

Minutes

ICSU GeoUnions (GUs) Meeting

1st Session: Saturday, 16 November 2013, 8:00 - 18:00

Venue: WOW Kremlin Palace Hotel, Antalya, TURKEY

Present: Ron Abler (IGU, Past President; Chair of the GUs Steering Committee); Orhan Altan (ISPRS First Vice President; ICSU Executive Board Member); Chen Jun (ISPRS President); Ian Corbett (IAU Past Secretary General); Christian Heipke (ISPRS Secretary General); Alik Ismail-Zadeh (IUGG Secretary General; Vice Chair of the GUs Steering Committee); Ian Lambert (IUGS Secretary General); and Phil Wilkinson (URSI President).

Ron Abler chaired the meeting. Alik Ismail-Zadeh took the Minutes.

1. Tour de Table

Participants introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the Agenda.

Phil Wilkinson suggested to drop the topic related to scientific publications from the Agenda.

The Agenda was then approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2013 GeoUnions Business meeting in Paris

The Minutes were approved with no changes.

The meeting was suspended (from 9:00 till 11:00) to allow members to attend three plenary talks at the ISPRS meeting, which was concluding that day.

4. Updates from the Unions

IAU (presented by Ian Corbett)

- (1) XXVIII IAU General Assembly was held in Beijing, China, 20-31 August 2012. The XXIX IAU General Assembly will be held in Honolulu, USA, 3-14 August 2015 and organized by the American Astronomical Society (AAS). Over 4000 attendees are expected.
- (2) IAU intends to use the system of abstract handling developed by AAS at future general assemblies, subject to the agreement of the organizers.
- (3) The Union has two categories of memberships: national and individual. National members define the policy of the union, they vote on matters of finance and policy. The National members are divided into three categories: prospective members (associated with the union but do not pay a membership dues), interim members (the members pay 50% of full membership dues), and full members (100% payment of the annual dues). After a period of time their membership is suspended if they do not pay their annual dues. Individual members normally are nominated by National Members through national astronomy committees, or equivalent. In the case of individuals whose country has no nominating mechanism, a neighboring National Member or an

IAU Division can nominate an individual member. Individual members vote on scientific matters. The annual dues for a National Member is not related to the numbers of the individual members, but is arrived at by negotiation based on GDP and GDP per capita.

- (4) IAU has introduced electronic voting system which is used for internal elections and will be used for voting on scientific issues presented to the General Assembly.

IGU (presented by Ron Ablor)

- (1) In the past IGU held its regional meetings once in between International Geographical Congresses. Recently the Union decided to hold regional meeting every year: next regional meetings will be held in Krakow (Poland) in 2014 and in Moscow (Russia) in 2015. The next International Geographical Congress will be held in Beijing (China) in 2016. The attendance of the regional meetings are good in general.
- (2) The Unions has only National Members. Adhering bodies represent local scholars. The Union considers of how to deal with a membership of a group of neighboring countries.
- (3) When there is a concern at the national level regarding the payment to the Unions, one of the criteria for financial support of the union is the number of the elected people from paying countries.

ISPRS (presented by Orhan Altan)

- (1) ISPRS organized the XXII ISPRS Congress in Melbourne (Australia). The next congress will be held in Prague (Czech Republic) in July 2015.
- (2) At the Melbourne Congress the decision was taken to introduce an individual membership. There is some resistance from National Members concerning the membership: they consider that ISPRS individual members will become ISPRS without having their membership in National professional societies of photogrammetry and remote sensing.
- (3) All 8 technical commissions of ISPRS organize workshops and regional conferences in between the congresses.
- (4) In 2011 ISPRS signed an agreement with COPERNICUS to take care of abstract handling and publication of the congresses proceedings.

