Welcome, Apologies and Meeting Logistics

The meeting was chaired by IGU President Michael Meadows, who welcomed EC members, Past-President Yukio Himiyama, First Vice-President Iain Hay, Interim Secretary-General Barbaros Gönençgil, Vice-Presidents Nathalie Lemarchand, Holly Barcus, Céline Rozenblat, Ruben Lois-González and Assistant Secretary-General Pankaj Kumar. Apologies were received from Vice-President Elena Dell’Agnese and Bojie Fu. Nathalie Lemarchand was thanked for facilitating the EC meeting and for excellent logistical and social arrangements in Paris. The Executive Committee (EC) meeting commenced at 10h00 local time on Tuesday 12th April, 2022.

Adoption of the Schedule and Agenda

The agenda and schedule were duly adopted.

Minutes

Minutes of the IGU EC meeting, held in hybrid format on December 7th and 8th 2021 in Rome, Italy, previously circulated and corrected via email, were approved. Lemarchand was thanked for preparing the French version. These minutes will be posted on the IGU website.

Organization

4.01 IGU Financial Status

Meadows and Barcus reported briefly on the IGU financial situation. Meadows explained that the Cape Town account is used largely for operating expenses relating to the website, EC member travel and other ad hoc payments. Given that it is associated with a debit card, it is convenient and cheaper to use this account for most such payments. Barcus reported that the account held under the auspices of Macalester College is used for three main purposes, viz. receipt of member country dues, payment of annual operating grants to Commissions and Task Forces, and payment of membership dues to, for example, ISC and CIPSH. In the last few years, as reported at the Istanbul online General Assembly, total IGU income had generally exceeded expenditure but, given that 2022 is a Congress year, this seemed unlikely this year. It was agreed to ask the General Assembly in Paris to approve that only an interim financial report be presented as there had been a comprehensive five-year report, scrutinized by the appointed Financial Committee in August 2021 and approved by the online General Assembly held in association with the Istanbul 2021 Congress. The next full report would be presented in Dublin in 2024 and will be reviewed by the appointed Finance Committee there. Meadows and Barcus will continue to monitor the situation and consider reviewing the annual membership fees, which have remained unchanged since 2008, early in 2023. It was agreed that, should the Paris Extraordinary Congress fail to break even, central funds could be applied if necessary to bring the books to balance as the event is a landmark one for the IGU.

4.02 IGU EC Members and SG Elections

Gönençgil reported on the call for nominations for the positions of Secretary-General and four Vice-Presidents. One nomination for the position of Secretary-General has been received, and six
nominations for Vice-President. The e-ballot will be implemented shortly, with ballots to be submitted by 15th May 2022 to the tellers, former Vice-Presidents Aharon Kellerman and Jarkko Saarinen. For the purposes of the election, and in light of the difficulties associated with the global COVID pandemic, Meadows suggested to be flexible or considerate while deciding upon ‘Good Standing’ member countries. The Interim Secretary General, in consultation with the Treasurer, will prepare an updated list. Gönençgil will broadcast a mail to all national committee representatives to inquire about their presence in the Paris Centennial Congress.

4.03 IGU Annual Report 2021
Gönençgil tabled the IGU annual report for 2021, which has already been distributed. It was agreed that Lemarchand would prepare a version in French for posting on the website.

4.04 EC meeting schedule 2021-22
Gönençgil noted that the next EC meeting will be held in Paris on 17th July 2022. Lois-González agreed to host a meeting in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in October or November according to the most suitable schedule for EC members. The date is to be confirmed at the EC meeting held on conclusion of the Paris Congress when the composition of the new EC is known.

Operations

5.01 IGU Declaration on the Ukraine crisis
Meadows reported briefly on the initial IGU declaration made in solidarity with Ukraine geographers in response to the invasion of their country by the Russian military. Following escalation of the situation, the EC had subsequently agreed to suspend membership of the IGU National Committee of Russia pending a formal debate and decision by the IGU General Assembly in Paris. Himiyama noted the importance of paying attention to the purposes and values of the IGU as indicated in its Statutes and made it clear that this is an extraordinary situation that requires extraordinary measures, hence the EC decision. There was considerable discussion as to how the matter can be presented to the General Assembly. Gönençgil reported that the IGU Olympiad Task Force had decided not to accept participation by a team from Russia for the 2022 iGeo.

