

# **International Geographical Congress, 15 – 20 August 2004 Final Report**

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## **Introduction**

This report has been produced by Professor Ken Gregory and Dr Lorraine Craig and agreed by the Committee of Directors in October 2005 to provide background to:

1. How the aims of the Congress were achieved
2. A record of acknowledgements to sponsors
3. A summary of the history of the organisational arrangements for the 30<sup>th</sup> Congress
4. The academic content of the congress
5. The wider Congress activities
6. A comment upon the financial outcome (audited accounts are in a separate document)
7. A series of recommendations.
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It is expected that this report, in total or in part, may be sent to the Royal Society, the British Academy, and the IGU particularly for the benefit of the organisers of the Tunisian Congress in 2008.

## **1. Aims and achievements**

The International Geographical Congress 2004 had four main aims which were achieved as indicated.

**a. To welcome member countries of the International Geographical Union and their delegates to the Congress in Glasgow that would showcase and enhance the vibrancy of scholarly geography throughout the world**

- 1,966 registered delegates for the 2004 Congress
- 84 countries represented at the Congress

**b. To enable delegates at all stages in their career to present their latest research findings to a truly international audience and to share their results with the media in the UK and overseas**

- 1,650 delegates making a presentation during the Congress.
- 350 (20%) of delegates registered as postgraduate students.
- 505 'parallel' sessions took place, either as oral or poster sessions.
- 58 media reports (newspaper, TV, radio) were recorded.
- 7 plenary sessions included delegates from all stages of their careers and from a variety of international backgrounds.

**c. To introduce members of the geography community who may not previously have been aware of the IGU to the wider IGU community by incorporating the International Association of Geomorphologists' Conference and the Royal Geographical Society with IBG (RGS-IBG) annual meeting with the IGU Congress and to encourage future cooperation**

- 30 of the 33 IGU Commissions held activities during the week of the Congress.
- 21 of the 23 research groups (speciality groups) of the RGS-IBG participated.
- 75% of research groups joined with IGU Commissions in either sessions, workshops, fieldtrips or other activities.
- 11 of the 33 IGU Commissions held pre- or post-Congress activities; 10 of these took part in the Congress.
- The Joint International Geomorphology Conference (JIGC) joined together the British Geomorphological Research Group of the RGS-IBG, the International Association of Geomorphologists and Commission 11 (Geomorphologic challenges for the 21 century) of the IGU, and hosted meetings over three days of the Congress.

**d. To provide a forum for networking and the sharing of common interests for geographers worldwide**

- The Opening Ceremony was attended by 62% of delegates
- Four main social events attracted at least 80% of delegates and their accompanying persons
- An exhibition of publishers, members of the Geographical Information Science Community and IGU countries, had 50 stands with tea, coffee, and water provided throughout the day as the principal networking area
- 10 fieldtrips were attended by 353 delegates from countries
- IGU delegate countries shared their latest research in the form of special issues of journals and books, issued to all delegates
- 18 countries took place in the International Schools poster competition for geographers aged 10 to 14 years old. The winner, from Bulgaria, attended the Congress.

## **2. Acknowledgements to sponsors and supporters**

It is a great pleasure to gratefully acknowledge the support received from our sponsors; without their inputs it would have been very difficult to organise such a Congress. All sponsors came from within the UK. We greatly valued the early support provided by grants from the British Academy and the Royal Society, both being provided in advance of the downturn in the economy in late 2001. Likewise, Glasgow Convention Bureau provided considerable support from the initial bid through to completion of the Congress.

