



## WORDS FROM THE IUGS PRESIDENT

### PROF. QIUMING CHENG

Dear All members of IUGS,

Please accept these late-arriving thanks from me Qiuming Cheng, the newly elected IUGS President. Unfortunately, I did not have chance at the 35th IGC to express my heartfelt gratitude to the IUGS members, its' council members, and all guests who participated in the Congress and the General Assembly. First of all, I would like to thank all delegates who participated in the IUGS General Assembly and voted for the current Executive Committee. I'd like to say a big thank you to Roland, the former president and the chair of the IGCC for his professional handling of the election process and his help for EC hand-over. I also want to thank the nominating committee chaired by Jacques Charvet for the high-quality candidates proposed for the various EC positions which ensured the formation of the strong and highly committed EC team that was elected. I thank all candidates for the EC positions who were prepared to devote 4 years of their time to the Union. The valuable comments and visions presented by all candidates at the election are appreciated and should be integrated into the current term. I want to sincerely thank the Council members of IUGS who voted and chose the current EC. This EC will work hard and closely with each of you.

I also want to thank the International Association for Mathematical Geosciences (IAMG) for providing strong support and tabling the nomination of my candidacy.

Below I would like to share some of the suggestions I had proposed during my Presidential candidate address to the IUGS Council.

After so many years of participating in IUGS' activities and tracking our development, especially while serving as an invited participant in the last several IUGS EC meetings, it's clear that IUGS has been doing very well. It has played important roles in promoting the geosciences worldwide, such as Future Earth studies, IGCP, GeoParks and Resourcing Future Generations, ultimately achieving its international reputation as one of the largest scientific unions supporting more than 120 nations, 56 affiliated organizations and a million geoscientists. However, we must realize that our organization also faces huge global challenges and opportunities, particularly in finding ways to sustainably increase memberships and further improve our contributions, enhancing international influence and better serving both the science and the society. There are many opportunities; here I would just like to share with all of you a few concerns and strategies that, I believe, can be implemented collectively.



## **1. Enhancing IUGS's contributions and its role in leading global geoscience**

Resources/energy, global change, and hazards are increasingly posing risks, threatening today's human life and societal development. These Future Earth issues are not only related to complex earth systems but to their intersections with ecological and human systems. Such challenges greatly demand transdisciplinary research and global collaboration. IUGS is one of the few international unions covering almost all geoscience disciplines, and this gives IUGS unique advantages for playing leading roles in international collaboration. At the same time, facilitating cross-disciplinary and convergent research and bridging natural science, social science and engineering as well as fundamental research and solution-oriented science and technology present both a challenge and new opportunities for IUGS. Certainly, the current collaboration with other organizations including ICSU, UNESCO, and other GEOUNIONS such as IUGG has provided a solid base for further development. Under the new International Council of all Sciences that would be formed by the merging of ICSU and ISSC, excellent opportunities are opened up for IUGS to develop and lead in new comprehensive programs such as Smart Earth, big data and mitigation of hazard threats as well as cyclical planning for resources and energy.

## **2. Increasing IUGS memberships and enhancing its influence**

Size and representation of union memberships not only determine their scientific activities, quality of service and financial situation, but eventually affect the strength and influence of the union. Recently, due to various factors including global fluctuations with low prices of energy and metal products, the memberships of IUGS have been declining notably; for example, currently IUGS has only 73 nations out of 120 recognized as active members. According to the UN definition of the world's 196 nations, over 63% nations are not IUGS members and as many as 40% of these have never had any association with IUGS. This poses a huge challenge for IUGS to reverse this declining trend and to connect more countries to IUGS. I believe that this should be one of the top priorities of the new EC. However, special efforts and effective approaches are required to achieve this objective. For example, IUGS needs to find ways to demonstrate how the global earth science issues tackled by international collaboration could affect the national and regional problems that individuals or groups of nations may face. Additionally, IUGS has to convince nations and organizations of the benefits to join IUGS in order to upgrade and share new knowledge and adopt cutting-edge technology. It should not be difficult to demonstrate the critical earth science problems to any nation if we put them into the perspective of Earth tectonics and global change. However, proactive approaches and more support are needed for effective communication, networking and promotion; for example, in promoting and supporting regional/national activities of



geoscientists and networking by direct and personal communication; creating new types of memberships comprised of universities, research institutes, foundations and government and industry agencies or any organizations that recognize the mission of IUGS and want to support IUGS activities; increasing the interaction between and roles of affiliated associations, for example, joint annual or biennial meetings and regional meetings in addition to IGCs; annually identifying and recognizing the most significant advancements in the geosciences; establishing an elite membership of Union Fellows and creating prestigious awards such as “Nobel Prize in Geosciences” to recognise the world’s leading earth scientists, especially early career scientists and women who have made outstanding contributions to science and to IUGS, supporting distinguished lecturers to deliver lectures, workshops, and other short training courses in underrepresented regions and countries; and inviting more members from these regions to serve on our Council, EC, Commissions, Task groups and Affiliated Organizations, are effective ways to promote geoscience and can increase the visibility of the union in a long run.

### **3. Increase the efficiency and the quality of activities and services**

Without a motivated, energetic, and highly efficient EC team and effective communication, any proposals would only stay on a wish list. To increase the efficiency and the quality of activities and services of our EC, Commissions, task groups, the EC team should take advantage of modern communication technologies such as web-service, social media, Google earth, Big Data and cloud computation. For example, electronic voting systems, online publication for Episodes, newsletters, reports and books, networking of regional chapters, and producing a Smart (Intelligent) Earth web product by integrating One Geology, Chemical Earth, and Glass Earth for online information and decision-making services to all. To ensure the Union’s ability for business development including fund raising from memberships, conferences, publications, donations and investments, we may consider upgrading one of the positions in the secretariat office to that of director of business development.

IUGS has entered a new stage, and its prosperity depends solely upon the support of every geoscientist including you and me. Let us work together for the best of the IUGS!



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## NOTES

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