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WELCOME

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The Commission has again planned a full program for 2006 and 2007 and we hope you will join us in all four conferences and workshops. Thanks to the responsible organisers we will have them in different regions of the world and we hope this will facilitate your participation. Any further suggestions are strongly welcome.

Looking forward to seeing you soon in Brisbane,

With best regards

Berne, June 2006

Doris Wastl-Walter

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dates of the Future Commission Meetings

The planned and confirmed future commission meetings are:

2006

July 3-7. BRISBANE (Australia), IGU Regional Conference "Regional Responses to Global Changes – A view from the Antipodes", 4 Sessions of the Commission. Organiser: Doris Wastl-Walter, University of Berne. E-mail: dwastl@giub.unibe.ch.

October 18-22. BRATISLAVA (Slovakia), IGU GAPP Conference "New tasks, approaches and spatial perspectives in public policy". Organiser: Jan Bucek, Comenius University, Bratislava. bucek@fns.uniba.sk.

2007

First week of February. KATHMANDU (Nepal), IGU GAPP Conference, Topic to be defined. Organiser: Pushkar K Pradhan, Tribhuvan University. puba@mail.com.np.

June 3-6. BERN (Switzerland), Joint Conference with the IGU Commission on Gender, Topic to be defined. Organiser: Elisabeth Buehler, University of Zuerich and Doris Wastl-Walter, University of Bern. dwastl@giub.unibe.ch.

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2008

August 25-29. TUNIS (Tunisia), IGC International Geographical Congress "Collaboratively Building our Territories". Organiser: Habib Dlala (Habib.Dlala@fshst.rnu.tn) and Ali Toumi (alitoumi2003@yahoo.fr), Université de Tunis.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

Brisbane, AUS, July 3-7, 2006

IGU Regional Conference

"Regional Responses to Global Changes – A view from the Antipodes"

As we have already informed you, our Commission has planned the following three (specialist) sessions at the IGU Regional Conference "Regional Responses to Global Changes – A view from the Antipodes". The **programme** is the following:

1. Local government and citizenship

Chair: Rex Honey (keynote speaker)

- Choo S: *From Cooperation to Unification: Possibilities and Obstacles in the Local Governance of Korea*
- Blazek J: *Regional innovations strategies in the Czech Republic*
- Razin E: *Local Governance and Local Democracy in the Context of Crisis in the Welfare State*
- Park J: *Seeking for Social Housings Vicinity to Work Place using GIS*

2. Public Policy and security

Chair: Doris Wastl-Walter

- Short J: *The Social Deconstruction of A 'Natural Disaster': Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans*
- Jocoy C: *Geographies of homelessness policy and services in the US*
- Laurenson P: *Towards Inclusion: Local Government, Public Space, and Homelessness in New Zealand*
- Collins D: *Governmental Responses to Homelessness in Canada and New Zealand: A Comparative Analysis*

3. Public policy and transnational spaces

Chair: Eran Razin

- Wastl-Walter D: *Conceptualising strangers: shifts in Swiss public policy re foreigners*

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- Healey R: *Initiating Change in Protocols Governing Institutions: The Case of a Refugee Centre and the Protocols around Integrating Refugees*
- Clarke S: *Rethinking Local Governance and Citizenship in Multicultural Settings*
- Markusse J: *Italian party realignment and interethnic political relations in South Tyrol*

We have also organised a keynote session for our Commission:

- Time: Friday, July 7, 13:30-15:10
- Chair: Sungjae Choo, Kyunghee University Seoul, Korea
- Keynote lecture: **Rex Honey "Human Rights: A Fundamental component of Geography and Public Policy"**
- Discussant: Doris Wastl-Walter, University of Berne, Switzerland.
Damian Collins, University of Auckland, New Zealand.

We will also have a business meeting of the Commission during the lunch break on Friday, July 7.

For further information see: www.igu2006.org

Bratislava, Slovakia, October 18-22, 2006

IGU GAPP Conference

"New tasks, approaches and spatial perspectives in public policy"

Introductory Announcement

Wide range of papers is expected, but contributions addressing narrow group of topics will be highly appreciated. They should discuss the latest administrative territorial reforms including decentralisation, their limits and consequences. Governments at all level also are changing approaches to delivery of various public goods and services with various outcomes. Communities, cities and regions also face large variety of problems – innovative public policies are adopted, responding on them in different ways and different effects. Rising differences in social and economic situation across localities ask for addressing local economic development issues once again, including role of institutions, financial tools, planning and implementation strategies, as well as central state intervention. The relations among levels of government also remain very complicated and ideal for fruitful exchange of ideas. The role, scope and forms of citizens' involvement in managing public affairs also need more attention. We should understand much more how governments perceive and deal with spatiality inherent in many of their policies.

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Place:

Department of Human Geography and Demography, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia.

