



## **IGU E-NEWSLETTER**

Quarterly

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*This Newsletter is circulated to more than 1500 individuals and bodies. Announcements, information, calls for participation in scientific events, programmes and projects are welcome. Please send them to [g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org](mailto:g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org) or [giuliano.bellezza@uniroma1.it](mailto:giuliano.bellezza@uniroma1.it)*

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## 1) 2013 REPORT OF FROM IGU PRESIDENT VLADIMIR KOLOSSOV

The first regional conference of three in the period between the Congresses in Cologne (2012) and Beijing (2016) was held in Kyoto on 3-9 August 2013. The conference gathered 1431 participants from 61 countries/regions, including 289 students. Such attendance is rather high for such meetings and nearly equal that at the IGU Congress in Tokyo (1980) and more than expected by the Organizing Committee. An important part of participants came from the Asian-Pacific region which justifies the very idea of regional conferences: one of their most important objectives is to contribute to networking geographers in a particular region of the world. Naturally, the largest number of participants was from Japan (688) followed by Taiwan (78), the US (70), India (55) and China (53). The Science Council of Japan provided financial support to cover all of the room charges at the center, allowing us to set a very reasonable registration fee despite the elegant facilities.

The conference's motto was "Traditional Wisdom and Modern Knowledge for the Earth's Future" which corresponded well to its main objective - examination of the relationship between society/culture and environment and the venue, the ancient capital of Japan. The opening ceremony was graced by the attendance of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino and several other distinguished guests.

The scientific programme was rather diverse: it included the sessions organized by 39 of 40 IGU Commissions and the interdisciplinary meetings held on the initiative of separate groups, key lectures of well known geographers and practitioners and special sessions devoted to the perspectives of our Union and to the main IGU interdisciplinary projects (*International Year of Global Understanding* and *Our Sustainable Cities*). To increase the number of domestic participants as much as possible, the joint sessions were organized by Japan's major geographical societies and research programs whose head investigators are Japanese geographers.

A special attention was paid to the support of young researchers. The Organizing Committee not only set the registration fee for them lower than a half of its standard amount but besides IGU grants also prepared its own 20 grants thanks to the generous financial support of the Tokyo Geographical Society and the Human Geographical Society of Japan. The authors of the best

poster presentations by young researchers received special awards at the closing ceremony. New initiatives concerning a broader involvement of young scholars in IGU activities were discussed in Kyoto, particularly through the contacts with the association of Young Earth Scientists (YES).

The Conference contributed to the development of cooperation between IGU Commissions. The total number of presentations made at the conference was 1,256: 9 at plenary sessions, 780 at commissions' sessions, 382 (254 oral and 128 poster) at general sessions, 76 at joint sessions, and 9 at other sessions. Two sessions may deserve a special mention. The first one is the special session on the status of geographical journals, the issues of their ranking and open access. It was shown that the abuse of citation indices can do particular harm to geography because of discrimination of regional studies, human geography and publications in the languages other than English. It represents a serious threat to the future of geographical departments and can undermine the personal carrier of many scholars. It was decided that IGU should sign the San Francisco Declaration and work out recommendations to national research and education governmental institutions. The second one is the session organized on the initiative of IGU Executive and devoted to the experience of geography teaching in universities.

The conference hosted the International Geography Olympiad (iGeo), a competition that gathers the winners of national Geography Olympiads. iGeo celebrated in Kyoto its 10th anniversary.

As usually, the conference included an exhibition of geographical literature, maps, atlases and multimedia products. The special exhibition "Traditional Wisdom and Modern Knowledge presented in Maps" was held in honor of the Conference: Kyoto University is famous for its excellent collection of old maps.

According to the special survey, a great majority of participants rated the conference management of the Kyoto conference very high: they noticed quick and efficient registration facilities, the work of volunteers, a user friendly Programme handbook, a memorable opening ceremony and many more.

### **IGU Executive Committee Meetings and Decisions**

The 2012-2014 IGU Executive Committee consists of eleven elected members:

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The IGU Executive Committee held two meetings in 2013: in Rohtak, India (March) and in Kyoto in August, before the Regional Conference. After the meeting in India the members of the EC addressed the National Conference on “Geoinformatics for Biodiversity and Climate Change” sponsored by the Indian National Academy of Sciences, Indian Council for Social Sciences and Research and other governmental institutions. The approved minutes of the 2013 IGU Executive Committee meetings are made available via the IGU E-newsletters at: <http://www.igu-online.org>

The agenda of these meetings and the decisions taken during them were structured along the IGU priorities for 2012-2016 adopted after the 32nd Congress in Cologne.

The first priority is to keep and to strengthen the role of IGU as a truly global organization, i.e. to increase the participation of geographers from the countries with low incomes and at the same time to make IGU attractive for geographers from the “North”, particularly for young generations. IGU meetings and publications have to be important milestones in their carrier. In 2013 several countries have either formally re-established membership or have indicated that they are likely to become IGU members shortly. The EC paid a special attention to networking

African geographers and worked out a “roadmap” to promote African and other developing countries membership.

