project steering committee representative of all the world's major culture regions;
- tasked its own members to provide names of candidates for the project steering committee from their respective regions of responsibility for Werlen's consideration;
- suggested that Werlen should designate steering committee liaisons with the Mediterranean Renaissance Project and the Home of Geography; and
- agreed to allocate US\$20,000 in IGU support for the project for 2009-2010.

Kolossov will inform Werlen of the results of the executive committee's deliberation and Abler will encourage commission and national committee chairpersons to collaborate with the UNIY project and to suggest individuals who could participate in the project or serve on its steering committee. The discussion concluded on a note of thanks to Werlen for his leadership of the project and congratulations on his success in obtaining financial support for the project secretariat at Jena from local sources.

Commission and Task Force Reports. The executive committee reviewed and approved the draft of a letter that will be used to solicit annual reports from IGU Commissions and Task Forces. The reports will be due in time for the secretariat to assemble them for review at the committee's April 18-20 2010 meeting. Fincher suggested that the section of the IGU Handbook (0000) outlining the responsibilities of commission chairs be included with the request for 2009 annual reports. To facilitate the compilation of *IGU Bulletins*, commission and task force chairpersons should also be given a page limit and a style sheet.

In further discussion of commission and task force research, Alcantara-Ayala proposed that the committee develop strategies for encouraging publication of such findings in prestige journals. Kolossov suggested selecting high quality congress and conference presentations for inclusion in a "Best of the IGU" publication series, and perhaps a publication series specifically for young scholars. Abler suggested that prizes regularly awarded by commissions and task forces would be another way to encourage participation in IGU meetings and subsequent

publication. The committee agreed to continue the consideration of ways to encourage publication under IGU auspices at its next meeting.

IGU Bulletin Progress. Abler and Sarah Kim have been coordinating the production of the back volumes of the *IGU Bulletin*. They will all (2003-2008) be printed in Seoul and mailed together from there in order to reduce the cost of both printing and mailing, which, combined, has run about \$15,000 per volume in the USA in the past.

Mediterranean Renaissance Program (MRP) and Leadership. The MRP has a book in publication on “Contemporary Mediterranean Geography” based on the conference it recently held in Rome. The program will hold future conferences in Tunis in collaboration with the *Centre d’Etudes et de Recherche Sociale* and in Tel Aviv with the IGU Commission on the Geography of the Information Society (C08.0000).

In compliance with the guidelines adopted when the MRP was established, the executive committee approved the appointment of Professor Maria Paradiso as Director of the MRP and Professor Ali Toumi as Program Secretary for terms of four years effective on 1 October 2009. The committee expressed its appreciation for the leadership of Mahmoud Ashour, outgoing MRP Director and for Paradiso’s effective service as Program Secretary.

Geographical Journals Evaluation Project. The committee reviewed the written report sent by Ton Dietz, leader of the journals initiative. Dietz and his assistant have compiled a list of more than 1,000 geographical journals as a partial basis for the project. Bellezza reported that he has provided the list of journals Dietz requested, and Qin’s was received by mail prior to the meeting. Meadows proposed that the information gathered to date be placed on the IGU web site as soon as possible, preferably by the end of 2009. Mr. Seung-pyo Hong in the IGU Secretariat will assist Dietz in putting the information on the IGU web site after it is transferred to Seoul. A list of countries that have not yet responded to Dietz’s request for their journal lists should be obtained so that the vice presidents responsible for those countries can encourage their cooperation with the journals project. The committee concluded its discussion of the project by expressing thanks for Dietz for his initiative in proposing the project and his effectiveness in leading it.

Endowment/Corporate Membership Program. Kellerman presented a summary of Ton Dietz’s original and modified proposals for a campaign to recruit corporate sponsors for the IGU and reported on a recent opportunity to make contact with an executive at Google. Kellerman and Meadows will pursue that possibility. The global economic downturn suggests that the original plan for a vigorous campaign for corporate members might be scaled back until economic conditions improve. Kellerman will try to arrange a meeting with Dietz in Europe early in 2010 or invite Dietz to the executive committee’s April 2010 meeting in Washington, DC if Dietz plans to attend the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers there.