IUGG (presented by Alik Ismail-Zadeh)

- (1) Five scientific assemblies were held by eight IUGG Associations around the world: (i) DACA-13, a joint assembly of IACS (cryospheric sciences) and IAMAS (meteorology and atmospheric sciences), Davos, Switzerland, 8-12 July; (ii) Scientific Assembly of IAVCEI (volcanology and chemistry of the Earth's interior), Kagoshima, Japan, 20-24 July; (iii) Scientific Assembly of IAHS (hydrology), IAPSO (physical sciences of the oceans), and IASPEI (seismology and physics of the Earth's interior), Gothenburg, Sweden, 22-26 July; (iv) Scientific Assembly of IAGA (aeronomy and geomagnetism), Merida, Mexico, 26-31 August; (v) Scientific Assembly of IAG (geodesy), Potsdam, Germany, 1-6 September. IAG celebrated its 150th anniversary.
- (2) The next IUGG General Assembly will be held in Prague (Czech Republic) on 22 June – 2 July 2015. Over 5,000 attendees are expected.
- (3) IUGG held its business meetings (Bureau, Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and Science Program Committee) meetings in Prague, September 2013. Major deliveries of the meetings were: (i) ratification of establishment of the Union Commission on Climatic and Environmental Changes and the Union Working Group on History; (ii) introducing IUGG Facebook page, a central electronic library, web-conferencing software, and an online voting system; (iii) establishment of three new Union-wide awards: the Gold Medal, Fellowship, and the Early Career Scientist Award (note that most of IUGG Associations have their professional awards).

- (4) IUGG set up an ad-hoc committee to deal with the membership issues related to individual membership of the Union as well as with strengthening of the relationship between IUGG Associations and National Members of the Union.
- (5) IUGG co-sponsored fifteen scientific meetings worldwide and six geoscience education events.
- (6) IUGG continued to strengthen the cooperation with other International Scientific Unions and multi-disciplinary bodies of the International Council for Science (ICSU) as well as with the World Meteorological Organization (participating in all major events of WMO and co-organizing a joint IUGG-WMO workshop on volcanic ash propagation to be held in November 2013), the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (particularly with two of UNESCO programmes in hydrology and oceanography), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (participating in science program committee for the CTBTO Science and Technology Conference).

IUGS (presented by Ian Lambert)

- (1) The Union has 120 member countries (including inactive members).
- (2) International Geological Congresses (IGCs) are held every four years. The next IGCs will be held in Cape Town (South Africa) in 2016 and in New Delhi (India) in 2020.
- (3) IUGS is supporting its first international, inter-IGC meeting to be organized by Canada and held in Vancouver in 2018. It is hoped that other GeoUnions will be interested in organizing sessions. The general theme is expected to be resourcing future generations.
- (4) The activities of IUGS are conducted through Commissions, Task Groups and Initiatives, which have limited durations, after which they have to make significant changes to continue as an IUGS activity, or become an independent activity affiliated with IUGS. A number of very successful projects have grown out of IUGS.
- (5) There has been increasing scrutiny by funding agencies in many countries of the benefits from IUGS membership, in line with global scrutiny of expenditure.

URSI (presented by Phil Wilkinson)

- (1) General Assemblies (GAs) of URSI are held every 3 years. The next GA will be held in Beijing (China) in 16–23 August 2014. The URSI Council decided that the URSI General Assembly would be renamed General Assembly and Scientific Symposium (GASS) to make clear that scientific sessions formed an important part of the Assembly.
- (2) URSI will hold more scientific meetings (without business meetings as normally at GAs) in the years between GAs. This is partly to overcome a loss of momentum between GAs and it is hoped smaller inter-GA meetings will join these meetings thereby reducing the overall number of meetings of interest to URSI members.
- (3) URSI tries to improve the work of the Union commissions: quite often the activity of the commissions depends on the commission's chair.
- (4) URSI has National Members, and they form the URSI Council. Among other duties, the Council elects the URSI Board to manage URSI between Assemblies. A weighted voting system is used the weight depending on the subscription paid by the National member's country. Each Commission of URSI has both National members, with voting rights (unweighted), and ordinary, or individual members. The Commission National members elect the Commission Chair. All

other issues requiring a vote in the Commission, resolutions for instance, are voted on by all present at the Commission Business Meetings.

5. ICSU General Assembly (Auckland, New Zealand, 31 August – 3 September 2014)

The General schedule of the meeting, draft programs of the general assembly and the union meeting were considered.

Action: Orhan Altan to send the information on the New Zealand Science Day on 30 August 2014 to GUs as soon as it is available.