The second IGU priority is communication and integration of IGU Commissions’ work, the development of interdisciplinary research by promoting problem- and region-oriented programmes and the cooperation between natural and social wings of geography in studying future environmental conditions and their consequences for people, and institutional, economic, and behavioral changes enabling effective steps toward global sustainability. IGU believes it very important the involvement of geographers in the implementation of *Future Earth*, the most ambitious international research programme integrating natural and social sciences which has been ever created. IGU through its national committees carefully selected the candidates to *Future Earth’s* Science Committee. The world geographical community is represented in it by several members, including IGU Vice-President Dahe Qin. IGU also encourages joint and special workshops, sessions and research projects sponsored by two or several Commissions. The EC worked out the criteria for an IGU Commission excellence award and established the committee to administer it.

The third priority is cooperation with local organizing committees (LOC) of IGU Congresses and Regional Conferences for keeping their high standards, looking for new flexible formats, and bridging gaps between geographers, policy makers and community leaders. IGU EC closely cooperated with the LOC of the next Regional Conference in Poland and for the first time signed with it the Memorandum of Agreement establishing mutual commitments and financial responsibility.

According to the fourth priority - cooperation with the leading international organizations in contributing to the cohesion of geography and its better international visibility, IGU participated in the activity of ICSU and ISSC in embedding IGU in global research programmes and networks. IGU established closer relations with the Association of European Geographical Societies (Eugeo) and the European Association of Geographers (Eurogeo), and signed with them the Memorandum on cooperation. IGU EC is also organizing “the IGU lecture” at the International Geographical Festival in Saint Dié (France). IGU sponsors the activity of the joint Commission on Toponymy with the International Cartographic Association and maintains working contacts with the International Union of Geological Sciences (IGS) and the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), in particular in Geounions, the association of international unions in the field of Earth Sciences within ICSU.

Geographical education is one of the major *raison d’être* of the geographical community and its main priorities. IGU should continuously show the value of geographical education in various international and national academic and policy contexts. IGU, Eugeo and Eurogeo are working on a common project for promoting geographical education and keeping and modernizing geographical curricula in secondary school.

IGU decided to celebrate in 2022 its centennial and created special Task Force. One of its objectives is to prepare the extraordinary Congress to be probably held in France, and a new publication documenting IGU history.

## International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU)



IGU strongly supports the transdisciplinary project of the *International Year on Global Understanding (IYGU)* which was created on the IGU initiative and is coordinated by Professor Benno Werlen, Chair of IGU Commission on Cultural Geography. 2013 was marked by spectacular progress in the implementation of this project. First, its bodies (the Advisory Board, the Steering Committee, the Outreach Panel and partly Regional Action Centres) were formed and started their activity. More important, the

UNESCO Executive Board and later the UNESCO General Assembly have unanimously adopted the resolution of the IGU initiative for the IYGU presented by the group of the East African countries in the name of Rwanda. Therefore, there is a real chance that the UN General Assembly could proclaim the IYGU in 2014. The main idea of the project is to bridge the gap in awareness between local actions and global effects and that there is the urgent need in global action towards resolving the problems arising from global social and climate change. It was stressed that geographical education for global understanding is critical for addressing global challenges - for providing sustainable sources of clean water, food and energy, and for maintaining an intact environment for the well-being of all people. The IGU initiative has already obtained earlier the support of ISSC, ICSU and a great number of other international and national institutions. More information about IYGU is available at: <http://global-understanding.info/>

## The IGU Journals Database

There are many journals globally that deal with the broad church that is the discipline of Geography. In recent years the domination of major publishing houses in the scientific journal market has become much stronger and it is clear that many geographical journals are published that have a much lower profile and yet could provide a very valuable resource for geographers – researchers and teachers alike - in particular national or regional contexts. It was for this reason that the IGU embarked on a project to establish a searchable global database of geographical periodicals. Information, including contact details, impact factor (where appropriate) and website addresses of more than 1000 journals from more than 80 countries worldwide are now available online (follow the link from the IGU homepage at: [www.igu-online.org](http://www.igu-online.org))



## Sustainable Cities: The IGU 'OurSus' Project

IGU also supports the project of making the site on *cities' sustainable development* created in 2010 on the initiative of Dutch and Chinese geographers the world centre of information and certification working under the sponsorship of IGU. This project is based on the idea that despite of their different size, location and functions all cities are facing similar challenges in terms of sustainable features, such as green R&D, environment-friendly consumption, green campaigns, challenges, and education, etc. In 2013 the project had a full



double Internet infrastructure, in English and Chinese ([www.oursus.org](http://www.oursus.org) and [zh.oursus.org](http://zh.oursus.org)). There were numerous cities presented on its website and many academics and professionals made use of it, albeit still mainly from China. It is expected that the project will reach full maturity in 2016 towards the IGU Congress in Beijing. It should have a wide and internationally balanced representation of both cities and users. It is necessary to mobilize geographical communities in many countries and to create national centres of the project.

### **IGU Honors and Awards**

At the Regional Conference in Kyoto President Kolosov declared Ton Dietz, Professor of Human Geography at the University of Amsterdam and Director of the African Studies Centre and Professor in African Development at Leiden University (the Netherlands), the IGU 37<sup>th</sup> Lauréat d'honneur. This award was established in 1976 to recognize individuals who have achieved particular distinction or who have rendered outstanding service in the work of the IGU or in international geography and environmental research.