Home of Geography. The committee reviewed the letter of 8 June 2009 from Professor Franco Salvatore, President of the *Società Geografica Italiana (SGI)*, which hosts the IGU’s office in Rome. The SGI has reclaimed the office space that formerly housed the Home of Geography but it remains willing to house the IGU archives and to IGU commission and task force meetings on a space-available basis, for which the committee expressed its thanks. Salvatore also reported the balance of IGU funds remaining at SGI as a result of the SGI’s roles as the fiscal agent for the Home of Geography. The executive committee approved Bellezza’s request that he be allowed to use the residual funds for the expenses of producing the *IGU E-Newsletter*.

IGU Web Site. The IGU web site will shortly be transferred to the IGU Secretariat in Seoul. Abler has written letters of thanks to the appropriate individuals at the University Helsinki who made it possible for the IGU’s site to be hosted there from its inception in 1996. Several members

of the committee suggested that a redesign of the web site be undertaken in the near future and Yu agreed to start that process.

IGU Wikipedia Entry. A person or persons unknown has placed a partial entry for the IGU on Wikipedia. The article appears to be based primarily on the current IGU brochure but is incomplete. Abler asked the members of the committee to review the posting and suggested that it be completed and updated as part of the updating of the IGU web site.

Executive Committee Meeting Schedule. Noting that the executive committee will meet in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers in mid-April 2010, Abler questioned the necessity of the meeting schedule just prior to the Tel Aviv Regional Conference, less than 90 days later. After reconsidering the matter, the committee agreed that a half day meeting on the morning of Monday, 12 July 2010 would suffice. Dahe Qin suggested to Abler that the committee might meet in Beijing in 2010 or 2011. The committee agreed to try to work a Beijing meeting into its schedule.

Cooperation and Outreach

International Council for Science (ICSU). Alcantara-Ayala reported on her appointment to ICSU's key Committee on Scientific Planning and Review (CSPR). The committee seeks the help of its members unions such as IGU in publicizing ICSU's programs and projects. Abler provided a brief overview of these programs and projects as described in the issue of the ICSU newsletter included in the meeting briefing book. Meadows inquired whether the IGU has any formal relationships with the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) either independently or via ICSU. Abler responded that there was some contact early in his time with IGU but that there were not active contacts now. Alcantara-Ayala and Meadows asked Abler explore the possibility of appropriate linkages with IAG officers.

ICSU GeoUnions. Abler will serve as the informal secretary of the ICSU GeoUnions cluster through 2010 and will convene the next GeoUnions caucus prior to the ICSU Unions meeting in April 2010. He reviewed the role and goals of the cluster within ICSU and provided a roster of the group's officers for the information of the committee. The cluster consists, in addition to the IGU, of:

- the International Astronomical Union (IAU);
 - the International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA);
 - the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS);
 - the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG);
 - the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS);
 - the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS); and
 - the International Union of Radio Sciences (URSI, from its name in French).
- The IGU is also active in the social sciences cluster within ICSU.
- **International Social Science Council (ISSC).** Abler reviewed the high points of the notes from the ISSC General Assembly held in November 2008 and the ISSC World Social Science Forum (WSSF) that met in May 2009. The general assembly focused on opportunities for social scientists in new global programs (particularly those focused on global change), the planned 2010 World Social Sciences Report (WSSR), capacity building in and or the social sciences, international research and exchanges, and related matters. Abler attended the WSSF in Oslo. Largely through the effectiveness, experience, and insights of ISSC President and Forum organizer Gudmund Hernes, the forum broke

new ground in exploring the ways social scientists can contribute to policy formulation at domestic and international scales.

