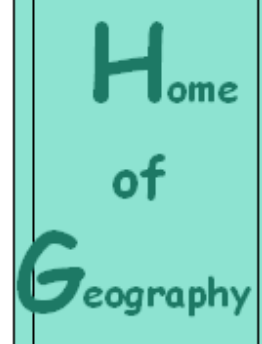




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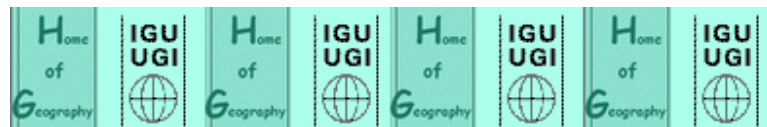
April

2009

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

Please send them to <g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org>



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1) MESSAGE OF RONALD ABLER, President of the IGU

Looking At and Toward Tel Aviv-Jaffa

Dear Colleagues,

The IGU Executive Committee held its second meeting in Tel Aviv on 4-5 May 2009. Major items on the agenda included, among other topics:

- IGU membership and finances;
- an IGU geographical journals inventory and evaluation project proposed by Ton Dietz, chairperson of the Netherlands Committee for the IGU;
- recruiting IGU corporate members;
- IGU collaboration with the *Festival International de Géographie* (FIG) held annually in Saint-Dié-des-Vosges in France; and
- future IGU Regional Conferences and International Geographical Congresses and the future of IGU meetings generally.

In a first for the executive committee, IGU Vice President Ruth Fincher (Australia) participated in the entire meeting via an internet audio and video link, which worked well, though her participation kept Ruth in her office till almost midnight owing to the six hour time difference between Melbourne and Tel Aviv. The committee hopes to make more use of advanced telecommunications technologies in the future to reduce the expenses of its meetings, and we greatly appreciate Ruth's willingness to pioneer the use of electronic participation.

We will disseminate the minutes of the Tel Aviv meeting when they have been approved and also include them in the next issue of the *IGU E-Newsletter*. Today, I would like to focus on plans for the 12-16 July 2010 IGU Regional Conference in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, now only fourteen months distant in time. The executive committee devoted a half-day of its meeting to a joint meeting with the local Steering Committee for the 2010 conference and to discussions with Target Conferences Ltd.—the professional conference organizing company that will handle conference accommodation, registration, and logistics—and with staff members from the main conference hotel.

All aspects of conference planning are well advanced. The main conference hotel—the Dan Panorama Tel Aviv—is situated on the Mediterranean with fine views of the sea and the city, and is located just a few city blocks from the historic port of Jaffa. The conference centre in which our sessions will be held is an integral part of the hotel and well laid out for an academic meeting. Target Conferences is a local firm with extensive experience in managing international conferences. Members of the executive committee queried them about many facets of accommodation booking, conference registration, credit card processing, abstract submission, visa requirements, and other matters of interest to delegates. We received complete and

satisfactory responses in every instance. The members of the executive committee are confident that delegate logistics, abstract submission and processing, and conference program formation will be handled promptly and professionally.



The EC members during the visit to Jerusalem and the Hebrew University

The conference Steering Committee (Itzhak Schnell, Chair with Daniel Felsenstein, Tovi Fenster, Aharon Kellerman, Michael Sofer, and Eliahu Stern) selected the conference theme of *Bridging Diversity in a Globalizing World* to highlight Israel's location near the junction of Africa, Asia, and Europe as well as the complex ethnic, political, and religious diversity of the country and the region. Every effort has and will be made to mount a conference that, in addition to the broader aspects of the conference theme, addresses directly and forthrightly the geographical dimensions of current cultural and political questions in Israel and adjacent areas, as well as in the Middle East and at continental and global scales. Tel Aviv-Jaffa itself offers intriguing opportunities for local and personal exploration of such questions, inasmuch as the municipality consists of both predominantly Jewish Tel Aviv and largely Muslim Jaffa. Jewish and Muslim neighbourhoods near the hotel are fine places to walk, gawk, and ponder the evolution and future of complex places resulting from millennia of political and religious overlays. Beyond the locality, the Steering Committee has scheduled an exciting list of pre- and post-conference field excursions in Israel and adjacent areas. More information on the field excursions will be available in the Conference Second Circular, which will be issued in a few weeks. Of particular interest to graduate students will be the 28 June-11 July pre-conference course on *Mediterraneanity* offered at the University of Haifa.

I hope you are already planning to be in Tel Aviv-Jaffa in July 2010. Watch for the second circular and monitor the conference web site (www.igu2010.com) for the latest details regarding the conference. As always, I will be happy to respond to any questions or concerns you may have regarding the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Regional Conference or any other aspect of IGU programs and plans.

