

ISC GeoUnions Steering Committee meeting

Virtual Meeting

26th January 2024 9h00 CET

Present:

Michael Meadows, MM: IGU, Chair
Johannes Mattes, JM: UIS
Ari Sihvola, AS: URSI
Lena Halounová, LH: ISPRS
Victor Chude, VC: IUSS
John Ludden, JL: IUGS
Orhan Altan, OH: ISPRS
Giuliano Manara, GM: URSI
Yukio Himiyama, YH: IGU
Alex Rudloff, AR: IUGG
Willy Benz, WB: IAU
Georg Gartner, GG: ICA
Nadja Zupan Hajna, NZH: UIS
Chris Rizos, CR: IUGG
Laura Sadori, LS: INQUA
Edoardo Costantini, EC: IUSS
Thijs van Kolfschoten, TvK: INQUA

Guest

Alik Ismail-Zadeh AIZ: ISC Foundation Fellow

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Welcome by Chair

The chair welcomed all present, especially AS and NZH, who were attending the meeting for the first time, representing URSI and UIS, respectively. The chair noted with satisfaction that all GeoUnions were represented.

2. Introduction of participants

All participants briefly introduced themselves.

3. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda, previously circulated, was adopted.

4. Approval of the minutes of the GU Steering Committee virtual meeting on 11th September 2023

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 11th September 2023 were approved with minor changes. The GeoUnions e-mail list has been reviewed and revised accordingly.

5. GeoUnions Matrix table update

The GeoUnions matrix table was updated.

6. News from the Unions

- IAU is preparing for its XXXII General Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa, from 5th to 16th August 2024.
- In August 2023, ICA held its International Congress and 19th General Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa. This year, ICA is organizing two major events: the European Cartographic Conference will take place in Vienna (Austria) in September; the Asia Cartographic Conference will take place in Hong Kong in December.
- IGU will hold the 35th International Geographical Congress in Dublin, Ireland 24th to 30th August 2024. A thematic conference, hosted by the Latin American Institute of Social Sciences (FLACSO), on “*Connecting Geographies from the Global South*” is scheduled for May 15th to 17th 2024 in Quito, Ecuador.
- INQUA held its XXI Congress in Rome, Italy, in July 2023, and this year will hold an Early Career Researchers (ECR) meeting in Goa (India).
- For ISPRS, 2024 is dedicated to the symposia held by the five Technical Commissions as follows: i) Changsha, China, 13th to 17th May 2024; ii) Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, 11th to 14th June 2024; iii) Manila, Philippines, 6th to 8th August 2024; iv) Perth, Australia, 22nd to 25th October 2024; v) Belem, Brazil, 4th to 8th November 2024.
- IUGG hosted its 28th General Assembly in Berlin, Germany, in 2023 with almost 5000 delegates in attendance. This year is a year of consolidation but there will be local symposia. IUGG is also involved in an activity associated with the ‘Planet versus Plastics’ initiative organized in association with Earth Day on 22nd April 2024.
- IUGS is holding its 79th Executive Committee meeting in association with the Geosciences for Africa event, in Nairobi, Kenya, 19th to 23rd February 2024. The next IUGS Congress is scheduled for Busan, Republic of Korea, 25th to 31st August 2024.
- IUSS will celebrate its Centennial: “*100 Years of Soil Science – Past Achievements and Future Challenges*” in Florence, Italy from 19th to 21st May 2024. There will also be an inter-congress meeting in Nanjing, China, during October 2024.
- URSI recently held its XXXV General Assembly in Sapporo, Japan, from 19th to 26th August 2023. The URSI Atlantic Radio Science Conference (URSI-AT-RASC) will be held from 19th to 24th May 2024 on the island of Gran Canaria, Spain.
- UIS reported that the 5th Asian Trans-Disciplinary Karst 2024 will be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 12th to 15th August 2024.

7. ISC Constitutional changes update

Proposed changes to the ISC Statutes and Rules of Procedure will be put to the vote at an Extraordinary General Assembly of ISC, which is scheduled virtually on 28th February 2024. AR asked if the latest version of ISC constitutional changes reflects the objections made by GeoUnions, among others, at the ISC Members mid-term meeting in Paris. MM recalled that the GeoUnions main concern was the retention of their proportional voting rights as Category I members and that there were some misgivings about the potential inclusion of national/regional scientific societies in a separate membership category. In his opinion, the problem has been solved but he asked if there are other issues to be considered including, for example, the terms of officers. Although the GeoUnions had not previously expressed a position of consensus on these matters, it was clear that there are many commonly held views. MM noted that, under the current constitutional arrangements, Category 1

members, including the GeoUnions, retain 50% of votes on non-financial matters, and our opinion is fundamental to the approval of any constitutional changes. It was agreed to hold an online meeting around the third week of February to assess the feasibility of reaching consensus among the GeoUnions with respect to the revised ISC Statutes and Rules of Procedure and the upcoming vote.