Preliminary programme:

(Working language will be English)

Wednesday October 18 - arrival

Thursday October 19 – pre-conference one-day excursion “Bratislava and Western Slovakia”, or walking-tour (about 3 hours) through “Old and future Bratislava” (depending on interest of participants)

Friday October 20 - conference meeting plus conference dinner

Saturday October 21 – conference meeting

Sunday October 22 – departure

Deadlines:

30 June 2006 – registration, hotel reservation (for late registration see web page or contact conference organisers)

15 September 2006 – title of presentation, abstract

Costs:

Conference fee: 100 EUR – paid during the conference

“Bratislava and Western Slovakia” excursion: 50 EUR – paid during the conference

Organisers and contact

Jan Bucek (bucek@fns.uniba.sk), Pavol Korec and Vladimir Slavik, Department of Human Geography and Demogeography, Comenius University, Mlynska dolina, 842 15 Bratislava, Slovak Republic (for more details and **registration form** see web: www.fns.uniba.sk/~khg/indexeng.htm)

Kathmandu, Nepal, 1st week of February, 2007

IGU GAPP Conference

“Public Policy and Local Development: Opportunities and Challenges”

Detailed Topical Issues:

1. Policy strategies/measures in local development: development models, concepts, and policy measures
2. Opportunities:
 - (a) Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices of resources use
 - (b) Local resources based livelihood systems
 - (c) Production potentials and geographical niche
 - (d) Technologies in local development – appropriate, information and tools
 - (e) Planning process and measurements of local development
 - (f) Spatial linkages – intra- and inter- regions and transboundary
 - (g) Structure and functions of local organisations in sustainable development
 - (h) Urban rural linkages and rural development

3. Challenges:
 - (a) Issues and problems in local development
 - (b) Failures of policy strategies
 - (c) Planning practices – weaknesses and challenges
 - (d) Problems of local governance and development
 - (e) Infrastructure, organisations and development
 - (f) Internally displaced peoples, and their development and environmental implications
 - (g) Public policies and resources conflicts
 - (h) Environmental degradations, geographical approach and development

Conference Time Duration (ONE week during the first week of February)

1. Paper sessions – **Three** days including local cultural tours
2. Geographical excursion – **Four** days (communities efforts to local development)

Organiser and contact

Pushkar K Pradhan, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. puba@mail.com.np.

News from the IGU General Assembly

E-Newsletter of the IGU (# 4, 2006):

A message by Adalberto Vallega: Roles and Visibility of Geography in a Changing World

A Latin proverb says: *Non progredi est regredi*, meaning "Not to go forwards is to go backwards". This is the condition in which international geography, represented by the International Union, has been immersed. In 2001 in New York, Kofi Annan gave an inspiring speech to the international geographical community inviting it to collaborate with the UN system, particularly in the framework of the Millennium Goals. Since that cardinal event, the reasons why the IGU, as indeed any scientific community addressing the interaction between society and nature, should optimise its strategy and implement its organisational and operational tools, have been acquiring increasing importance.

As a matter of fact, nowadays, the approach to places and spaces must not only deal with global change but also investigate, and represent, the interaction between society and nature, the interaction between individual spaces and globalising processes, and the role of culture in shaping the identity of places. There is no doubt that many human communities and social contexts have moved from an approach to their existential condition focusing on evolution, i.e. on time, to an approach focusing on the sense and values of places, namely on space, particularly on what Yu-Fu Tuan called topophilia. Hence, the increased cultural and epistemological importance of geography.

Individual communities and the media have expanded and intensified their attention to the geographical features of places and their role in day-to-day life. There is a growing demand for geographical information and knowledge, needed as a specific tool to better understand the peculiar conditions of life, and to compare these conditions with those in different social contexts. Hence, the increased role of geography for mutual understanding among cultures.

IGU Commission on Geography and Public Policy

To tailor its role in such a changing world and reference framework, IGU has increasingly felt the need to optimise its strategy by implementing inter-disciplinary approaches, by widening collaboration with other scientific institutions and inter-governmental organisations and by focusing on education and social communication. The recently adopted memos of understanding with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Festival International de Géographie (FIG), together with the implementation of the role of the Home of Geography as the Union's technical office, are - among others, such as the Cultures and Civilizations for Human Development initiative - meaningful signals of a strengthening reactivity to the changing reference framework.

To proceed along this path, an increasingly closer collaboration among IGU, National Committees, Commissions and other research bodies, and the Executive Committee is needed. All these bodies are cordially invited to participate in building up such a strategy. The broader and more dynamic such interaction is, the more effective the role and visibility of IGU in the international arena will be.

Adalberto Vallega, President IGU

Further contents:

- 1) Obituaries for Prof. Niko Berutchasvili and Prof. Serge Antoine
- 2) Brisbane Regional Conference
- 3) 2008 International Geographical Congress
- 4) 2010 Regional Conference
- 5) ICSU 2006-2011 Strategic Plan - Part II
- 6) International Year of Planet Earth
- 7) Arab League of Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisations
- 8) Festival International de Géographie : 2006 Action Plan
- 9) Cultures and Civilizations for Human Development
- 10) Mediterranean Renaissance Programme
- 11) New Commissions: Small Islands
- 12) Lesotho Atlas of Sustainable Development
- 13) *L'Éspace politique*: A New Geographical Journal
- 14) UN Group on Geographical Names
- 15) Researching Poverty and Land Use in Vietnam
- 16) Memorandum of Agreement with China
- 17) Olympiads in China

The newsletter can be found on the homepage of the IGU.