**International Geographical Union**

**Minutes of the IGU Executive Committee Meeting**

**Monday, 2nd & Wednesday 4th October 2023,**

**Delhi School of Economics, New Delhi, India**

1. **Welcome and apologies**

   The meeting was chaired by IGU President, Michael Meadows (MM) who welcomed Nathalie Lemarchand (NL) as First Vice-President, Yukio Himiyama, (YH) Past-President, Barbaros Gönençgil, (BG) Secretary-General, Holly Barcus (HB) Vice-President and Treasurer; Ruben Lois-González (RLG), Yazidhi Bamutaze (YB), Phil McManus (PM), Maria Paradiso (MP) as Vice-Presidents, and Pankaj Kumar (PK) Assistant Secretary-General. Vice-Presidents Céline Rozenblat and Fu Bojie attended via an online link whenever it was possible. MM warmly thanked Assistant Secretary-General Pankaj Kumar and his local team at University of Delhi for their hard work in facilitating the EC meeting. The Executive Committee (EC) meeting commenced at 09h00 local time on both Monday, 2nd & Wednesday 4th October 2023. The IGU liaison person at INSA, Professor Rai, and Professor Anindita Data both sent their greetings.

2. **Adoption of the agenda**

   MM pointed out that this was an unusual EC meeting in that it was scheduled around an international conference and a workshop on Geoheritage, with an extended fieldtrip, kindly organized by colleagues at the University of Delhi. The opportunity to interact with local geographers in a more structured way was welcomed, and it was agreed that this is a meeting model that should be considered for future EC meetings.

3. **Minutes of the IGU EC meeting held in Stillwater, Minneapolis (US), 28th and 30th March 2023**

   Minutes of the Stillwater EC meeting in English and French, previously circulated, were reviewed and accepted following minor changes. The final versions are to be posted on the IGU website. NL pointed out that updating and finalization of the IGU handbook is still underway but should be complete by the time of the next EC meeting (BG, NL, MM) due in April 2024 in Nanjing, China.

4. **Organization**

   4.01 **Financial Report**

   The Treasurer (HB) presented a financial report. The report premised on the IGU Macalester account indicates that expenditure and income will be very close to balance this year. Further consideration of increasing national membership fees needs to be given consideration ahead of the Dublin Congress, and appropriately motivated as necessary. PM noted that IGU national membership in general needs to be reconsidered and YB suggested that the fee arrangements adopted by other Unions be investigated for comparison. It was agreed that a small subcommittee (HB, MM, BG, PM) be established to consider these issues and report back at the next EC meeting. NL noted that IGU National Committees should be encouraged to promote their own activities via the various IGU media platforms. The Paris contribution to the P&S fund will be transferred to the account in Japan (HB, YH).

   4.02 **EC meeting schedule 2024**

   MM noted that the next meeting will be hosted by Nanjing University, China (NJU). Agreed dates are: arrival 9th April 2024, EC meeting 10th and 11th, including interaction with NJU colleagues, Nanjing and Shanghai field excursion, 12th and 13th, departure 14th April 2024. For the meeting in association with the Dublin Congress, arrival 22nd August 2024, meeting 23rd and morning of 24th August, departure at the end of the Congress.

   4.03 **IGU EC Elections**

   BG noted that the call for elections of a new President, and four Vice-Presidents will be made early in January 2024, with nominations to be submitted by the end of March 2024 followed by the distribution of candidate details to the National Committees. Voting will take place at the General Assembly in Dublin.
Operations

5.01 IGU Commissions and Task Forces
The IGU Olympiad Task Force agreed to accept the EC invitation to apply for a change of status, from Task Force to that of Commission. The decision needs to be ratified by the General Assembly in Dublin. There has been no response from the Young and Early Career Geography Task Force and further communication is needed (BG). The Olympiad Task Force has requested a special grant to assist them in funding a registration system for the Indonesian Olympiad due to unexpected circumstances. The exceptional nature of the situation was acknowledged, and the transfer was approved (HB).