### **Communication and Outreach**

The main communication tools of the IGU are its quarterly newsletter, compiled by Vice-President Giuliano Bellezza and its website, maintained by Secretary-General Mike Meadows. Four issues of the new series of the e-Newsletter were published in 2013 and can be downloaded from the website by following the newsletter link from [www.igu-online.org](http://www.igu-online.org). IGU now has a Facebook page and the new website design. In 2013 volume 61-62 of the *IGU Bulletin* was published representing the years 2011-12. IGU also issued a leaflet on its current activity and updated the handbook for its members.

### **Forthcoming IGU Conferences**

18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2014, Krakow, Poland Regional Conference

20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015, Moscow, Russia Regional Conference

August 2016: People's Republic of China International Geographical Congress, Beijing

More details at [www.igu-online.org](http://www.igu-online.org)

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## 2) 31st ICSU GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ICSU's highest decision-making body, its members, will be coming together again in 2014 for the General Assembly, held every three years. Our hosts, the Royal Society of New Zealand, have already been working closely for some time with the ICSU Secretariat in Paris, in order to prepare for this important event, which will be held in Auckland, New Zealand, from 31 August to 3 September 2014.

ICSU members will be examining the work of the organization over the last three years and looking ahead at the implementation of its Strategic Plan. Items on the agenda will include the External Review of ICSU, the state of ICSU's different programmes and initiatives, a celebration of its global environmental change research programmes over the last 30 years, as Future Earth moves towards implementation, and reports from activities in the regions. The New Zealand Day preceding the General Assembly will provide an opportunity for members to find out more about indigenous Maori knowledge and culture and its links with science. The General Assembly programme will include four Science Lectures, ranging from Antarctic research, seismology and biology to science policy and education, as well as a young scientists' science panel.

Work on the practical arrangements for the event has been intensifying at the ICSU Secretariat in Paris and at the Royal Society in New Zealand. Online registration will be available in January for members to register for the General Assembly and make their hotel bookings. An update will be sent round to members as soon as registration goes live. Meanwhile full voting members of ICSU have been asked to submit their nominations for candidates for election to the Executive Board of ICSU, elections which will take place during the General Assembly. The Members of the Nominating Committee, appointed by the Executive Board, will be meeting in March 2014 to review the nominations and prepare their recommendations.

We look forward to seeing you in Auckland in August 2014. Find out more on the General Assembly portal on our website.

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### **PECS – Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society**

The Earth system, upon which human well-being depends, is in a period of unprecedented transition. An increased awareness of these changes to socio-ecological systems is vital for developing an effective response. However, significant gaps persist in our knowledge of the relationships between natural capital, human wellbeing, livelihoods, inequality and poverty. PECS is a ten-year initiative, sponsored by UNESCO and ICSU and hosted by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, which aims to contribute to filling these gaps by integrating research on the stewardship of social-ecological systems and the services they generate. The principal approaches of PECS research are comparisons of place-based, long-term social-ecological case studies and the development of interdisciplinary working groups that focus on different cross-cutting topics. PECS brings together a vibrant network of 11 transdisciplinary projects, covering 30 local and regional case-studies around the world. The growing portfolio of PECS case studies provides a wealth of regional and local assessments and generate new insights into the complex and multi-scale dynamics of social-ecological systems. The case studies



explore, for example, the synergies and trade-offs among ecosystem services in the Norrström basin in Sweden; the relationships between ecosystems services and well being of the poor in coastal areas of Africa and Southern Africa; the interactions between land use, climate change and ecosystems for sustainable land and resource management solutions in numerous sites including Russia, China, Vietnam and Amazonia; climate change and impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services in Montreal; social structures and resilience to climate change in Norway and Switzerland.

The PECS approach also puts a strong emphasis on working with a wide range of stakeholders on the ground, including local governments, resource managers and NGOs to co-design and co-produce knowledge directly relevant to decision-making on land management. The PECS agenda tackles fundamental questions underlying the sustainability challenges of the 21st century, and the local to global transformations required to enable better stewardship of social-ecological systems. PECS has started the process of transitioning into Future Earth. This provides opportunities to strengthen PECS's contribution to transdisciplinary research for global sustainability and its specific approach to transformations of social-ecological systems from local to the global scale.

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### **ICSU in 2013 – the year in review**

2013 was a landmark year for Future Earth, but ICSU, led by its Executive Board, was also busy on many other fronts. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making this such a successful year.

We've collected the highlights from 2013 in [our year-end review](#), which you can read on our website.

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### **Call for full bids: Future Earth Secretariat**

ICSU, on behalf of the Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability, has released a call for full proposals to host the permanent secretariat of Future Earth. This follows an expression of interests step (July-September 2013) and a bidders' conference (November 2013). The call for full bids is open to all those who were judged by the selection committee to have submitted credible expressions of interest and were invited to participate in the bidders' conference.

More information on the call is available from our website.

