

***International Geographical Union***  
**Minutes of the IGU Executive Committee Meeting**

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Online via Zoom

**1. Welcome**

The online Executive Committee (EC) meeting was chaired by IGU President Michael Meadows (MM) who welcomed Nathalie Lemarchand (NL) as First Vice-President, Past-President Yukio Himiyama, (YH), Secretary-General Barbaros Gönençgil, (BG), Vice-President and Treasurer, Holly Barcus (HB), Vice-Presidents Ruben Lois-González (RL-G), Phil McManus (PM), Maria Paradiso (MP) and Fu Bojie (FB), and Assistant Secretary-General Pankaj Kumar (PK). Apologies were received from Vice Presidents Céline Rozenblat (CR) and Yazidhi Bamutaze (YB). Comments on the agenda sent by CR were acknowledged. The meeting commenced at 12h00 GMT on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**2. Adoption of the agenda**

The circulated agenda was adopted with no additions.

**3. Commission Proposals**

MM noted that two IGU Commission proposals have been received, both emanating from China, and asked EC members to share their views on the proposals, reiterating that the EC needs to reach consensus in each case ahead of their being presented, or otherwise, to the General Assembly for formal approval.

**a) Proposal for IGU Commission on “Geographical Indications Environment & Sustainability (GIES)”**

MM briefed EC regarding the proposal for a Commission on Geographical Indications Environment & Sustainability (GIES) submitted by Prof. Chuang Liu from the Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), Beijing. BF briefly introduced the proposal, highlighting the achievements of Prof. Liu and her research team, as well as their contributions to big data science, CODATA, FAO and noted that geographical indicators link both physical and human geography in promoting local livelihoods and sustainability. The EC noted several impressive features of the proposal, in particular the big data element, which is an emerging theme that IGU needs to be aware of. Although the EC was impressed by the quality of the proposal and the topic’s clear relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals, it was agreed that it has the appearance of a substantial research proposal, rather than a Commission that the wider IGU community would find easily accessible. It was agreed, therefore, not to present this proposal to the General Assembly in Dublin. Discussion ensued as to what directions such a proposal could take. A possible alternative solution was suggested, i.e. that Professor Liu consider proposing a Commission centered on the theme of ‘Big Data in Geography’, and use the GIES theme as a core application. MM agreed to draft a response to the proposer summarizing the views expressed and justifying the EC decision.

**b) Proposal for IGU Commission on “Silk Road Civilizations and Environments” (SRCE)**

BF presented a summary of this proposal to the EC, highlighting its aims and objectives and highlighted that the broader Silk Road concept embodies both society (civilization) and environment. It was noted that the proposal emerges from a very strong and productive research group within the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Studies at CAS. Suggestions were made for refinements, including a broadening the international Steering Committee by drawing on expertise in Central Asia in particular, and also strengthening the social elements. Subject to receipt of a suitable revision, it was agreed to recommend this proposal to the upcoming General Assembly. MM agreed to draft a response to Professor Chen.

**4. IGU Ethics Guidelines**

MP introduced this item and reported that a subcommittee of the EC has prepared a draft IGU Statement on Academic Freedom and Ethics which now also incorporates impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on science, education, research, teaching and publications. She noted that former IGU First Vice-President, Professor Joos

Droogleever-Fortuijn and Professor Virginie Mamadouh had made very helpful comments to the document. The document remains work in progress and the subcommittee agreed to seek further inputs. MM undertook to edit the document further, which would be tabled again at the next EC meeting for decision ahead of posting on the IGU website.

#### **5. Proposal for Young and Early Career Geographers Task Force to be established as an IGU Commission**

MM briefed EC about the proposal from the Early Career Task Force of IGU that it take up Commission status. Noting CR's reservation, supported by several others in the EC, consensus was eventually reached that, despite some differences in the nature of activities compared to other Commissions, there is sufficient evidence to warrant Commission status. It was suggested that establishment as an IGU Commission should prompt the Chair to link any future activities with a wider range of IGU commissions and to increase the number and representation of Steering Committee members. MM agreed to draft a response to the chair summarizing EC concerns and that, following satisfactory attention to these matters, an appropriately revised proposal would be presented to the General Assembly for approval.

#### **6. Adjourn**

MM thanked all for their attendance and positive contributions. The online meeting adjourned at 14h00 GMT on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024.