

Report of the second meeting of the IYPE National Committees



Place: Vienna, Academy of Sciences, Date: 17 April 2007, 2 – 6 pm

Attending: Werner Piller (Austria National Committee (NC)), Veronica Stedra (Czech Republic NC), Dimitri Kaljo (Estonia NC), Denis Vaslet (France NC), Jean-Paul Cadet (France NC), Wolfgang Eder (Germany NC, Board Member), Leonello Serva (Italy NC), Uk Han (Korea NC), Grazina Skridlaite (Lithuania NC), Amga Tsolmon (Mongolia NC), Johan Meulenkamp (the Netherlands NC), Arne Bj_rlykke (Norway NC), Tadeusz Peryt (Poland NC), Victor Mocanu (Romania NC), Igor Broska (Slovak Republic NC), Cecilio Quesada (Spain NC), Holger Stunitz (Switzerland NC), Edmund Nickless (UK NC), Mateja Jemec (Slovenia NC), Jack Hess (GSA, USA), John LaBrecque (NASA, USA), Werner Janoschek (Meeting Chair, IYPE Goodwill Ambassador), Eduardo de Mulder (IYPE Executive Director Secretariat).

Apologies received from: Ian Lambert (Australia), John Boyd (Canada), Abdolazim Haghypour (Iran), Peadar McArdle (Ireland), Vince Neall (New Zealand), Mariusz Orion Jedryzek (Poland), Mircea Sandulescu (Romania), Khalid Al-Thour (Yemen), Mohamed Al-Haj (Yemen), Mohamed Al-Kadasi (Yemen).

1. Opening

The IYPE Goodwill Ambassador, Werner Janoschek, opened the meeting and gave the floor to the meeting's host and Chairman of the Austrian National Committee, Werner Piller, who welcomed the participants. A group photo was then taken.

2. Update IYPE

The Executive Director informed the meeting about developments in the first quarter of 2007 when the IYPE triennium started with balloon launches in London (UK), Chidambaram (India) and Sao Paulo (Brazil) and other events (e.g. in Tokyo, Japan). The first Board meeting took place on 9 and 10 January in London, UK. The Board decided to expand the Science Implementation Teams to 10 experts including some more engineers. An electronic ballot resulted in approval of the IYPE Statutes and Bye laws, approval of the Agreement on the Norway-based IYPE Secretariat, establishment of Regional Committees (first in East and Southeast Asia), a Vice Chair of the Science Programme Committee (John Dodson), two Senior Advisers and one Goodwill Ambassador. It also agreed to hold a second Board meeting in 2007 (20 & 21 June, in Paris). The Executive Director also reported that fundraising at national levels is going well and is improving out the international level. The Executive Director shared the remaining concerns for the Corporation with all present, mainly dealing with international fundraising and current vacancies on the Board. He distributed a new IYPE flyer among the participants.

3. Website – web portal transformation

The Executive Director informed the meeting about current efforts to upgrade the IYPE website to a web portal. The transformation involves four phases: conceptual, design, software engineering, and maintenance. The first phase explores options for parties and stakeholders to interact *via* closed sections (password access). Initially, such sections will be developed for Board members and for representatives of National Committees, to be followed for more sections later. Entries for donations and purchasing of IYPE items will be set up, as well as for open discussion and ideas fora. The first outlines of this conceptual phase have already been produced, as have those for the design phase, which will be realized by the same design house that produced the IYPE brochures. The Corporation now awaits a bid from a software engineering firm for that part of the process, as well as one for the maintenance. The current webmaster of the website has been invited to serve in the same capacity for the web portal, in close cooperation with the Secretariat. Once the bids for these activities have been received, the Geological Survey of Canada will be informed and invited to cover these costs as agreed with (former) Goodwill Ambassador Irwin Itzkovitch.

