The online meeting was chaired by President Michael Meadows, who welcomed EC members, Secretary-General R.B. Singh, Past-President Yukio Himiyama, First Vice-President Iain Hay, and Vice-Presidents Elena dell’Agnese, Ruben Lois-González, Barbaros Gönençgil, Céline Rozenblat, and Holly Barcus, along with Assistant Secretary-General Pankaj Kumar. Apologies were received from Vice Presidents Nathalie Lemarchand and Bojie Fu for the meeting of 24th November 2020, and from Vice Presidents Elena dell’Agnese and Holly Barcus for the meeting of 8th December, 2020. The Executive Committee meeting commenced at 10h00 GMT on both Tuesday, 24th November and 8th December 2020.

Adoption of the Schedule and Agenda

The agenda was duly adopted.

Minutes

Minutes of the IGU Executive Committee Meeting, held online on 15th October 2020, previously circulated and corrected via email, were approved. The French version is to be prepared by Lemarchand.

Organization

4.01 EC meeting schedule 2021
Meadows noted that two EC meetings were already planned for 2021. The first meeting of 2021 was originally scheduled to be held in Rome at the end of March 2021 but, given the COVID-19 situation, it now seems certain that this will have to be held via Zoom. The EC meeting in association with the postponed Istanbul 34th IGU Congress remains on the calendar for now, pending a final decision on the format of the Congress.

4.02 IGU accounts transfer to US
The transfer of operating funds to the new account at Macalester College, St Paul, USA is underway and a portion of the IGU operating funds have already been received under the auspices of the acting Treasurer, Vice-President Holly Barcus. As the IGU account in South Africa is still receiving membership fees from National Committees, the account should remain active. Day-to-day accounting from the Macalester account will commence from January 2021 onward. Barcus noted that the Macalester finance department is working on a system to streamline subscription fee collections and payments.

Operations

5.01 IGU Strategy
Meadows tabled a one page draft of IGU strategy and priorities for the period 2020 to 2024. Once finalised, the document will be circulated to the broader community of geographers and posted on the website. There was discussion as to the appropriate length of the document and, while some felt more detail was required (for example by including an indication that the IGU responds to global ‘challenges’ such as climate risk etc., and indicating the IGU relationship with other GeoUnions) others argued that a more concise description would be more accessible. It was suggested that the
proposed strategy should indicate short-, medium- and longer term actions. Meadows agreed to take the points raised into consideration and circulate a further iteration for comment and final decision.

5.02 National membership database
Meadows noted that there are new Chairs of the National Committee for Peru and Japan. Kumar thanked EC members for updating the IGU National Committee details for the database and IGU website. Meadows reported that he would be attending a conference in Kampala, Uganda, co-hosted by the IGU African Studies Commission, and hoped to use the opportunity to further develop the limited IGU national membership among African countries.

5.03 C&TF updates
Meadows reported that the new chairs of the IGU Commission on Landscape Analysis and Mediterranean Basin had suggested brief online meetings with him to learn more about their responsibilities and that these would take place in the next weeks. Kumar noted that Commission and Task Force details placed on the website are currently all up to date.

5.04 IGU Honors and Awards Committee
Himiyama tabled the latest Honors and Awards Committee guidelines (revised on 15th October 2020) and an email communication from Professor Ron Abler, Chair of the committee. Arrangements for the call for 2021 nominations for the Lauréat d’Honneur and Planet and Humanity Awards were discussed. Himiyama agreed to finalise the call documents in consultation with Abler and that these, along with an accompanying email, would be distributed by the Secretary-General by the end of December with a submission deadline of end-February 2021.

5.05 IGU website/social media
Kumar reported on the activities of the IGU website/social media working group, comprising himself, Meadows, Rozenblat Hay and Gönençgil. The group met online on 11th November 2020 and considered a new draft website structure. Kumar tabled the new structure to the EC in the form of a ppt presentation and, following discussion, this was accepted. Rozenblat suggested incorporating a dedicated email address to facilitate the posting of information on the website by the IGU community at large. Meadows agreed to arrange for the new website structure to be developed and published but noted that this would not be possible before January 2021.

5.06 IGU Brochure
Meadows agreed to update the IGU Brochure and, with the help of other EC members, arrange for this to be available in French, English, Spanish and Portuguese. It was, however, recognized, that the need for printed copies of the brochure would only become relevant again once face-to-face meetings were re-established.

5.07 IGU Bulletin
On behalf Singh, Kumar noted that collation and formatting of the next issue of the IGU Bulletin was nearly finalised and would be sent to Meadows for printing in the first week of December 2020.

5.08 IGU e-Newsletter
Rozenblat is the EC member with responsibility for the IGU e-Newsletter and agreed to liaise with its long-term editor, former Vice-President Giuliano Bellezza, regarding future issues. It was agreed that the newsletter needs to be redesigned to make it more accessible and that careful consideration be given to the nature and relevance of the contents. The EC minutes would no longer be published in the newsletter but would continue to be included in the IGU Bulletin and can be posted on the website.

