

# ***International Geographical Union***

## ***Union Géographique Internationale***



### **2015 Annual Report of the International Geographical Union**

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#### **Report on IGU Regional Conference, Moscow**

The venue for the IGU 2015 Regional Conference, held from August 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> 2015 was the Lomonosov Moscow State University. It was organized by the Faculty of Geography of that university jointly with the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Geographical Society. The conference gathered 1658 participants from 73 different countries. 764 Russian geographers accounted for 46% of participants. The largest foreign groups came from China (173), India (90), USA (57), Japan (59), Germany (38), Spain and Brazil (28 participants each).

The main themes of the 2015 Regional Conference were Urban Environment, Arctic Studies, Natural and Anthropogenic studies in a Changing Climate and transboundary conflicts. A total of 32 IGU Commissions (out of 40) arranged their sessions within the framework of the conference. A number of “thematic” sessions were held on the initiative of other scholars and research teams. Notably, there were many sessions, organized both by Commissions and groups of scholars, devoted to climate change and its diverse impacts. All in all, the scientific programme included 312 scientific sessions comprising of 1084 individual oral presentations, as well as 451 poster presentations.

The Commissions on Urban Challenges in a Complex World and on Political Geography had the largest number of sessions. Many participants attended also the sessions on distributed spatial data and GIS, geographical systems’ modeling, natural and anthropogenic risks and hazards, the impact of Olympic games and other mega-projects on environment, contemporary geographical technologies, sustainable land and water use, etc. Special

sessions were devoted to the work on the flagship IGU projects, in particular IYGU and Our Sustainable Cities.

According to a relatively recently established tradition at large IGU meetings, keynotes were a notable focal point of the conference and were attended by many participants. Professor Gordon Macbean (Canada), a well-known climatologist and President of ICSU, discussed different views on the problem of climate change and its challenges for the international scientific community and in particular the joint ICSU/ISSC programme Future Earth. Professor Georg Gartner (Austria), President of the International Cartographic Association, talked about the role of cartography in contemporary society. Professor Benno Werlen (Germany), Chair of the IGU Commission on Cultural Approach in Geography and Coordinator of the International Year of Global Understanding, informed the audience about the progress of this ambitious project initiated by IGU. Professor John O'Loughlin (USA), one of the world leading political geographers, focused his presentation on the results of a major interdisciplinary project on the impact of global change on violence in Africa. Professor Alexander Murphy, former President of the Association of American Geographers, raised the question of the future of geographical disciplines facing dynamic transformations in society and environment. Professor Solomon Kroonenberg (Netherlands) discussed the problem of geographical forecasts and predictability using the case of the Caspian Sea. Professor Valery Tishkov, the most prominent figure in the studies of identities, ethnology and cultural anthropology in Russia, entitled his lecture "Culture Complexity of Contemporary Nations". Professor Vladimir Kolosov, President of IGU, summarized specific features and the main trends in the development of geography in Russia. Professor Shirlena Huang (Singapore) offered a keynote on the achievements and challenges of the discipline in relation to Gender, as the IGU Commission on Gender in Geography was the recipient of the 2014 IGU Commission Excellence award.

The Organizing Committee established another format that facilitated the presentation of results of studies with wider interdisciplinary importance – thematic lectures. These were offered by Professors Karl Donert (UK, President of Eurogeo), Céline Rozenblat (Switzerland), Elena dell'Agnese (Italy), Takashi Yamazaki (Japan), Cosimo Palagiano (Italy), Brad Coombes (New Zealand), Melinda Laituri and Lee Schwartz (USA), and Alexander Pelyasov and Nadezhda Zamiatina (Russia). Their lectures attracted many participants and filled the venue.

A special programme was worked out for young scholars that embraced the dynamic discussion format of poster presentations, master-classes, quests and even a competition in orientation in a big city. The Commission on Geographical Education held, together with the Russian Association of Geography Teachers, a 'Day of the Geography Teacher'. Perhaps the most interesting event of this Day was an interactive round table on the perspectives of geographical education with the participation of "practitioners" – geography teachers from Moscow who shared their experience and ideas with the Commission's members. The Day was marked by the presentation of the first draft of the new Charter on Geographical Education which should be signed soon by major international geographical associations.