- ***Festival International de Géographie (FIG)***. Abler reviewed with the members of the committee the Memorandum of Understanding between FIG and IGU that was signed by both parties on 1 October 2005. Owing to the tragic demise of IGU President Adalberto Vallega shortly thereafter and the period of uncertainty following his death, the provisions of the agreement fell somewhat into abeyance from 2006-2008. The presence of the IGU Executive Committee at this, the 20th iteration of the Festival, offers an excellent opportunity to re-animate the provisions of the memorandum for the mutual benefit of FIG and the IGU. The ongoing discussions with FIG officials during this meeting of the executive committee should provide a productive framework for more intensive participation of IGU Executive Committee members in the 2010 Festival.
- **International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE)**. The IYPE project is in its final stages after several years of highly successful programs of research and education in the earth sciences. Frauke Kraas's leadership of the Megacities component of IYPE has drawn widespread praise from throughout the IYPE community. The capstone event of IYPE will be held in Lisbon in November 2009, where the IYPE Board of Directors will explore ways to continue and capitalize on the IYPE's accomplishments. Abler will represent IGU at the meeting.
- **International Cartographic Association (ICA)**. Former IGU President Bruno Messerli represented the IGU at the 50th Anniversary celebration of the ICA's founding in Bern in June. Inasmuch as Bruno knew ICA founder Eduard Imhof well and his wife Beatrice was a student translator at the launch meeting of the ICA in 1959. Bruno reports that ICA is eager for closer collaboration with IGU. Abler will explore collaboration with the ICA Executive Committee when he visits the venue where the ICA will be holding its congress in November, which is the same location for the 2011 IGU Regional Conference in Santiago de Chile.
- **EUGEO (European Geography)**. EUGEO was initiated in 1994 to foster greater cooperation among independent European geographical associations, institutes, and societies. After reviewing information gleaned from the EUGEO web site (<http://www.eugeo.org/AboutEUGEO.htm>) the executive committee agreed to contact EUGEO officers about possibilities of collaboration between EUGEO and IGU.

International Geographical Congresses and IGU Regional Conferences

Tunis, 2008 International Geographical Congress. The committee reviewed the financial report from the 2008 congress. Yu noted that the contribution to the IGU Promotion and Solidarity Fund due from the Tunis congress local organizing committee had not yet been received at the secretariat.

Tel Aviv 2010 Regional Conference. Kellerman reported on the status of plans for the 12-16 July Regional Conference. The Tel Aviv Local Organizing Committee (LOC) met last week and everything seems to be on track for the meeting. The LOC has made contact with all IGU Commissions and Task Forces except Arid Lands and Mountain Response to Global Change which have not responded to LOC queries regarding their plans. The conference web site (<http://www.igu2010.com/>) is active in both English and French and the Conference Second Circular is now available there.

Santiago, Chile 2011 Regional Conference. Abler will visit Santiago to inspect the conference venue and meet with local organizers at the time of the International Cartographic Congress in November 2009. The IGU Conference is tentatively schedule for November 2011. In reviewing academic calendars for both the Northern and Southern hemispheres, it became clear that a meeting during the first two weeks of November is greatly preferable to one scheduled during the last two weeks of that month.

Köln, Germany 2012 International Geographical Congress. Soyez reported that planning for the congress is on schedule. A workshop was held in June to identify topical emphases for the congress and a consultative committee is working on congress frameworks and structure. The congress web site (<http://www.igc2012.org/>) is up in German; French and English versions will be added shortly. The organizers are planning a large number of cross border field excursions that will be closely linked to congress themes. The exact dates for the congress remain to be determined owing to the necessity of scheduling the event around examinations that will be held in August 2012 at the University of Cologne, where the congress will be held. [Subsequent to the meeting, the dates for the Köln Congress were fixed as **26-30 August 2012.**]

Kyoto, Japan 2013 Regional Conference 2013. The committee agreed that a report on planning should be requested for review at the committee's April 2010 meeting.

Krakow, Poland 2014 Regional Conference. The executive committee requested no update on the meeting.

Moscow, Russia 2015 Regional Conference 2015. Kolossov reported that the conference will be held on the premises of Moscow State University, most likely in the last week of July 2015.

Beijing, China 2016 International Geographical Congress. In the absence of IGU Vice President Dahe Qin no additional information was available regarding the meeting other than that it is tentatively scheduled for the month of August. Abler will visit Beijing in October 2009 and will check on the state of planning for the event at that time.

