



International Association of Geomorphologists

Association Internationale des
Géomorphologues

IAG/AIG Newsletter No. 24 (1/2008)

A note from the editor...

In keeping with IAG tradition, we publish in this newsletter the past President's address given in Zaragoza in 2005.

Best wishes for a productive 2008!

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OPENING CEREMONY, ZARAGOZA 2005 PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

President, Vice-Rector, Authorities, Ladies and Gentlemen, National Scientific Members and Dear Colleagues, on behalf of the IAG, I wish to express a friendly welcome to all the participants in this Sixth International Conference on Geomorphology. I also wish to address my sincere thanks and appreciation to the organizers of this Congress and, in particular, to Prof. Mateo Gutierrez and all the Collaborators from Zaragoza and all Spain.

This Conference is taking place 4 years after the Tokyo Conference and it will conclude the 4 years of work of the Executive Committee, which was elected there. During the IAG First General Assembly (after this Opening Ceremony) and during the First Council Meeting (tomorrow morning) I will have the opportunity, together with the other IAG Executive Committee Members, to illustrate in detail the activities and the results of this 4-year period. Now, with great satisfaction, I would just like to mention two very important results.

- **First result.** The participation of many young geomorphologists in IAG activities, thanks especially to the numerous Training Courses (twelve), organized in several parts of the world, in collaboration with other national and international agencies and thanks also to the numerous grants that we offered to the most deserving and needy young geomorphologists.
- **Second result.** The participation and enrolment of numerous less favoured countries in the IAG, thanks mainly to the organization of international meetings (regional conferences, symposia etc.) in Africa, Asia and Latin

America, and thanks also to financial provisions regarding the IAG enrolment fees for the less-favoured countries: about twelve new countries.

During this past 4-year term the new IAG **Constitution** has become operative (you will find a copy in your Congress bag): although this version maintains the spirit and goals of the original, it contains numerous, substantial improvements, which will make the IAG's activity more efficient. An important act of implementation of the new Constitution will take place during this Conference, with the appointment of the new 2005-2009 Executive Committee and the new statutory rules.

Unfortunately this four-year period has been characterised by serious events of **war** and **terrorism**, which have disrupted many areas of the world: from the USA to Iraq, from Turkey to Afghanistan, from Indonesia to Spain and Britain, up to the recent massacre in Egypt. On behalf of the IAG, I express our disdain and horror and our full, sincere solidarity to the countries involved and deep sorrow for the victims. We feel abhorrence towards any form of violence and hope that culture and science may contribute to overcome any political and religious contrast.

It is also necessary to remember the many **natural disasters**, which in the past four years have struck our planet: the most catastrophic of all being the tsunami, which caused the loss of innumerable lives and incalculable damage in Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and other countries. I remind you also many earthquakes around the world and other disasters. The most recent of all were the floods in central Europe, hurricane Katrina in the southern USA and mainly in New Orleans, and the typhoon in east Asia. One of Geomorphology's commitments must be to contribute to the prevention and mitigation of these risks. In fact during this Conference we shall have the opportunity to discuss and compare various geomorphological concepts, research methods and scientific results on various topics and, in particular, on geomorphic hazards.

The rich list of Lectures and Posters, the highly qualified scientific level of the participants and the interesting topics presented in the Symposia and in the Field Trips lead me to think that this Conference will be successful.

I thank again the Organizers of this Geomorphological Conference and also all the participants who will contribute to its success, the National Scientific Members, whose contribution, suggestions and stimulus are most welcome, and the members of the Executive Committee, who have firmly and successfully collaborated in defining the aims of the IAG.

I now declare this Sixth IAG International Conference open.

Mario PANIZZA

REPORT ON THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GEOMORPHOLOGY

The Sixth International Conference of the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG/AIG) was celebrated in Zaragoza (Spain) on September 7-11, 2005. The meeting was organised by the Spanish Society of Geomorphologists, being Prof. Mateo Gutiérrez and his collaborators from the University of Zaragoza, the local organizers.