Another fine tradition of conferences is the holding of the International Geographical Olympiad. In 2015 it was organized in the region of Tver' (about 200 km to the north-west of Moscow). This Olympiad broke all records: it reunited 40 teams and 159 participants from 38 countries, as well as 86 coaches and observers. The tests were compiled by

geographers from Moscow State University and the University of Tver'. According to tradition, the closing ceremony of the Olympiad was held at the opening of the main Conference. The winners were greeted by the governor of Tver' region, the rectors of Moscow and Tver' universities, the members of IGU Executive and other officials. In this competition, the Polish team proved triumphant. The conference coincided with the celebration of the 170th anniversary of Russian Geographical Society which organized a reception and an exhibition in one of the finest Moscow hotels. For the first time RGS decided to award with its medals to five renowned foreign scholars from China, Finland, Hungary and the United States who have for many years cooperated with Russian colleagues in joint research projects. The medals were presented by the President of the RGS, Sergei Shoigu.

The conference in Moscow was without doubt the major event in the life of the international geographical community in 2015. It was widely covered by Russian TV and other media and certainly contributed to the greater visibility of geography and a better understanding of its role in contemporary science and society.



The venue of IGU 2015 Regional Conference, Lomonosov Moscow State University



Inauguration speech by IGU President V.Kolosov



IGU 2015, Ice Breaking party IGU 2015 - Teleconference with the International Space Station





IGU 2015. Teleconference with the International Space Station



The opening ceremony of IGU 2015. Gordon Macbean, President of ICSU, Vladimir Kotlyakov, Head of the National Committee of Russian Geographers, Vladimir Kolosov, President of IGU, Sergei Donskoi, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia, Viktor Sadovnichii, Rector of Lomonosov Moscow State University.



IGU 2015, awarding the Olympiad of Geography winners

### Highlights of the IGU Executive Committee meetings of 2015

The 2014-2016 IGU Executive Committee consists of eleven elected members:

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Two executive committee meetings were held in 2015. The first was in Chicago, in April, and the executive committee members were able to participate in the Annual Conference of the Association of American Geographers. The second meeting of the year was held prior to the Moscow regional conference in August.

The agendas of these meetings focused on the main objectives of the IGU Strategy adopted in late 2014: 1) keeping and strengthening the role of IGU as a truly global organization, increasing the number of country members, particularly from Tropical Africa and Latin America, and raising the interest in, and activities of, IGU in developed countries, and maintaining highest possible standards for IGU Regional Conferences and Congresses; 2) making IGU an important global inter- and intra-disciplinary coordination platform in geographical and environmental research, integrating IGU Commissions' work and developing interdisciplinary research by promoting problem- and region-oriented programmes; 3) promoting geography and improving its visibility in the international academic community and global society at large; 4) contributing to the improvement of geographical education. The agenda of EC sessions in 2014 comprised the adoption of new members (Myanmar and Uganda became full members in 2015) and the developing relations with major international and national geographical organizations like EGAL (*Encuentro de Geógrafos de América Latina*), Association of American Geographers, Eugeo and Eurogeo, etc. Particular attention was paid to the establishment of closer contacts with African geographers. The EC contributed to the progress of its most ambitious initiative – the proclamation of the International Year of Global Understanding and other interdisciplinary projects: the creation of the web-platform “Our Sustainable Cities” and the database of geographical journals. It was agreed that, from 2017, IGU would host so-called ‘thematic conferences’, devoted to important interdisciplinary problems such as energy and sustainable development, and the geography of peace. The preparation of the 2022 Extraordinary International Geographical Congress in Paris celebrating the IGU centennial is continuing with the participation of a special Task Force. A special Task Force was also established for Young and Early Career Geographers. It is in particular planned, in celebrating the centennial and sesquicentennial of the IGU, to publish a monograph (in two volumes) on the role of IGU in the internationalisation of science, the circulation of key ideas and the change of paradigms in geographical studies, and on the Union's long and distinguished history.

As usual, the EC approved financial reports, actively participates and controls the preparation of Regional Conferences and the Congresses, the affiliation with other organizations, cooperation and outreach, the involvement of the world geographical community in the international *Future Earth* programme, the work of a Committee on IGU awards, etc. The EC coordinates the activity of 41 IGU Commissions and Task Forces and regularly discusses their reports. A special award to the Commission of excellence established in 2014 was handled for the second time at the Regional Conference in Moscow. The EC believes it particularly important to encourage the participation of early career geographers in its events through special programmes at the Regional Conferences and Congresses and especially the creation of a Task Force consisting of young scholars, which starts its activity in 2016. Geographical education remains a priority for the EC. It is planned to adopt at the 33d International Geographical Congress in Beijing the internationally approved minimum of geographical knowledge for each citizen in the XXI century and the new Charter of Geographical Education. Its first version was presented at the 2015 Regional Conference in Moscow.



