



IAG OUTGOING PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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President of the IAG (2022-2026)

The Beginning of my Long Journey

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all my predecessors—the former Presidents of the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG)—for establishing this important international platform and for carrying forward the academic advancement of geomorphology through the IAG.

My association with the IAG began in 2001, when I attended the 5th International Conference on Geomorphology in Tokyo, Japan, for the first time. Since then, I have participated in most of the international and regional conferences of geomorphology, which provided me with opportunities to interact with geomorphologists from different parts of the world and to become increasingly involved in the international geomorphological community.

The Indian Institute of Geomorphologists (IGI), established in 1987, is the only national Indian platform exclusively devoted to the promotion of research and academic development in geomorphology. Through the IGI, I was given the opportunity to organize the *International Workshop on Landslides in the Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas*, held from 27 February to 6 March 2004. The workshop was approved by the IAG under the Presidency of Mario Panizza and was very well attended. This event became an important milestone in strengthening my association with the IAG and in bringing the geomorphological problems of the Darjeeling–Sikkim Himalayas to a wider international audience. Consequently, the IGI entrusted me with the responsibility of organizing the 9th International Conference of Geomorphology (9th ICG) in New Delhi, India, where I served as the *Convener*.

A further turning point came in 2005 during the *5th International Conference of Geomorphology*, Zaragoza, Spain when Andrew Goudie, the newly elected President of the IAG, entrusted me with the responsibility of serving as Co-Chair of the IAG Working Group on Geomorphological Hazards, together with Irasema Alcántara-Ayala, who served as Chair. I shall remain ever grateful to both Mario Panizza and Andrew Goudie for the confidence they placed in me and for the opportunities they provided. From that point onward, I never looked back. I decided to devote myself more closely to the IAG and to contribute to the international advancement of geomorphology.

My responsibilities within the IAG subsequently increased progressively. I was elected Publication Officer in 2009 at the 7th International Conference of Geomorphology in Melbourne, followed by Secretary General at the 8th International Conference in Paris, Vice President at the 9th International Conference in New Delhi, and finally President at the 10th International Conference in Coimbra. Each of these responsibilities provided me with valuable opportunities to learn about international academic leadership, institutional organization, and the functioning of a global scientific community.



During this journey, I had the privilege of learning from many distinguished former Presidents of the IAG, including Denys Brunsden, Olav Slaymaker, Mario Panizza, Andrew Goudie, Michael Crozier, Eric Fouache, and Mauro Soldati. Their vision, experience and commitment to geomorphology greatly influenced my understanding of international academic and organizational activities. I also had the opportunity to meet and develop friendships with many internationally renowned geomorphologists. These personal and professional relationships have been among the most rewarding aspects of my association with the IAG.

Institutional Foundation of the IAG

Another major development in the history of the IAG occurred in 2019, when, during the Presidency of Mauro Soldati, the Association established its legal base in Madrid, Spain. The absence of a formal legal foundation had been a long-standing issue for the IAG, and its resolution represented an important institutional achievement. I particularly recall the considerable efforts made by Mauro Soldati, Francisco Gutiérrez, and Emmanuel Renard in establishing this legal foundation. Soldati also proposed a number of important objectives for fulfilling the missions embodied in the newly framed Constitution of the IAG. The establishment of this legal and organizational framework provided a stronger foundation from which the activities of the Association could be carried forward. The financial affairs of the IAG are entrusted to our Treasurer, Francisco Gutiérrez, who is based at the IAG headquarters and manages the organization's funds efficiently and responsibly.

My Vision as President, 2022–2026

When I assumed the responsibility of leading the IAG, I identified three principal areas of focus for my term. First, I sought to **increase the international visibility of the activities and contributions of the IAG**. Second, I emphasized the importance of **inclusion and diversity** in all initiatives and activities of the Association. Third, I aimed to **strengthen the training and capacity-building activities of the IAG**, particularly to provide greater opportunities for young geomorphologists and bring a new generation of researchers onto the international stage.

With the active cooperation and support of all the members of the Executive Committee, I worked to advance these three objectives during my tenure. Looking back, I consider this journey with the IAG not merely as a sequence of academic and organizational responsibilities, but as a deeply enriching part of my life as a geomorphologist. It enabled me to contribute to the international community of geomorphology while, at the same time, learning continuously from colleagues across the world. Above all, it strengthened my belief that geomorphology transcends national boundaries and that its future depends upon international cooperation, inclusiveness, knowledge sharing, and the nurturing of young geomorphologists.