Improving Future IGU Congresses and Conferences. After reviewing the minutes devoted to the topic at its May 2009 meeting, the committee revisited the subject of improving the contents and structure of IGU Congresses and Conferences in order to attract more delegates. At one level, financial aspects of congresses and conferences were mentioned often. Abler suggested that the IGU's current meeting model in which local organizing committees take all risks is not sustainable for the long term, especially in light of a close reading of the final reports submitted by the organizers of the Durban, Glasgow, Brisbane, and Tunis meetings; a joint venture model in which IGU and local organizers share risks and any financial surplus, and, of course, are jointly responsible for any financial losses, is the most probable structure for future meetings.

In terms of specific strategies, in addition to those discussed previously, committee members suggested:

- alternative presentation formats to complement traditional lecture-type papers and panel discussions;
- techniques for dealing with speakers who talk beyond their allocated times;
- policies for dealing with speakers who do not provide advance notice of their inability to attend IGU meetings, including listing their names in final meeting reports and alerting the organizers of subsequent meetings of their boorish behavior; and
- conducting evaluations of sessions and speakers at IGU Congresses and Conferences.

Implementing these and other suggestions will be explored with the organizers of future IGU meetings. The committee may also ask the chairpersons of commissions and national committees for their ideas on upgrading IGU meetings. In the meantime, a set of guidelines for the

chairpersons of sessions held at IGU meetings will be prepared and offered to local organizing committees.

IGU Congress and Conferences Memorandum of Agreement. The committee reviewed a draft Memorandum of Agreement for IGU Congresses and Regional Conferences prepared by Abler that reflects current and recent IGU practice. Formal agreements between the IGU Executive Committee and Local Organizing Committees would help reduce tensions between the respective parties. Occasional misunderstandings and disagreements usually result from the long lag time (as much as eight years or even more) between the selection of a meeting location and the actual event. It is not unusual for those who sought and accepted the responsibility for a conference or congress to have died, moved, or retired by the time the event occurs, leaving the responsibility for the meeting in the hands of individuals who were not involved in tendering the invitation for the meeting, and who may be indifferent, or in the worst case even opposed to soliciting the meeting. Such difficulties would not be totally resolved by written memoranda of agreement between the IGU and local organizers, but the basis for misunderstanding and disagreements would be clarified by such documents. Historically, the provisions governing IGU meetings have been contained in long series of letters and e-mail messages among multiple individuals on both sides that may not be available to all interested parties.

Executive Committee members offered a variety of suggestions regarding specific provisions of the draft proposal. By far the most contentious disagreement that emerged in the committee's discussion is the traditional expectation that local organizing committees are responsible for providing members of the IGU Executive Committee with lodging for an executive committee meeting well in advance of each meeting and for another just prior to each meeting, as well as with complimentary registration and lodging at the conference or congress itself. The organizers of the Durban, Glasgow, and Brisbane IGU meeting have identified those costs as a serious drain on their meeting budgets and a source of resentment among the members of their organizing committees, many of whom pay their lodging and registration fees personally out of principle or necessity. The committee debated the pros and cons of current policy at considerable length and often with passion, but came to no consensus on whether the policy should be continued or altered. The committee will return to the subject at its next meeting in April 2010.

Organization

2010 Secretary General and Treasurer Election. Abler outlined the procedure and timetable to be followed for the election next year of a successor to Secretary General and Treasurer Woo-ik Yu, who has chosen not to stand for re-election. The procedure will be comparable to that used to elect a successor to Vice President Nikita Glazovsky in 2006. The ballots will be received and counted by a party independent of IGU and the results of the election will be known in late April 2010. The new Secretary General and Treasurer will take office at the conclusion of the Tel Aviv Regional Office for an initial term of four years ending at the conclusion of the Krakow Regional Conference in 2014. Only the chairpersons of IGU National Committees are eligible to vote in the election.