Thanks and best wishes,

Ron Abler, President

rabler@aag.org



*Hebrew University, a few meters away from wall and check points;
our wish: maybe Geography could help the peace arrive,*

**2) COMMISSION' ACTIVITIES UPDATE TO APRIL 2009
from Prof. Wooik YU, IGU Secretary General**

(with some modifications by G.Bellezza)

IGU Executive Committee Commission and Task Force Liaison Assignments 2008-2010						
<i>No</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Chairperson(s)</i>		<i>IGU EC Liaison</i>	<i>News letter</i>	<i>Activities</i>
C08.01	Applied Geography	R.	Stimson	Abler	Report 2008-12 Feb.2009	Session in the FIG 2009.
C08.02	Arid Lands, Humankind, and Environment	M.	Ashour	Bellezza		
C08.03	Biogeography and Biodiversity	U.	Schickhoff	Meadows		
C08.04	Climatology	Z.	Ustrnul	Qin		
C08.05	Coastal Systems	E.	Anthony	Meadows		
C08.06	Cold Region Environments	N.	Doubleday	Qin		Managing water in a changing world, Torino (Italy), 27-31 July
		D.	Trombotto			
C08.07	Cultural Approach in Geography	B.	Werlen	Kolossov		
C08.08	Dynamics of Economic Spaces	M.	Taylor	Soyez		
C08.09	Environment Evolution	.A.	Velichko	Kolossov		

C08.10	Gender and Geography (the most active of all Commissions, personal comments f.g.b.)	R.	Longhurst	Fincher	News1.41 News1.42 Commiss. history	- gender, place & culture award - Old and new Gendered Societies, July 09 -Sessions in all IGU meetings
C08.11	Geographical Education	L.	Chalmers	Löytönen	News1. #1, 2009	Spatial Thinking for Geogr. Educ, Tsukuba, August 2009
C08.12	Geographical Information Science	B.	Lees	Löytönen	Jan. 2009	
C08.13	Geography of Governance	J.	Bucek	Kolossov	Spring. 2009	
C08.14	Geog.of Global Information Society	M.	Wilson	Kellerman	News. 2 2009	-Digital communities conference, Seoul, June 2009
C08.15	Geography of Tourism, Leisure, and Global Change	J.	Saarinen	Soyez		-membership of the commission 2008-2012
C08.16	Geomorphic Challenges for the 21st Century	A.	Parsons	Meadows		-international conference. on geomorphology, Melbourne, 6-11 July
C08.17	Global Change and Human Mobility	A.	Montanari	Kellerman		New forms of intern. mobility, Gran Canaria June2009
C08.18	Hazard and Risk	S.	Haruyama	Ayala	-Hazard and Risk renewal	
C08.19	Health and Environment	W.	Wang	Löytönen		
C08.20	History of Geography	J.	García-Álvarez	Bellezza	Commiss. renewal	- Landscapes and Territories, Miraflores Sierra, Febr,2009 - Session Tel Aviv 2010
C08.21	Indigenous Knowledges, Peoples' Rights	J.	Johnson	Soyez		
C08.22	Islands	C.	Chang	Bellezza		
C08.23	Karst	E.	Trofimova	Ayala		Int.Karstological School, Postojna, June 2009
C08.24	Land Degrad. Desertification	G.	Gisladottir	Meadows		
C08.25	Land Use and Land Cover Change	I.	Bicik	Ayala	LUC members	- Vladivostok International Conference, September 2009

C08.26	Local Development	M.	Sofer	Kellerman		-IGBP and the ICSU GeoUnions -new members
C08.27	Marginalization, Globalization: Regional, Local Responses	E.	Nel	Fincher		Session in Tel Aviv
C08.28	Modeling Geographical Systems	Y.	Leung	Löytönen		
C08.29	Mountain Response to Global Change	J.	Loeffler	Qin	Jan. 2009	
C08.30	Political Geography	A.	Gosar	Kolossov		Borderscapes II, Trapani, Italy, September 2009
C08.31	Population Geography	A.	Findlay	Fincher		
C08.32	Sustainability of Rural Systems	L. A.	Laurens Bicalho	Bellezza		Sust.Rural Development, Maribor, Slovenia, July 09
C08.33	Urban Commission: Emerging Urban Transformations	C.	Matthiessen	Kellerman		Emerging Urban Transformation, Hyderabad, July-August 2009
C08.34	Water Sustainability	J...	Jones	Meadows	ann. rep. 2008	Managing water in Changing World, Torino, July 2009
T08.01	Geoparks	D.	Wei	Ayala	guideline	-UNESCO conf. on geoparks
T08.02	Megacities	F.	Kraas	Soyez		
T08.03	Olympiad	J. H.	vander Schee Ankoné	Bellezza		



3) HOME OF GEOGRAPHY UPDATE

In the Seoul Meeting (November 2008) the new Executive Committee decided that the IGU financial situation doesn't allow to give any more money to the Home, and this was rather a shock for the Società Geografica Italiana. Some months earlier its Board had decided to add to

the usual in kind facilities an amount of money similar to IGU's one. As a first reaction, the same Società clearly stated that no more money will be given to fund the Home.

The last EC Meeting in Tel Aviv has been very productive and all members are really active, and in some way my work has been appreciated: the problem of some fund for the Home wasn't in the Agenda, and hasn't been mentioned at all.