Membership, International Collaborations and Outreach

When the present Executive Committee (EC) assumed office in October 2022, the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) comprised 63 countries, represented through 56 individual National Scientific Members and three regional associations



encompassing a further eight countries. By 2026, the IAG had expanded its membership to 74 countries, represented by 64 individual National Scientific Members and four regional associations comprising a total of 10 countries. This growth reflects the increasing international visibility of the IAG and its expanding engagement with the geomorphological community worldwide.

During the period 2022–2026, the IAG strengthened its international academic and organizational partnerships by signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the American Geophysical Union (AGU), the Geological Society of America (GSA), and the International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA). Through an official MoU, the IAG also extended its support to *Geomorphica*, the journal run by young geomorphologists, thereby encouraging the participation and scholarly development of the next generation of geomorphologists.

These initiatives built upon the collaborations established by the IAG prior to the present EC's tenure, including partnerships with the International Geographical Union (IGU), the European Geosciences Union (EGU), the International Permafrost Association (IPA), the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), the American Association of Geographers (AAG), and the International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG).

The International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) has nominated its former President, Mauro Soldati, to represent the IAG in the Deep-time Digital Earth (DDE) Programme. The DDE is the first global “big science” programme initiated by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), aimed at promoting international collaboration and developing a comprehensive digital framework for understanding the Earth's geological history and evolution.

Recognising the importance of geological and geomorphological heritage, the IAG constituted a Global Geosite Committee under the leadership of Piotr Migoń. The committee comprises Paola Coratza, Emmanuel Reynard, Ghislain Zangmo Tefogoum, Andrea Coronato, Mauro Soldati, and Zbigniew Zwoliński, who have been working sincerely and meticulously towards the identification, documentation, evaluation and promotion of significant geomorphological and geological sites across the world. The committee has made an important contribution to the IUGS Geological Heritage Sites initiative, particularly through the selection of the First 100 and Second 100 Geological Heritage Sites. Their collective efforts have helped highlight sites of outstanding scientific, educational, cultural and geomorphological significance at the global level. In the First 100 Geological Heritage Sites, three sites proposed through the geomorphological community were approved, while six additional sites were included in the Second 100 Geological Heritage Sites. These contributions represent a significant achievement for the IAG and demonstrate the growing recognition of geomorphological heritage as an integral component of Earth heritage. The work of the Global Geosite Committee has not only strengthened the international visibility of geomorphology but has also established a meaningful connection between geomorphological research, geological heritage conservation and the broader objectives of the IUGS and the DDE Programme.



On behalf of the IAG, I am pleased to note the considerable expansion of its international visibility, both in terms of National Scientific Membership and institutional collaboration. I sincerely thank all members of the IAG Executive Committee for their commitment and hard work. I would particularly like to acknowledge Mihai Micu, Vice President for National Scientific Members, and Takashi Oguchi, Vice President for Communication and Outreach and for Contact with Asian and Oceanian Countries and Webinars. Their efforts, together with those of Karl W. Wegmann, Narges Kariminejad, and Ghislain Zangmo Tefogoum, have been instrumental in disseminating IAG activities and strengthening its presence across the global geomorphological community.

Virtual Memory Book and IAG Heritage Initiatives

The IAG also took the initiative to establish a virtual *Memory Book* featuring interviews with former IAG Presidents and IAG Honorary Fellows. Mihai Micu, Vice President of the IAG, was entrusted with coordinating this important initiative. The project provides a valuable record of the history, experiences, and institutional memory of the Association and offers younger generations an opportunity to learn from the contributions of leading figures in geomorphology. As of 2026, eight interviews are available on the IAG website, featuring A. L. Coelho Neto, D. Loczy, E. Fouache, J. P. Peulvast, M. Crozier, Y. Wang, M. Fort, and S. Singh. Two additional interviews, with O. Slaymaker and P. Williams, are currently in the editing phase, while five further interviews—with M. Soldati, A. Goudie, A. Cendrero, A. M. Harvey, and M. J. Kirkby—are in progress. The initiative is therefore continuing to develop as an important archive of the intellectual and institutional history of the IAG.