Commission on Transportation. The committee reviewed and approved a proposal for the establishment of an IGU Commission on Transportation submitted by Yves Boquet (France). Richard Knowles (United Kingdom) will chair the commission, which will begin operations immediately.

Commission on the Informal Economic Sector. Several individuals contacted Soyez more than a year ago regarding a commission focused on informal economies. They have not responded to

an invitation to submit a formal proposal. No further consideration is possible in the absence of a proposal.

Commission on the Geopolitics of Sub-Alternate Knowledge. Alcantara-Ayala and Abler have had intermittent contact with the group proposing the commission but have not yet received a revised proposal.

Commission on Toponymy. The possibility of forming an IGU Commission focused on place names and naming has been discussed informally for several years, with David Munro (Scotland) and Sungjae Choo (South Korea) designated as prime movers. The International Cartographic Association may be interested in a joint ICA-IGU Commission on Toponymy. Abler will assess ICA interest in a joint commission when he visits the ICA executive committee in November.

Honors and Awards

IGU Planet and Humanity Medal. A highly distinguished individual has agreed to accept the IGU Planet and Humanity Medal at the Tel Aviv Regional Conference. The individual's name will be announced in a press release a week or ten days prior to the conference.

IGU *Laureats d'honneur*. The IGU customarily awards its *Laureats d'honneur* at IGU Congresses. Accordingly, national committees will not be solicited for nominations until October 2011.

Proposed IGU Honors Committee. Discussion of a draft proposal to establish an IGU Honors Committee to receive and evaluation nominations for IGU awards was postponed until the committee's next meeting.

Adjourn

The committee having concluded its deliberations, President Abler adjourned the meeting at 16h30 on 1 October 2009 by expressing the deep appreciation of the IGU Executive Committee to Mr. Christian Pierret and the Festival staff for their generous hospitality during the meeting and the Festival.



3) NEXT IGU OFFICIAL INITIATIVES

3.1) 2010 TEL AVIV REGIONAL CONFERENCE

No wonder that in "The City who never sleeps" the organisation of the IGU Conference to be held in next July is already completed. All the relative information can be easily find in the official website: <http://www.igu2010.com>.

3.2) 2011 SANTIAGO DE CHILE CONFERENCE

In the recent AAG Annual Conference in Washington, the Organisers of the 2011 IGU Regional Conference presented the state of the organisation, the first Circular and the website <http://www.ugi2011.cl>



4) REPORTS FROM CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

4.1) MITIGATION OF THE WATER RELATED DISASTERS IN A TROPICAL RIVER BASIN

Okinawa, 25 October 2009, Ryukyu University, organised by the IGU Commission Hazards and Risks and the Japan Geographical Society

The symposium was held in an afternoon of October 25, 2009. The event was organized by Professor Shigeko Haruyama of Mie University, Chair of the IGU Commission C08.18, and was held at Ryukyu University, Okinawa, Japan.

There were 6 papers presented at the meeting. Most of them were related to the mitigation of water-related hazards in a tropical river basin.

Professor Shigeko Haruyama, chairperson of the symposium, presented an introduction to the flood problems in monsoon Asia. Tide gauge records show that tide levels have risen over the past 30 years, thereby placing coastal areas at high risk to flooding over the next century. Reclamation of land, clearing of mangroves and adoption of polder-type flood defense present an increasing risk

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of flooding to the mega river delta. Mitigation of these water-related hazards could be achieved through sustainable land use practices.

Dr. Charlchai Tanavud from Prince of Songkla University, Thailand, has presented his views on disaster management in Hat Yai City, southern Thailand. The city has been extremely vulnerable to flooding during monsoon season. In order to support long term stability and sustainable development, the city's capacity to manage flood hazard should be strengthened through the adoption of non-structure measures to supplement existing structural efforts.

Dr. Rabindra Osti from the Public Work Research Institute has described that a flood hazard map is necessary for long-term flood disaster risk management in South East Asian countries. The International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management has been enhancing flood management capacity through the training in and promotion of flood hazard mapping in countries like Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Philippines.