Tel Aviv architecture: from Bauhaus to post modern

Thus the situation of the Home of Geography is very unstable, but not very unusual for the Director, executive secretary, webmaster, telephonist: in a single word, for me. In my opinion, a good diffusion of our activities is the best way of advertising Geography as the discipline essential in every kind of planning: environmental, economical, demographic and so on. Every planning relates to human-environment relationships, therefore is geographic (but always remembering that a co-operation with scholars of natural and human sciences is as much necessary).

To continue in my action for the survival of the Home, it is vital for me to receive some help from all of you; please read carefully the following lines (partially copied from a letter sent to the Commission' Chairs at the end of 2007 by IGU Executive Secretary, Prof. Wooik Yu). Since some years my aim is to direct a Home of Geographers, more than an impersonal Home of Geography. Now I ask directly all the recipients of the newsletter, and first of all the Chairs of the Commissions: to try to complete the e-archive already existent in our website, please send me all the information on the following items:

1. Membership

A. Provide a complete list of your commission's steering committee members. Include all contact information (mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address) for each steering committee member.

B. The number of commission members in total and *by country*. The counts of members by country are exceedingly helpful for IGU Secretariat in documenting to the International Council for Science (ICSU) and other international organizations the IGU's extensive reach.

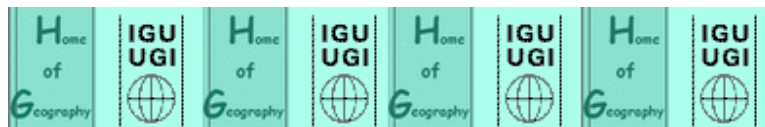
C. The URL of the commission's web site, if there is one.

2. Commissions' activities and Home of Geography

The building of a reliable e-archive will be possible only if you send to the Home of Geography (giuliano.bellezza@homeofgeography.org) all information about:

1. The meetings your commission is organizing in the following months, with information on their locations, dates and dead lines, in order to be soon published in the website. Possibly try to organize Sessions during the Tel Aviv Regional Conference in July 2010 (and in the following IGU Regional Conferences and Congresses).
2. A brief report (about 600 words and possibly 1-2 photos) after all the meetings, in order to be published and diffused in the following newsletter.
3. Newsletters, special journal issues, and books published **only in e-format**: due to the aforementioned difficulties, there is no more available physical space available for the Home of Geography.
4. Last not least: don't forget that the library of the Società Geografica (the best of Italy in our field) is available for all scholars coming to visit the Home; many Commission already enjoyed the conference rooms for their meetings in the nice building, situated in the middle of a park.

Giuliano Bellezza,
IGU VP and Home of Geography Director



4) REPORTS FROM CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

3.1 – International Symposium: Languages and visions of Landscapes and Territory Miraflores de la Sierra (Spain), 5-8 February

The International Symposium "Languages and visions of landscape and territory" was held in Madrid last February 2009. It was organized jointly by the History of Geographical Thought Working Group of the Association of Spanish Geographers (AGE) and the International Geographical Union Commission on the History of Geography, formerly named Commission on the History of Geographical Thought. It was the first meeting driven by the IGU Commission on the History of Geography since its recent renewal and renaming, approved during the IGU Conference held at Tunis in August 2008. The Symposium coincided with the IVth Colloquium of the aforementioned Spanish Working Group, which was created, in its turn, in 2001. It was held at "La Cristalera", a residence and a conference hall owned by the Autónoma University of Madrid in the village of Miraflores de la Sierra, which is located in the foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama, 50 km North of the city of Madrid. A Committee made up by professors and researchers from Autónoma and Carlos III Universities of Madrid was responsible for the Symposium's local organisation. Likewise, Professor Nicolás Ortega-Cantero (Autónoma University of Madrid), current chairman of the AGE Geographical Thought Working Group, and Professor Jacobo García-Álvarez (Carlos III University of Madrid), current chairman of the IGU Commission on the History of Geography, were

in charge of the scientific coordination of the meeting.

Two special lectures were given throughout the Symposium, one at the very beginning, and the other one at the closing ceremony. There were twelve paper sessions, in which forty-eight communications were presented and discussed by fifty participants coming from ten different countries. Two excursions, closely related to the main topics of the Symposium, took place into the Sierra de Guadarrama and the historic city of Toledo.

The opening lecture was given by Professor Vincent Berdoulay (Pau University), who was the Chairman of the IGU Commission on the History of Geographical Thought between 1996 and 2004. He lectured on the topic *L'histoire de la géographie au défi de la prospective: patrimoine, mémoire et enjeux iconographiques*.



The Symposium participants at the Mirador de los Robledos (Rascafría), during the excursion into the Sierra de Guadarrama (photo by Paloma Puente-Lozano)

The communications presented at the Symposium were organized around two thematic axis, having the same number of participants, and carried out in parallel sessions. The first thematic axis was devoted to languages of landscape and territory, emphasizing three essential realms: cartography, rhetoric and iconography; whereas the second one focused on connections between landscapes and territories, and the building of identities and places of memory. As a complement to the working sessions, an ending lecture was given by Professor Eduardo Martínez de Pisón (Autónoma University of Madrid), who dealt with the history of the scientific and cultural discovering of the Sierra de Guadarrama and with the ongoing process of turning this natural space into a National Park, within which Prof. Martínez de Pisón has played a fundamental role. On the occasion of the Symposium, a business meeting of the IGU Commission on the History of Geography did also take place, in order to work out the guidelines for the next three years. It was the first Commission's business meeting since the recent renewal of its Steering Committee, and some members of the preceding Steering Committees took part in it too.

