

# ***International Geographical Union Union Géographique Internationale***



## **2013 Annual Report of the International Geographical Union**

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### **IGU Regional Conference, Kyoto (Japan), 3-9 August 2013**

The first regional conference of three in the period between the Congresses in Cologne (2012) and Beijing (2016) was held in Kyoto on 3-9 August 2013. The conference gathered 1431 participants from 61 countries/regions, including 289 students. Such attendance is rather high for such meetings and nearly equal that at the IGU Congress in Tokyo (1980) and considerably more than expected by the Organizing Committee. An important proportion of participants came from the Asian-Pacific region which justifies the very idea of regional conferences since one of the most important objectives is to contribute to networking geographers in a particular region of the world. Naturally, the largest number of participants was from Japan (688) followed by Taiwan (78), the US (70), India (55) and China (53). The Science Council of Japan provided financial support to cover all of the room charges at the Kyoto International Conference Center, allowing us to set a very reasonable registration fee despite the elegant facilities.



*The 2013 IGU Regional Conference venue: Kyoto International Conference Centre*

The conference's motto was "Traditional Wisdom and Modern Knowledge for the Earth's Future" which corresponded well to its main objective - examination of the relationship between society/culture and environment and the venue, the ancient capital of Japan. The opening ceremony was graced by the attendance of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino and several other distinguished guests.



*Medal winners of the Geographical Olympiad (iGeo) competition at the Opening Ceremony*

The scientific programme was very diverse; it included sessions organized by 39 of 40 IGU Commissions and interdisciplinary meetings held on the initiative of separate groups, key lectures of renowned geographers and practitioners and special sessions devoted to the perspectives of our Union and to the main IGU interdisciplinary projects (*International Year of Global Understanding* and *Our Sustainable Cities*). To increase the number of domestic participants as much as possible, joint sessions were organized by Japan's major geographical societies and research programs whose head investigators are Japanese geographers.

Special attention was paid to the support of young researchers. The Organizing Committee not only awarded 10 full-cost travel grants to young Geographers and set the registration fee at less than 50% of the regular fee thanks to the generous financial support of the Tokyo Geographical Society and the Human Geographical Society of Japan. In addition, the IGU directly supported travel grants to more than 20 delegates mainly from developing countries. The authors of the best poster presentations by young researchers received special awards at the closing ceremony. New initiatives concerning a broader involvement of young scholars in IGU activities were discussed in Kyoto, particularly through the contacts with the association of Young Earth Scientists (YES).



*Award ceremony for the IGU Travel Grant awardees*

The Conference contributed to the development of cooperation between IGU Commissions. The total number of presentations made at the conference was 1,256: nine at plenary sessions, 780 at commission sessions, 382 (254 oral and 128 poster) at general sessions, 76 at joint sessions, and nine more at other sessions. Two sessions may deserve a special mention. The first one is the special session on the status of geographical journals, the issues of their ranking and open access. It was shown that the abuse of citation indices can do particular harm to geography because of discrimination of regional studies, human geography and publications in the languages other than English. It represents a serious threat to the future of geographical departments and can undermine the personal career of many scholars. It was decided that IGU should formally endorse the San Francisco Declaration and develop recommendations to national research and education governmental institutions. The second one was the session organized on the initiative of IGU Executive and devoted to the experience of geography teaching in universities.



*IGU President Kolossov's greeting to the chairs of IGU Commissions and National Committees*

The conference hosted the International Geography Olympiad (iGeo), a competition that gathers the winners of national Geography Olympiads. iGeo celebrated in Kyoto its 10th anniversary.

As usually, the conference included an exhibition of geographical literature, maps, atlases and multimedia products. The special exhibition “Traditional Wisdom and Modern Knowledge presented in Maps” was held in honor of the Conference: Kyoto University is famous for its excellent collection of old maps.



*Award ceremony for the former IGU President Ronald Abler, who received the Tokyo Geographical Society Medal from Professor Michio Nogami, President of the Tokyo Geographical Society*

According to the special survey, a great majority of participants rated the conference management of the Kyoto conference very high; they remarked favourably on the quick and efficient registration facilities, the tremendous efforts of a large team of student volunteers, a user friendly Programme handbook, a memorable opening ceremony and much, much more.

At the closing ceremony, President Kolossov declared Ton Dietz, Professor of Human Geography at the University of Amsterdam and Director of the African Studies Centre and Professor in African Development at Leiden University (the Netherlands), the IGU 37<sup>th</sup> Lauréat d’Honneur. This award was established in 1976 to recognize individuals who have achieved particular distinction or who have rendered outstanding service in the work of the IGU or in international geography and environmental research.



*Professor Ton Dietz receives the Laureat 'd'Honneur for outstanding service to the IGU*

### **IGU Executive Committee Meetings and Decisions**

The 2012-2014 IGU Executive Committee consists of eleven elected members:

**President**

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The IGU Executive Committee held two meetings in 2013: in Rohtak, India (March) and in Kyoto in August, before the Regional Conference. After the meeting in India the members of the EC addressed the National Conference on “Geoinformatics for Biodiversity and Climate Change” sponsored by the Indian National Academy of Sciences, Indian Council for Social Sciences and Research and other governmental institutions. The approved minutes of the 2013 IGU Executive Committee meetings are made available via the IGU E-newsletters at: <http://www.igu-online.org>

The agenda of these meetings and the decisions taken during them were structured along the IGU priorities for 2012-2016 adopted after the 32nd Congress in Cologne.

