

## **MINUTES OF GEOUNIONS MEETING**

**Rome, Italy**

**25 September 2011**

**Venue: Villa Celimontana, via della Navicella 12, Rome, Italy**

**Participants:** Francois Lefevre (URSI Past President), Phil Wilkinson (URSI President), Chen Jun (ISPRS Secretary General), Orhan Altan (ISPRS President), William Cavazza (IUGS Treasurer), Harsh Gupta (IUGG President), Alik Ismail-Zadeh (IUGG Secretary General), Alberto Riccard (IUGS President), Peter Bobrowsky (IUGS Secretary General), Ian Corbett (IAU Secretary General), Ron Ablor (IGU President), Giuliano Bellezza (IGU Vice President)

**Regrets:** John Clague (INQUA Past Past President)

**Observers:** Ester Sztejn (NAS USA),

**Host:** Societa Geografica Italiana President Franco Salvatori gave thanks to Ron Ablor and others for coming to Villa Celimontana and the opportunity to host the meeting of the GeoUnions.

### **1. Introduction –**

Round table, welcoming comments by local hosts

### **2. Approval of the Agenda –**

A few additions to the schedule were proposed

### **3. Minutes of 2010 GeoUnion meeting in Paris**

The minutes of this meeting were approved. NOTE: all action items from the Paris meeting either completed or obsolete

### **4. GeoUnion Updates –**

URSI - new President Phil Wilkinson. General Assembly in Istanbul had 1300 people, next Congress will be in 2014 in Beijing. Expect 1000 people. No national committee in countries surrounding Turkey but it still worked. Good opportunity to have contacts with people in the region interested in radio science, tried to have ISPRS and IUGG people involved. Room turned out to be terrible.

ISPRS – in 2008 they established several regional representatives for areas such as Africa, South America, etc. who are charged with organizing meetings, publications, etc. Transition is slow. Next Congress in Melbourne in late August (25 Aug – 1 Sept). Registration fees will be \$800 for early and \$1100 on site.

IUGG – General Assembly was held in Melbourne, Australia, 27 June – 8 July 2011 with about 3800 participants. The Union consists of 8 international associations. Landmark was to attract earlier career scientists. 16 speakers, 40 years or younger, were invited to a Union symposium

and supported with \$1000 travel grants. New executives were elected. Next meeting in 2015 in Prague, Czech Republic. Contribution of geosciences to society. Registration fees were AU\$890 early bird, and AU\$1150 on site.

IUGS – last EC meeting in Paris in 2011, next meeting in Madrid. This is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of IUGS. Looking into the future, distributed awards, essay for young people. Next IGC is in Brisbane in 2012. Book of facts will be published. New strategic plan will be approved in Brisbane. Statutes and Bylaws are being revised. Main focus is on geoinformation and geostandards. New Initiative on Forensic Geology and new Task Group on GeoHeritage. Looking for a new Secretariat. The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of IGCP in 2012.

IAU – concentrated on following up Year of Astronomy in 2009, established an international office for development in Cape Town which will be paid by country donors after getting 40 replies; 60 national members and also get grants, money is spent on meetings annual budget is 800k euro, IYA (140 countries, mainly astronomers, 800 million participants to IYA) was a huge success they raised 670k euro to run the secretariat and 10 cornerstone projects, GA in Beijing in 2012 (Aug 20-31), expect 3000 people; they do lots of young astronomer activities

IGU – SG is Michael Meadows from Cape Town, former SG Yu Woo-ik was appointed Ambassador to China and is now Minister of Reconciliation, Tel Aviv meeting in 2010 had 500 people turn up, Tunis meeting in 2008, next meeting in Santiago in November 2011, Escuela Militaire is the location of Pinochet tortures and this is the site of the conference. August 2012 is the Congress in Cologne at the University. 4 annual regional meetings: 2013 Kyoto, 2014 Krakow, 2015 Moscow, 2016 Congress in Beijing. 2022 will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IGU. Restructuring allows them have virtual GA including voting and elections.

IUSS – no report (no representative)

GUEST Ester Szein – National Academy of Sciences, she is in charge of US national committees (4 unions, IUGG, IUGS, INQUA and IUSS) others on the board are URSI and IAU. IGU is in another disciplinary board.

## **5. IGU initiative on International Year of Global Understanding**

Ron Abler tabled brochures associated with their new initiative. Current status of fund raising? Level of support to get UN year approved? Germany withdrew offer to submit to the UNESCO Executive, but this maybe done by Korea or Monaco, perhaps will be ready by end of 2011.

**ACTION:** Ron Abler to immediately contact all of the GeoUnions regarding their official endorsement of the proposed International Year of Global Understanding.

## **6. ENHANS Project**

Alik Ismail-Zadeh reports on the success of this project. Several partners, with plans for a new book on methodology of different extreme hazards. They looked at a number of geographic regions to hold the meetings: Africa (Pretoria), North America (San Francisco), Middle East

(Antalya), Asia/Pacific (Australia), Latin America (Brazil). Lots of good participation and endorsement by the various GeoUnions. Project ends on 31 December 2011.

IRDR could take on the role of starting a major project as a continuation of this project.

ISPRS was very active in this project through SPIDER and UNOOSA.