4. Information from the National Committees

Lithuania: Grazina Skridlaite informed the meeting that the Lithuanian IYPE Committee was initially established as a Working Group. Together with the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, they produced a national IYPE Programme and presented that to the Ministry of Education and Science. The Working Group awaits formal approval by the government which is expected in May 2007. The IYPE Programme includes dissemination of information on the IYPE 2008 to the members of the Geological Society and the media; in addition, a call for IYPE initiatives from Geologists was made by the NC. A IYPE Programme was developed for both science and outreach activities, including publications on topics including mineral and alternative energy resources, water resources, natural resources for the public, medical geology, conferences and workshops, reconstruction of geological museums for the public, development of an Information Centre for Natural Sciences, as well as movies and competitions for school pupils. In 2006 and 2007, the IYPE logo was used on several occasions at conferences, workshops and exhibitions. A series of lectures on IYPE items was also presented to the general public. One expected challenge is fundraising, although geological companies are represented in the IYPE NC. Dr. Kaljo (Estonia) asked why the Lithuanian NC wishes to wait for formal approval. Dr. Skridlaite replied that this would make organizing events and fundraising much easier.

Italy: Leonello Serva informed the meeting that the MoU between the Corporation and the NC is now ready for signing. A Ministerial Decree was signed on February 19th, 2007, stating that the NC is to be presided over by the Minister of the Environment and that the Director of the Italian Geological Survey (APAT) is the President of the Technical Scientific Committee, composed of all Italian institutes dealing with the Earth sciences. The NC has already started its work, and its website is in progress. The Italian NC has produced its own logo (TERRRA). A national IYPE launch event is being organized for June 2007. The NC includes a professional fund raiser who works on a percentage basis; the International Corporation has been invited to use these services as well. To that end a meeting with the Executive Director will soon be arranged. A major international Art exhibition on 'Planet Earth' will be held in Milano in 2008.

France: Denis Vaslet informed the meeting that the French National Committee consists of two bodies, the overarching Steering Committee chaired by Jean Dercourt and the Organising Committee, which Denis Vaslet chairs. One of the NC's first activities was a call for initiatives. That was quite successful as more than 120 are already listed. These include field excursions. A launch event on February 16th was hosted by BRGM in Paris, with excellent attendance including all major players

in the Earth sciences in France. A small budget was provided by the Ministry of Research to cover the expenses of the Organising Committee. As to its programme, the French NC places much emphasis on the regions. On April 11th a presentation was given for the Minister of National Education and the Rectors of Regional Academies. This resulted in a formal engagement of French National Education with the IYPE. Moreover, scholars in the geology, soil sciences and geography communities will now collaborate in developing a new (2009?) education programme for the Earth sciences, including aspects of water, hazards, soils and population. This might well emerge as one of the IYPE's legacies after 2009. A Communication Plan was developed, and TOTAL contracted one person to implement it and to identify industrial sponsors, starting in May 2007. Moreover, the French NC is working together with the International Corporation on the realization of the international IYPE Launch Event in Paris, 12 & 13 February at UNESCO's HQ in Paris.

Korea: Uk Han told the meeting that the Korean NC was formally established in 2006, chaired by the Vice Premier, who is the Minister of Science & Technology. It consists of 7 sub committees on science, 5 on outreach and one planning and strategic subcommittee. Since its foundation, the KNC has held many meetings and opened an office on April 1st, based in the Korean Federation of Science and Technology Societies (KOFST) in Seoul, and staffed by two full-time people, including Uk Han who is the Secretary General of the KNC. The IYPE Office has produced a brochure which was distributed to all present at the meeting. As to fundraising, which is the responsibility of the planning and strategic subcommittee, Prof. Han expects half of the income to come from governmental organizations and the other half from industrial sources.

The Netherlands: Johan Meulenkamp informed the meeting that the NC was formally established in March 2007 and its first meeting will be held on May 9th. The Committee has 37 members covering a wide spectrum of knowledge and experience, stretching beyond the Earth sciences in the strict sense. As to the IYPE science programme, the Dutch focus will be mainly on environmental issues (coastal, land, climate, sea, river processes). Apart from geoscientists, engineers will be involved in realizing the programme. Significant attention will be paid to outreach (Geo-truck, Geo-debates, TV *et cetera*). Regions will be strongly involved in its implementation.