The first priority is to keep and to strengthen the role of IGU as a truly global organization, i.e. to increase the participation of geographers from the countries with low incomes and at the same time to make IGU attractive for geographers from the “North”, particularly for young generations. IGU meetings and publications have to be important milestones in their career. In 2013 several countries have either formally re-established membership or have indicated that they are likely to become IGU members shortly. The EC paid a special attention to networking African geographers and worked out a “roadmap” to promote African and other developing countries membership.

The second IGU priority is communication and integration of IGU Commissions' work, the development of interdisciplinary research by promoting problem- and region-oriented programmes and the cooperation between natural and social wings of geography in studying future environmental conditions and their consequences for people, and institutional, economic, and behavioral changes enabling effective steps toward global sustainability. IGU believes it very important to involve geographers in the implementation of *Future Earth*, the most ambitious international research programme integrating natural and social sciences which has been ever created. IGU through its national committees carefully selected the candidates to *Future Earth's* Science Committee. The world geographical community is represented in it by several members, including IGU Vice-President Dahe Qin. IGU also encourages joint and special workshops, sessions and research projects sponsored by two or several Commissions. The EC worked out the criteria for an IGU Commission excellence award and established the committee to administer it.

The third priority is cooperation with local organizing committees (LOC) of IGU Congresses and Regional Conferences for keeping their high standards, looking for new flexible formats, and bridging gaps between geographers, policy makers and community leaders. IGU EC closely cooperated with the LOC of the next Regional Conference in Poland and for the first time signed with it the Memorandum of Agreement establishing mutual commitments and financial responsibility.

According to the fourth priority - cooperation with the leading international organizations in contributing to the cohesion of geography and its better international visibility, IGU participated in the activity of ICSU and ISSC in embedding IGU in global research programmes and networks. IGU established closer relations with the Association of European Geographical Societies (Eugeo) and the European Association of Geographers (Eurogeo), and signed with them the Memorandum on cooperation. IGU EC is also organizing "the IGU lecture" at the International Geographical Festival in Saint Dié (France). IGU sponsors the activity of the joint Commission on Toponymy with the International Cartographic Association and maintains working contacts with the International Union of Geological Sciences (IGS) and the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), in particular in Geounions, the association of international unions in the field of Earth Sciences within ICSU.

Geographical education is one of the major *raison d'être* of the geographical community and one of its main priorities. IGU should continuously show the value of geographical education in various international and national academic and policy contexts. IGU, Eugeo and Eurogeo are working on a common project for promoting geographical education and keeping and modernizing geographical curricula in secondary schools.

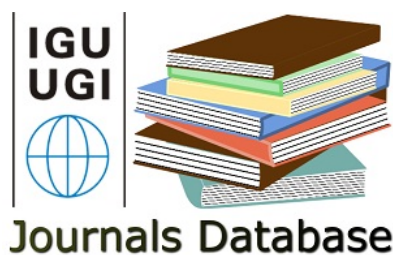
IGU decided to celebrate in 2022 its centennial and created special Task Force. One of its objectives is to prepare the extraordinary Congress and a new publication documenting IGU history.

## International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU)



IGU strongly supports the transdisciplinary project of the *International Year on Global Understanding (IYGU)* which was created on the IGU initiative and is coordinated by Professor Benno Werlen, Chair of IGU Commission on Cultural Geography. 2013 was marked by spectacular progress in the implementation of this project. First, its bodies (the Advisory Board, the Steering Committee, the Outreach Panel and partly Regional Action Centres) were formed and started their activities. More important, the UNESCO Executive Board and later the UNESCO General Assembly have unanimously adopted the resolution of the IGU initiative for the IYGU presented by the group of the East African countries in the name of Rwanda. Therefore, there is a real chance that the UN General Assembly could proclaim the IYGU during 2014 for 2016. The main idea of the project is to bridge the gap in awareness between local actions and global effects and that there is the urgent need in global action towards resolving the problems arising from global social and climate change. It was stressed that geographical education for global understanding is critical for addressing global challenges - for providing sustainable sources of clean water, food and energy, and for maintaining an intact environment for the well-being of all people. The IGU initiative has already obtained earlier the support of ISSC, ICSU and a great number of other international and national institutions. More information about IYGU is available at: <http://global-understanding.info/>

### The IGU Journals Database



There are many journals globally that deal with the broad church that is the discipline of Geography. In recent years the domination of major publishing houses in the scientific journal market has become much stronger and it is clear that many geographical journals are published that have a much lower profile and yet could provide a very valuable resource for geographers – researchers and teachers alike - in particular national or regional contexts. It was for this reason that the IGU embarked on a project to establish a searchable global database of geographical periodicals. Information, including contact details, impact factor (where appropriate) and website addresses of more than 1000 journals from more than 80 countries worldwide are now available online (follow the link from the IGU homepage at: [www.igu-online.org](http://www.igu-online.org))