## International Year of Global Understanding



The *International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU)* is an IGU project that has been in the planning for several years. Its official proclamation is 2016, with the launch in Jena, Germany. The IYGU programme was unanimously adopted by the UNESCO General Assembly in December 2013. The Year is supported by the International Council of Science (ICSU), the International Social Science Council (ISSC), and the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH), and sponsored by a large number of organizations and institutions. The IYGU aims to bridge the gap in awareness between local actions and global effects, to

encourage everyone to make daily decisions in light of global challenges and to contribute to bottom-up initiatives that connect individual, local action to global sustainability. The IYGU intends to strengthen collaboration between natural, social, and cultural sciences, to identify how local actions yield results on a global scale, and to empower individuals to manifest local-scale change with global effects. More information about IYGU and in particular its programme are available at: <http://global-understanding.info/>. It is coordinated by Professor Benno Werlen, Chair of IGU Commission on Cultural Geography.

In 2014 the IYGU Steering Committee established cooperation with *Future Earth*, the Rio Summer Olympics 2016 and the International Olympic Committee, and the world renowned software company *ESRI*, etc. It coordinated the creation of new Continental and Regional Actions Centers, and 'hubs' of action and communication. The first main IYGU brochures will be published soon by Springer, the other follows later during 2016. The Steering Committee continued fund raising. A substantial number of conferences and IYGU presentations were held around the world and the programme is expected to accelerate and expand significantly in 2016.

## The IGU Journals Project



The project to establish a searchable global database of geographical periodicals is ongoing and the database is currently being updated. Information, including contact details, impact factor (where appropriate) and website addresses of more than 1300 journals from more than 80 countries worldwide are available online (follow the link from the IGU homepage at: [www.igu-online.org](http://www.igu-online.org)). Ton Dietz, Christian Vandermotten and Mike Meadows have recently published a paper in the new online geographical journal *Geo: Geography and Environment* entitled: 'A perspective on problems and prospects for academic publishing in Geography'.

that considers the journals project database in the wider context of publications in academic geography globally. The article is open access and may be found here: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/geo2.16/full>

### **Sustainable Cities: The IGU 'OurSus' Project**



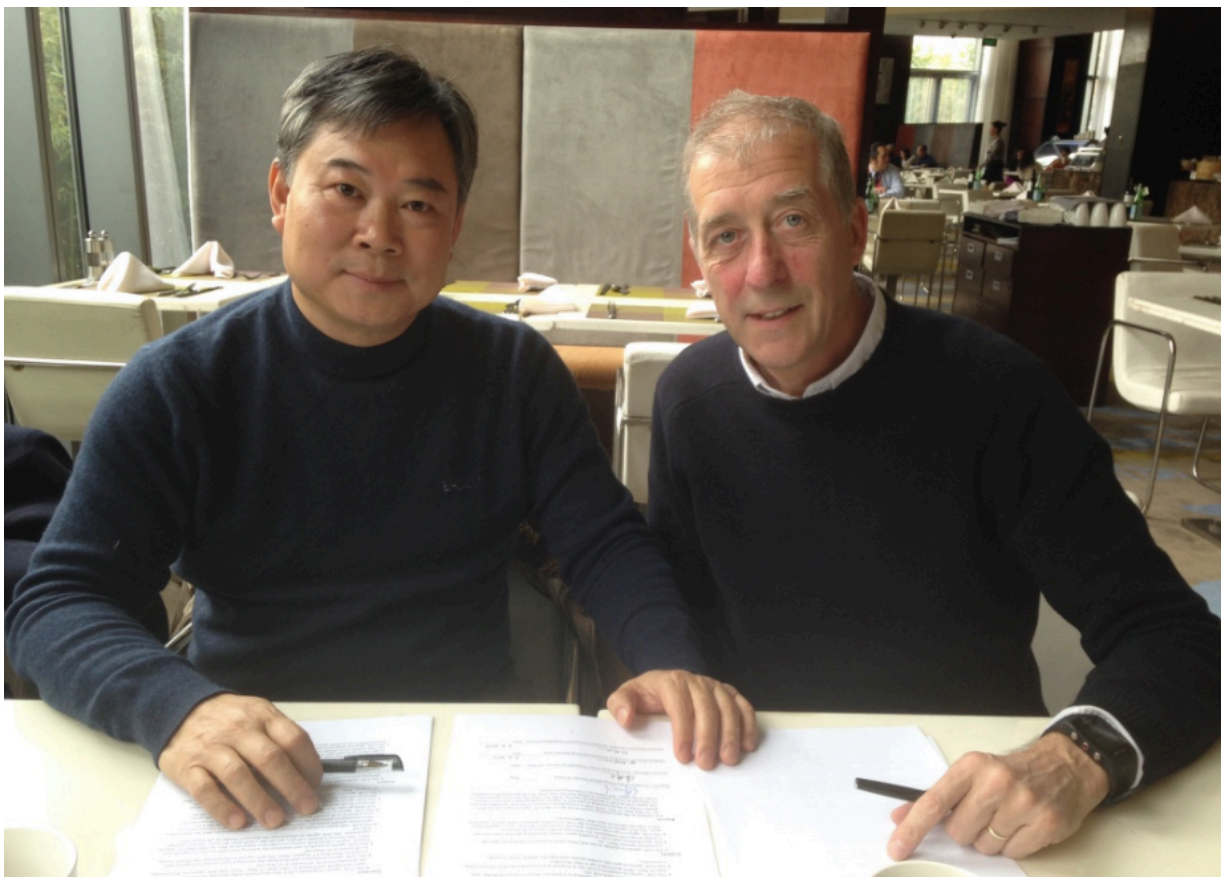
The project "Our Sustainable Cities" ('OurSus') is being implemented by Chinese and Dutch experts who try to connect academic geography with municipal authorities and business communities, and to disseminate good practice of sustainability in the cities of different size all over the world ([www.oursus.org](http://www.oursus.org) and [zh.oursus.org](http://zh.oursus.org)). *Oursus* is planned to reach full maturity in time for the 2016 Beijing Congress having a wide and internationally balanced representation of both cities and users. Between 2014 and 2016 it is anticipated that up to 70 Chinese cities will be on the website but the challenge now is to get cities from outside China represented. It is decided to establish an international steering committee for 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. As usual, four issues of the new series of the e-Newsletter were published in 2015 and can be downloaded from the website by following the newsletter link from [www.igu-online.org](http://www.igu-online.org). The IGU Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Geographical-Union/282917935136850>) - continues to attract 'likes' and the website also attracts many visitors.