The results of the Symposium were very positive, because, among other reasons, the high quality of the lectures and communications, most of which will be published soon in a book, as well as the cordial atmosphere, affection and intense relationship among participants, who were all accommodated in "La Cristalera" residence. Many of us will also recall for a long time the special beauty of the Sierra de Guadarrama's landscape during these days, due to a particularly strong snowfall, one of the biggest in this region over the last ten years, which everyone had the chance of

experiencing during the excursion carried out on February 7th. Finally, the Symposium turned out to be very successful in its purpose of relaunching the UGI Commission on the History of Geography's activity, and working out its future guidelines, full of encouraging projects. The next Symposium of the UGI Commission on the History of Geography will be taking place in the Regional Conference of Tel Aviv, in July 2010, with the guiding topic "Geography, civilizations and cultural identities in historical perspective".

**Prof. Jacobo García-Álvarez, Carlos III University of Madrid,
IGU Commission on the History of Geography**

3.2 – Mediterranean Renaissance Project, Workshop 2009: Contemporary Challenges for the Mediterranean Basin Rome, 24 February 2009

At its business meeting at the Home of Geography, Rome, May 2008, MRP was declared to be at a turning point looking for a sound vision for its role and consequent future actions within the broader IGU strategic goals, hoping to strengthen geography in its networking and external involvements. As a result MRP became a co-founder of EMUNI (Euro-Mediterranean University); it organized the Rome 2009 workshop; and it initiated contacts for future activities.

The Rome 2009 workshop included 11 papers by Douguédroit, Sala, Toumi, Montanari, Bellezza, Kellerman, Eveno, Paradiso, Gosar, Terkenli, Jelen, grouped into four sessions: Environmental impacts of climatic changes (Chair and organiser: Annick Douguédroit, France); Migration in the Mediterranean Region: between human development and security (Chair and organiser: Ali Toumi, Tunisia), Information Society (Chair and organiser: Maria Paradiso, Italy) Tourism and sustainability (Chair and organiser: Giuliano Bellezza, Italy).

The workshop was marked by thorough discussions following each presentation, and these discussions have been able to illuminate new perspectives which will be developed into structured sessions for the IGU Tel Aviv 2010 Regional Conference (e.g. borders and illegal border crossing). The workshop attracted several young Italian Ph.D. students on Mediterranean studies.

The business meeting has been led by the Executive Secretary Maria Paradiso and it was attended by the following members of the steering committee present: Annick Douguédroit, Anton Gosar, Giuliano Bellezza, Aharon Kellerman, Maria Sala, Theano Terkenli, and Ali Toumi.

The committee expressed warm thanks to the Home of Geography and to the Chair of the Italian Geographical Society, Professor Franco Salvatori, for hosting the event. It further thanked the IGU for its financial support and Maria Paradiso for the organization of the workshop.



Some participants on the terrace of the Home of Geography

The following initiatives were decided on:

Session proposal for IGU Regional Conference 2010: Sessions in collaboration with Commissions will be prepared, and one thematic MRP session will be possibly entitled ‘Mediterranean borders’ . The topic of ‘cruisers’ and immigration were found of special relevance for the ‘borders session’. The organizer for this session will be Giuliano Bellezza and/or Anton Gosar

MRP book proposal with Springer on ‘Contemporary Mediterranean Geography’: This proposal will aim at the publication of chapters based on the workshop presentations, as well as additional ones, solicited by the co-editors. Theano Terkenli expressed her readiness to serve as co-editor for the proposed volume and will look for the second co-editor. MRP decided that both co-editors have to be geographers and come from Mediterranean countries. The co-editors will send back to MRP steering the book proposal for comments and approval before sending to the publisher.

EMUNI: MRP decided to submit to EMUNI (Euro Mediterranean UNiversity) a proposal for a summer doctoral research seminar prepared by Aharon Kellerman and Maria Paradiso on Mediterranean information societies, with up to four Professors, assuming that EMUNI will accept new proposals.

Collaboration with Tunis-CERES (Centre d’Etudes et de Recherche Sociale): Ali Toumi reported that CERES is interested in principle to co-sponsor with MRP a three-day workshop (including a one-day field trip) focused on tourism, scheduled for the second week in March 2010. CERES will cover accommodations and meals for speakers. The committee asked Ali to arrange for a formal invitation, which will be followed by negotiations with CERES performed by a sub-committee consisting of: Ali Toumi, Maria Paradiso (coordinator), Anton Gosar, and Giuliano Bellezza. If CERES will require, an agreement will be drafted and signed.