Dr. Mamoru Koarai from the Geography Survey Institute has discussed methods to evaluate hazard risks in East Asia and South-East Asia using GIS and remote sensing. A Digital Elevation Model (DEM) has been used to delineate hazardous areas and classify landforms by GIS. Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) is also useful in identifying inundation areas caused by floods.

Dr. Teruko Sato from Tokiwa University has presented the Japanese experiences in flood control. The adoption of large-scale flood control structures may produce negative consequences to people and property. In order to achieve a sustainable reduction in flood disaster risks, social resilience of local community should be enhanced and all stakeholders should be involved in the preparation of flood risk management.

Dr. Kazuko Uchida commented the mitigation of the tropical river:

In tropical river basins, it is necessary to plan a sustainable mitigation system or comprehensive and integrated flood risk management. Study results and Japanese experience will be used to support and develop such a system

(Reported by Charlchai Tanavud)

4.2) AAG 2010 CONFERENCE REPORT TO IGU NEWSLETTER

The Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting for 2010 was held April 14-18 at the Marriott Wardman Park and Omni Shoreham Hotels in Washington, DC, USA. Breaking all previous records, more than 8,000 geographers, GIS specialists, and environmental scientists registered from around the world to share the very latest in research, policy, and applications in geography, sustainability, and GIScience. Of those attending, thousands, representing approximately 26% came from countries other than the USA, which continues a steady trend toward increased international participation at AAG Meetings. For comparison, the 2006 meeting in Chicago registered approximately 20% international attendees, while the 1982 meeting in San Antonio had only 59 international attendees, or 2.8% of the registered



A giant globe, 22 feet in diameter and almost two stories tall was displayed by Bridgewater State College and greeted visitors to one entrance of the Exhibit Hall. The "EarthView" is an inflatable model of the earth, used by the department in its outreach efforts to promote global learning at middle and secondary schools.

total. This year, 2010, attendees came from **81 different countries, including 58 nations** of developing or emerging economies. The largest participation of scholars from outside of the US

came from Canada, the UK and Germany, with strong representation among geographers in developing regions coming from China, Korea, and Brazil. Many others attended from countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ghana, Hong Kong, Iran, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mexico, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Romania, Spain, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, and many more to share in the stimulating intellectual and social events throughout the week-long conference.

AAG celebrated the global character of the association and the meeting by holding an **International Greeting and Networking Reception** in the Exhibit Hall as part of the Thursday evening conference events. The reception provided an opportunity for attendees to mingle with more than 90 booths of exhibitors, including the ***International Geographical Union***, as well as to meet with other attendees from around the world while enjoying refreshments. IGU President Ronald Abler and Director of the Home of Geography, Giuliano Bellezza were both in attendance. The AAG showcased its many international activities, including the AAG *Developing Regions Membership Program* which engages eligible geographers and other colleagues from lower income countries of the world with full membership benefits at deeply discounted rates. countries of the world with full membership benefits at deeply discounted rates.



World-renowned primatologist, anthropologist, environmentalist, and humanitarian **Dr. Jane Goodall**, Ph.D., DBE presented the keynote lecture to thousands of attendees on Friday evening. She also received the inaugural AAG Atlas Award, celebrating outstanding accomplishments that advance world understanding in exceptional ways. Her address, entitled *Gombe and Beyond: The Next 50 Years*, reflected - both personally and professionally - on the meaning of the past five decades, the extraordinary changes the world has seen since 1960, and the impact these changes have had on people, animals and the environment we all share.

AAG Executive Director Douglas Richardson congratulates Dr. Jane Goodall.