5.02 IGU Commission and Task Force update and Annual Reports 2021
Gönençgil noted that 37 of 43 Commissions and 2 of 3 Task Forces had submitted annual reports for 2021. The report of the Commission Excellence Award sub-committee, chaired by dell’Agnese, was tabled. It recommended the IGU Commission on Sustainability of Rural Systems as the winner for 2021. It was agreed that the past three Commission Excellence Award winners (2018, 2019, 2020) would present their lectures at the Paris Extraordinary Congress and the 2021 winners at the Dublin IGU Congress in 2024. Meadows agreed to congratulate the winners and to draft a formal announcement for distribution and posting on the IGU’s social media platforms. A proposal from the Commission on Geoheritage was tabled requesting that the name be adjusted to ‘Commission on Geoheritage and Parks’. This was approved. A proposal from the Chair of the IGU Karst Commission about a young geographers’ forum was discussed. It was agreed to forward the suggestion to the Chair of the IGU Young and Early Career Task Force.

5.03 IGU Honors and Awards
Himiyama tabled the summary report of the IGU Awards Committee. Awards are being made in four categories, including two new awards. Four persons are recommended for the IGU Distinguished Practice Award, five persons for the Early Career Award, four persons for the IGU Lauréat d’Honneur (the fourth award being proposed is supernumerary in relation to the existing Guidelines) but a strong
case was made), and one person for the IGU Planet and Humanity Medal. All recommendations were accepted and Meadows agreed to draft an announcement for circulation and for the IGU social media platforms.

5.04 IGU website/social media
Rozenblat noted that the IGU website has some technical issues relating to the ‘Connect with us’ facility that needs to be corrected. It is better that this feature, which appears under several tabs, be consolidated under ‘contact’ on the top line. Meadows agreed to take steps to resolve these issues.

5.05 IGU Bulletin
Meadows reported that the volume 67-68 has now been printed for distribution to appropriate individuals and libraries in Paris and that he will attempt to have a pdf version of the next volume (69-70) in time for the Centennial Congress.

5.06 IGU e-Newsletter
As editor of the e-newsletter, Rozenblat agreed to launch the April newsletter and made a request for information pending publication and circulation by the end of the month.

5.07 IGU Publications/Elgar/Springer
Hay reported that the second volume of the Elgar series is still in progress. It was agreed that the management of the series will continue with the current arrangements (Hay and Meadows as co-editors). Himiyama reported on the Advances in Geographical and Environmental Sciences series (Springer).

5.08 UNGEGN Liaison Officer
Meadows reported that Cosimo Palagiano, co-chair of the IGU Commission on Toponymy has been formally appointed as the IGU liaison officer to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names following a request.

5.09 LinkedIn site: status and future management
Hay agreed to continue to manage the IGU profile on LinkedIn when his term of office as Vice-President concludes after the Paris Congress, but effecting a transition by extending site admin rights to Meadows, Rozenblat and Lemarchand.

IGU Conferences and Congresses

6.01 Extraordinary Geographical Congress, Paris, France, 2022
Having attended a meeting with the Local Organizing Committee the day before, the EC was fully appraised of progress regarding the upcoming Congress. Thus far, approximately 1800 registrations have been received, the vast majority of which are on-site participants, with more expected in due course, and there are more than 250 confirmed sessions. Meadows requested that a slot for the IGU Commission and Task Force Chairs to be reserved, as well as one for the Commonwealth Geographical Bureau. The names of VIP guests to be invited to the opening ceremony were finalized.

Almost 160 applications for the IGU Travel Grant were received and reviewed against the appropriate criteria by a sub-committee, comprising Barcus and Hay. Ultimately, 28 of the applicants were successful, with awards varying between €450 and €600 depending on distance to travel to the Congress. In addition, the LOC also has a program of free registration grant.
In relation to iGeo, it was agreed that the Russian team will not be invited to participate in Paris. Sue Lomas, as co-chair of the Task Force, has been invited to lead the prize-giving at the Opening Ceremony.

Gönençgil agreed to compile the General Assembly agenda in consultation with Meadows and Kumar and circulate as soon as possible.

6.02 IGU Thematic Conferences
Planning for the upcoming Thematic Conference in India (Mahendragarh, India, 24th to 25th November) is in progress. The website is live and registration and abstract submission open. Vigorous attempts have been made to keep registration costs to a minimum and the fee is affordable thanks to generous government support. Training programmes (Biodiversity monitoring, Glacier studies) and pre-and post-conference field trips are also arranged. Springer-Nature has indicated that it is willing to consider publishing an edited volume based on full-paper submissions.

Milan (March 2023) and Osaka (August 2023) IGU thematic conferences are still in the preparation stage but no further information is available at the moment. A proposal for a third thematic conference in 2023, (Mexico, 20th to 23rd August 2023) entitled ‘Urban Transformations Towards Resilient Cities’ was tabled. This represents the re-scheduling of a thematic conference originally proposed in 2021 and was approved. A pre-proposal for a thematic conference on ‘Connecting Geographies from the Global South’ was tabled (February 2024) and will be formally considered for approval in due course (12 to 18 months in advance of the event).

6.03 International Geographical Congress, Dublin, Ireland, 2024
The IGC Dublin local organizing committee has circulated an update and promotional video on their progress. They are committed to further engagement after the Paris Congress.