8. ISC Standing Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (ISC-DRR)

OH reported the activities of the ISC-DRR, that was started in 2020. Many members of ISC-DRR are also members of this GeoUnions Standing Committee. OH agreed to continue as ISC-DRR chair to the end of 2025. Several activities of ISC-DRR were reported, paramount among which is the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) International Program Office. This collaboration should prove highly beneficial for both parties, enhancing ISC-DRR visibility and strengthening its profile. OH noted that only seven of the ten GeoUnions have representatives in the ISC-DRR and invited the three missing Unions to indicate their representatives in ISC-DRR. EC proposed VC to represent IUSS; GG indicated commitment of ICA to participate; WB indicated that IAU will identify an appropriate representative for the committee. LH noted the need for all GeoUnions to provide information or a link to ISC-DRR on their websites.

9. IYBSSD/IDSSD ISC Distinguished Lecture Series

The International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development (IYBSSD) ended in 2023, with a closing ceremony held at CERN, Switzerland on 15th December 2023. On August 25th 2023, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming 2024-2033 as the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (IDSSD). MM commented that the GeoUnions Distinguished Lecture Series had been presented successfully in the framework of the IYBSSD but noted that ISC is not able to continue providing the necessary technical support. There was general agreement that the series should continue in the context of the IDSSD, at least for 2024. GM reported that URSI is willing to provide technical support to the initiative, providing the platform for the webinars (a Zoom platform able to support up to 500 online connections). The committee selecting the webinars comprises AIZ, YH, and GM, who graciously agreed to continue in this role. Several possible lectures for 2024 have already been identified and the committee was invited to arrange a suitable date, presenter and moderator, with the suggestion that two or three additional panellists be appointed to facilitate the discussion at the end of the webinar. MM declared his availability to become an additional member of the webinar selection committee. The new series of webinars should hopefully get underway in March 2024.

10. Any other business

JL noted that IUGS has reached its 50 years of collaboration with UNESCO, running the International Geoscience Program. JL asked if there was any possibility for other members of GeoUnions to join the Program under the supervision of GeoUnions as there is a danger the program may disappear. Wider support among the GeoUnions may be needed to secure its future. MM requested JL to circulate a one page summary document providing basic information about the initiative, including a link to the corresponding website. JL further noted his role as member of a panel of the French National Academy of Sciences that is seeking geo-engineers and geoscience professionals with competence in, for example, climate change, erosion and other environmental problems. He noted that there are indeed many such opportunities and there is a potential role for the GeoUnions in this process.

AR informed that, jointly with EGU Geological Society of London, IUGS, and AGU, IUGG has made an application for a session at the EGU General Assembly 2024, to be held in Vienna, 14th to 19th April

2024. The session is entitled “How can geoscience unions and societies effectively integrate science into global policy decisions?” Panellists are being selected. AR also noted that the EGU meeting week in Vienna (14th to 21st April) would make a suitable focus for the next meeting, or at the Centennial Celebration, or, alternatively, the Centennial Congress of IUSS, 19th to 21st May 2024. EC invited representatives of the GeoUnions to attend the Congress and that a suitable date for a GeoUnions meeting would be either the evening of the 20th or 21st May.

In response to a question about the updating of the GeoUnions website by JM, LH noted that this was underway and should be completed soon.

A general discussion followed regarding GeoUnions terms of reference and the role of the GeoUnions within and beyond the ISC. It was agreed that the matter warrants deeper consideration and time must be found at a future meeting to more fully explore the role and responsibilities of the GeoUnions both within the ISC and within the broader context of global science. AR agreed to work on a review of the GeoUnions terms of reference, in order to arrive at the definition of an “on-board” document for new members of the committee, as raised by CR.

11. Date and format of next meeting

It was agreed that the next GeoUnions meeting would be held virtually with one agenda item only (the ISC revised Statutes) during the third week of February 2024. A Doodle Poll will be circulated to fix the date of that meeting. A date for the next regular GeoUnions, probably in May in association with the IUSS Congress, will also be finalized following circulation of a Doodle Poll.