5.02 RSGS and Catalan Geographical Society
Both the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and the Catalan Geographical Society have confirmed their acceptance of the EC decision to establish them as Corresponding Members of the IGU. The IGU website needs to be updated to reflect their status (PK).

5.03 IGU Social Media
The appointment of Jorge Salgado of the University of Lausanne has led to a significant improvement in the IGU social media profile across all the relevant platforms. EC members are reminded of the need to be seen to be active on these platforms.

5.04 IGU Bulletin
Meadows reported that the latest volume (69-70) is finally finished and will be posted on the website in pdf format. A small number of copies (15) are to be printed for distribution on request, and for the IGU archives.

5.05 IGU e-newsletter
The editor, CR, published the latest (September) issue on time and it is widely distributed. More than 50% of the recipients open, and 40% click on at least one item. YB suggested that other EC members could contribute short updates on their work and agreed to provide this for the next issue pending approval by CR.

5.06 IGU Publications
YH reported that the IGU Springer series: *Advances in Geographical and Environmental Sciences* has several newly published volumes in 2023. The volume dedicated to RB Singh ‘Research Directions, Challenges and Achievements of Modern Geography’, edited by Jerzy Banksi and MM, is scheduled for publication before the end of the year. YH suggested that all volumes published in this series should be submitted to the IGU archives and undertook to ensure this (YH). HB noted that there are currently two proposals in the Edward Elgar series currently under review. NL reported that, unfortunately, the contribution by French-speaking geographers was no longer being considered by Elgar and will be published as a special journal issue, in English, in a European journal. The call for early career members of the editorial board of the Elsevier journal *Geography and Sustainability* has been circulated. The journal has just been informed of its first Impact Factor (9.7).

5.07 IGU Website
5.07a ‘Fake’ IGU website
The list of links has been obtained but the detailed analysis will commence shortly.

5.08 Honors and Awards
YH tabled documents received from the Chair of the Honors and Awards committee regarding the call for nominations for 2023-24 awards. The call needs to be sent as soon as possible (BG). Following a recommendation from the chair of the committee, it was agreed that EC members will not personally nominate individuals for IGU awards.

5.09 MoA for Thematic Conferences
BG tabled this document again and proposed that there should be an additional paragraph regarding
the use of the US$ 5000 subsidy. It is the EC intention that these funds be used exclusively for travel
grants to support attendance for early career participants and participants from low income countries.
This needs to be stated in the MoA. This was agreed, noting the need for consistency of the wording of
the additional text with existing guidelines for Congresses and Conferences. The additional paragraphs
were drafted (BG) and approved.

**IGU Conferences and Congresses**

6.01 **Report for Extraordinary International Geographical Congress, Paris 2022 and iGEO**

NL noted that the three planned projects designed to commemorate the Extraordinary Geographical
Congress are progressing.

6.02 **Report on the IGU Thematic Conference 4-6 April Osaka, Japan**

The report of the thematic conference was submitted by Takashi Yamazaki (Appendix I) and noted.

6.03 **IGU Thematic Conferences 6-8 June 2023, Milan – Italy**;

MP reported that the conference was held successfully. The keynote lectures were particularly well-
received, as was the idea of joint sessions between different IGU Commissions. A report on the
conference is attached as Appendix II.

6.04 **IGU Thematic Conference 20-23 August 2023, Mexico City – Mexico**

Lois-González tabled a ppt file highlighting the main features of this conference. Six IGU Commissions
were involved, with particularly strong contributions from the Urban and Tourism Commissions. There
were 76 participants from 21 different countries; participation from early career delegates was
particularly notable.

6.05 **Report on ANSO Silk Road Forum, 23-25 August 2023, Lanzhou, China**

PK tabled a short report on his engagement, as representative of IGU, in this meeting.

6.06 **UIA Associations Round Table Asia-Pacific 2023, 11–12 October 2023**

BG is in communication with the Chair of the IGU National Committee for Korea regarding this round
table and will follow up with the individual concerned.