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### **Vacancies; Executive Directors for Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) and Urban Health and Wellbeing**

Two key positions are open at interdisciplinary programmes co-sponsored by ICSU. Both the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Programme and the Urban Health and Wellbeing Programme are recruiting an Executive Director. More details are available on the job postings for [IRDR](#) and [Urban Health](#). Applications close on 20 and 18 January, respectively.

Read [the full announcement](#) on our website

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**ICSU GeoUnions launch new website**

The GeoUnions, a network of representatives of the international scientific unions of the International Council for Science (ICSU) dealing with Earth and space sciences, have established a new web presence.

The network's aim is to promote sciences worldwide, to communicate and to coordinate scientific activities of individual unions.

The GeoUnions established a Steering Committee in 2004 for their activities, and to speak on behalf of GeoUnions members to the ICSU Executive Board, ICSU Members and its interdisciplinary bodies and at the international level. The Steering Committee of GeoUnions meets normally a day before of ICSU General Assemblies and Scientific Unions Meetings of ICSU.

Their new website can be found at [www.icsu-geounions.org](http://www.icsu-geounions.org)

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**Urban Health and Well-Being International Programme Office to be hosted in Xiamen, China**

ICSU announced today that its new research programme on Urban Health and Wellbeing will be hosted at the Institute of Urban Environment (IUE) in the city of Xiamen in southern China. The institute was selected to host the International Programme Office after an open competition. The Urban Health programme is a 10-year interdisciplinary research effort whose overall aim is to generate policy-relevant knowledge that will improve health status, reduce health inequalities and enhance the well-being of urban dwellers. It will focus on the integration of natural, social, medical and engineering sciences using systems approaches to address the complexity of urban issues and their influence on health.

Read the full announcement on our website.

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**Ocean Acidification expert launched at UNFCCC COP-19**

In a major new international report launched at the UNFCCC COP-19 in Warsaw, experts conclude that the acidity of the world's ocean may increase by around 170% by the end of the century bringing significant economic losses.

More information on the findings is available.

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**Final Report of the Future Earth Transition Team published**

Future Earth has just published the final report of the Transition Team, the group of experts that led the initial design of the research initiative on global sustainability. The report is available for download from the ICSU website.

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## **AFRICA**

### **ICSU RCA 15 Meeting**

The ICSU Regional Committee for Africa held its 15th meeting in Pretoria, South Africa, on 29 – 30 August 2013. The meeting was attended by the full complement of the statutory members of the Committee. The RCA 15 was preceded by a half-day seminar that was organised by ICSU ROA in collaboration with the South African Institute of South Africa (one of ICSU ROA's regional partners).

The Seminar, which was held at South African Institute of South African Institute of South Africa Offices, was attended by the RCA members, local scientists and other stakeholders. It focused on issues related to energy, food and nutrition security in Africa. Two RCA members, Prof Hillary Inyang and Prof Tito Fernandes, gave presentations during this event and the presentations were well received. The two-day RCA meeting focused its deliberations on the status of the implementation of the Regional Office's four science plans and to seek the way forward. The Committee was also updated on the accomplishment and planned activities of ICSU ROA with the ICSU family as well as with the Office's partners and other science networks in the region. During the RCA 15, the Committee proposed strategic and scientific advice to the Regional Office that would enable it to accomplish its goals in the region. The next RCA meeting, scheduled for March 2014, is planned to be held in Nigeria and will be co-organised by the Nigeria Academy of Science

More news from ICSU's Africa Regional Office

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## **ASIA PACIFIC**

Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific meets in Seoul back-to-back with the 5th ICSU Regional Consultation in Asia and the Pacific

The e 16th Meeting of the ICSU Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific (RCAP) began in Seoul on 26 November 2013. Among the attendants was Professor Sukiman Sarmani, the new representative from the Council of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, the host organization of ICSU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP). The Committee met briefly to review progress of its work in four priority areas before adjourning to join the start of the 5th ICSU Regional Consultation in Asia and the Pacific that had as its focus the new 10-year international research programme, Future Earth. The Consultation will explore how Future Earth may be implemented in Asia and the Pacific focusing on transformative pathways, capacity building and funding needs.

More news from ICSU's Asia-Pacific Regional Office

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## **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

### **First Meeting: ICSU ROLAC Scientific Steering Committee for Integrated Research and Disaster Risk in LAC**

With the purpose of developing scientific activities in ICSU-ROLAC for contributing to risk prevention and management various actions have been carried out. These actions culminated in 3-5th September in Panama when a Steering Committee to ICSU-ROLAC was established,

composed by 7 representatives of national scientific institutions from Argentina, Costa Rica, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Jamaica and Mexico. The committee also has representatives of IRDR, UNISDR, IAI, UNESCO and from the Scientific Committee of ICSU-ROLAC. The objectives of the meeting were the establishment of the Steering Committee and to agree on a yearly working

### **Access and Benefit Sharing in Latin America and the Caribbean: A dialogue between Science and Policy for academic research**

The objective of this workshop was to develop a guide to promote dialogue between researchers working with genetic resources and decision makers who are the focal points responsible for implementing international regulations of ABS in the Latin America and the Caribbean. This workshop included examples of good practices in the region and the positions of other users, such as indigenous peoples. This workshop could be a pilot project to establish a dialogue between science and policy for mutual benefit and promoting international cooperation. DIVERSITAS, ICSU ROLAC, SCNAT and IUBS organized the event. There were 30 participants academics, policy makers and indigenous representatives from 9 countries of the region.

