

Minutes

ICSU GeoUnions (GUs) Steering Committee Meeting

Saturday, 30 August 2014, 19:30 - 21:30

Venue: SkyCity Convention Centre, Auckland, NEW ZEALAND

Present: *Ron Abler* (IGU, Past President; Chair of the GUs Steering Committee); *Orhan Altan* (ISPRS First Vice President; ICSU Executive Board Member); *Tom Beer* (IUGG Past President); *Chen Jun* (ISPRS President); *Allan Chivas* (INQUA Past President); *Harsh Gupta* (IUGG President); *Christian Heipke* (ISPRS Secretary General); *Alik Ismail-Zadeh* (IUGG Secretary General; Vice Chair of the GUs Steering Committee); *Vladimir Kolosov* (IGU President); *Mike Meadows* (IGU Secretary General); *Stephen Nortcliff* (IUSS Past Secretary General); *Roland Oberhaensli* (IUGS President); 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.

The Agenda was approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2013 GeoUnions Steering Committee meeting in Antalya, Turkey. Review of major actions

The Minutes were approved with the changes suggested by Phil Wilkinson:

- Add to the URSI report “URSI is forming an Early Career Representative (ECR) group, two members from each of the ten Commissions. The first ten members will be elected during the Beijing General Assembly and Scientific Symposium. They will be funded to attend URSI meetings.”

Major action points were reviewed.

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

- *Unions Meeting.* The Unions meeting will be held on 31 August to discuss in detail some topics of the ICSU General Assembly.
- *Future Earth.* Harsh Gupta and Roland Oberhaensli initiated a discussion on this program and highlighted the fact that a very important component related to the physical and chemical processes within solid Earth is missing from the proposed program of Future Earth. These processes are responsible for causing earthquakes, landslides, inundations, volcanoes, providing the material for soil development within which plants grow and all related phenomena affecting environment and society. Continuously improving the understanding of these processes is essential for a better life on Planet Earth and its sustainability. It was decided that GeoUnions should raise the topic of underrepresentation of solid Earth science in the program of Future Earth both at the Unions meeting and at the General Assembly.

- *Disaster Risk Reduction.* Alik Ismail-Zadeh discussed about the IUGG, GeoUnions, and IRDR initiative on disaster risk assessment and pointed to the relevant topic of the General Assembly.
- *Candidates for ICSU Officers.* IGU nominated Ron Abler for a position of ICSU Vice President and GeoUnions agreed to vote for this nomination.
- *Candidates for ICSU Executive Board Membership.* GeoUnions nominated this time only one candidate Orhan Altan. The ICSU Secretariat and the Executive Board consider that each position for Executive Board membership should be filled by two candidates. Perhaps ICSU will approach GeoUnions with a request to nominate 2 candidates for the next election campaign.
- *Application of the International Cartographic Association (ICA) to become a Union Member of ICSU.* Ron Abler reported that ICA received a number of letters of support and everything is ready for formal election of the association to become a Union member of ICSU.



During the GeoUnions Business meeting (photo: T. Beer)

5. ICSU Grants Programme 2015

Three proposals have been briefly presented and discussed at the meeting.

5.1. Jun Chen informed that ISPRS intends to submit a grant application on supporting Future Earth with Global Geo-information. This application will seek funds for an international workshop on the same topic to be held in Beijing, China on 9-10 June 2015.

5.2. Alik Ismail-Zadeh presented a draft of the grant application prepared by IUGG and related to future Earth and space science and education, determination of strategic priority areas where the creation of new knowledge would make a significant impact on society. The brainstorming workshop is planned to be organized in the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy, on 2-7 November 2015 with the aim to disseminate the knowledge and information on Earth and space sciences, and future Earth sustainability. It will enhance the interface between geosciences community and international organizations and involve geosciences education in developing countries.

5.3. Roland Oberhaensli mentioned that the proposal is not yet ready, but will be dedicated to resourcing new generations.

6. International Years

6.1. *International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU)*

Mike Meadows reported on the recent activities of the Secretariat for the International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU). IYGU addresses the ways in which we inhabit an increasingly globalized world. How do we transform nature? How will we build new social and political relationships for the emerging global reality? Societies and cultures determine the ways we live with and shape nature. They also influence how we perceive the global consequences of our everyday behaviour. You cannot change the world if you do not understand what your daily actions mean for the world as a whole.

The UNESCO General Assembly endorsed the International Year to become a United Nations Year. The proposal for endorsement by the UN General Assembly is now submitted to the UN office in New York.

6.2. *International Year of Soils (IYS)*

Stephen Nortcliff reported on the International Year of Soils (IYS). Key objectives of the IYS have been formulated as follows: (i) to create full awareness of all stakeholders about the fundamental roles of soils for human life; (ii) to achieve full recognition of the prominent contributions of soils to food security and nutrition, climate change adaptation and mitigation, essential ecosystem services, poverty alleviation and sustainable development; (iii) to promote effective policies and actions for the sustainable management and protection of soil resources; (iv) to sensitize decision-makers about the need for robust investment in sustainable soil management activities, to ensure healthy soils for different land users and population groups; (v) to catalyze initiatives in connection with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) process and Post-2015 agenda; and (vi) to advocate rapid enhancement of capacities and systems for soil information collection and monitoring at all levels (global, regional and national).

The lead on this year is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with close collaboration with IUSS.

6.3. *International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies (IYL 2015)*

Phil Wilkinson briefly mentioned that 2015 is also U.N. International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies (IYL 2015).

7. New Booklet Project

Orhan Altan briefly presented a follow-up joint JBGIS/ICSU GeoUnions/UN OOSA Booklet Project. He mentioned that optimizing disaster risk management (DRM) with geoinformation products and services is an increasing global challenge to the scientific community. Two booklets on the topic were successfully issued, and the need for the third booklet was highlighted by the UN OOSA. The third booklet will focus on how geoinformation is utilized in the context of specific application cases. Orhan Altan will shortly distribute the time table for the preparations and how the GeoUnions can contribute to this project.

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

Stephen Nortcliff was elected Vice Chair of the GeoUnions Steering Committee. (On 9 September 2014 Stephen resigned from this position because IUSS officers decided to appoint a new person to represent IUSS.)

Alik Ismail-Zadeh assumed the position of Chair of the Steering Committee and thanked Ron Abler for chairing the Steering Committee for the last three years.

Orhan Altan thanked Alik Ismail-Zadeh for organization of the GUs meeting.

9. Next meeting of the GUs Steering Committee

Three venues to hold the next GUs meeting were mentioned. Ali Ismail-Zadeh suggested GeoUnions to meet in ICTP, Trieste (Italy) in November 2015. Chen Yun proposed that GUs can meet in Beijing in June 2015. Alternatively, Orhan Altan suggested one of the cities in Turkey. The place of the next meeting was not decided and will be decided on the outcome of both projects related to the ICSU grants.

10. Other business

Alik Ismail-Zadeh informed GeoUnions that IUGG invites representatives of GeoUnions to present a talk at a special session dedicated to major activities of GeoUnions to be organized at the IUGG General Assembly in Prague, 22 June – 2 July 2015. Tom Beer informed that ICSU asked him and Stephen Nortcliff to be Tellers at the General Assembly. A group photo was shot.

The meeting was closed at 21:40.