Officers:

Mahmoud Ashour, MRP Coordinator, Chair IGU Commission on Arid Lands Humankind and Environment, University Ain Shams, Cairo, Egypt (mmashour_99@yahoo.com);

Maria Paradiso, MRP Executive Secretary, Vice Chair, IGU Commission on Geography of Information Society, University of Sannio, Benevento, Italy (paradise@unisannio.it).

Steering Committee

Ronald F. Abler, IGU President; Antoine Bailly, Chair of IGU Commission on Applied Geography, University of Geneva (antoine.bailly@geo.unige.ch); Giuliano Bellezza, Vice President, IGU, Director of Home of Geography, University of Tuscia, Viterbo (g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org); Anne Buttimer, IGU Past President, University of Dublin, (anne.buttimer@ucd.ie); Annick Douguédroit, Former Chair of IGU Commission on Climate Change, University of Provence, Aix en Provence (Annick.Douguedroit@univ-provence.fr); Anton Gosar, Chair of IGU Commission on Political Geography University of Primorska, Koper/Capodistria (anton.gosar@guest.arnes.si); Aharon Kellerman, Vice President, IGU, (akeller@univ.haifa.ac.il); Mohamad Riad, Ain Shams University, Cairo (osprey@Link.net); Maria Sala, Former Chair of the IGU Commission on Land degradation and Desertification, University of Barcelona (msalasanjaume35@gmail.com); Theano S. Terkenli, University of the Aegean, (t.terkenli@aegean.gr); Ali Toumi, General Secretary of Association des Géographes Tunisiens, University of Tunis (alitoumi2003@yahoo.fr).

3.3 – Association of American Geographers Conference, Las Vegas, 22-27 March

The Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting for 2009 was held March 22-27 at the Riviera Hotel and Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. More than 6,400 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 GIS science. Of those attending, approximately 25 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 total. This year, 2009, attendees came from 77 different countries, including 28 developing nations. Geographers and related scholars from Albania to New Zealand, Azerbaijan, Philippines, Nepal, Japan, Korea, Trinidad, Panama, Argentina, Jamaica, Canada, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Italy, Sweden, France, UAE, Iran, Ghana, Ethiopia, South Africa, and many more shared 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 Networking Reception** in the Exhibit Hall as part of the Monday evening opening events. The reception provided an opportunity for attendees to mingle with more than 200 AAG exhibitors, including the *International Geographical Union*, as well as to meet with other attendees from around the world while enjoying hors d'oeuvres and drinks. 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 of the world with full membership benefits at deeply discounted rates.

The AAG Annual Meeting also featured two important research tracks, with strong international dimensions. The **Africa Research Track** featured geographers who are harnessing the power of geographic methods to address issues of environmental sustainability and spotlighted the work of scientists and practitioners who apply geography tools and methods to expand our understanding of complex, trans-boundary sustainable development issues such as food security, biodiversity, carbon emissions and water quality, among others. The track built on 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. The track's keynote speech

on *Geography, GIS, and Africa* was presented at a Wednesday noontime session by Jack Dangermond, President of ESRI. His presentation was followed by a special panel on Continuing Global Dialogues on Geospatial Science and Sustainable Development, chaired by AAG Executive Director Douglas Richardson and including panelists Lee Schwartz, Geographer of the United States and Director of the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues, U.S. Department of State; Sives Govender, Executive Director, EIS-AFRICA; Paul Bartel, U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information Unit; Richard Williams, Director of the NGA Support Team to the U.S. Department of State; Professors John Townsend and Chris Justice of the University of Maryland; and Peter Ndunda, GIS Director for The Green Belt Movement of Africa, founded by Nobel Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai.

A second research track built upon international themes was the **Geography and Human Rights** Track, which brought together multiple sessions highlighting ways in which geographers can directly and indirectly support human rights work, both in the United States and elsewhere.



Peter Ndunda, GIS Director for Wangari Maathi's Greenbelt Movement in Kenya, with Indy Hurt of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Themes explored cross-border anti-trafficking, environmental justice in transnational context, regional geovisualization of human rights, and refugee issues, among others. Attendees with relevant experience contributed their knowledge to a developing *AAG Geography and Human Rights Clearinghouse*, a resource introduced as part of the AAG's support in the launch of the *AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition*.

The AAG also sponsored a continuing series on **Geography in the Americas**, with this fourth annual theme focused on *Resources for Supporting International Collaboration*. The panel session explored resources available from programs and services -- including but also beyond funding -- that can help geographers across the Americas to garner the support needed to pursue international collaboration, sharing information, experiences and advice on how to develop successful research projects, how to take full advantage of the unique nature of international collaboration, and how to best pursue opportunities for support. Speakers included Santiago Borrero, Secretary General of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, an organization of the Organization of American States; Ned Strong, Executive Director of LASPAU: Academic and Professional Programs for the Americas, a non-profit organization affiliated with Harvard University that administers Fulbright Programs in the Americas; Nicole

Stahlmann, Director of Fellowship Programs of the American Council of Learned Societies; Ibrahim M. Shaqir, Director of the Office of International Research Programs within the Agricultural Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; Mark Caicedo, Inter-American Foundation; Jessica Robin, Program Officer of the Americas Program in the Office of International Science and Engineering at the U.S. National Science Foundation.