The nominations of candidates for the ICSU Executive Board were discussed. Chen Jun informed that ISPRS intends to nominate Orhan Altan for the ICSU Executive Board (as an Ordinary Member representing the ICSU Unions cluster of Earth and space sciences) for his second term. The representatives of six unions agreed that Orhan Altan, ISPRS candidate, would be the most appropriate person to be elected. Meanwhile according to the ICSU requirements, two candidates should be put on the list for each vacant position of the Executive Board.

Therefore, we need another candidate (representing the interests of GUs) to be placed on the list. If more than two candidates are nominated for the second position, an electronic voting will be organized. Two members of the Steering Committee (representing the unions which were not nominated candidates) will form a Teller Committee and inform the all Unions on the second candidate to be placed on the list of two candidates.

Also Ron Abler informed that IGU intends to nominate him for the position of the Executive Board Ordinary Member. It was proposed that IGU should nominate Ron for the position via the ICSU social sciences cluster (as IGU belongs to the social science cluster) and GeoUnions will support this nomination.

Action: Alik Ismail-Zadeh to send an e-mail to the GUs Steering Committee with a request to nominate additional candidates.

6. Membership in ICSU: Application of the International Cartographic Association to become a Union Member of ICSU

Ron Abler informed that the International Cartographic Association (ICA) applied for a Union membership of ICSU. ICSU requires three letters of support of this membership from Scientific Unions to place the application for consideration by the ICSU General Assembly. He mentioned that ICA was an Associate of ICSU since 2000. Alik Ismail-Zadeh mentioned that the IUGG Bureau considered the ICA application, and some concerns about the Union membership of ICA were raised. Namely, what was the basic motivation of ICA to become a Union member of ICSU? What changed between 2000 (when ICA became an Associate member of ICSU) and the present that ICA seeks for a Union membership of ICSU? Alik Ismail-Zadeh expressed this concern of IUGG to the ICA President at the meeting in Vienna in early September 2013 and asked him to send clarification. No clarification was received so far.

Action: Ron Abler to ask for support letters of GeoUnions.

7. Future Earth Programme

During general discussion Orhan Altan expressed the opinion of ISPRS that engineering is not included into Future Earth. Alik Ismail-Zadeh told that engineering is not covered by ICSU expertise and normally ICSU cooperate with the World Federation of Engineering Organizations. Phil Wilkinson mentioned that science education could be a good point of Future Earth. Alik Ismail-Zadeh informed that IUGG asked IUGG Past President Tom Beer to liaise with all Union Associations and Commissions and to prepare a statement IUGG contribution to the goals of the Future Earth program. Orhan Altan suggested that communications between GeoUnions on Future Earth should be coordinated. Each Union can prepare a letter to Future Earth Scientific Committee expressing how the Union can contribute to the goals of the program.

8. IUGS proposal for inclusion in the Future Earth Program

Ian Lambert presented the proposal of the new IUGS initiative on Resourcing Future Generations (RFG, see *Appendix 1*). After the presentation there was general support for the concept. Chen Jun mentioned that GeoUnions should enhance their impact through collaboration. Alik Ismail-Zadeh pointed out that the proposal should be more specific emphasizing the role of potential supporting organizations (including GUs). Also he expressed a view that the geoscience-oriented program could get low priority from the Future Earth Scientific Committee comprised by experts in environmental sciences. Ian Lambert noted that in principle support has been received from the Chair of that Committee, on the basis of the presentation sent to him. Alik Ismail-Zadeh proposed to consider alternative ways of realization of the project proposal (e.g. considering contribution of GeoUnions to scientific program on Resourcing Future Generations independent of Future Earth program). Ian Corbett proposed to send a letter to the Chair of the Future Earth Scientific Program indicating that GeoUnions will enthusiastically take part in the program.

Action: Ian Lambert to prepare a summary of the proposal for distribution to the GeoUnions for their consideration and to draft a letter to the Chair of the Future Earth Scientific Program concerning the proposal on RFG.