## Sustainable Cities: The IGU 'OurSus' Project



IGU also supports the project of making the site on *cities' sustainable development* created in 2010 on the initiative of Dutch and Chinese geographers the world centre of information and certification working under the sponsorship of IGU. This project is based on the idea that despite their different sizes, location and functions all cities are facing similar challenges in terms of sustainable features, such as green R&D, environment-friendly consumption, green campaigns, challenges, and education, etc. In 2013 the project had a full double Internet infrastructure, in English and Chinese ([www.oursus.org](http://www.oursus.org) and [zh.oursus.org](http://zh.oursus.org)). There were numerous cities presented on its website and many academics and professionals made use of it, albeit still mainly from China. It is expected that the project will reach full maturity in 2016 towards the IGU Congress in Beijing. It should have a wide and internationally balanced representation of both cities and users. It is necessary to mobilize geographical communities in many countries and to create national centres of the project.

### Communication and Outreach

The main communication tools of the IGU are its quarterly newsletter, compiled by Vice-President Giuliano Bellezza and its website, maintained by Secretary-General Mike Meadows. Four issues of the new series of the e-Newsletter were published in 2013 and can be downloaded from the website by following the newsletter link from [www.igu-online.org](http://www.igu-online.org). IGU now has a Facebook page and the new website design. In 2013 volume 61-62 of the *IGU Bulletin* was published representing the years 2011-12. IGU also issued a publicity leaflet on its current activities and updated the handbook for its members.

One of the most important tasks of the IGU is to act as the connection between the international community of geographers and the major global scientific organisations. IGU is formally recognised as a voting member Union of both the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and plays a vital role in representing the discipline at the highest level of global scientific administration. It is vital that geographers are represented on the major international science committees and successfully nominated candidates for membership of the *Future Earth* programme (see: [www.icsu.org/future-earth](http://www.icsu.org/future-earth)), a joint ICSU-ISSC 10-year international research initiative that will develop the knowledge for responding effectively to the risks and opportunities of global environmental change and for supporting transformation towards global sustainability in the coming decades.

### Financial

A summary Profit and Loss statement and Balance Sheet (amounts given in US\$) for 2013 are attached to this report and indicate that the overall financial position of the IGU remains stable. The revenue generated by its member countries continues to ensure that IGU is able to remain

active in the international geographical community and is able to strive towards fulfilling its major objectives (see [www.igu-online.org](http://www.igu-online.org)).

### Forthcoming IGU Conferences

18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014, Krakow, Poland Regional Conference



<http://www.igu2014.org/>

20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015, Moscow, Russia Regional Conference



<http://www.igu2015.ru/>

August 2016: People's Republic of China International Geographical Congress, Beijing

More details at: [www.igu-online.org](http://www.igu-online.org)

**International Geographical Union**  
**Profit & Loss**  
January through December 2013

	<u>Jan - Dec 13</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Grants	
Corporate and Business Grants	24,741.80
Nonprofit Organization Grants	58,002.73
Direct Public Grants - Other	655.00
Total Direct Public Grants	<u>83,399.53</u>
Investments	
Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	3,969.31
Total Investments	<u>3,969.31</u>
Program Income	
Membership Dues	135,374.91
Publications	174.56
Subscriptions	558.65
Total Program Income	<u>136,108.12</u>
Total Income	<u>223,476.96</u>
Gross Profit	223,476.96
Expense	
Awards and Grants	
Cash Awards and Grants	34,670.06
Total Awards and Grants	<u>34,670.06</u>
Operations	
Banking Fees	3,823.89
Books, Subscriptions, Reference	944.56
Commissions	27,606.49
Internet and Web Site	2,130.90
Postage, Mailing Service	955.65
Printing and Copying	8,650.75
Projects	63,033.12
Secretarial Assistance	1,392.29
Software	377.99
Supplies	507.95
Total Operations	<u>109,423.59</u>
Other Types of Expenses	
Memberships and Dues	6,545.80
Total Other Types of Expenses	<u>6,545.80</u>
Travel and Meetings	
Conference, Convention, Meeting	5,340.01
Executive Committee Meetings	14,715.24
Travel	17,164.02
Total Travel and Meetings	<u>37,219.27</u>
Total Expense	<u>187,858.72</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>35,618.24</u>
Net Income	<u><u>35,618.24</u></u>

**International Geographical Union**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As of December 31, 2013**

	<u>Dec 31, 13</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
<b>Checking/Savings</b>	
Johnson Bank IGU Endowment	46,584.33
Johnson Bank Operating Account	7,627.80
Petty Cash	590.95
SBCT Market Link	743.98
SBCT Money Market	103,227.29
SBCT Operating Account	28,183.41
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	<u>186,957.76</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>186,957.76</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>186,957.76</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Equity</b>	
Opening Balance Equity	151,339.52
Net Income	35,618.24
<b>Total Equity</b>	<u>186,957.76</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b><u>186,957.76</u></b>