Geography in the Americas Panelists: Shaqir, Strong, Robin, Borrero, Stahlmann, Patricia Solís (AAG), Caicedo, and Doug Richardson (AAG Executive Director)

Many other paper, poster, and panel sessions and presentations highlighted international geographic work. Other event activities as well celebrated international themes, such as the special Film Event, “45° North: Life, Space and Change on the U.S.-Canadian Border,” organized by the University of Vermont. The *AAG Center for Global Geography Education* Workshop, entitled “No Passports Required: Online Resources for Teaching International Perspectives in Geography” explored international geography educational resources developed to internationalize teaching and learning in college classrooms.

The AAG also engaged with many other national associations and representatives from sister geography societies around the world. For instance, AAG received a national delegation from the newly formed *Professional Association of Romanian Geographers*, including a meeting with AAG President John Agnew to explore collaboration opportunities. Additionally, the AAG signed a memorandum of corporation with the *Association of Professional Geographers in India* (APGI), following a highlighted session on “The changing face of contemporary geography in India,” chaired by AAG Past President Kavita Pandit.



The AAG signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of Professional Geographers India, to cooperate on program and projects of mutual interest in the future

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 Washington, DC from 14-18 April 2010*. For more information or to register, please visit www.aag.org.

3.4 – International Symposium: Hazards and Benefits of a Northern River The Amur River and the Impacts of land Use Changes

The conference has been organized by Shigeku Haruyama on behalf of the IGU Commission C08.18 and the Japanese Geographical Society, and was held in one session in the afternoon of March 28, 2009. It was organized on the premises of Teikyo University in Tokyo, Japan, and was combined with the Meeting of Japanese geographical society.

Totally, there were 10 presentations made at the IGU conference. Most of them were devoted to the joint Japanese-Russian-Chinese project “Amur-Okhotsk” and to the studies of Amur river basin and adjacent territories.

An introduction to the problem of hazardous flooding in the Amur river basin has been presented by Prof. Shigeko Haruyama from Mie University and the University of Tokyo. In particular, changes of land use in the Amur basin, notably in the Chinese part of the basin, have influenced the flood threat in the basin. Certain cases of floods in the Amur basin were analyzed in the report.

Prof. Takayuki Shiraiwa (RIHN, Japan) have made an overview of the problem of primary biological production in the Sea of Okhotsk and Oyashio oceanic region. It is one of the most productive regions of the world ocean, and to a large extent this productivity is influenced by dissolved iron transport from Amur basin. Thus, studies of the dissolved iron transformation in the basin is very important. Land cover and land use in Amur basin are of large importance for the dissolved iron cycle.

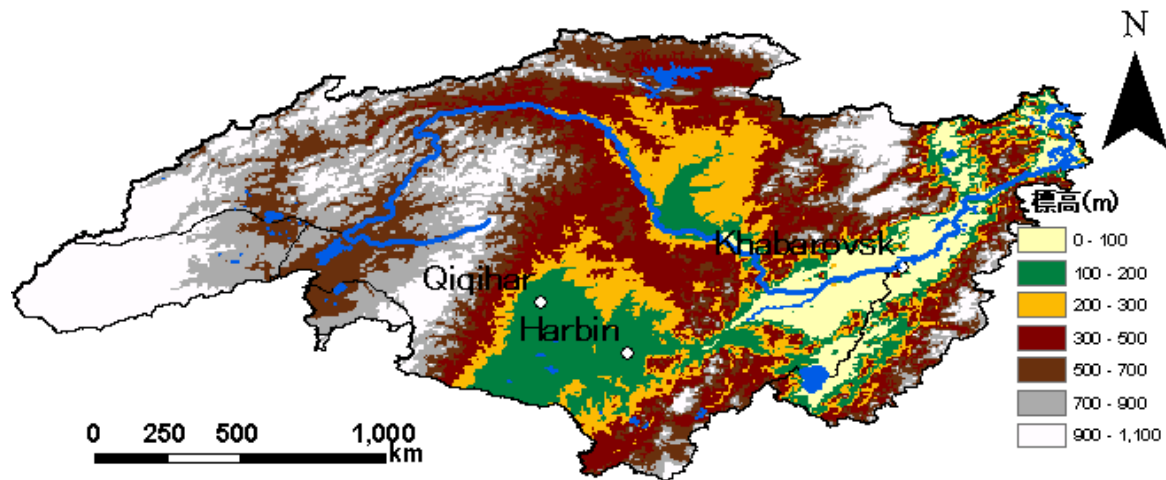


Fig.1 The Amur River Basin

Prof. Yan Baixing from the Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology (Changchun, China) has presented an analysis of land use changes in the Sanjiang plain within Amur basin. It has been shown that agricultural development in the basin has led to decrease of the iron transport to Amur, although increase of rice paddies area seems to increase it again.

Dr. Takeo Onishi (RIHN, Japan) has demonstrated results of numerical modeling of the dissolved iron productivity in Amur basin under different scenarios of land use in the basin. In particular, forest fires and conversion of wetlands to arable lands were studied. Both types of land use changes have a potential to decrease the dissolved iron productivity in Amur basin.