The AAG Annual Meeting also featured several important research tracks and special events, many with strong international dimensions. The themed session tracks included Climate Change, with over 50 sessions running on two continuous tracks over the course of the conference, including the Opening Presidential Plenary chaired by AAG President **Carol P. Harden**; A track on Geography & Human Rights, featuring a “Human Rights 101” workshop in which participants gained an understanding of key human rights concepts in international and geographical perspective ; and other research tracks such as Enhancing Diversity in Higher Education, Place Names and Gazetteers; and Geography & Mental Health tracks. Recipient of a Nobel Prize in 2008 for groundbreaking work in economic geography and international trade, **Paul Krugman**, Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, gave a Plenary Address and received recognition as the AAG’s 2009 Honorary Geographer. AAG Past President **Victoria Lawson**, University of Washington gave a lunch plenary on Progress in Human Geography entitled *Trade, Globalization and the Question of Development*. A set of panel sessions featured continuing work by the AAG with the U.S. Department of State’s *Global Dialogues on Emerging Science and Technology* initiative, which has promoted the use of **Geospatial Science for Sustainable Development in Africa** through

organizational capacity building and the strengthening of spatial data infrastructure. A special public briefing was held to announce the **Eye on Earth Summit**, a multi-partner initiative that includes the AAG, which will be convened Abu Dhabi, UAE this coming November. The Summit will bring together high-level policy-makers, decision-makers and technical specialists from the international community, as well as governmental and non-governmental sectors with the aim of accelerating global cooperation on key environmental challenges. A special event to promote international collaboration was also held at a meeting of the **Korean-American Group** on Saturday during the conference.

A rare and beautiful exhibit of more than fifty reproductions of 16th and 17th century maps and manuscripts by influential Ottoman Turkish cartographers, entitled *From Piri Reis to Katip Çelebi: The Ottoman Worldview* were displayed at the AAG Annual Meeting. A reception and ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the exhibit was sponsored by senior Turkish governmental and academic officials. Words of welcome were given by [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#), Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey (*far right*), **Bekir Karliga**, Head of the Civilization Studies Center at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul (*middle*), and AAG Executive Director **Douglas Richardson** (*far left*). ►



The AAG Presidential Award is given with the purpose of recognizing individuals for their long-term, major contributions to geography, and this year, Past President **John Agnew** (*right*) conferred the 2010 award to **Peter Meusburger** (*left*) during the AAG Past President's Address held on Thursday evening. ►

Professor at the University of Heidelberg, Meusburger has established a strong set of ties between English- and German-medium geography, which he has fostered in part through the annual Hettner Lectures, cross-national personal networks among American, British and German geographers, and institutional linkages that are benefitting the discipline as a whole.



The AAG also continued its series on **Geography in the Americas**, with this fifth annual theme focused on a multilingual workshop to support *Publishing Across National, Institutional, and Linguistic Borders*.

A group of officials and national representatives of various specialized organizations of the **Organization of American States** also gathered during the conference to broaden understanding of various institutional initiatives, to consider priorities affecting the hemisphere, and to strengthen collaboration among the respective interests of the specialized organizations of the OAS, hosted by the United States National Section of the PanAmerican Institute for Geography and History (USNS-PAIGH) Geography Commission and the AAG. Among the attendees were representatives of the Geography, Cartography, and History commissions of PAIGH as well as special guests from sister specialized organizations of OAS, namely, the InterAmerican Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the PanAmerican Health Organisation (PAHO), and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM).



▲ (Back to Front, L-R): James Biles, Roger Sayre, Paul Cooper, Patricia Solís, Wanda K. Jones, CIM-OAS, Gianni Paz, Sylvia Wilson, Ayesha London, IICA- OAS; Régilo de Souza, PAHO-OAS/WHO; Jean Parcher, Mark DeMulder, PAIGH, Carmelle Terborgh, Photo credit: David Salisbury.

The above summary represents only a few of the many exciting sessions and international activities that took place at the AAG Annual Meeting. Numerous other paper, poster, and panel sessions and presentations highlighted international geographic work that were organized by AAG members and AAG Specialty and Affinity Groups. A digital archive of abstracts from the conference program may be accessed online via the AAG's website.

The AAG Annual Meeting concluded simultaneously with an untimely natural event that stranded some of our attendees from abroad: the volcanic eruption in Iceland and subsequent air traffic complications affected travelers needing to cross the Atlantic. In response, the AAG facilitated the exchange of information regarding local accommodations, assistance, and other services needed by overseas colleagues, unable to return home immediately, through onsite bulletin boards and the AAG facebook fan-page: www.facebook.com/geographers. AAG thanks the staff and many volunteers in the DC area who opened their homes and provided help to these fellow geographers.