Sponsorship was subsequently very difficult to find, both in cash and in kind, as explained in the report in section 4 below. The Ordnance Survey, who was our major sponsor, provided substantial support in kind. Other substantial support was provided by ESRI and Intergraph. We were therefore extremely grateful to the following for support:

- Royal Society of London
- British Academy
- Ordnance Survey
- ESRI
- Intergraph
- University of Glasgow, and in particular the Department of Geography and Geomatics
- Scottish Enterprise Glasgow
- Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board
- Glasgow City Council
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Agence intergouvernementale de la francophonie, France
- Microsoft MapPoint
- Council of British Geography, COBRIG
- The Earl of Dalkeith & Buccleuch Estates
- Scottish Association of Geography Teachers and the Geographical Association for the schools poster competition
- Royal Scottish Geographical Society
- Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Professor Chris Philo, Head of the Department of Geography and Geomatics, University of Glasgow and his staff provided a very warm welcome and support during the period leading up to the Congress and throughout the week of the event. Several meetings took place in the department where a comprehensive display of current research was hosted. Delegates visited the department where a warm welcome was received. The department also provided the majority of the 'student helpers' for the Congress. We are extremely grateful for all the assistance they provided.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the sponsors, to the Commissions and research groups and the delegates who attended the IGC meeting, to Meeting Makers who provided the administrative support and Vicki Grant who in particular put in many hours to assist with making the event successful.

### **3. Summary of organisational arrangements**

- 3.1 **Preparation** – The organisation for the 30<sup>th</sup> IGC Congress was undertaken over the preceding ten years. During the 28<sup>th</sup> IGC in The Hague in 1996 the proposal to hold the 30<sup>th</sup> IGC in the UK based in Glasgow was enthusiastically accepted by the IGU and we were complimented on the preparatory work already done. After the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress an Organising Committee was established chaired by Professor Ken Gregory and involving 14 members to represent the several interested organisations (including the two UK Learned Societies for Geography).
- 3.2 **Committee** – The Committee met 6 times before the 29<sup>th</sup> IGC in Seoul, Korea in 2000. The first circular was distributed at the Congress. At the 29<sup>th</sup> Congress in Seoul a report was presented and the theme 'One Earth – Many Worlds', with attached sub-themes, to be inclusive of physical, human and environmental concerns was proposed for the 30<sup>th</sup> Congress and accepted by the IGU. A reception held at the British Embassy in Seoul was attended by all IGU national delegates. Dr Jonathan Young provided the secretarial support to the Committee and created many links with the IGU Commissions which proved invaluable in the next four years.
- 3.3 **Professional Conference Organisers** – Meeting Makers were appointed as Professional Conference Organisers on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2001. Their remit was to provide the local organization for the event being held at the Scottish Exhibition and Congress Centre, SECC, including all congress bookings, accommodation in both university study rooms and hotels, online delegate registration and abstract submission, the exhibition, the fieldtrips and other tours, and with the IGU Commissions and the RGS-IBG Research Groups through Dr Craig, the conference programme.
- 3.4 **Budget** – The overall outline budget that had been established was gradually evolved at meetings in the period 1997-2000 but was further refined in 2000-2001. The change in world economy following events of September 11, 2001 led to serious changes in budget planning, especially with the difficulty of obtaining sponsorship and grants.
- 3.5 **Status** – A Company Limited by Guarantee and with charitable status, was established on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2002. The organisational arrangements were amended as we moved into the last 2 years before the Congress: henceforth a meeting of the 5 Directors of the Company would be the major meeting to take place with Dr Lorraine Craig appointed as Executive Officer to ensure that all necessary work was undertaken, accomplished and realised. With Professor Ken Gregory as the Chair of the Congress, the 5 Directors established to run the Congress met regularly from January 2002, with twice yearly meetings of the Organising Committee.
- 3.6 **Visit** – In April 2002 the IGU Executive visited Glasgow for one week and included a meeting with the Organising Committee, at which stage the changed financial situation was explained to the IGU Executive. The break-even attendance was proposed to be 1200 which was entirely realistic in view of the attendance at previous congresses in 1992, 1996 and 2000, and this proposed figure of 1200 was accepted as entirely reasonable by the IGU. In minute 8(a) of the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2002 *'On behalf of the IGU Executive, Ron Abler formally endorsed the plans made by the Organising Committee as outlined in the various papers presented during the current meeting. The Executive was extremely pleased with the progress that had been made so far and were impressed by the comprehensive nature of the planning process. The Organising Committee was encouraged to proceed with the full support and blessing of the IGU Executive'*.
- 3.7 **Fundraising** – Professional fundraisers, paid for by The Earl of Dalkeith, failed to raise any targeted funding in the period 2001-2002. However, support in kind was provided in the academic year 2003-2004 preceding the Congress. With this in mind, the delegate fee was set as late as possible in September 2003 recognising the need for flexibility with delegates registering as postgraduates, or from countries where they had problem raising the registration fee. No late fee was charged to the latter two categories of delegates, and all delegates who registered by the early registration date, 31 March 2004, had their registration fee honoured. The second circular was issued in September 2003, although regular and frequent email communication had been

made with Chairs of IBG Commissions, RGS-IBG research groups and the IAG throughout, with requests for onward distribution to their committees.