## **Forthcoming events**

The next IGU Congress will be held in Beijing, China, from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2015 and hosted by the Geographical Society of China. See details at [www.igu2016.org](http://www.igu2016.org)



Professor Zhang Guoyou, Secretary-General of the Geographical Society of China, and Professor Michael Meadows, Secretary-General of the IGU, sign the Memorandum of Agreement in respect of the Beijing Congress 2016.

## **Financials**

A summary Profit and Loss statement and Balance Sheet (amounts given in US\$) for 2015 are attached to this report and indicate that the overall financial position of the IGU remains reasonably stable despite a small operating loss in the year. 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)).

# International Geographical Union

## Profit & Loss

### January through December 2015

	Jan - Dec 15
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Grants and Awards Received	
Nonprofit Organization Grants	10,245.67
Total Grants and Awards Received	10,245.67
Investments	
Banking Accounts Interest	3,359.33
Total Investments	3,359.33
Misc Credits and Refunds	4,139.61
Program Income	
Country Member Dues	102,460.51
Subscriptions	200.00
Total Program Income	102,660.51
Total Income	120,405.12
Gross Profit	120,405.12
Expense	
Awards and Grants	
IGU Travel Grants	14,723.55
Total Awards and Grants	14,723.55
Operations	
Collaboration and Outreach	
Conference, Convention, Meeting	1,684.62
Memberships and Dues	4,390.64
Travel and Lodging	10,552.38
Collaboration and Outreach - Other	1,935.28
Total Collaboration and Outreach	18,562.92
Executive Committee Meetings	31,657.13
IGU Commissions	27,536.35
IGU Honors Programs	1,383.48
Projects	
IYGU	18,194.96
Journal Evaluation	227.29
Total Projects	18,422.25
Publications	
Biobibliography Series	2,482.59
IGU Bulletin	3,049.80
Total Publications	5,532.39
Total Operations	103,094.52
Secretariat	
Banking Fees	3,446.87
Internet and IGU Web Site	2,005.77
Secretarial Assistance	958.26
Supplies	1,043.35
Total Secretariat	7,454.25
Total Expense	125,272.32
Net Ordinary Income	-4,867.20
Net Income	-4,867.20

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Cash Basis

**International Geographical Union**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As of December 31, 2015**

	<u>Dec 31, 15</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Johnson Bank IGU Endowment	59,244.40
Johnson Bank Operating Account	3,515.44
Petty Cash	590.95
SBCT Market Link	767.64
SBCT Money Market	114,170.42
SBCT Operating Account	24,509.18
Total Checking/Savings	<u>202,798.03</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>202,798.03</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>202,798.03</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	151,339.52
Unrestricted Net Assets	56,325.71
Net Income	-4,867.20
Total Equity	<u>202,798.03</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b><u>202,798.03</u></b>