Prof. Sergey Ganzey (Pacific Institute of Geography, Vladivostok, Russia) has presented results on surveys of the land use changes in Amur basin obtained from Russian, Chinese and Mongolian sources. Both historical sources from 1920s-1930s and contemporary satellite data were used for the study. Detailed quantitative information on the changes of land use based on GIS technology has been presented.

Dr. Akihiko Kondoh from Chiba University (Japan) has demonstrated results of a group of scientists with analysis of the remote sensing of land use from satellites. NDVI index, mostly reflecting the greenness of vegetation, was used for the study. Changes in forest areas, agricultural areas and, particularly, rice paddies area are of special interest as they might change the dissolved iron productivity in the Amur basin.

Dr. Hiroaki Kakizawa (Hokkaido University, Japan) has presented an analysis of causes of the natural resources degradation in Amur basin. Notably, forest degradation in Russia and agricultural development in China are studied, especially at the level of certain regions. Particular features of the land use changes (such as maturity of forests, types of agriculture lands) are studied.



Fig.2 Flood in the Amur river basin

Dr. Yoshihiro Tachibana (Mie University, Japan) has studied natural reasons of interannual variations of Amur river discharge and its connection to the large-scale atmospheric circulation patterns. Variations of the Arctic Oscillation and sea surface temperature in the Sea of Okhotsk are discussed as possible reasons for the precipitation variations, and hence, Amur discharge changes.

Dr. Andrey Shmakin (Institute of Geography, Moscow, Russia) has presented results of statistical study of weather situations suitable for spring floods in Northern Eurasia, and changes of frequency of such situations under contemporary climate change. In general, there is no increase of frequency of flood-threatening weather situations over Northern Eurasia, except for few areas in Pechora basin near Ural mountains and in some other areas in Western and Eastern Siberia. In Amur basin, no significant changes are observed.

Yukio Himiyama (Hokkaido University of Education, Japan) has made a summary of Amur-Okhotsk international project and its development during the last years. The Amur-Okhotsk project is sited as a good example of international collaboration aimed at better understanding of the ecological situation and processes in large region of Eurasia.

3.5 – Minutes of the Joint meeting of IUGG-IGU National Committee held at INSA, New Delhi on March 16, 2009.

The joint national committee of IUGG-IGU met on March 16, 2008 from 11.00 a.m. to 13.00 in the INSA committee room, New Delhi. The committee had an hour-long interactions with the Prof. M. Vijayan, President, INSA from 10.00 to 11.00 AM.

The following members of IUGG-IGU National Committee along with a special invitee attended the meeting.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Prof. Harsh. Gupta, FNA, Hyderabad | Chairman |
| 2. Prof. R. B. Singh, DU, New Delhi | Member |
| 3. Prof. J.R. Kayal, Kolkata | Member |
| 4. Prof. D. K. Nayak, Shillong | Member |
| 5. Er. Anuj Sinha, DST New Delhi | Special Invitee |
| 6. Dr. V.M. Tiwari (NGRI, Hyderabad) | Member- Secretary |

Dr. (Brig.) B. Nagarajan, Deputy Surveyor General SOI, Hyderabad could not attend the Meeting due to unavoidable circumstances.

Prof. Harsh Gupta, FNA initiated the meeting by briefing all members about the actions taken on the recommendations of previous meeting. He made a detailed presentation about Indian initiatives on the four International Years (**IYPE, IPY, eGY, IHY**), which have drawn International attention of Indian efforts. He proposed to host a one day session on the International years at INSA. He also informed the committee that INSA is considering the committee's recommendation for the higher adherence, from the current level of Category V to Category VI for IUGG commensurate with the Indian standing in the IUGG.

Committee was pleased to know a joint General Assembly of IAH (International Association of Hydrogeology) and IAHS (International Association of Hydrological Sciences) is being organized at Hyderabad in September 2009. This would give a boost for Indian bid for General Assembly of IUGG-2015. Committee proposed that we should start preparing for bidding IUGG-2015 in the beginning of 2010.

Prof. Gupta informed that India has made a very competitive bid for the IPO for the recently launched programme, Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) of ICSU at INCOIS, Hyderabad.

Er. Anuj Sinha, head, RVPSP, DST, New Delhi attended the meeting as special invitee and talked about DST outreach activities on IYPE. Committee applauded the efforts put up by DST on national mission kind of effort to educate students and common man about mother Earth, its resources and challenges ahead due to climatic changes etc. He informed that DST had several gigantic programmes, some of them still running across the country about themes of IYPE. For example eight video films on Planet Earth were telecasted and community radio programme, science exhibition on wheel (Science Rail) are still running.

Dr. J.R. Kayal suggested evolving programmes, specially oriented to the school children, and pleaded that committee should consider recommending to DST and other government organisations commissioning such initiative.