6.07 **GeoSus2023, Beijing, China 26-29 October 2023.**

The workshop, organized by the IGU Commission on Geography for Future Earth, is very well
supported, with more than 400 abstracts submitted.

6.08 **IGU Thematic Conference, 15-17 May 2024, Quito, Ecuador**

RL_G reported that the conference website is now live with the theme: “Connecting Geographies from
the Global South”. The conference will be held at the Latin American Institute of Social Sciences
(FLACSO), in Quito, Ecuador. The Memorandum of Agreement (BG to send) will be signed in late
October (RL-G). Several EC members are planning to attend.

6.09 **International Geographical Congress, Dublin 2024**

More than 350 session proposals have been submitted and the call for abstracts will be made shortly
with a closing date of January 2024. The LOC has been in frequent contact with BG and MM regarding
progress, and all elements of the Congress appear to be progressing very well. The social media
presence is especially noteworthy.

**6.9a Travel Grants**

The Dublin LOC has their own travel grant bursary programme. Finalisation of the IGU travel grant
arrangements are to be made by the appointed subcommittee (HB, MM, YB) who will meet while in
Delhi to finalize modifications of the application form and the call for applications.
6.10 IGU Thematic Conference, 2025, Cairo, Egypt, 12th to 15th April 2025
A formal proposal has been submitted by the LOC for this conference (Appendix III). Following discussion, the EC approved the Conference and congratulated the organizers for their hard work. The chair of the LOC is to be informed and asked to clarify the issue of venue as soon as possible (BG).

6.11 IGU Regional Conference 2026 17-21 August 2026.
BG provided a brief update on this conference, indicating timelines, and that the situation is currently well on track.

6.12 International Geographical Congress, Melbourne 9-14 July 2028
PM reported that Monash and Melbourne are working together in organizing the Congress and there is a new co-leadership reflecting this partnership. The Melbourne Convention Bureau is providing support to the LOC. Next steps involve formalising the connections with various stakeholders, including the Institute of Australian Geographers. The MOU draft is to be shared in November 2023 for signature. It was noted that the website needs to be updated to reflect the finalised dates (PK).

6.13 Future Congresses and Conferences
Calls for proposals for 2030 IGU Regional Conference and 2032 IGU Congress will be made early in 2024 (BG).

Cooperation and Outreach

7.01 IYBSSD/IDSSD
YH reported that the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development IDSSD 2024-2033, which explicitly now includes the social sciences, has been approved by the UN General Assembly. The closing ceremony for the IYBSSD will take place at CERN, in Switzerland, in December 2023. NL suggested that GeoNight may be a good platform to promote the establishment of the new decade.

7.02 International Science Council
7.02a Revision of ISC Statutes and Rules of Procedure
Following circulation by the ISC on the ‘zero draft’ of the revised statutes, MM reported on the substantial discussions on this matter that had taken place via email between many Unions. Several EC members had recently met online to discuss the situation. In summarising the discussion, MM noted that there are particular concerns on the part of many Unions regarding the addition of a new category of ISC membership, and on the voting protocol relating especially to scientific matters. These concerns have been outlined in a letter to the ISC Secretariat, initially drafted by the International Mathematical Union and supported by many other Unions. It was agreed that IGU should co-sign this letter. The EC undertook also to respond directly on behalf of IGU noting issues relating to voting and around the possible risk of fragmenting scientific disciplines that the zero draft appears to pose (MM).

7.02b Standing Committee for Gender Equality in Science (SCGES)
NL reported that the Standing Committee has been established at the initiative of several international organizations and supported by the ISC to address gender inequality in science. The committee has drafted a questionnaire survey on the matter for circulation to the broader scientific community. The IGU Gender Commission is planning a Webinar for November to highlight related issues. Several other projects are still in the planning stage.

7.02c ISC-IYBSSD webinar
Geographers have presented two of these online lectures so far this year. The continuation of the series is assured for now, with YH as one of the members of the selection sub-committee. Given the establishment of IDSSD, MM agreed to request the ISC Secretariat to continue to offer infrastructural support for the series in the future.