[More news from ICSU's Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office](#)



## **3) REPORTS FROM CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS**

### **3a) REGION-2013: STRATEGY FOR OPTIMAL DEVELOPMENT – KHARKIV (UKRAINE), 7-8 NOVEMBER 2013**

On 7-8 November, 2013 the Scientific and Practical Conference with International Participation "Region-2013: strategy for optimal development" was held at the Department for Social and Economic Geography and Regional Studies, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Ukraine). Organizers of the conference, besides this university, were the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Ukrainian Geographical Society, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kharkiv Regional Station of Young Tourists (Ukraine), Belgorod National Research University (Russia).

244 participants submitted applications and abstracts, including: 206 were from other cities of Ukraine (112 were from other countries (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, The Transnistrian Moldovan Republic, Poland, The Czech Republic, France, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

The authors have submitted 180 abstracts that are thematically joined the 4 sections:

Role of Earth Sciences in the strategy for optimal development

Modern issues of regional development;

Social and economic development of regions.

Natural and resource potential and regional environmental policy.

50 participants were directly involved in the conference.

According to the program of the conference firstly the plenary session has been which Head of the Department, Professor Lyudmila Niemets opened. The Presidium also included: Vice-Rector, academician Mukola Azaryenkov, Dean of the Faculty of Geology and Geography, Professor Vilina Peresadko, Deputies Dean – Associate Professors Oleg Polevych and Igor Udalov and founder of the conference – Head of the Department for International Economic Relations, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Professor A.P. Golikov.



*Left: Lyudmila Niemets, Head of the Department for Social and Economic Geography and Regional Studies opening the plenary section of the conference.*

*Right: Vice-Rector Mukola Azaryenkov welcoming the participants of the conference*

Within the plenary section following reports were presented:

"Features of the Development of the Human Geographical Studies in Kharkiv region," in which **Katherine Segida**, PhD in Geography, associate professor of the department told about history of the Department for Social and Economic Geography and Regional Studies, modern faces of the Kharkiv human geographical school (K. Niemets, A. Golikov, L. Niemets), topics of the modern research of the department.

The next speaker was **Eugene Korostelev**, associate professor of the Department for Regional Geography and International Tourism, Saint Petersburg State University (Russia), PhD in Geography, who talked about the features of eco-tourism as a factor of sustainable development in the Republic of Karelia in Russia.

**Konstantin Mezentsev**, professor of the Department for Economic and Social Geography, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Doctor of Geographical Sciences, presented the report on the following topic: "Ukraine's Cities: Resistance to the Challenges of the Social and Economic Transformations", where he showed demographic, economic transformation of cities in Ukraine, new and old imaginations of cities as social and economic centers.

**Andjey Sochuvka**, Assistant at the Department for Spatial Planning, The University of Silesia, PhD in Geography, reported on the organization of public passenger transport in Moravian-Silesian region in the Czech Republic.

In the report of **Vladimir Chasovski**, Head of the Department for Social and Economic Geography and Nature, Smolensk State University, Doctor of Geographical Sciences, the changes in the industry of the CIS were emphasized.

**Konstantin Niemets**, professor of the Department for Social and Economic Geography and Regional Studies, Doctor of Geographical Sciences, presented author concept of the influence zone of human geographical objects, modeling of the integral influence function.

After the dinner participants of the conference was divided into sections listed above. Reports devoted to methodic of GIS application for geomarketing studies, general human geographical research, analysis of threats to economic security in Transnistria, modern problems of development of recreational nature in the Republic of Buryatia , the modern features of employment, social security, food consumption, investment activity, industry development in Ukraine and other countries of the CIS.



*Left: Participant Konstantin Mezentsev presents his key position of the research.*



*Right: Ceremony of summarizing and closing of the conference*

Next day participants were waited a trip to Chuguiv (Kharkiv region, at least 20 km from Kharkiv), where they visited the museum of Illia Repin (1844-1930) (the famous Russian artist) and the Chuguiv museum of local lore.

Generally, the event was successful and guests expressed desire to visit the conference next year.

### **3b) ISPRS/ IGU/ICA JOINT WORKSHOP ON BORDERLANDS MODELLING AND UNDERSTANDING FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY – BEIJING, 5-6 DECEMBER**



*Organisers and most of the participants gathered outside after the Opening Ceremony*

With the sponsorship of the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), International Geographical Union (IGU), International Cartographic Association (ICA), Geographical Society of China (GSC), and the Association of American Geographers (AAG), the ISPRS/ IGU/ICA Joint International Workshop on Borderlands Modelling and Understanding for Global Sustainability was successfully organized on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of December in 2013 in Beijing, China, by the School of Geography at Beijing Normal University (BNU) and National Geomatics Center of China (NGCC). This workshop aims to promote scientific research and academic exchange on digital modelling, advanced analysis and comprehensive understanding of borderlands. The Chinese Academician Dahe Qin (IGU Vice-President), Professor Jun Chen (ISPRS President) and Professor Yanhua Liu (GSC president) co-chaired the workshop, and around 80 leading scientists and young researchers from 11 countries participated in the workshop.