6.04 IGU Regional Conference 2026
No further communication has been received regarding a tentative proposal from Kazakhstan to host a 2026 Regional Conference. Attempts to elicit further information from Peru regarding the Lima proposal have not proved successful. Following discussion, it was agreed that, on the basis of the information received, it would not be possible for the EC to recommend either of these proposals to host the 2026 Regional Conference. A formal bidbook has been received from the National Committee for Turkey for the event to be held in Istanbul (August 17th to 21st 2026). It was agreed, on the grounds that it had not been possible to organize either the 2020 Congress or the postponed in-person Congress in 2021, that an in-person conference in Istanbul represents an excellent opportunity for the IGU community to finally visit the city and would likely be well-supported. Given the quality of the proposal, it was agreed to recommend Istanbul as host of the IGU Regional Conference in 2026.

Cooperation and Outreach

7.01 International Science Council (ISC) Election results
The ISC maintains regular contact with the IGU through its frequent email communications and there was no further discussion on this item. In her capacity as an ISC Councillor, Maria Paradiso regularly updates the IGU President regarding developments of possible interest to IGU in particular.
7.02 GeoUnions
The GeoUnions met online on 3rd February, with Meadows and Himiyama in attendance. It is intended that the next meeting be held in person where possible in association with the IGU Extraordinary Geographical Congress. Meadows reported that there had been two meetings of the ISC Standing Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (ISC-DRR) since the Rome EC meeting attended by Himiyama (February 10th) and by himself (April 7th). Two main initiatives are underway, viz., a proposal for a special issue to the journal *Sustainability* to be entitled ‘Monitoring and predicting natural hazards and environmental risk’, and a proposal for a session at the upcoming Seventh Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2022) to be held from 23rd to 28th May 2022 in Bali, Indonesia.

7.03 UGAL/EGAL
Lois-Gonzáles noted that the next Congress will be held in San Domingo (Dominican Republic) in 2023 (end-June) and that the IGU is involved in the organization through membership of the scientific committee. The participation of members of the IGU in the event is very strongly encouraged.

7.05 RGS-IBG/RSGS
A second ‘gathering’, along the lines of the 2021 event that was held ahead of COP26 (Climate) and co-hosted by the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and the IGU took place on 30th March 2022 to discuss possible roles for geographers and actions in advance of the planned COP15 (Biodiversity). The IGU had invited Professor Keping Ma of the Chinese Academy of Sciences to present a short ‘provocation’ and Meadows had chaired two of the eight break-out sessions. IGU had assisted in distributing publicity about the event which was attended by participants from around 30 countries. Meadows further reported that planning for the joint initiative with the Open University (OU), Royal Geographical Society and the IGU entitled: ‘Thinking geographically about global debates: learning from the Global South continues, with the first annual event to showcase the new online course scheduled for 2023. The IGU will assist in identifying possible participants, whose costs will be met by the OU up to a mutually agreed annual amount.

7.05 GeoNight
Lemarchand reported that the latest edition of GeoNight had resulted in activities across 30 countries, among these an event in Kyiv, Ukraine on GeoNight, 1st April 2022. More than 50 local participants attended an online launch meeting at the start of the evening (European time). The event was promoted on the ISC website and will do so in future. The next GeoNight will be celebrated on 1st April 2023; the IGU will promote the event as usual.

7.06 UN Decade of Indigenous Languages
In association with the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, Canadian Geographic, and National Geographic, and in recognition of the commencement of the UN Decade of Indigenous Languages, the IGU had supported the *Geographical Societies Joint Declaration for Decade of Indigenous Languages* by soliciting signatories, distributing the statement on the website, and posting it on the website.

7.07 Other organizations
The next EUGEO (Association of European Geographical Societies) conference will be held in Barcelona in 2023 and a EUGEO session is planned during the Centennial Congress in Paris.

The next *Festival International de Géographie* (FIG) is planned for 30th September to 2nd October 2022 with the theme ‘deserts’ and focus country Portugal.
The opening ceremony of the UN International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainability (IYBSSD) is scheduled for 8th July 2022 at the UNESCO premises in Paris. There was discussion and agreement that it is in IGU interests to promote research and activities in relation to this topic and it represents an excellent opportunity for the IGU community to think about the role of Geography. Himiyama agreed to draft an email to the IGU Community concerning this and soliciting suggestions around possible activities. Meadows undertook to place a link to IYBSSD on the IGU website and to suggest possible geographers to speak at the opening ceremony. Himiyama agreed to draft a communication for the website and distribution to the IGU community to encourage further support.

**Other Business**

No other business was tabled.

**Adjourn**

Meadows thanked all for their attendance and, in particular, Lemarchand for logistic support and hospitality for those present in person in Paris. The meeting adjourned at 17h15 pm local time on Tuesday 12th April 2021.