- 3.8 **Insurance** – Insurance for enforced cancellation of the Congress was obtained but we could not obtain insurance cover for reduced attendance. Security was required for a potential bank overdraft to cover the period 2003-4 during the final stages of preparation and prior to receipt of registration fees. The IGU was asked to provide such security but could not guarantee our loan request, so that technically each Director plus Dr Craig, could each be financially responsible for any loss. We considered this an entirely unacceptable demand upon individual geographers.
- 3.9 **Bank arrangements** – The Earl of Dalkeith provided invaluable assistance with the Congress bankers, Royal Bank of Scotland, who restricted the amount of cash available before the Congress. Likewise, the Scottish Exhibition and Congress Centre, SECC, considerably delayed stage payments to assist with cashflow. The early grants provided by the Royal Society and the British Academy proved critical to maintain cashflow.
- 3.10 **Travel grant awards** – The IGU Executive award travel grants to delegates. We were pleased that the IGU General Secretary was asked to administer this on behalf of the Executive. All applications for travel grants were made to the General Secretary, who liaised closely with Meeting Makers, our Professional Conference Organisers. To minimise confusion, the Royal Geographical Society with IBG, and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, each organized their own travel awards, which were mainly for the benefit of postgraduate student delegates.
- 3.11 **Registrations** – By the abstract deadline 30 January 2004, 2150 abstracts had been submitted which led to 1950 registered delegates. By the early registration deadline of 21 March 2004, 1475 delegates had registered. By 6 August 2004, 1730 delegates had registered and paid, allowing tea and coffee, and receptions to be restored to the budget. There was a higher rate of no-shows for paper presentations than is normally the case at a national conference. In some instances this arose because delegates who had registered did not attend, but in many cases it was delegates who had registered, submitted their abstract, had their presentation timetabled and yet did not turn up at the allocated time to deliver their paper. This, sadly, is a feature of IGU meetings, leads to frustration among all the delegates, but is very difficult for organisers to avoid.

A series of recommendations is provided in section 7 below.

#### **4. Summary of academic content**

- 4.1 With 7 plenary, and 1650 individual presentations scheduled for the week of the Congress, it is impossible to do justice to the varied and rich quality of the presentations which included:
- Opening Plenary: Peter Haggett, The changing search of geographical order
  - Geopolitics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: cultures in confrontation: Christian Pierret, Tom Edwards, Audrey Kobayashi and Antoine Bailly
  - Geography in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Potentials, scales, connections, futures and collisions: Doreen Massey, David Livingstone, Mike Summerfield, Sallie Marston, Keith Richards, Liz Bondi, Andy Baker, Alison Blunt, Danny Dorling, Andrew Jordan, Miles Ogborn, Andres Rodriguez-Pose, Gill Valentine, Sarah Whatmore, Catherine Nash, Nigel Thrift, Chris Philo, Susan Smith
  - Urban Violence and Insecurity as a Serious Development Constraint: Towards an integrated framework for violence reduction: Caroline Moser
  - Dust in the global system. Andrew Goudie, with Janet Hooke and Olav Slaymaker
  - Where the wild things are: river restoration and wildlife preservation? Will Graf with Ken Gregory and Colin Galbraith, Director Scottish Natural Heritage
  - Terra Cognita, geography in the information age. David Rhind with Vanessa Lawrence (Ordnance Survey), David Maguire (ESRI), Bart Hoogenraad (Intergraph)
- 4.2 **Individual sessions** – There were 546 individual sessions at the Congress, with up to 22 parallel sessions at any one time. Through the day there were 6 parallel sessions taking place between

07.30 and 18.30. A break at lunchtime of 1 hour 20 minutes, with only a few parallel sessions extending into this period, allowed for networking and attendance at plenary sessions. Each session lasted 1 hour 20 minutes, allowing 4 talks of 20 minutes each to take place.