This workshop organized two keynote sessions and five sub-topic sessions. Eight guest speakers were invited to give speech in the keynote sessions. Yujing Ouyang, the director in the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, introduced the past, present, and future of China's boundary and ocean affairs. Victor Konrad, the President of the Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS), gave a presentation on imagining and imaging borders, which claimed that borders in globalization are the meeting points of globalizing forces of security, trade and migration flows with emerging technologies, self determination and regionalization around the world. Jun Chen, ISPRS President, discussed the importance of the application of geographical technologies to global sustainability. He argues that reliable information and effective analysis tools are requested to support borderlands studies through the integrated utilization of geospatial analysis, web service, and other specific expertise. The three major challenges and suggestions in the borderlands studies from geospatial information science were discussed in his speech. Giuliano Bellezza, the IGU Vice President, Professor at University of Roma, Italy, discussed the historical evolution of borders and clarifies different types of borders in human history from natural borders to a possible borderless world in the virtual cyberspace.



*Following day: invited guests in the middle row, surrounded by some participants*

Stanley David Brunn, Professor at University of Kentucky, US, gave a broad vision of boundary in his speech. He focused on new transdisciplinary boundaries that are essential to study sustainability at local and global levels and also cyberspace worlds where there is much fluidity, speed, networking that relate to issues of identity and territoriality. Paul Cheng, former Director of the UN Statistics Division, and Ayako Kagawa, Chief Geo Support Unit of UN Cartographic Section, presented the international boundary experiences by the UN. UN regards the adequate delimitation and demarcation of international boundaries as a very important element for the maintenance of peace and security in fragile post conflict situations, establishment of friendly relationships and cross-border cooperation between countries. They provide the technical support for different boundary requirements as each international boundary issue requires specific focus and attention. Rana Singh, Professor at Banaras Hindu University, India, presented from a cross-culture perspective to understand global sustainability. He argued human beings should think universally, see globally, behave regionally, and act locally but insightfully. He thought this is an appeal for sharing wisdom for global sustainability in making our cultural landscapes mosaic of happy, peaceful and sustainable places crossing all the borders and transitions.



*Question time after one session*

The 19 oral presentations in the five sub-topic sessions cover diverse topics by using quantitative and qualitative methods for analysis. The five sub-topics addressed were: scientific challenges and perspectives in borderlands studies, analytical and quantitative methods for borderlands, understanding of borderlands features, understanding cross-border communication and security, and modelling and representation of digital borderlands. One group of studies focused on methodological and technical issues, such as data sources and collection of borderlands information, data analysis of borderlands information, visualization of borderlands information, and the application of newly developed method on borderlands management. The other group of the papers focused on empirical studies on specific topics, such as polar region, Chinese border policy, cooperation between border cities, geo-energy security, and non-traditional security in the South China Sea.

The workshop emphasized two important issues of borderlands and sustainability studies: interdisciplinary and practice-oriented. The papers, from the perspectives of history, culture, and



technology respectively, studied the borderlands and sustainability. The challenges and solutions on borderlands derive from practice. To advance borderland study in the future, we need multidisciplinary efforts by attracting people from various majors including geography, international relation, law, environment science, economics and so on. We also need to apply new technologies in GIS, remote sensing and other necessary tools in the research. This workshop indicated the importance of multidisciplinary efforts, and we hope it will shed light on future research on borderlands modelling and understanding.

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After the workshop, School of Geography at Beijing Normal University invited four professors to deliver guest lectures to the graduate students: Directions and Advances in the Study of Borders in Globalization by Prof. Victor Konrad, Frontiers and Borders: From Ancient Time to Postmodern by Prof. Giuliano Bellezza, Visual Geopolitics: A New World Order? by Prof. Stan Brunn and Sacred Geography and Landscape Geometries: Interfaces in Holy Places of North India by Prof. Rana Singh. Both the guest lectures and discussion afterwards provided a good opportunity for the graduate students to learn about the progress in borderlands studies (*see photo above and below*).





#### 4) RECEIVED FROM FORMER PRESIDENT ANNE BUTTIMER

*Last December former IGU President Anne Buttimer sent to relatives and friends her nice and kind Xmas Circular. This year, with her permission, I take from her Circular the initial lines, showing her mind, always open to world and environment. But this year she gave more importance to one particular event: the demise of Nelson Mandela. In 2002 in Durban I had the privilege to see the Ceremony when Anne consigned him the IGU Planet and Humanity Award. Let me, please, tell my impression: he fully deserved the award, and his thanking words have really been a lesson not only or real, lived life, but also of political, economic and human geography.*

Dear

Christmas greetings! It's hard to believe that a whole year has passed since my last Yuletide greeting. We have had a really mild Autumn here and only a few days of wintry weather. Elsewhere, of course, there were tragic climatic events – not only in countries which refuse to change their environmentally damaging behaviour - but also in lands of innocent victims such as the Philippines. When will humanity really learn to respect our “Mother Nature” and live in more sustainable ways? The splendid efforts of Pope Francis are surely encouraging.