7.02d UNEP-ISC Strategic Foresight project participation
The call for participation was circulated to the membership and several Geographers participated. IGU nominated a candidate for the UNEP-ISC Foresight Expert Panel but that nomination was regrettably, not successful.

7.02e ISC Extraordinary General Assembly 28 - 29 February 2024
MM, NL and YH will attend this online meeting as representatives of IGU.

7.02f International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) ISC membership
Encouraged by MM, the IAG has applied for membership of ISC and the Secretariat will be requesting letters of support in due course. IGU supports the application (MM).

7.02g ISC-DRR Committee
At the most recent meeting of this committee, MM made the proposal that it forge a closer relationship with the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk programme (IRDR). This has been agreed and a draft MoU is currently under discussion.

7.02h ISC Global Knowledge Dialogue, Kuala Lumpur, 6th October 2024
YH is attending this meeting as representative of the IGU. The meeting is being held under the auspices of the ISC Regional Focal Point for Asia and Pacific. Former IGU V-P Iain Hay, nominated by IGU, has been elected to the Steering Committee of the focal point.

7.03 EGAL/UGAL XIX Meeting of Geographies of Latin America and the Caribbean – EGALC
RL-G represented IGU at the opening and closing ceremonies and provided a report. There were 77 papers presented altogether, with representation from 15 Latin American countries, as well as Spain and Portugal. The next EGAL will be in Mexico City in 2025.

7.04 Geodiversity Day
YH has convened the IGU contribution to the Geodiversity Day, which takes the form of a workshop (hybrid in-person/online) that will take place at the University of Delhi on the afternoon of 8th October 2023. The programme for the workshop is attached as Appendix IV

7.05 CODATA
The CODATA General Assembly is taking place on the 27th and 28th October 2024, and will be attended by both PK and CR. The Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2027 has been circulated among the IGU community.

7.06 13th UN-GGIM session Geospatial Societies
CR is now chairing this body and attended the sessions in New York (Appendix V). Upcoming important dates include: 6-8 November 2023: Asia Pacific geospatial forum “Geo–Driven development”, Bali, Indonesia; 7-9 August 2024: 14th session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on GGIM, UN Headquarters, New York, USA; October 2024: Seventh High-Level Forum on UN-GGIM “Accelerating implementation, achieving resilience”, Mexico City (Mexico). CR reported on her efforts to build a strategy towards improving coordination between the member societies and has proposed a session for the Dublin Congress. Work is also underway to assure better communication between ISC and UN-GGIM. MM expressed his appreciation for CR’s outstanding contribution in such a short time as chair.

7.07 RGS Medal to IGU
The IGU has been awarded of a Royal Geographical Society Special Gold Medal in honour of 100 years of contributions to international geography. MM attended the RGS awards ceremony and accepted the award on behalf of the IGU; it was agreed that the medal should be showcased at the next RGS annual meeting if possible.

7.07a RGS-OU-IGU “Voices from the South” initiative
MM reported that this project is very near completion and he shared the short trailer that has been prepared to showcase the series, which will comprise six open access video films, together with a suite of supporting resources, that comprise the core of the project. A formal launch is scheduled to take
place early in 2024. MM has proposed a session at the Dublin Congress to highlight this important teaching resource that focuses on the challenges and response to climate change from the perspective of the global south.

7.08 CIPSH General Assembly and Conference
This was held from 21st to 24th August 2023 in Tokyo. Former V-P Elena dell’Agnese, as IGU nominee was elected as member of the CIPSH Executive Committee. YH was invited as a panellist at the Special Panel Session on BRIDGES, which was designed to enhance the participation of humanities in sustainability science. The Session was chaired by CIPSH President Luiz Oosterbeek and the panellists also included Steven Hartman (Executive Director of BRIDGES), Kazuhiko Takeuchi (President, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies), Fumiko Kasuga (Director, Future Earth Global Hub – Japan), and Gabriela Ramos (Assistant Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO) who regretted her absence for her sudden family tragedy. YH highlighted possible IGU contribution to BRIDGES, particularly through Commission on Global Understanding lead by its chair Benno Werlen.