Czech Republic: Veronica Stedra said that the NC operates with support of the Ministry of the Environment and includes representatives of regional networks and consultants. In its first stage, the NC produced printed materials, such as a poster and a brochure, copies of which handed out to participants. The CNC maintains

strong relations with the National UNESCO Commission and involves the 50 UNESCO Associated Schools in the Czech Republic, as well as paying significant attention to the UNESCO Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, run by the Ministry of Education. The CNC is currently working on further expansion of its website (www.rockplanetyzeme.cz). The IYPE programme includes a painting competition for children, development of a virtual geological encyclopedia on the server of the Geological Survey (CGS), dissemination of geo-info to regions, Geoparks, schools and museums. A roving exhibition "The planet Earth: powerful and vulnerable" on the IYPE will start in Prague and will become permanent as a permanent legacy of the IYPE. The project "Geologists for Prague" will create a permanent geo-layer complementary with the Prague ZOO Park and the Botanic Garden. A special point of interest in the Czech Republic will be on rehabilitation of old mining sites, undermined cities, and protection of underground space as potential locations for storing strategic reserves.

Germany: Wolfgang Eder told the audience that the German NC also includes UNESCO representation in addition to that from the geosciences. The NC is run under the supervision of the GeoUnion (former Alfred-Wegener-Foundation) with the leadership of its President Rolf Emmermann, GFZ-Potsdam, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the German Research Foundation (DFG). It is in the process of approaching VIPs including Prime Minister Angela Merkel, former PM Gerhard Schröder, and Klaus Töpfer (the last UNEP Executive Director) as Patrons. Eder does not anticipate that the NC will generate as many funds as in 2002, when a very successful Year for the Geosciences was organized in Germany, but numerous existing and planned geo-related projects, funded mainly by the DFG and BMBF, will be designed according to the IYPE guidelines. In September/October a launch event might be held in the German Parliament House in Berlin, in the presence of all members of Parliament, for the purpose of politically addressing the IYPE and signing of the MoU with the International Corporation. A German brochure on the IYPE will be issued by the German UNESCO Commission, and a series of conferences, as well as exhibitions and "capacity building" events for schoolchildren, is planned in relation to the IYPE and Geoparks. Two new Geoparks are expected to be opened in 2008. Joint "transboundary" events (excursions, conferences) are being discussed with France, the Netherlands, and Poland. A German IYPE website, using the existing "Planet Earth" website of the BMBF-Ministry, is under construction.

Spain: Cecilio Quesada informed the meeting that the Spanish NC consists of two bodies, the Honorary Committee chaired by HH Princess Cristina de Borbón and consisting of five Ministers and the Presidents of the Senate and Congress, and an Executive Committee, chaired by the President of the National Committee for Geology, who is also the Secretary of the Honorary Committee. In 2007, the IYPE

might face some competition from the recently proclaimed national Year for the Sciences. The IYPE MoU will be signed during a formal meeting of the NC in early June. The Science programme is already running, and a special call for proposals on all ten IYPE themes has been issued by the Ministry of Research & Development, entitled 'Planet Earth'. That will be financed through existing funding mechanisms. The output will be available by 2010 and a special conference will be held in 2011. In 2008, the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress will be held in Barcelona and will bear the IYPE logo. Other IYPE labeled events will be the World Water Forum (2008), the National Congress on Global Change (April 2007) and the National Geological Congress in 2008. This month, the SNC produced a brochure, which was handed out to the meeting participants. More such brochures will be produced later. A photo CD/DVD for education purposes in schools is expected soon. The SNC has signed a contract with the Association of Earth Science Teachers to prepare workshops for primary and secondary school children, as well as local field trips for students and the general public. The Spanish network of UNESCO Associated schools will host some of these events. In the Island of Tenerife, a weekly lecture series will be held from March to November 2007; a lecture will also be delivered at Madrid's Cosmocaixa Museum on 'What are these things made of?', the programme running from April 18 to June 6, 2007. From spring 2007 onwards lectures will be given by national and international experts in universities all over Spain. In June 2007, the SNC will be formally presented to the media and the formal opening ceremony of the IYPE will be held in the Parliament in January 2008. In December 2008, the formal closing ceremony will be held in the Senate. A TV documentary will be produced and broadcast on all ten IYPE themes from autumn 2007. The SNC will contribute to the UNESCO exhibit at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in October 2007. IGME (the Spanish Geological Survey) will contribute to the *OneGeology* Project, which operates under the IYPE banner, and the SNC will cooperate in a transboundary project across the Pyrenees together with BRGM under the patronage of CGMW.