Then in December our beloved Madiba passed away. Memories of his warm embrace in Durban 2002 remain vividly in my heart. Having accepted our IGU Planet and Humanity Award, he spoke touchingly about his own personal geography. If you would like to have a copy of that speech, let me know. ([anne.buttimer@ucd.ie](mailto:anne.buttimer@ucd.ie))

#### **Presentation of the International Geographical Union's Planet and Humanity Award to Nelson Mandela, Durban, 4 August 2002**

##### **Speech of Anne Buttimer, President:**

“The International Geographical Union is honoured and overjoyed to present its Planet and Humanity award to Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Madiba. As a leading humanist and statesman, in championing human rights and freedom for the oppressed, Mr Mandela’s immense and selfless contribution to the welfare of humanity, is acknowledged globally. His honours are many, including the Nobel peace prize. His curriculum vitae provides many lessons to scientists and politicians about our responsibility for the stewardship of society and the natural environment of our planet Earth. Only a few of his political and humanitarian achievements can be highlighted here:



- Your willingness to undergo suffering for the alleviation of human oppression
- Your visionary and resilient engagement in socio-political activities that eventually led to the democratization of South Africa
- Your commitment to the alleviation of poverty and championing of human dignity, and

- Your unwavering belief in youth as the cornerstone of nation building.

Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Madiba, your profound sense of justice, humility and warmth, and your sterling qualities of leadership, indeed render you an ideal and deserving recipient of the IGU Planet and Humanity medal for 2002. On behalf of the international community of geographers, I personally thank you for the inspiration, the courage and the challenge which you continue to offer us. *Siyabonga.*”

**Address by Mr. Nelson Mandela:**

The President of the International Geographical Union, esteemed members of the Union, our international visitors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: my grandchildren, including Dr Ben Ngubane, the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, and Mike Sutcliffe there, they have to keep on reminding me that I have now lost power and influence. I should remain with my grandchildren. I hope they will revise their opinion after this occasion - because a man who has lost power and influence cannot be honoured by such an organization!

And it is with a special sense of humility that we stand here to receive the Planet and Humanity award. We are aware of how much correspondence and intervention it took to finally secure our presence here this afternoon. We need to indicate that the effort it entailed to finally conclude the discussions about our participation had nothing to do with an unwillingness to accept this prestigious award, or an attitude of playing “hard to get”, as the colloquial saying goes. We ourselves, as well as our office, long ago indicated to our Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, that we would be extremely honoured to receive the award. The vagaries of leaving official office and having to establish home as an unemployed pensioner, contributed to the uncertainty of not knowing where and in what condition one would be when the event comes around at last. Employed people and those in office can never imagine how chaotically unscheduled the lives are of those who find themselves in the idleness of retirement and pension. We are very happy that out of that chaos, our office could contrive to have us here, at this most prestigious event and occasion.

I am a simple country boy, and I remain astounded and overawed by the awards and honours that people, for some incomprehensible reason, decide to bestow upon us. A colleague of mine often asks me how it is that I remember so distinctly people I have met, days on which events have occurred, and the details of occurrences. My consistent and truthful reply to him is the following: I am a simple country boy, unacquainted with all of these marvelous and strange things of the world. Every time I encounter people, things and events, they remain indelibly stuck on my overawed mind.

I left the country in April 1941, and many people may wonder why I call myself still a country boy. But although I left the country in 1941, the country has not left me. This visit will be such an occasion that I will never be able to forget, and it is furthermore an occasion that takes me back to concrete memories of and present-day knowledge about my origins as a country boy. When I go to the place and area of my birth, so often as I do, the changed geography of the place strikes me with a force that I cannot escape. And that geography is not one of mere landscapes and topography, it is the geography of the people. Where once there were trees and even forests, we now see barrenness. I can no longer walk those distances, but until a few years ago, I would traverse the miles of land I knew as a child and young man, and one was saddened at the poverty of the people - poverty lived

out in the geography of the place. It is the geography of women and young people, walking miles and miles to find the paltriest pieces of wood for fire to cook, and make a meal, and to keep a shelter warm.

The trees and forests were destroyed exactly because our people were so dependent upon them, as sources of energy. And in turn, people are today cold and in want of energy for cooking, cleaning and basic comforts because the trees and forests are destroyed. I walked and I saw in the land of my youth, women walking, but walking in poverty and destitution. The streams of my youth that were places of beauty and inspiration were now clogged up and dirty. I saw the descendants of the mothers of our people bowing down to secure with their bare hands the cleanest of the dirty and dangerous water in those streams and pools.

How would they get that water clean enough to use it for household purposes? I often ask them. They would boil it, they reply, if only they had wood or other sources of energy to do so.

I was taking a walk a few days ago in my country village, and I came across a stream which was polluted and where the water was moving very slowly. And then I found three women fetching water. And I asked them, "What are you going to do with that water?"

They said, "We are going to use it for domestic purposes. We are going to cook with it, drink it, clean ourselves".

I said, "But the water has tadpoles moving around, it has algae, this green stuff that covers stagnant water". And I said, "Up there, you see people washing their bodies and their clothes. That water comes here".

They say, "That is our life".