9. ISPRS proposal “Global Land cover information for Future Earth”

Chen Jun presented the proposal discussed earlier at the business meeting of GeoUnions in Paris in April 2013 (see the Minutes of the GUs meeting in Paris, topic 15). Chen Jun sought support of the proposal by GeoUnions and intends to apply for the 2014 ICSU Grants Programme. Interest was expressed by several Unions, particularly IGU and IUGS. Alik Ismail-Zadeh asked for a draft of the ICSU application to be distributed as soon as possible for discussion by the Unions to determine their support for the project proposal.

10. GeoUnions and ICSU Regional Offices

Phil Wilkinson informed that URSI received an invitation to participate in the ROLAC meeting to be held in Cuba. During general discussion it was expressed that ICSU Regional Offices are weakly connected to ICSU GeoUnions although the link and cooperation depend on particular tasks. There are no strongly established cooperation between the regional offices and unions.

11. Project proposal “Application of Geoinformation to Enhance Disaster and Risk Management”

Orhan Altan introduced the history of development of the cooperation with UNOOSA (U.N. Office for Outer Space Affairs) and on publication of two booklets. Orhan presented a proposal for the new book (see *Appendix 2*) and invited GUs for cooperation on the book. Alik Ismail-Zadeh asked Orhan Altan to be more specific in his request and to prepare a questionnaire on how the Unions can contribute to the booklet.

Action: Orhan Altan to send three questions related to the contribution of GUs to the development of the new booklet.

12. An intergovernmental high-level scientific body on assessment of disaster risks

Alik Ismail-Zadeh presented the history and current state of the IUGG initiative in the setting up of an intergovernmental body to assess disaster risk. The IUGG proposal concerns ICSU involvement together with existing relevant bodies of the United Nations and international institutions (UNESCO, UNISDR, UNDP, UN-SPIDER, WMO, World Bank and others) into initiation of negotiations on setting up a high-level inter-governmental body of experts to assess disaster risk. The body (e.g. panel or platform) will develop a process of assessing and synthesizing the policy-relevant results of peer-reviewed published research on (i) the understanding of the natural phenomena and the social vulnerability associated with disasters; (ii) the capability of predictive systems to disseminate timely and accurate information needed for policy and decision making; methodologies and approaches for reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience of societies; and (iii) the overall ability of societies to reduce risk (prevent, mitigate and prepare for the increasing impact of natural events). The assessment would contribute to enhance the knowledge of disaster risk at global, regional, and local levels and the awareness of the people living with risk.

At the 30th ICSU General Assembly (September 2011) IUGG had submitted a draft resolution calling for ICSU’s involvement, through the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) programme, in the setting up of an intergovernmental platform akin to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for the assessment of disaster risk. The Assembly had decided that the substance of the resolution merited consideration by the Executive Board; the Board in turn decided to invite the IRDR Scientific Committee, working with the ICSU GeoUnions, to discuss with concerned ICSU Members and relevant UN bodies the need for an Intergovernmental Platform for the Assessment of Disaster Risk.

The ICSU Executive Board (EB) considered the scoping report from IRDR related to the initiative. The EB recognized that the creation of an intergovernmental structure of the type originally proposed would require political and material support at the highest level and considered that an integrated, interdisciplinary scientific synthesis across all hazards of the state of knowledge and response, hazards’ occurrence and impacts and priorities for research in the decades to come would be important to the HFA2, the International Council for Science Members and relevant UN bodies and all governments. The preparation of such a synthesis should be carried out through scientific processes involving the IRDR, the ICSU GeoUnions and other like-minded bodies of scientists. The ICSU Regional Offices could play a role in to ensuring the global coverage of such a synthesis. An ad-hoc funding group including members of the Board would be established to render this process effective.

To prepare the synthesis report (as a background paper for the call for intergovernmental body on assessment of disaster risks) a list of potential experts was discussed. It was agreed that GeoUnions will take a part (via their experts) in the process of preparation to the document.

Also it was mentioned that a resolution should be submitted to the 2014 ICSU General Assembly in advance to be sure that it will be considered by the General Assembly.

Action: Alik Ismail-Zadeh (i) to clarify with the ICSU Secretariat about the timing for submission of the resolution for consideration at the General Assembly; (ii) to negotiate with the ICSU Executive Board regarding the synthesis report.