Norway: Arne Bjørlykke described the setting up of the 25 member NC that has organized a launch event in Oslo for 9 May at which both the Minister of Education & Science and the famous Norwegian rock artist, Morten Hartuk, will be present. The days of Geology (Earth Day, 22 of April) in 2007, 2008 and 2009 will all be dedicated to IYPE. An IYPE school programme in cooperation with the University of Oslo is being developed, aimed at recruiting more students in the Earth sciences. For the first time, Earth sciences are being taught at high schools in Norway. There are IYPE programmes in development at all Norwegian museums and IYPE science contests. Some 50 companies and institutions are being approached for support of the implementation of the Norwegian IYPE programme. The popular book on the

Geology of Norway will be translated into English. The International Geological Congress (IGC33) will be held in Oslo, in August 2008. All ten IYPE themes will have the opportunity to convene a topical symposium and all NCs are invited to contribute to these symposia. Current and future Norwegian science programmes will be checked on issues that comply with the IYPE Science Programme and if so, labeled also as IYPE Projects.

USA: Jack Hess informed the meeting that the Geological Society of America (GSA) will dedicate its annual congresses for 2007, 2008 and 2009 to the 10 themes of the IYPE. He expects the formal launch of the USA NC later this year.

UK: Edmund Nickless said that the UK NC is entirely composed of members of the External Relations Committee (ERC) of the Geological Society, which is a Founding Partner of IYPE. The ERC is also the IUGS National Adhering organization. In 2007, the ERC will be occupied almost entirely by the activities of the bicentennial of the Geological Society. One of these activities was the joint IYPE-GeoSoc 4,567 balloon launch early in January 2007 in London. Other activities include 10 Shell-sponsored public lectures, 15 'local heroes' lectures, student essay competitions, and a bicentennial conference with public debate. Upon evaluation by the end of 2007, some of these (e.g. the public lecture and local heroes series) will be followed-up in 2008 and 2009 as IYPE activities, while new IYPE activities might be introduced too.

Estonia: Dimitri Kaljo informed the audience that the EstNC for the IYPE was established in June 2006 and is composed of representatives of universities, the Geological Survey, institutes of hydrology, marine studies, UNESCO, the media, *et cetera*. The Committee operates under the Academy of Sciences. As the public profile for geology in Estonia was low in the 1990s, the EstNC is focusing on raising public awareness of the importance of the Earth sciences for society as well as seeking to persuade decision-makers of the value of the Earth sciences for further development of the nation. The EstNC has a commission on science and a very active commission on outreach/education; activities will include public lectures, TV and radio performances, publications, *et cetera*. Co-operation with different societies has been arranged. A project to secure some funds from the Ministry of Environment has been initiated. Dimitri Kaljo asked the Executive Director to send to the NC a draft MoU to be signed as soon as possible.

Mongolia: Amga Tsolmon informed the meeting that the Mongolian NC is well developed and will focus mainly on mining in 2007-2009. This is quite necessary as mining has a undeservedly poor public profile in the media.

