Toward the IGU Strategy for 2015-2022

Preamble

According to the Statutes, the IGU is an international, non-governmental, non-profit scientific organization. Its activity is based on the principles of voluntary participation, equal rights of all its members, self-governance, legitimacy and transparency.

The main general purposes of the International Geographical Union’s activity in 2015-2022 will be:

- to participate in the coordination of research, the discussion of their results and the elaboration of major international documents on global and regional problems of sustainable development; to promote studies contributing to the improvement of the quality of life, modernization of economy, social justice and environmental security by the means of regional, urban and landscape planning;
- to develop and coordinate international initiatives concerning the protection of bio- and cultural diversity, natural and cultural heritage, geographical and environmental education and the dissemination of geographical knowledge;
- to stimulate a creative interaction between geography and other Earth and Social Sciences, as well as cooperation and integration between natural science and social science elements of the discipline of geography;
- to support modernization of geographical studies through the application of the newest ICT methods, the use of data bases and integration with technical sciences;
- to promote geography in international governmental organizations and at the national level, contribute to its better visibility for decision-makers and business community, in society at large.

Strategic objectives

The IGU should be a truly global organization

- expanding membership through contacts with countries not currently associated with IGU and strengthening contact with existing members;
- improvement of cooperation with geographers from, especially, countries of tropical Africa, Latin America and other developing world regions; this should include the development of regional networks;
- development of closer contacts with IGU Commissions and Task Forces, in particular, through projects and events sponsored jointly by several commissions and, through the IGU commission excellence award, stimulating best practice;
- improvement in the profile and status of International Geographical Congresses and Regional Conferences as well as improving accessibility to early-career scholars and participants from low income countries;
- diversification and modernization of the format of IGU events with the support of IGU Commissions;
- IGU publicity materials should be made available in additional languages, especially Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic.
organization of IGU interdisciplinary and policy or theme-oriented international conferences (devoted to, by way of example, hazards and risks, energy and environment, geography and the mass media, the use of international databases, Future Earth etc.). The question arises as to how to initiate such conferences or workshops; what is required is an individual or individuals to champion such conferences, the earliest of which would be in 2017. A list of suggested themes should be drawn up in consultation with Commissions and National Committees.

More equitable functional division of labour between the members of IGU EC.

The IGU should play a leading role in territorial and environmental research

The IGU should play a more visible role among international scientific unions and associations. It should become the main global inter- and intra-disciplinary coordination platform for the leading geographical and environmental research institutes and laboratories, universities and other organizations. In order to achieve this objective, the following should be taken forward:

- development of a ‘cluster of sciences on territory’ with geography as its core;
- active participation in ICSU and ISSC and related bodies through IGU representation in their assemblies and on their committees;
- greater involvement of IGU representatives in the work of international governmental organizations and committees of the UN system;
- development of joint activities with the ICSU/ISSC Future Earth programme. This represents an opportunity for another IGU Task Force to be established. coordination of joint initiatives and projects with the major European geographical associations, in particular EUGEO and EUROGEO;
- development and launching of new IGU projects;
- exchange of information and business contacts with other scientific unions and associations working in neighboring fields including invitations to their representatives to attend IGU events and participation of IGU in their meetings;
- improved contacts with national geographical societies, research organizations, universities, ministries and governmental agencies, business associations;
- contribution to cultural diversity of geographical research;
- support for the concepts of open data and the open access publications;
- publication of a series of “IGU monographs”, the current Springer series being one case in point.

The IGU should promote geography and improved integration in the international media space

The IGU should establish successful public relations with its own community, decision makers at different levels and society at large.

This objective can be reached through:

- regular updating and modernization of the IGU website, putting on it news of interest for public received from correspondents in different countries, archival materials, references to other relevant international and national sites, bibliography and information on current IGU projects;
- improvement of the IGU brand and symbols which should be better known and easily recognizable. participation in social networks;
- realization of a special business plan for using the opportunities opened by the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the International Year on Global Understanding initiated by IGU;
development of the project “Our Sustainable Cities” (OurSus);
• establishing together with Commissions relations with international organizations of tourism and business community (for instance, in organizing the IGU award for the best tourist guide and/or other product);
• establishing together with Commissions relations with the leading institutions in the field of GIS and organization of joint events;
• improving the visibility and prestige of the main IGU awards;
• using the IGU centennial and the extraordinary International Geographical Congress in Paris for improving the image of geography and IGU; transforming it into a memorable international event.
• taking new measures for example the establishment of an award to the geographer whose work had the most visible and real impact on society, appointment of IGU spokespersons on the most important global issues; use of various memorable dates.

**Geographical education should be a focus of IGU activity**

Geographical education is vitally important for citizens of the 21st century and for all national geographical communities. Together with other international and national institutions, the IGU is responsible for keeping geography in curricula and for modernization of geographical courses in secondary school.

This objective includes:

• elaboration of the internationally approved minimum of geographical knowledge for each citizen in the 21st century;
• adoption of the new Charter of Geographical Education;
• lobbying of geography at international and national governmental organizations (UNESCO, EU, etc.);
• identification and dissemination of the best practices of teaching at secondary school and at universities; elaboration of recommendations for teaching geography at schools of management, technical universities, etc.;
• development of contacts and cooperation with international organizations of young scholars – EGEA (European Geography Association for students and young geographers) and YES (Young Earth Scientists);
• establishment of IGU summer school for young scientists; It was agreed that Soyez would approach Frauke Kraas for advice in regard to organizing and funding such events.
• organization of a special day for young geographers at each International Geographical Congress and Regional Conference;
• participation at the International Geographical Festival (FIG) in Saint Dié, France, and other similar events.