### **7. Joint GeoUnion Actions**

Francois Lefeuvre notes that much of his concern regarding continuation of hazards projects has already been discussed. Orhan Altan then discussed the structure of ISPRS. General Assembly with 87 National members, etc. and this funnels down to a Council which does all the work thru 8 working groups. They have 8 categories of membership which translates to 8 weighted votes. They signed an agreement with Copernicus.org to elevate their publication status. Their journal is published by Elsevier (8 issues per year). Also have an open online journal. Membership (regional) may change to “individuals” will be eligible to a variety of benefits. ICSU does not allow for individual membership, so you can call this a “donation” to get around this stipulation. New strategic plan launched in 2010. Published Geoinformation for Disaster and Risk Management – this was best practices. Now they want to launch the VALID project (The Value of Geo-Information for Disaster and Risk Management - Benefit Analysis and Stakeholder Assessment) which will show the benefit of the best practices. All of this is already on the SPIDER website.

Chen Jun then introduced his Global Land Cover Mapping Project. He reviewed different global studies to date. They are using Landsat imagery with almost full coverage for 2000. For 2010 there is now 80% coverage. Verification (ground truth) is difficult in some areas of the world.

Alberto Riccardi discussed the IYPE. Supposed to have terminated 30 June 2010, which means the corporation was to have been closed at that time. Problems with BESA bank developed. 20 Feb 2011 a meeting was called by de Mulder but Unions did not attend. Issue is that IYPE has not been officially terminated, and there are legal issues arising with IYPE expenditures, etc. We need a collective GeoUnion message to send to Ed de Mulder, remove him from the Executive Director of IYPE, or inform BESA that we are not involved.

### **8. Executive Board nominations**

ICSU Statutes and Bylaws indicate there must be 2 candidates per position. One solution is to change the statutes in time for the next GA.

Hence forth the GeoUnions will nominate two candidates with due consideration for adequate representation and equal access by all the official unions appointed in the ICSU GEOCLUSTER (NOTE: some unions of our unofficial GeoUnions consortium are technically part of other ICSU clusters – e.g. IGU who are technically part of the ICSU SOCIAL CLUSTER so we need to clarify when such votes would be a conflict of interest due to double voting powers). EB members should be limited to a single three year term instead of a total of 6 years (2 terms) thus avoiding a multi-decade cycle of access.

Most GeoUnions have an official liaison to each of the ICSU regional offices.

## **9. Nomination of ICSU officers and executive board members.**

**Gordon McBean presentation on his bid for ICSU President, Past Bureau Member of IUGG.** Relationship of the unions with ICSU is important to him. New Executive Director is coming. Need a better way to track the science which is the unions. He wants to improve procedures, visibility, etc. in ICSU. Leverage the networks of each union to the advantage of ICSU.

Guoxiong We (atmospheric scientist) proposed by China for a national EB position.

Yoichi Muraoka (computer scientist) proposed by Japan for a national EB position.

Mamannamana Vijayan (biologist) proposed by India for a national EB position.

## **10. Union Members Forum (27 September)**

Program agenda was sent by ICSU for approval and additions, but we had no opportunity to produce an agenda.

We already talked about Union involvement in ICSU committees. We should continue promoting the ICSU grants program.

We should complain about the tabled “foresight” analysis which is an embarrassing fiction.

**ACTION:** Peter to compile a short 3-4 sentence for Clague to read on behalf of the GeoUnions regarding the poor agenda/structure of the Union Forum (lack of substantive union issues). The topics proposed for discussion by ICSU, although a priority to the ICSU management, are not a priority to the Unions.

## **11. ICSU GA**

There will be an opportunity to comment on behalf of the GU s during discussion time after each point.

Earth System Sustainability Initiative. ISPRS and IUGG had proposed a candidate each which was not selected. ICSU is now proposing a new scientific committee.

**ACTION:** someone should ask ICSU how do they expect the GeoUnions to contribute to this new program.

Health and Well Being in the Changing Urban Environment. ISPRS, IGU, IUGS, have been active in the initiative during the past several years. Will GUs be involved in the new scientific committee?

GCOS, GOOS, GTOS, GEO/GEOSS and GGOS. Most GeoUnions are involved independently in most of these activities.

Integrated Research Disaster Risk. Several new candidates were added to IRDR after the fact but a second call was never announced by ICSU. Original nominations included Cutter nominated by IGU, Modaressi nominated by IUGS, etc Salvano Briceno will succeed Gordon McBean as Chair of IRDR.

Program on Ecosystem Change and Society. Should leave it to each GU to decide on its own level of interest and participation.

Rio+20 (4-6 June 2012). GU think that it is important, question is what shall we do and do we want to try to do this thru ICSU? GU should engage in discussions to determine how they want to get involved.

**ACTION:** Alik will talk to Briceno if there is a way the GeoUnions can contribute to Rio+20. If the reply is positive we need to come up with 3 or 4 important issues.

Geoscience Education. URSI notes that ICSU wants to go forward with a bland proposal for scientific education. ICSU does not want to support the initiative but will endorse actions and thus benefit from any success stories.

**ACTION:** someone should ask ICSU what are they actually doing in education. Each Union has their own committee, commission, etc. involved in education.

**ACTION:** Alik to speak to McBean and Briceno about an intergovernmental assessment panel on disaster risk.

SSCIDE, WDS, CODATA. GeoUnions have been very active in the data management efforts like CODATA but the new initiatives have gone into a “black hole”. We wish them good luck.

The Unions need a real liaison between the interdisciplinary bodies and the unions, because candidates selected by ICSU to committees are no longer obligated to communicate to the unions.

**NEXT OFFICIAL MEETING:** spring of 2013 in Paris  
Ohran offers to host the next meeting in Spring of 2012.  
Prepared by P. Bobrowsky on behalf of the GeoUnions.