Romania: Victor Mocanu said that the Romanian Committee for IYPE has been organized under the National Committee of Geologists which comes under the Academy of Sciences. The RNC tries to involve three ministries: Education & Research (Universities, Research Institutes, higher and elementary schools), Environment (Research Institutions and funds for research), and Economy and Commerce (funds for specific research on problems dealing with sustainable development and natural resources). The Romanian President, Emil Constantinescu, is ready to assist with the advancement of the IYPE and will send a supporting letter to the Corporation. The RNC aims to raise funds from the oil and gas industry, governmental bodies and from current research programmes. There is significant funding for science in Romania, but the challenge is to steer some of it to the IYPE activities. The ten science themes of IYPE closely match the current interests of Romanian experts as well as with the main research streams of the government. The most appealing IYPE issues for Romania are natural hazards, Geoparks, sustainable development, and environmental problems. In Romania, the IYPE is seen as an important vehicle with which to get the Earth sciences back on the education agenda. A website is in construction and the MoU with the Corporation is ready to be signed.

Poland: Tadeusz Peryt informed the meeting that the Polish NC for IYPE has two subcommittees, one mainly on science (chaired by Andrzej Zelazniewicz) and the other mainly on outreach (chaired by the Vice Minister of the Environment Mariusz-Orion Jedrysek). The Polish NC is presided over by the Minister of the Environment. Both subcommittees have developed ambitious programmes. After the meeting, Zelazniewicz talked to the Executive Director about the planned activities of his subcommittee ('Planet Earth') which includes representatives of all Polish Earth Sciences institutions. Among other items, these plans include a roving outdoor exhibition, geoscience competitions and contests in schools throughout Poland, a prominent role for the Earth sciences in Warsaw's annual Festival of Science and in other university cities, guided tours of forthcoming Polish geosites and geoparks, the publication of brochures and flyers on the 10 IYPE themes, promotion of scientific research on these themes, preparation of special educational broadcasts, TV films and other shows, and the setting up of a dedicated IYPE website from 2007 onwards to provide authorized explanations and comments on Earth-triggered events in Poland and beyond, and to share results of scientific programmes such as IGCP, IODP and ICDP.

Slovak Republic: Igor Broska informed the meeting that the NC is running well and that they have already held two seminars. A new round of lectures will be held in the Museum. There will be an exhibition on dinosaurs, and a film on the history of the Slovak mountains will be produced, accompanied by a special publication on this topic.

Austria: Werner Piller mentioned that the ANC will have only limited support for its activities in 2007 but that significantly more is expected for 2008. Many organizations have expressed their keen interest in participating in the IYPE activities in Austria. Although difficult to realize, Vienna's world-famous New Year concert still has a chance of being associated with the IYPE. The Museum of Natural History in Vienna plans to arrange for an Open Geology Hall. Moreover, activities at schools, Geoparks, popular books on geology, digitization and dissemination of old geo-manuscripts, and artist impressions will be prominent during the IYPE triennium.

Following this overview of National IYPE Committee activities by those represented at the meeting, the Executive Director presented some information on NCs that were not represented.

Argentina: a message was received that a NC will soon be set up in Argentina.

Australia: in 2008, the Australian Mint will produce a special series of IYPE coins.

Mexico: the Mexican NC will organize a meeting in May to be attended by the Executive Director.

Brazil has produced a series of cartoons by students in the Geosciences.

Cuba: during the triennium, a national drawing contest for children, entitled MY PLANET IS ALIVE (www.scg.cu), will be held. Lectures on GEOLOGICAL NATURE OF CUBA will be given and broadcast every week on Cuban TV. A website has been developed (www.medioambiente.cu/upnatgeo/index1.html). Furthermore, the CNC for IYPE has already published 60 000 copies of a magazine on Cuban Geology and

its relevance for society. The CNC hopes to publish a popular book (GEOLOGIA DE CUBA PARA TODOS) in 2008. Finally, 26 TV lectures in DVD format will be made available for schools, universities, and the public at large.

China: the Chinese National Committee for IYPE will probably be formally launched by mid May 2007.