5.09 IGU Journals project
Fu tabled a brief report noting that he has made arrangements for the journals database to be fully updated. Once complete, this will be synchronised with the restructured IGU website.

5.10 IGU Publications
Singh reported on the publication of the latest volume in the Springer ‘Advances in Geographical and Environmental Sciences’ series, entitled Global Geographical Heritage, Geoparks and Geotourism: Geoconservation and Development. The revitalised IGU Mountain Studies Commission has proposed a volume for the Springer Sustainable Development Goals series. Hay suggested that Singh contact Springer to ensure that the ‘Advances’ series is more clearly associated with the IGU on their website. Hay agreed to contact chairs of all Commissions and Task Forces to compile a list of monographs, edited volumes, journals etc. completed under the auspices of the IGU.

5.11 Governance matters

Informal discussion between some EC members had occurred concerning the possibility of extending General Assembly voting rights to Commission and Task Force (C&TF) chairs. The structure of IGU National Committees in some countries is such that the individual(s) concerned may in practice have little involvement in IGU matters and this, coupled with the fact that the C&TFs are at the core of IGU activities, prompts the EC to reflect on IGU governance in general. Hay noted that the matter is not simply one of affording voting rights as such, rather it is to reflect on ways IGU C&TFs can play a meaningful role in governance of IGU affairs in general. Lemarchand pointed out that it is the National Committees that pay fees to the IGU and that this must always be borne in mind. Gönençgil added that the National Committees are the foundation of the IGU, as well as its funders, and that C&TFs, are established by the General Assembly (via the EC) and that they therefore should not be regarded as ‘equivalent’. Governance structures within the International Science Council, whereby both Unions and national scientific associations have equal say in making major decisions, could offer a possible alternative IGU General Assembly voting model. Himiyama cautioned, however, that a direct comparison is inappropriate, since the Unions were the founding members of ICSU and the national associations affiliated subsequently (it is the other way round in the IGU). Moreover, it is entirely feasible for the C&TFs, through their respective chairs, to make representations to the General Assembly at any time through the EC. Singh argued that the current arrangement is functioning well and that the present structure is already sufficiently participatory. Following this lengthy discussion, it was decided not to recommend changes to the IGU structure but rather to try to explain it more clearly in the form of appropriate and accessible text on the website and in the brochure. Rozenblat agreed to draft an organogram to illustrate the current IGU governance arrangements.

IGU Conferences and Congresses

6.01 IGC Istanbul 2021
Gönençgil noted that plans remain in place to host the conference in Istanbul in August 2021 and that there are no changes to the important dates and schedule announced. Abstract submissions are still open. Refunding registration fee is possible without difficulty if delegates are unable to attend. The main question concerns the format of the Congress amid the ongoing pandemic. The 34th IGC can be organised either online or face-to-face, and all necessary infrastructure is ready and available as required. Gönençgil commented that the idea of a hybrid meeting had also been raised but that, while this may work well for small meetings, there are logistical challenges in the case of larger events; these will need to be checked. Hay questioned the ways Q&A sessions might be handled in hybrid mode. Singh noted that, considering the present situation, physical meetings are not really feasible and that, even with vaccinations in several countries, travel bans may continue and many people are fearful such that participation may be substantially reduced anyway. Meadows suggested that Gönençgil meet with the local organising committee and conference facilitators to consider the practical and budgetary implications of holding IGC 2021 in online mode and that he report back before the next EC meeting. A final decision on the format of the Congress would be made at the end of February or early March 2021.

6.02 Extraordinary IGC Paris 2022
Lemarchand presented a ppt highlighting that the COVID pandemic has some consequences even for the Extraordinary IGC in Paris, 2022. The contract with the original company engaged to assist in hosting the event was terminated in June 2020 and a new contract with a different company was signed in September 2020. There are various budgetary and other implications of the pandemic that have to be dealt with. Online and hybrid options are also being explored. The idea that the Congress
is to be held in the ‘Time of Geography in the 21st Century’ suggests that a novel way of hosting the event as hybrid seems particularly appropriate. Issues such as budget, technology, synchronous or asynchronous presentations, and number and size of venues are all being considered. Changes to scheduled dates, information on the Congress website, calls for session proposals etc. all have to take uncertainty into account. The Local Organising Committee remains committed to hosting a successful IGC Paris 2022 and is willing to take on the challenge. Himiyama noted that, in the present situation, the hybrid mode of conducting conferences seems most feasible. Meadows highlighted the importance of minimising the possible increased cost implications of hosting the Extraordinary Congress in hybrid format.

