International Geographical Union
Minutes of the IGU Executive Committee Meeting
Zoom EC Meeting
Tuesday, 15th September, 2020

Welcome, Meeting Logistics and Introductions

The online meeting was chaired by President Mike Meadows, who welcomed EC members, Secretary-General R.B. Singh, Past-President Yukio Himiyama, First Vice-President Iain Hay, Vice Presidents Nathalie Lemarchand, Elena dell'Agnese, Bojie Fu, Ruben Lois-González, Barbaros Gonençgil, Céline Rozenblat, Holly Barcus, along with, Assistant Secretary-General Pankaj Kumar. The Executive Committee meeting started at 10h00 GMT on Tuesday, 15th September, 2020.

Adoption of the Schedule and Agenda

The agenda was duly adopted; Gonençgil shared his screen to display the agenda and supporting documents during the meeting.

Minutes

Minutes of the IGU Executive Committee Meeting, held online on 20th and 21st August 2020, previously circulated and corrected via email, were approved. Meadows confirmed that Professor Iain Hay is appointed as IGU First Vice-President for the period 2020-22 and indicated that it is his intention to propose Professor Nathalie Lemarchand be nominated to that position in 2022.

Organization and Operations

4.01 Allocation of EC member responsibilities

Meadows tabled complete address details of IGU Executive Committee members for final checking and verification. This will be considered as confirmed for internal use by IGU EC members. An edited version is to be posted onto the IGU website (Singh). A document setting out EC Commission & Task Force responsibilities for 2020-2022 was tabled for consideration and adoption. Following discussion and minor amendments the EC approved the document (Appendix 1). Rozenblat inquired about the roles and responsibilities expected of an EC member in liaising with Commissions/Task Forces. Meadows explained the need to establish a real sense of connection with Commission Chairs and Steering Committee members. The draft list of IGU EC country liaison responsibilities for 2020-2022 was then tabled, with the addition of the Dominican Republic. Following discussion and minor amendments, the EC approved the allocation (Appendix 2). Gonençgil proposed that EC use WhatsApp to facilitate rapid communication. Meadows supported this idea and asked EC members to show their willingness to use WhatsApp, given that it facilitates quick and easy message broadcasting.
4.02 IGU communication and information (website and social media etc.)

Meadows introduced discussion on IGU communications by stressing the need to have current, accurate and authentic information on the website, Facebook, and other IGU communication networks. Details of all new Commission Chairs and updates from National Committees need to be added to the website as soon as possible. EC liaisons with Commissions, Task Forces and National Committees are important for soliciting updated information. Barcus inquired about the procedure for communicating any changes to the IGU EC. Meadows replied that all such communications should go to the Secretary-General with copies to all other EC members. Meadows asked EC members to communicate to the Secretary-General, and his Assistant any redundant or incorrect information on the website. dell’Agnese suggested placing details on the IGU website and it was noted that full contact details of all Commission/Task Force Steering Committee members need to be collected to facilitate this (Singh). Such information should also be available on each Commission or Task Force webpage. The need to update National Commission membership categories on the webpage in respect to IGU classification as Full, Associate and Affiliate members was noted. Each EC member is requested to email all Chairs of Commissions, Task Forces, and National Committees that fall under their responsibility to introduce (or reintroduce) themselves as the appropriate EC liaison. Rozenblat suggested using Dropbox or equivalent for circulating documents among EC members and offered to facilitate this and agreed to investigate a solution that would be accessible to all. If such a system is adopted, there needs to be clear indication on all documents regarding the author and date to avoid duplication and confusion. Meadows pointed out that the EC also has to focus on updating IGU website information which is made available in Spanish and French as it is not being updated regularly. Meadows also mentioned reinvigorating the IGU’s Facebook site to restore the auto update link with the IGU website. IGU also has a presence on other social platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn and Instagram that will require attention. Rozenblat suggested that the IGU website was in need of restructuring and that she would prepare a summary assessment report on the matter. Singh noted that Assistant Secretary-General Kumar was also preparing such an assessment. Singh also requested that EC members submit a brief one-page CV to Kumar for inclusion on the IGU website. Kumar suggested adding a new section entitled ‘Publications’ to the IGU website to highlight all IGU publications including the Springer and Edward Elgar series.

4.03 IGU Bank Account and Assistant Treasurer

Meadows recalled that, at the last EC meeting, Rozenblat and Barcus had agreed to explore the feasibility of hosting the IGU treasury in Switzerland or the USA respectively. Barcus reported that she had contacted appropriate people in Macalester College and they are willing and able to host the IGU operating accounts. Macalester is able to operate the account as a so-called Agency Fund and can provide extensive support such as periodic account reviews, office support for payments and receipts, maintaining monthly account statements, and annual account audits. A procurement card can also be issued. There is no cost associated with maintaining and running the account, although there would of course be banking costs associated with fund transfers to and from other countries. No interest will be earned on the account. Meadows remarked that this looks to be a very efficient and reliable way of managing IGU accounts. Rozenblat reported that she had visited two banks in Switzerland, UBS and BCB. The UBS situation appears to be very complicated, since in order to open an account, the headquarters of the organization would have to be in Switzerland, as would both the Treasurer and President. UBS also has money laundering
concerns about IGU transactions with more than 100 countries. BCB had similar concerns although they require that either the Treasurer or President be in Switzerland. Rozenblat commented that the Macalester proposal seems more attractive and appropriate than that which could be offered by a Swiss bank. Hay observed that his inquiries in Australia with commercial banks on behalf of IGU had yielded similar concerns to those uncovered in Switzerland and added that the Macalester proposal looks promising. It was agreed that Barcus be appointed as Temporary Treasurer (pending an amendment to the Statutes to formally establish the position of IGU Treasurer separately from the position of Secretary-General). Meadows asked Barcus to engage in more detailed discussions with Macalester to better understand the formalities and documentation required to transfer and operate IGU funds. Meadows thanked Rozenblat for her research with Swiss banks.

**Cooperation and Outreach**

This item was held over pending discussion of IGU strategy which is scheduled for the next EC meeting in mid-October.

**Other Business**

No items were tabled.

**Adjourn**

The Zoom meeting adjourned at 11:45 GMT on 15th September, 2020.