Mihai Micu has also played a leading role in organizing the IAG Photo and Video Contest. The contest continued throughout 2024–2026, with different themes selected on a quarterly basis. The themes for the entire year were announced at the beginning of each year, providing members and the wider geomorphological community with regular opportunities to document, interpret, and communicate geomorphological phenomena through photography and video.

The IAG is also grateful to Mauro Soldati, former President, and Piotr Migoń, former Vice President, for their significant contribution in documenting the history of the Association through the publication of *“Geomorphology without Borders—The History of the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) and Reappraisal at the 35th Anniversary.”* The article was published in *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms (ESPL)* in 2024 and provides a valuable account of the evolution, achievements, and international growth of the IAG over its 35-year history.

Together, these initiatives have contributed not only to strengthening the institutional identity and global visibility of the IAG, but also to fostering greater interaction among geomorphologists across generations, regions, and professional backgrounds.



Inclusion and diversity issues

During 2022–2026, the IAG made sustained efforts to uphold the principles of inclusion and diversity across its various programmes, activities, and organisational structures. Of the 16 members of the Executive Committee—comprising 7 elected members, 6 co-opted members, and 3 members entrusted with special portfolios—5 were women. The composition of the Executive Committee also ensured representation from all continents, thereby reflecting the truly international character and global reach of the Association.

The principles of inclusion and diversity were likewise given due consideration in the selection of recipients of the Young Geomorphologist Grants, the constitution of Working Groups, and the implementation of other programmes and activities of the IAG. While merit and academic excellence remained the primary criteria, every effort was made to provide equitable opportunities and to promote broad geographical and gender representation. These measures contributed to strengthening the inclusive, diverse, and genuinely global character of the Association.

Encouraging Young Geomorphologists on the International Platform

To encourage and bring more young geomorphologists onto the international platform, Anita Bernatek-Jakiel and Efthimios Karymbalis, IAG-EC Co-opted Members, have worked tirelessly to expand opportunities for young researchers and facilitate their participation in international scientific activities.

Since the initiation of the IAG Travel Grant programme in 2002 and up to August 2026, the IAG has awarded 302 grants to 278 young geomorphologists (YGs) from 63 countries. During the current 2022–2026 Executive Committee (EC) tenure alone, the IAG has awarded 80 grants supporting 75 YGs from 31 countries, enabling their participation in both recurrent and occasional scientific events in geomorphology.

This commitment has been strongly motivated by the experience and achievements of the previous two EC tenures, which demonstrated the importance of providing greater international exposure and networking opportunities to early-career geomorphologists. During 2013–2017, a total of 47 grants were awarded to young geomorphologists from 22 countries, while during 2017–2022, the number increased to 54 grants supporting participants from 24 countries.

The steady expansion of the programme reflects the IAG's continued commitment to nurturing the next generation of geomorphologists, strengthening international collaboration, and ensuring that young researchers have a meaningful presence on the global geomorphological platform.

Working Groups

Since 1997, the IAG has supported 40 Working Groups, whose scientific outputs are disseminated through the IAG website, individual group websites, and scholarly publications. During our tenure, six new Working Groups were approved, while 13 existing Working Groups continued their activities. Special thanks are due to Andrea Coronato, Vice President



responsible for Working Groups, for her dedicated and efficient coordination of these activities.

Webinars

Since 2022, the IAG has been annually organising a webinar to commemorate UNESCO International Geodiversity Day, observed on 6 October each year. In addition, the IAG has continued its programme of regional webinars during International Geomorphology Week, held annually in the first week of March. This initiative, which began in 2021, has provided an important platform for regional engagement and exchange among geomorphologists. We gratefully acknowledge Takashi Oguchi, IAG Vice President, with the support of Susan Conway, IAG EC Co-opted Member, for their dedicated efforts in organising and conducting these webinars.

IAG Highlights

Since 1995, the IAG has published its newsletter, featuring the activities of the IAG and those of all its National Scientific Members. In 2018, the former *Newsletter* was replaced by the *IAG Highlights*, providing a more contemporary and effective platform for disseminating information about the Association's activities.