IUGS, IAU, and URSI to nominate an expert to participate in the drafting of the synthesis report.

13. Scientific publications

Phil Wilkinson suggested to drop the topic related to scientific publications for discussion at the meeting. He felt the GeoUnions possibly formed a niche scientific group less affected by the current changes in publications. Thus making a report based on the GUs experience is likely to be less helpful. Those present agreed on this point.

14. International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU)

Ron Abler reported on the development of the IYGU initiative on IYGU. One of the IGU's current key initiatives is to establish a UN International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU) in 2016. More information about this is available at: <http://global-understanding.info/>. Rwanda agreed to act as applicant country and submitted the proposal to the UNESCO Executive Board, which accepted it earlier this year. The UNESCO general conference should consider the proposal in a few days.

Ron Abler told that the IGU Secretariat sent a letter of invitation to GeoUnions to contribute financially to the program. IUGS agreed to pay \$3000 a year for three year. IUGG considered the request at the recent Executive Committee meeting and decided to support the initiative for the first year pending on the decision of the United Nations.

Action: Ron Abler to send a reminder about cooperation on IYGU.

The meeting was adjourned at 18:00

2nd Session: Monday, 18 November 2013, 9:00 - 11:00

Venue: WOW Kremlin Palace Hotel, Antalya, TURKEY

Present: Ron Abler (IGU, Past President; Chair of the GUs Steering Committee); Orhan Altan (ISPRS First Vice President; ICSU Executive Board Member); Chen Jun (ISPRS President); Ian Corbett (IAU Past Secretary General); Alik Ismail-Zadeh (IUGG Secretary General; Vice Chair of the GUs Steering Committee); Ian Lambert (IUGS Secretary General); Roland Oberhänsli (IUGS President); and Phil Wilkinson (URSI President).

Ron Abler chaired the meeting. Alik Ismail-Zadeh took the Minutes.

Before the session started, Ron Abler presented a souvenir to Orhan Altan thanking him for his efforts to organize this meeting.

15. Work procedure of GeoUnions

Orhan Altan presented the draft of Work procedure. After the discussed it was proposed to simplify the procedure. Ian Corbett prepared the revised draft proposal (below) for GeoUnions Procedures to be discussed till 31 December 2013 and to be accepted after that.

“GEOUNIONS PROCEDURES

Mission Statement

The GeoUnions (hereinafter GUs) is a network of representatives of the international scientific unions of the International Council for Sciences (ICSU) dealing with Earth and space sciences.

The GUs established a Steering Committee in 2004 to promote the sciences worldwide, to communicate and to coordinates scientific activities of individual unions, and to speak on behalf of GUs members to ICSU Executive Board, ICSU Members and its interdisciplinary bodies and at international level, especially to the United Nations organizations and other global stakeholders.

Membership of Steering Committee

Each member union appoints one representative to the meetings of the Steering Committee, normally the President or the Secretary General/Chief Executive Officer of that union. Each union’s representative may be assisted at meetings by other nominees of that union.

At present there are 8 members, from the following unions:

- the International Astronomical Union (IAU),
- the International Geographical Union (IGU),
- the International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA),
- the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS),
- the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG),
- the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS),
- the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), and
- the International Union of Radio Science (URSI).

New members can be invited to join at any time.

The Steering Committee controls no funds and individual unions are responsible for all expenses incurred by their representatives.

Administration

The Steering Committee appoints a Chair and a Vice Chair, normally by rotation through the unions. The appointment starts immediately after the end of the meeting of the Steering Committee where the officers were appointed and normally extends to one and half years. At the end of the second meeting, the Vice Chair becomes new Chair, and the Steering Committee appoints a new Vice Chair. The appointment cycle should normally coincide with the ICSU General Assembly and the ICSU Scientific Unions Meeting.

Chair of the Steering Committee normally chairs two successive meetings of the Committee and speaks on behalf of the GeoUnions externally after consulting with all members. The Vice Chair prepares the agenda and coordinates papers for meetings of the Steering Committee, takes Minutes of the meeting, and is responsible for maintenance of the GUs webpage.