The scientific programme comprised scientific sessions with oral and poster presentations, plenary lectures, field trips, and an intensive course for young geomorphologists. Other activities included General Assemblies of the IAG, a Meeting for Young Geomorphologists, a Competition of Geomorphological Photography and three cultural visits for accompanying persons. In the First General Assembly, Prof. Mario Panizza, President of the IAG, designated with the special mention of Honorary Fellows Professors Albert Pissart, Leszek Starkel and Herman Verstappen. On the other hand, Dr. Gerardo Benito, President of the Spanish Society of Geomorphologists, gave to Prof. Adrian Harvey a silver plate in recognition of his contribution to Spanish Geomorphology. An IAG silver plate was given by way of congratulation to the organizers of the conference; then the incoming IAG President, Prof. Andrew Goudie, delivered to the outgoing IAG President, Prof. Mario Panizza, an IAG silver plate with gratefulness for his four years of presidency.

A total of 861 delegates coming from 61 countries participated in the conference. The IAG gave grants to 15 delegates and 18 participants were financially supported by the organization of the conference. 875 abstracts were accepted for the 25 scientific sessions. These included 17 general sessions, 5 special sessions and 5 sessions of the IAG Working Groups. The abstracts were published in a volume (511 pages) including a CD with the abstracts and the 24 edited field trip guides in an electronic version. The session chairs have arranged or are negotiating the publication of special issues in some international journals like *Geomorphology*, *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*, *Catena*, *Zeitschrift für Geomorphologie*, *Natural Hazards*, *Geodinamica Acta*, *Polish Polar Research*, *Environmental Geology*, *Geografia Fisica e Dinamica*, and *Quaternaria Edafologia*.

The Plenary Lectures were presented by Prof. Mario Panizza (Univ. of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy), Prof. Antonio Cendrero (Univ. of Cantabria, Spain), Dr. Irasema Alcántara-Ayala (UNAM, Mexico), Prof. Michael Thomas (Univ. of Stirling, UK), Prof. Xiaoping Yang (Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China) and Prof. Mohamed Benazzouz (University of Constantine, Algeria).

Initially, 27 field trips were offered which covered numerous regions of the Spanish territory and the Portuguese coast. Finally, 4 pre-conference (92 participants), 9 one-day (292 participants) and 4 post-conference (50 participants) field trips were celebrated. The 24 completed field trip guides were published separately in booklets and jointly in two volumes (1007 pages). The 3-days Intensive Course for Young Geomorphologists, partially subsidized by the IAG and the organization, and lead by Dr. José María García-

Ruiz and Prof. Mauro Soldati, had 35 participants. Also worthy of mention are the 113 photographs presented to the Competition of Geomorphological Photography.

Gerardo Benito (President of the Spanish Society of Geomorphologists)
Francisco Gutiérrez (Secretary of the Conference)

IAG DECLARATION ON NATURAL HAZARDS

On the occasion of the Sixth International Conference on Geomorphology,
in Zaragoza, Spain, 7-11 September, 2005,

The International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG/AIG),
founded in 1985, recognizes that

Whereas

- (1) Natural hazards, including floods, landslides, soil erosion, desertification, and volcanic and seismic events, which change earth surface processes and landforms, are of primary concern worldwide; and
- (2) Each year, more people are exposed to natural hazards, as natural and anthropogenic processes of global change increase the frequency and intensity of hazardous events;

and whereas

- (3) Geomorphology is the study of land surface forms and the processes that shape them; and
- (4) Geomorphologists analyze causes and consequences of natural hazards, time periods between destructive events, and locations of past, present, and potential risks from the impacts of natural hazards;

The International Association of Geomorphologists declares that

- (1) Geomorphological research that produces maps and models identifying areas susceptible to damage should always be part of the scientific basis of decision-making to reduce susceptibility and prevent loss of life and property by natural events; and
- (1) Geomorphologists should contribute to decision-making, at all levels, to prevent and mitigate geomorphological hazards and to encourage decision-makers to place higher priority on prevention and mitigation of risks associated with natural hazards.

Editor's Note

The success of the IAG/AIG Newsletter depends upon the contributions that we receive. Please assist by sending commentaries, reviews of regional or national meetings and field trips, summaries of issues pertinent to geomorphology, and announcements of future meetings and workshops. Your contributions should be forwarded to the IAG/AIG Publications Officer:

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