And then I asked this question: "What do you do with this water before you use it?"

They say, "We do nothing. We use it as it is".

And then I asked a foolish question. I was born in that area and I am supposed to know the conditions, but for me twenty-seven years of prison life was sufficient to make me forget about the living conditions of my people. I then asked the question, "Don't you boil it before you use it?"

They all exclaimed simultaneously. "Boil it with what? Look up, right up to the horizon, there is not a single tree. We have no electricity. With what must we boil it? We use cow dung, and that gives more smoke than heat".

I felt humiliated because I should never have asked that question, but I did. The alternatives seem clear: use what they have and suffer the consequences. And the consequences were and remain cholera and other environmentally induced diseases.

On the 9th of May, I was in New York and I met one of the most powerful businessmen in the world, who has supported us in the past, and built a school and a clinic. And when I formed the [Nelson Mandela] Foundation, he invited me and my wife to his place in the United States of

America. He then gave my wife five million dollars, and gave me ten million. And his partner gave my wife seven-and-a-half million, gave me seven-and-a-half million too [for charity work in South Africa].

Now I said to him, “I want you to build forty-five schools in the countryside in South Africa, because there are vast areas in the countryside where there is no school, where there is no clinic”.

He said, “No, I concentrate on health. I propose building so many clinics in your country.”

And we had an argument. I said, “No, clinics are alright. But in the countryside the situation, the thinking of the people, is that the *sangomas* are more reliable than the clinics, modern clinics. We therefore want an educated core of people who are going to campaign in the countryside to say, These clinics are much better than *sangomas*. So that’s why I want you to build your forty-five schools.”

We couldn’t resolve the argument. He said, “No, I am prepared to respond, but only in the field of health”.

“Well”, I said, “let me go back and go to consult”.

I came back home and I consulted the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal. He overruled both of us, and he said, “No, there are many schools throughout the country without water, without sewerage, where the school children have to go to the Veldt to relieve themselves. They have nothing to clean themselves so they use grass and then their fingers are soiled. With soiled hands, without washing because there is no water, they go and handle food. Bread, sandwiches, hard meally pap, meat, fruit, and in that way cholera spreads”. And then Professor Asmal said, “What we want is the installation of water in all the schools. And it’s going to cost a lot of money”.

Well, I have written to the businessman to say, this is what the man who knows this field thinks we should do. No schools, no new schools, no new clinics, but water for the schools that are there, because that will go a long way in preventing cholera. These conditions I have seen repeated all over our country, our continent, and the developing world.

We accept the honour you bestow upon us today, not as an honour in the usual sense of that word. We accept it as an acknowledgement of our common lack of honour, as humanity, for the manner in which we are destroying our mother planet and the chances for our children to have a sustainable future on earth. Your award is however also a source of encouragement to take up and continue the struggle for a world in which we can live in dignity, not only among ourselves as human beings, but also as human beings in relationship with our natural environment.

South Africa will soon be hosting the all-important World Summit for Sustainable Development. As your Union gathers here and now, it is part of the challenge to our country, its leaders and its people to be seen to be in the vanguard of the modern-day struggle to render our environment a livable and sustainable one for our children. I try to live by the simple precept of making the world one in which there is a better life for all, particularly the poor, marginalized and vulnerable. A devastated geography makes for a devastated people. It renders people vulnerable, and the

traditionally vulnerable - women, children, the aged and disabled - will always be bearing the brunt of that suffering.

Let us stand together to make of our world a sustainable source for our future as humanity on this planet. I thank you.”

*Eventually, a few days before the diffusion of this newsletter, Anne Buttimer, found the way to give all of us the possibility to see the video of the awarding Ceremony, with the essential help of Barbara Craig, Executive Assistant of the University College of Dublin ([barbara.craig@ucd.ie](mailto:barbara.craig@ucd.ie)), This is the mail Anne received from Barbara:*

Dear Anne,

Here is the video link you can give them if they want to download the Nelson Mandela video speech with your speech. The video file is in .avi format so it should read okay on their computers and they will be able to download it directly too from this link. <http://goo.gl/zZzYXm>

Thanks and Kind Regards,

Barbara.

*And Editor, on behalf of the Newsletter Readers, gratefully expresses all possible thanks to Anne, Barbara and the University College of Dublin.*

## 5) FORTHCOMING EVENTS

*(more information in the Home of Geography website, Events 2013)*

**5.1) COLLOQUE SFSIC, ABIDJAN, 13-14 MARCH 2014**

**5.2) URBAN AFFAIRS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, 19-22 MARCH 2014**

**5.3) COLLEGE INTERNATIONAL DES SCIENCES DU TERRITOIRE, 2E COLLOQUE, PARIS, 27-28 MARS**

**5.4) BORDERLANDS STUDIES CONFERENCE, ALBUQUERQUE (NM), 2-5 APRIL**

**5.5) REGION 2014, HUMAN AND GEOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS, KHARKIV, 3-4 APRIL**

**5.6) AAG ANNUAL CONFERENCE, TAMPA (FLORIDA) 8-12 APRIL**

**5.7) COLLOQUE METROPOLE ET REGIONS, PARIS, 9-11 AVRIL 2014**