Decisions will normally be taken by consensus. If required, voting in the Steering Committee is based each member having one voice. Decisions of the GeoUnions come into force with their approval by a majority of the members (2/3 of the membership of the Steering Committee of GUs).

Ad Hoc Committees

The Steering Committee can establish ad hoc committees on important topics of common interest. In urgent issues an ad hoc committee can be established by the Chair after consultation with the members of the Steering Committee. These committees must have clear goals and should be appointed for a limited time period. Each union may appoint a member to an ad hoc committee.

Meetings

The Steering Committee of GUs normally meets a day before the ICSU General Assemblies and Scientific Unions Meetings of ICSU. The Steering Committee may also choose to meet at other times.”

16. Web page of the GeoUnions

Alik Ismail-Zadeh presented the draft webpage of GeoUnions (see *Appendix 3*; it can be viewed at <http://test.iugg.org>). During discussion it was suggested to revise the title of the homepage incorporating “International Council for Science (ICSU)” above “GEOUNIONS”. Also it was decided to replace “Joint Board of GeoUnions” by “GeoUnions” revising relevant entries of the webpage.

Also it was discussed financial obligations of GeoUnions to maintain the webpage. It was decided that the union represented by the Vice Chair of the GUs Steering Committee will take care of the GUs webpage for the Vice Chair’s term. This will be reflected in the revised GeoUnions Procedure.

17. Election of Vice Chairperson of the Joint Board of GeoUnions

According to the GeoUnions Procedure, the “Steering Committee appoints a Chair and a Vice Chair, normally by rotation through the unions. The appointment starts immediately after the end of the meeting of the Steering Committee where the officers were appointed and normally extends to one and half years. At the end of the second meeting, the Vice Chair becomes new Chair, and the Steering Committee appoints a new Vice Chair. The appointment cycle should normally coincide with the ICSU General Assembly and the ICSU Scientific Unions Meeting.”

It was agreed that the new person to be appointed as Vice Chair should be selected before the next regular meeting of GUs in 2014 (in Auckland, New Zealand). GUs should propose names of their representatives. It was proposed to determine the unions which should get priority for the nomination. Based on the statistics (related to 2008-2013) Steering Committee was chaired by the representatives of IGU and IUSS; the position of Secretary (now Vice Chair) of the Committee was kept by the representatives of IUGG, IUGS, and IUSS. Therefore, IAU, INQUA, ISPRS and URSI should be invited to nominate a Vice Chair.

Action: Ron Abler to invite GeoUnions to nominate Vice Chair.

18. Next meeting of GUs Steering Committee

30 August 2014 would be the most appropriate day to meet in Auckland, New Zealand. But the final decision on the date and time of the meeting will depend on the schedule of the New Zealand Science Day.

Orhan Altan mentioned that at the next meeting GUs should concentrate on the business related to the ICSU general assembly and on the joint project of GUs. Phil Wilkinson expressed a concern that due to lack of time, because only a half-day meeting was being proposed, it would be difficult to consider joint activities in much detail and it might be worth holding a further GeoUnion Meeting after the ICSU Assembly. Alik Ismail-Zadeh proposed to discuss joint activities and projects electronically before the meeting in Auckland.

19. Other business

Chen Jun expressed his frustration that the discussion of joint activities do not result in actions. Ian Lambert asked on how to proceed with cooperation on the IUGS new initiative on RFG. Ron Abler mentioned that normally a joint action of GUs starts with project proposals for funding by ICSU (via Grants Programme), then some (not necessary all) unions join the proposal led by one of the members of GUs and participate in the project if successful. Orhan Altan mentioned that we need to enhance GUs cooperation by developing new proposals (e.g. ISPRS Excellent Speaker Program, or RFG). Roland Oberhänsli mentioned that IUGS would like to establish an educational program in Africa. Chen Jun emphasized that ISPRS considers that it is quite important to have involvement of GUs at scientific meetings of the unions (for example, proposing keynote speakers). Alik Ismail-Zadeh reviewed the development of GU's various initiatives since 2003. Orhan Altan considers that GUs should identify some proposals for a joint activity before the Auckland meeting in August 2014.

The meeting was closed at 11:00.