

Coimbra Declaration on the Development of Geosciences in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP)ⁱ

The National Committees for the International Year of Planet Earth of Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique and Cape Verde and geoscientific institutions and geoscientists participating in the International Conference “The Geosciences in the Development of the Lusofony Communities”, held in Coimbra, Portugal, 13 – 14 October, 2008;

Considering the potential role of the geosciences in contributing materially to achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) in Africa;

Convinced that the access to scientific knowledge is a right of every citizen and an important step towards sustaining harmony between nations;

Welcoming Resolution 60/192 of the United Nations, proclaiming 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE) in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014);

Further considering the crucial role that the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE) can play in the promotion of respect for Planet Earth, by increasing public awareness to the vulnerability of soils, rocks, vegetation, and landscapes, as well as the importance of Earth Sciences to the sustainable use of the Planet’s resources, to the reduction of natural hazards and the global capacity for implementation of a sustainable management of Planet Earth, of its environment and its resources;

Welcoming the content of the Paris Declaration, presented at the Global Launch Event of the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE), at UNESCO Headquarters, in Paris, 12 February 2008;

Convinced that, with its large range of natural resources and knowledge, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries can contribute substantially to its own development and to the development of other regions of Planet Earth;

Considering the crucial role played by the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries in the promotion of actions of bilateral and multilateral character in every domain, and especially its concern regarding the protection of the environment and securing a balanced management of natural resources between member states, and with a view to a sustainable development;

Welcoming the Maputo Declaration content on the Development of Geosciences in Africa approved in Maputo, Mozambique, 5 July 2006;

Welcoming the Luanda Declaration on the implementation of a mutual cooperation platform in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, in the field of environment, approved in Luanda, Angola, 24 April 2008, in the framework of the IV Ministerial Conference of Environment of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries;

Welcoming the Arusha Declaration, during the launch of the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE) in Africa, approved in Arusha, Tanzania, 9 May 2008;

Convinced that the knowledge in geosciences can help the Portuguese speaking communities to contribute to an approach to environmental management of our Earth System that can improve the quality of life of their people;

1. share the view that:

- ✚ Geoscientists, and particularly geologists, have an important social role to fulfil;
- ✚ *Promoting* a broader education within the geosciences can improve the awareness of the Portuguese speaking people concerning the need for sustainable management of the Earth' natural resources, considering the close affinities between the geodiversity, biodiversity and social-cultural diversity of our Earth System;
- ✚ *Strengthening* the scientific infrastructure and promoting regional centres of excellence can promote, in a sustainable way, the emergence of geoscientific researchers of high quality in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries;
- ✚ *Improving* the extent and quality of geological mapping and developing improved geoscience information networks in order to assist the exploration of minerals, energy and water resources and to consider major environmental challenges faced by the territories belonging to the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries;

2. *Reminding* the Portuguese speaking geoscientists of their responsibilities in the study of their territories so that the partnerships in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries can become stronger and productive;

3. *Supporting* the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) European Union – Georesources System for Africa (AEGOS) for a development of a system of digital information, distributing, sharing and interoperable information system for the ACP subsurface, resources and hazards

4. *Inviting* the geoscientific community and the civil Portuguese speaking society to contribute actively, through the National Committees for the International Year of Planet Earth, demonstrating the great potential of

geosciences to build a safer, healthier and wealthier Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries;

5. *Inviting* the leaders of the Portuguese speaking nations to recognise unconditionally and give special support to the development of geosciences throughout the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, particularly by increasing national research budgets for training courses and research and, more specifically, by paying special attention to the alarming brain drain, which is greatly weakening the Portuguese speaking research systems.

6. *Appealing* to the European Commission and to the African Union, through their specialized technical committees and Ministers responsible for Science and Technology, to develop a strategic plan designed to achieve balanced development of the geosciences in the Community of Portuguese speaking Countries, as an essential tool in the implementation of a cooperation platform among the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries in the Environmental Area, a compromise included in the Luanda Declaration.

Coimbra, Portugal, 14 October 2008

*Translated by Elizabeth Silva, responsible for the Science Sector of the Portuguese Commission for UNESCO,
member of the Portuguese Committee for the IYPE
Revised by _____ from the IYPE Corporation*

ⁱ Maria Helena Henriques (Coordinator of the Portuguese Committee for the International Year of Planet Earth - IYPE), 28 April 2008.

This Declaration includes the remarks and suggestions received by: Mr. Lopo Vasconcelos (Mozambique National Committee for the IYPE), 26 May 2008, Mr. Eduardo de Mulder (Executive Director for the IYPE UNESCO- IUGS), 17 July 2008, Mr. Carlos Oití Berbert (Brazilian National Committee for the IYPE), 22 July 2008.