Iran: has produced an information sheet and has made it available on the IYPE website (under the Iranian flag).

Japan has painted the IYPE logo on its largest deep drilling research vessel, the Chikyu ('Earth' in Japanese).

Hungary: the NC has developed a website (www.ggki.hu/planet-earth) and will have its launch event in Budapest, in November 2007.

Turkey: the TNC for IYPE, operating under the national UNESCO Commission, held a meeting on March 7th in Ankara, attended by some 100 leading scientists in Turkey. In the meeting working groups produced science plans for all 10 IYPE science topics.

Namibia: the NNC for the IYPE has issued an attractive calendar showing national geological features.

Sweden announced the establishment of its NC website:
www.snkgkva.se/planetearth.htm

Tanzania: the TNC for the IYPE is heavily involved in organizing an IYPE launch for Africa, to be held in May 2008 in Arusha, Tanzania.

CCOP Regional Committee: this Regional IYPE Committee comprises 11 geological survey organisations in East and South East Asia. As a contribution to the IYPE, the Committee will produce a book on GeoParks in the region.

United Nations: the UN will issue a series of 6 stamps celebrating the UN IYPE '08.

Nature will launch a new monthly, multidisciplinary journal in 2008, entitled *Nature Geoscience*.

5. Exhibitions

The Chairman shared his concerns regarding the exhibition on "Planet Earth" to be shown during the UNESCO General Conference in October 2007. UNESCO invited the IYPE to organize that exhibition under the IYPE umbrella, but its Secretariat had to withdraw that offer and will now invite UNESCO Member States to comment on a strategic concept paper (under preparation) and to come forward with proposals. To bring these in line with the original UNESCO offer, the National UNESCO Commissions might be approached by the IYPE National Committees to deliver materials for the exhibition. As more explicit information is still needed from UNESCO, Wolfgang Eder suggested freezing all preparations for a period of two weeks (until May 1st). Cecilio Quesada stated that contributing nations should have the right to display the exhibit in their own countries once the General Conference is over. The following comment by Wolfgang Eder was received on 3 May 2007. On 3 May 2007 the draft strategic concept of UNESCO was received; this might allow, in consultation with UNESCO National Commissions, easy access for IYPE-related exhibits.

6. General discussion

The Chairman gave the floor to the Executive Director who shared his observations with the meeting at large. He identified some common denominators in the presentations.

One such denominator was the regional scope of some of the NCs (a.o. France, the Netherlands, Spain) which was seen as a very important approach indeed, given that such an arrangement will involve more people directly and might generate

considerable additional sponsoring from regional industries and (semi-) governmental bodies.

Direct political involvement is another denominator in view of the fact that one of the IYPE's ambitions is to convince politicians of the benefits that may be generated by the geosciences for the public good. This was highlighted, in particular, by Germany and Spain in their presentations, launch and closing events in the Parliament and Senate, involving the presence of politicians.

Another general issue is to do with the legacy that all would like to see left by the IYPE after completion of the triennium, i.e. by 2010. Amongst others, this was mentioned in the contribution by Spain (IYPE Science congress in 2011), France (new Earth science education programme) and by the Czech Republic (permanent base of Geoscientific Centre). Johan Meulenkamp urged that this should be the main drive behind the IYPE, creating a lasting legacy for public, scientists, and politicians alike. Veronica Stedra added that the publicity work of Peter Jakes (The Planet Earth) will be an integral part of this legacy in the Czech Republic. National Committees would appreciate greater clarity concerning co-funding of projects submitted by EoI forms. John LaBrecque (NASA) suggested that the IYPE should enter and thus strengthen existing major international projects such as the creation of a geosciences reference base in Africa (AFREF). This and similar actions would significantly contribute to a lasting legacy for the IYPE.

Finally, the Chairman thanked the participants for their attendance and contributions, the tone of which clearly indicated that the IYPE is soundly on track. He also thanked the host for the fine arrangements made for the meeting. A glass of wine completed the NC Meeting, which closed at 6 p.m.