Special appreciation is due to Katja Laute, IAG Officer, for her tremendous dedication and meticulous efforts in preparing and publishing the *IAG Highlights* regularly and to a consistently high standard. Since 2022, she has successfully published 15 issues of the *Highlights*, ensuring a regular and comprehensive flow of information to the geomorphological community.

Social Media and Website

In today's digital age, social media play a vital role in disseminating information and promoting the activities of scientific organisations. The IAG has also embraced these platforms to strengthen communication and outreach within the international geomorphological community.

The IAG website was redesigned and independently relaunched in 2023, providing a modern platform for communicating the Association's activities, programmes and initiatives. Although a few minor functional issues remain, most have been efficiently resolved through the dedicated efforts of Susan Conway, IAG EC Co-opted Member responsible for Website and social media, with valuable assistance from Meven Philippe.

The IAG is also active on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, through which its activities, announcements and initiatives are widely disseminated. These platforms have significantly enhanced the visibility and accessibility of IAG activities and strengthened communication with geomorphologists worldwide.

We also extend our special thanks to Susan and all those involved in maintaining communication through Geomorph-L, where approximately 35–40 messages are posted each



month. This continued effort has been instrumental in keeping the international geomorphological community informed and connected.

International and Regional Conferences

The 11th International Conference on Geomorphology (11th ICG) was an outstanding event and a great success under the leadership of Sam McColl, IAG Special Portfolio Member. The conference was held from 2 to 6 February in Christchurch, New Zealand, and was jointly organised by the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG), the University of Canterbury, the Australian and New Zealand Geomorphology Group (ANZGG), and the New Zealand Rivers Group. A total of 927 geomorphologists from 45 countries gathered in Christchurch to participate in stimulating thematic sessions, inspiring scientific presentations, excellent networking opportunities, and a diverse social programme. The conference provided an important international platform for exchanging ideas, strengthening collaborations, and advancing geomorphological research.

Prior to the 11th ICG, two memorable regional conferences were successfully organised. The first was held in Cappadocia, Türkiye, from 12 to 14 September 2023, bringing together 150 geomorphologists from 25 countries. The second took place in Timișoara, Romania, from 16 to 18 September 2025, with 249 geomorphologists from 33 countries participating.

The IAG extends its sincere appreciation to its Special Portfolio Members, Cengiz Yıldırım, who led the organisation of the Türkiye conference, and Ion Florin Țățui, who led the Romania conference. Their dedication, commitment, and meticulous efforts contributed greatly to the success of these regional conferences and to strengthening the international geomorphological community.

All these achievements would not have been possible without the invaluable support of our Secretary General, Achim A. Beylich, whose meticulous efforts in preparing, organising, and preserving all IAG documents have been instrumental in ensuring the smooth and effective functioning of the Association.

Concluding remarks

Since September 2022, approximately 1,100 natural hazards and disasters have occurred across the Earth's surface, encompassing geomorphological, geological, meteorological, and human-induced events. As geomorphologists, we are particularly attentive to geomorphological hazards and firmly convinced that our science has an important role to play in reducing loss of life, strengthening resilience, and mitigating the economic and social consequences of such events.

Many members of our Association are actively engaged in research, monitoring, risk assessment, and practical initiatives addressing hazardous geomorphological processes and their impacts on communities. The scale of suffering and disruption caused by these events further strengthens our commitment to advancing geomorphological knowledge and translating scientific understanding into effective measures for the protection of human lives, livelihoods, and the environment. The International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG)



extends its deepest sympathy and heartfelt solidarity to all those affected by these hazards and disasters. Our thoughts are with the victims, their families, and the communities that continue to face the profound consequences of these tragedies. We remain committed to supporting scientific cooperation and promoting the application of geomorphological knowledge to reduce disaster risk and build safer and more resilient societies.

I once again extend my heartfelt thanks to all our outgoing Executive Committee Members for their unwavering support, dedicated service, and sincere efforts throughout our tenure. Their commitment and contributions have played an important role in the successful functioning and advancement of the IAG.

At the same time, I warmly welcome the newly elected Executive Committee Members, led by Dr. Mihai Micu. I wish the new Executive Committee every success in carrying forward the work and vision of the IAG. Please be assured that our cooperation and support will always be extended to you as you undertake this important responsibility.

Thank you all.
Best regards
Sunil Kumar De
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