6.03 IGC Dublin 2024
Nothing to report at this stage.

6.04 IGU Regional Conference 2026 call
Singh will make a call for IGU Regional Conference 2026 early in 2021.

Cooperation and Outreach

7.01 FIG
Lemarchand summarised the announcement and schedule for the next Festival International de Géographie (FIG), which will be held from 1st to 3rd October 2021 under the theme “Bodies” and the invited region of “Europe(s)”. The festival is no ordinary scientific conference: more than 150 events will be organized over three days throughout Saint-Dié and in some neighboring towns, in various formats, divided into three main categories: round tables, plenary lectures, geo-cafés. Proposals for workshops are also welcome, particularly those that focus on the theme, either specifically for teachers to encourage experimentation with pedagogical practices, or aimed at a wider audience. There are also exhibitions of photographs, documents, maps, field visits, in situ observations, collective listening, moving debates, text surveys - all possibilities are being explored. Meadows thanked Lemarchand for maintaining the important and strong IGU connections with FIG.

7.02 Night of Geography/Day of Geography
Lemarchand noted that GeoNight/GéoNuit 2021 will take place on 9th April 2021. She is working this year with Alexis Alamel from France and Massimiliano Tabusi from Italy. Tabusi is planning to develop a website that highlights information, images, videos and other materials about GeoNight/GéoNuit (the suggested title for this event going forwards) under an appropriate domain name. The website will indicate information on location (these will be mapped) and include a link to all online events. A common webform is being developed to make it easier for each local organizer to manage their respective event. Kumar agreed to assist in developing the webform and to share it on the IGU website. Gönençgil continues to explore the idea of the international ‘Day of Geography’, especially in light of the upcoming IGU Centennial in 2022.

7.03 ISC (including GeoUnions, CODATA etc.)

ISC. Meadows noted that the ISC appears to be communicating much more regularly of late. Comments on the ‘UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science’ were being sought. Given that this is an initiative aimed at democratising science, it is surely something that the IGU should support; Meadows agreed to convey this position. The ISC will hold an extraordinary General Assembly (eGA) from 1st to 5th February 2021 with the main agenda item being ISC Statutes and Rules of Procedure. It is essential that the Unions maintain their relative importance in ISC and the proposed changes must be very carefully scrutinized in that regard. Meadows will indicate his attendance as voting member on behalf of IGU, although others may register to attend if they so wish.
**GeoUnions:** The GeoUnions are scheduled to meet online on 14th December, 2020 to be attended by Meadows and Singh. Singh noted that the GeoUnions ad hoc Committee on Risk and Disaster Management has prepared a policy brief which is being tabled at the meeting. A second, ocean-related, policy brief is being prepared in line with the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Meadows thanked Singh for his lead role in developing these policy briefs.

**CODATA:** Singh attended DRUM (Digital Representation of Units of Measure) Ambassadors meeting in November and will attend the CODATA General Assembly scheduled for 15th December 2020.

**7.04 CIPSH**
The CIPSH General Assembly is scheduled for 14th to 15th December 2020, in Odense, in Denmark, but will be attended online by Himiyama, Lemarchand and former IGU Vice-President Kolosov, who is to be re-nominated as Executive Committee member. The IGU has two votes at the meeting.

**7.05 UN-GGIM**
Nothing to report at this stage.

**7.06 Eurogeo/Eugeo**
Lois-González had attended the recent meeting of Eugeo as representative of the Spanish geographical associations. Eugeo is planning a congress in the end of June 2021, from June 28 to July 1, in Prague.

**7.07 EGAL/UGAL**
Nothing to report at this stage.

**7.08 Other organizations (e.g. AAG, RGS, AGA etc.)**
Meadows had met online with the Director of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). The RGS/IBG is willing to host/co-host an exhibition in line with IGC 2022 events if desired. Singh noted that the AAG celebrated a successful Geography Awareness Week. AAG has proposed a Complimentary Advertising Exchange Program whereby AAG will promote IGU events, etc. in exchange for IGU promoting the upcoming AAG 2021 Annual Meeting. This was agreed and Singh was requested to convey this to the AAG.

**Other Business**
Lois-González tabled the draft cooperation framework agreement between the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLASCO) and the IGU. CLACSO is an international non-governmental institution with associate status in UNESCO, created in 1967 and currently brings together more than 660 research and postgraduate centers in the field of social sciences and humanities in more than 50 countries. The purpose of the Agreement is to establish the basis of inter-institutional cooperation to develop, promote and carry out research, publication and training activities in order to engage in concrete actions for the benefit of society. The Institutional Cooperation Framework Agreement will have a duration of five years from the date of its subscription, and may be renewed for a similar period, with the prior agreement of the Parties. Meadows proposed that he sign the agreement on behalf of the IGU and this was approved. The draft MOU received from Standing Committee for Gender Equality in Science (SCGES) was tabled. Several other of the GeoUnions are already co-signatories. It was agreed that Meadows would sign this on behalf of the IGU.

**Adjourn**
The meeting adjourned at 13.30 GMT on 8th December, 2020.