The AAG welcomes international geographers and colleagues across the globe to attend its conferences and events. We invite you to consider attending the next **AAG Annual Meeting, to be held in Seattle, Washington from April 12-16, 2010**. For more information, please visit www.aag.org.

Submitted by Dr. Patricia Solís, AAG Director of Outreach and Strategic Initiatives, psolis@aag.org; with Oscar Larson, AAG Conference Director and David Coronado, AAG Communications Director; Photos by Dr. Jim Ketchum, AAG Newsletter Editor.



5) FORTHCOMING EVENTS

(more information in the Home of Geography website, Events 2009)

- 5.1) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LAND RECLAMATION, BOLOGNA (ITALY, MAY 14)
- 5.2) CONFERENCE ON DATA HANDLING, HONG KONG, 26-28 MAY
- 5.3) MOUNTAIN RESPONSE TO GLOBAL CHANGE, BONN, 2-4 JUNE 2010
- 5.4) GEOMED SYMPOSIUM, ANTALYA (TURKEY), 2-5 JUNE 2010
- 5.5) 8TH INTERNATIONAL KARSTSOLOGICAL KARST SCHOOL, POSTOJNA (SLOVENIA), 14-19 JUNE
- 5.6) GEOGRAPHIES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: ASIA-PACIFIC PERSPECTIVES, CHRISTCHURCH, 5-8 JULY, 5-8TH
- 5.7) COMMISSION ON GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION, SYMPOSIUM ISTAMBUL, 8-10 JULY
- 5.8) IGU CONFERENCE, TEL AVIV, 12-16 JULY 2010
- 5.9) EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION CONFERENCE, WIEN, 14-16 JULY



6) HOME OF GEOGRAPHY UPDATE

The activity of the Home of Geography is mainly dedicated to the Newsletter, but in the first months of 2010 there has been some additional work to do, obviously in the interest of Geography. Since long years, Geography teaching is suffering in Italy for numerous initiatives of the Ministry of Education; seen by our side, the last “reform” now discussed in the Parliament is the worst ever.

All the Italian Geographical bodies began an action, better say a struggle, against this proposal, and my position, as one of the IGU VP, enabled me to ask for international sustain.

Now I have been asked to publish the following lines of thanks:

To the IGU and to all the geographical bodies in the world who helped us in the struggle against the reform of the educational system proposed by the Italian Government. The reform proposed by Mrs. Mariastella Gelmini is heavily damaging the teaching of Geography in the Italian Schools of every order. Asking for sustain, the Italian Geography Teachers did imagine to receive lot of adhesions in Italy, and we actually received nearly 35,000 signature in a half month. But we didn't hope to receive such a wide sustain from abroad: more than 400 hundreds mails from Geography teachers, mainly thanks to the immediate official adhesion of International bodies such as Eugeo, Eurogeo, Herodote and others, all following the letter sent to the Italian Ministry of Education by the IGU President Ron Abler, on behalf of the Executive Committee.

The Italian Minister didn't revise or changed her proposal yet, but actually the speed in approving the reform slowed down significantly. Whatever our final result will be, the following Italian Association want to express their deepest thanks to al the colleagues worldwide.

AIIG (Associazione Italiana Insegnanti di Geografia)

SGI (Società Geografica Italiana)

SSG (Società di Studi Geografici)

AIC (associazione Italiana di Cartografia)

CISGE (Centro Italiano Studi Storico-Geografici)

By my part, it is impossible to thank individually all the friends who sent e-mails, but is a must to remember the nice and friendly letters received from Past Presidents Anne Buttimer and Bruno Messerli. Many colleagues remarked that Geography is knowing hard times in their countries also, and I promise them that in case they will receive from Italy all possible help.

Moreover, I want to end with a proposal: the members of the IGU Commission on Geography Education, in agreement with the local Organisers, should raise the global problem of Geographical Education in a dedicated Session during the next Tel Aviv Conference.

Giuliano Bellezza