Prof. R. B. Singh and Prof. D.K. Nayak informed about IGU general Assembly held in Tunisia during August 12-15, 2008 and submission of the National report. Prof. R. B. Singh has been elected as vice chair to the one of the section of IGU. Committee congratulated Prof. Singh and also recommended to update the list of Indian scientists holding positions in the ISCU bodies. One such list is now enclosed (appendix I). Prof. Nayak brought the attention of committee about fewer (9) Indian participating in IGU general assembly. Although INSA had supported more than 90% of total applicant but all could not attend due to the unavailability of remaining support from DST etc. Prof. Gupta assured the members to bring this matter to INSA, as the INSA committee on ICSU had recommended a single window sponsorship, which was also agreed in principle.

The committee noted that the *American Geophysical Union* had honoured Prof. Harsh Gupta with **Waldo E. Smith Medal** one of its highest honours and also elected him as the Fellow of *American Geophysical Union* last year. All members congratulated him for this honour, received by first Indian geophysicist.

The Committee once again discussed the structure of the national committee in the view of eight associations of IUGG, including the recent one on Cryosphere. Committee agreed that few more names must be included so that every sphere of the IUGG is represented. Committee had suggested the following names

Dr. D K Srivastava, Dy DG Head, Glaciology, GSI

Dr. Purnima Jalihal, Scientist 'F', NIOT, Chennai

Dr. V.M. Tiwari suggested that committee should nominate scientists to the general assemblies of different associations of IUGG (IAG, IAGA, IAHS etc) to be held this year. He also suggested that non ICSU meetings, like AGU fall meeting, meetings of AOGS, EGU could be considered for sponsoring as they are one of the largest international congregations of geoscientists.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.

Prof. Harsh Gupta, NGRI, Hyderabad, Vice President, IUGG, Life Bureau member ILP (IASPEI)

Prof P. Rajendra Prasad, Andhra University, Viskhapatnam, IAHS Vice-President

Dr. U.C. Sharma, Centre for Natural Resources Management, Vice-President ICWQ (IAHS)

Prof. Lakshamanan Elango, Chennai, Vice-President, ICWQ (IAHS)

Dr. T. Harinarayana, NGRI Hyderabad, Executive committee member –IAGA

Dr. R.K. Chadha, NGRI, Hyderabad, Secretary General, ASC (IASPEI)

Dr. K. Sain, NGRI, Hyderabad, Member, ILP (IASPEI)

Dr. Sukanta Roy, NGRI, Hyderabad, Member, IHFC (IASPEI)

Prof. R.B Singh, Delhi University, Delhi, Vice Chair IGU Comm. Biogeography Biodiversity

3.6 – 5th Forum of the Arab Geographers, Kuwait, 5-7 April

Under the auspices of His Highness Sheikh Nasser bin Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, President of the Council of Ministers, the Kuwaiti Geographical Society in collaboration with the Department of Geography, University of Kuwait, arranged for "the fifth forum of the Arab geographers", under the slogan "the geographic dimensions of the sustainable environmental and economic development in the Arab world", during the period 5-7 / 4 / 2009.

About 370 research papers were sent to the symposium, of which 64 scientific papers were discussed by 170 researchers in 16 scientific meeting attended by scholars from 15 Arab countries. Discussed topics included theoretical, practical and technical resources related to natural and economic resources in the Arab world, with an emphasis in most of these topics on sustainable development to achieve food and water security.



Saudi Geographers have participated heavily in this forum as 13 of them assured involvement in research participation, in addition to participation of 20 attendees.

In the final adjournment of the meeting thanks were passed to the participants and appreciation to the sponsors of the event and provided recommendations as follows:

1 – work applied to support and protect environmental resources in the Arab world, particularly in the Republic of Sudan, and the rejection of all types of external domination, as Sudan is a key home to a present and future Arab food security.

2 - The need to exchange experiences between the Arab countries with regard to sustainable development to preserve the natural and historical features of great environmental and economic impact.

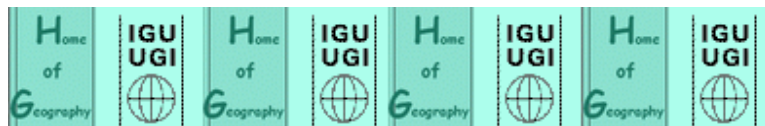
3 - to emphasize the importance of geography in the field of applied studies to guide the sustainable development in all environmental and economical fields.

4 - Work on the inclusion of geographical subjects in universities addressing the issues of sustainable development and the development of Arab awareness on ways to achieve sustainable development.

5 - to attract new technologies, including GIS and remote sensing technology and applications of agricultural machinery in the areas of environmental and economic development in all Arab countries.

6 - the formation of national research groups and the allocation of development sustainability in the development system in Arab geographical societies and to link their activities to the International Geographical Union and the relevant scientific societies.

It was on the sidelines of the Forum two social occasions were organized to deal with outside dining on the first day and the second of the Forum. Also meetings of the Coordinating Committee of the Forum were organized before and after the holding of scientific meetings to discuss topics of the host country for the six Forum of the Arabs geographers, and the adoption of the status of the geographical Arab forums, discussion of a proposal to revive the Arab Geographical Union, the establishment of geographical Arabic Olympiads, and to encourage the Arab countries that do not have geographical societies to take initiatives to start establishing such societies.



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