



IUGS E-Bulletin #9 January 2005

First of all, the IUGS Executive Committee wishes all of you A Happy and Prosperous New Year 2005!

This issue of the International Union of Geological Sciences E-Bulletin includes recent information regarding the most important actions taken by the IUGS Executive Committee after the International Geological Congress in Florence in August

UNESCO – Division of Earth Sciences

Many of you have already heard that UNESCO has decided to abolish the position as Director of Earth Sciences after Dr. Wolfgang Eder – and the recruitment process for his successor is stopped. Although an “official press release” will not occur until this spring, it is known that the Earth Science Division’s activities will be split up into two sections: one (including IGCP, Geoparks, International cooperation, Earth observation, Capacity building) will be merged with the Division of Ecological Sciences, the other (Disaster Reduction) will go to the Division of Basic and Engineering Sciences. The official positive view is, that all Earth sciences related activities of UNESCO will be continued, the larger component within the renamed 'Division of Ecology and Earth Sciences', but, unfortunately, on (financially) lower level.

This decision by UNESCO comes as a blow to a wide community of scientists around the world. The IUGS Executive Committee find this to be very unfortunate, and do in particular worry about the long-term and successful cooperation between IUGS and UNESCO through the IGCP. After decades of high profile success in science research, this program will undergo a 50% reduction in funding from UNESCO for 2006. There are no assurances regarding the viability of the programme beyond 2006.

Apparently, only political pressure from our National Committees through State Departments or Ministries of Foreign Affairs via their official UNESCO consulates and representatives in Paris will minimize the erosion of the geosciences within UNESCO. We urge the national committees to act in order to re-establish the Earth Science Division. It is important to highlight the key role of geo-resources for the societies (oil, gas, minerals, groundwater). The time is short and the reaction from a large number of nations is needed to make UNESCO to change this unfortunate decision.

The IUGS Secretary General, President and Treasurer will meet with the Director General of UNESCO Koichiro Matsuura in February this year and discuss the future cooperation between IUGS and UNESCO Science.

Members of the IGCP Scientific Board 2005

Names of new members in italic

Chair: Prof. Sospeter Muhongo, Tanzania

Working Group 1 - Stratigraphy, Palaeontology, Sedimentology, Fossil Fuels

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Working Group 2 - Quaternary, Environmental and Engineering Geosciences

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Working Group 3 - Mineral Deposits, Petrology, Volcanology, Geochemistry

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Working Group 4 - Geophysics, Tectonics, Structural Geology

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Working Group 5 - Hydrogeology

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International Year of the Planet Earth

On August 26, 2004, the joint Council of IUGS and the International Geological Congress, together representing earth science communities in 140 countries and regions, adopted a Declaration on the International Year. Through this Declaration, UNESCO's Executive Board is invited to adopt an International Year of Planet Earth, considering that:

- the geosciences can contribute significantly to a safer, healthier and wealthier world;
- this potential contribution is seriously under-used by society and should be substantially increased;
- Proclamation of an international year under the aegis of UN member states would help the Earth sciences to make their full contribution to the sustainable stewardship of the planet.

You may have heard that we have had to reconsider the timing and strategy to be adopted in advancing the complex political process involved in placing before the General Assembly of the UN a motion for proclamation of the International Year of Planet Earth. The Management Team of the International Year has already adopted a revised timetable as it further develops its contingency plan, now geared to short-term postponement of the UN-Year proclamation from 2006 to 2007. Germany was added to the list of supporting nations (now 13 together representing about half of the world population) and the Russian Federation agreed to be one of the proposing nations.

The Science Programme of the Year continues to make progress, with a new science brochure on Hazards now available (both in printed form and on the website (www.esfs.org)). The Outreach brochure is now available on the website too. Financial support from many European Geological Surveys and from the The Ministry of Land and Resources of China to print these brochures is greatly acknowledged.

IUGS Mid-Term Strategic Plan 2001 - 2011

In 2001, the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) celebrated its 40th anniversary. Apart from looking back this anniversary provides a good time to look forward. This is particularly true for the past three years when the Union has worked hard to address the many recommendations to improve its professional performance following the report 'International Earth Science in the 21st Century; Science and organizational Strategies for the International Union of Geological Sciences' (2000). An implementation plan was published in November 2003: 'Mid-Term Vision and Strategic Action Plan' and adopted by Council in its meeting in August 2004 in Florence.

The Strategic Action Plan is an important document that requires continuous efforts of several successive terms of IUGS team. In 2006 we are midway through the Mid-Term Vision period. The Executive Committee will now evaluate the progress made since publication and perhaps adjust the goals set for 2011. The IUGS President Zhang Hongren has asked the following points are discussed during the IUGS Executive Committee meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, March 19 – 22:

1. Among the issues defined in the Plan, what have already been done and what have to be done in the four years to come?
2. What are the priorities in the next four years?
3. What is the major role of IUGS in the advancement of Geosciences?
4. What contributions can IUGS make for the interest of the majority of member countries?
5. How to better use our limited financial resources and decrease unessential expenditure?

New Editor of *Episodes*

Dr. Yang Zhenyu, China is appointed the new editor of *Episodes*. In the period 1992 - 2003 the scientific level of the journal, expressed by the SCI impact factor, rose almost five times, from 0.194 to 1,020. The Executive Committee agreed in 2002 that *Episodes* should gradually move into the direction of high quality review articles and IUGS news. Simultaneously, the *Episodes* text-processing and printing facilities were upgraded and more review articles were solicited and published. Many of you have submitted news about science and IUGS activities to *Episodes* and thereby contributed to its high standard. We hope that you also in the future are prepared to submit scientific news to *Episodes* and thereby help to maintain its high standard.

Meetings

Turin will host the 14th Meeting of the Association of European Geological Societies - MAEGS 14 "Natural hazards related to the recent geological processes and regional evolution". In order to inform about this meeting all over the world we ask you for inserting this info into your website and, if it is possible, for providing to have a link to the website: www.maegs14.com

The XII Latin-American Congress of Geology is arranged in Quito, Equador 4 – 6 May, 2005. For further information, please contact Ing. Gustavo Pinot Arteago, e-mail congresolat@cigmyp.org

24/01/05

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IUGS Vice President