7.09 IUCN initiative on Key Geoheritage Areas
The IUCN called for input to their ‘Key Geoheritage Areas: Scoping Study and Proposed Guidelines’. The call was distributed to the IGU community. MM reported that he responded in his personal capacity.

7.10 UNGEGN Session I session, New York
The Chair of the Toponymy Commission submitted a report on this (attached as Appendix VI). Information Bulletin 65 (August 2023) of the United Nations - Group of experts on Geographical Names (UN-GEGN) was recently published. The IGU Toponymy Commission actively participates in this expert group and recently published a book “Placing Names, Identities and Geography.

7.11 EUGEO 2023 (RLG)
RL-G reported that almost 800 participants from 35 countries, including some from Latin America, had participated in the meeting in Barcelona between 4th and 7th September 2023 at the Institute of Catalan Studies. More than 400 papers were delivered. NL represented IGU at the opening ceremony and RLG at the closing. The keynote address focused on the new Catalanian geography. RL-G participated in the General Assembly. The next congress will be in Vienna in 2025. EUGEO sessions are also planned at the IGU Dublin Congress.

7.12 Other events

7.12a FIG
The 2023 event (29th September to 1st October), with the designated country Chile, coincides with IGU EC meeting in Delhi and it was therefore not possible for NL to participate directly this year. Other countries participate in festivals of geography along similar lines and it was suggested that possible links with these be encouraged (NL). This issue relates to the idea of an International Day of Geography. MP suggested that IGU consider establishing a Task Force for Geography Outreach and Engagement. The theme for the next FIG will be ‘Terres’ (territory).

7.12b GeoNight 2023
Each year seems to be larger and more successful. More than 30 countries contributed to the event. The launch online was attended by NL as MM was unavailable. No date has been announced yet for the 2024 event.

7.12c AIGF
NL reported that the organization was launched in Rabat, Morocco in June with more than 200 participants from many Francophone countries, especially those in Africa. A new board was elected with Professor Papa Shako, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Senegal as President. A strong link between this fledgling organization and IGU is evident.

7.12d Congress of the African Studies Commissions in Mozambique
RL-G had attended this meeting held in Maputo from May 28th to 30th 2023 with 140 participants representing 12 countries. Most delegates were from Mozambique and South Africa. There was fruitful discussion aimed at developing stronger links between universities in the two countries.

7.12e 2024 AAG Meeting
YB noted that the efforts to establish a stronger relationship with AAG as initiated at the AAG annual meeting held in Denver 2023 need to be consolidated. HB will attend, YB may attend if he obtains funding. HB and YB will promote the IGU activities at the 2024 AAG meeting. It was agreed to ask the Dublin LOC if they plan to further promote the Congress at the AAG meeting in 2024, in which case we will consider establishing a booth at the exhibition.

7.12f Frontiers Planet Prize
MM noted that this initiative is a high profile international award now in its second year of operation. The intention is to award outstanding scientific contributions to research on planetary boundaries and sustainability. Given the clear synergies with IGU objectives, it was agreed that IGU can publicity disseminate information about the prize through its usual communication channels and to encourage nominations from geographers.

8. Other Business

8.1. Opinions on General Strategic Positioning of IGU
CR pointed out the need to discuss again the IGU Strategy in light of the many different activities. The issue is how can IGU be more visible in the international arena, and is IGU making a difference beyond our immediate community. Making the work of geographers more visible, for example in relation to sustainability, is important. MM pointed out that the work of a future Task Force, if indeed it comes into existence, on ‘Outreach and Engagement’ would contribute to such a need.

9. Adjourn
Meadows thanked all for their attendance and positive contribution. He expressed his warm appreciation to PK and his team of students for the excellent meeting arrangements and hospitality, and especially in providing the opportunity to interact with India’s community of geographers. The meeting adjourned at 12h00 local time on 4th October 2023.