- 4.3 **Poster presentations** – A limited number of poster presentations took place, with most being within the Joint International Geomorphology Congress.
- 4.4 **Additional sessions** – To enhance the diversity of the Congress, in addition to the IGU Commissions and Task Forces, the RGS-IBG Research Group sessions, and the sessions were also organised by the Regional Studies Association, Regional Science Association International, Association for Geographic Information, British Cartographic Society, International Cartographic Association, International Council of Scientific Unions, Commonwealth Geographical Bureau, EUGEO, Network of Latin American geographers, COBRIG and others.
- 4.5 **Publication of proceedings** – It is not typical for proceedings of the entire Congress to be produced, but a number of Commissions, and some of the RGS-IBG Research Groups had special or themed issues of journals e.g. *Transactions of the IBG* who covered the plenary Geography in the 21 Century in a themed issue, and special issues of *Earth Surface Process*, of *Catena*, and of *Geomorphology*.

## 5. Wider Congress activities

It is normal procedure within the IGC to have a programme of events and activities that delegates and their accompanying persons (ACPs) can attend. 161 ACPs attended the Congress. Delegates and their ACPs, attended the Opening and Closing Ceremony, the receptions, and the Accompanying persons tours.

- 5.1 **The Opening Ceremony** – Held in the Clyde Auditorium of the SECC, lasted 1 hour, the Opening Ceremony was chaired by Professor Ken Gregory, chair of the congress, with presentations given by:
- Bailie Dr Christopher Mason: Welcome to Glasgow
  - Thomas Rosswall, Executive Director of International Council of Scientific Unions
  - President Royal Scottish Geographical Society, The Earl of Dalkeith: Welcome to Scotland
  - Director RGS-IBG Rita Gardner, Welcome to UK Geography and activities since the 20<sup>th</sup> IGC in the UK in 1964
  - Director of the Ordnance Survey Vanessa Lawrence, The role of the Ordnance Survey and what Geography means to me
  - Christian Pierret Co-Founder International Festival of Geography (FIG): the bilingual tradition of the IGU and the relevance of geography as a discipline in 2004
  - IGU President Anne Buttimer: Welcome by the IGU, Presidential address and themes/aspirations for the meeting, concluded by official opening of the 30<sup>th</sup> IGC

The opening ceremony was followed by a 50 minute welcome plenary lecture, chaired by the President, Anne Buttimer, introduced by Ken Gregory, given by Peter Haggett on 'The changing search for geographical order'.

- 5.2 **Social events** – These included a Reception at the Science Centre on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>, a reception in the Hunterian Museum of the University of Glasgow on 18<sup>th</sup> August, hosted by the Vice Chancellor Sir Muir Russell and the Department of Geography and Geomatics; and a dinner and ceilidh at the Marriott Hotel on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> August preceded by a reception hosted by Vanessa Lawrence, Director General of the Ordnance Survey, and by the RGS/IBG represented by the Director Rita Gardner. The Tunisian delegates hosted a reception following the Closing Ceremony.
- 5.3 **Exhibition** – An exhibition including 50 'stands' was present throughout the Congress. Of these 18 were from countries present at the Congress. Free tea, coffee and biscuits in the central area

throughout the morning, and during the mid-afternoon were most welcome. Biscuits were provided, in part, by the Buccleuch Estates.

- 5.4 **Fieldtrips and Tours** – Fieldtrips took place both pre- and post- the Congress, plus one during the Congress; all but one fieldtrip planned actually took place. These were for the most part organised by representatives from the geography departments throughout Scotland, sometimes in association with the IGU Commissions. Organising fieldtrips for international congresses requires a not inconsiderable amount of time and all those involved were warmly thanked. Alan Werritty masterminded the programme especially in the initial stages.

353 delegates attended fieldtrips, with 94% of delegates non-UK, excluding leaders

- Iceland: Landscape and Environmental Change; Leaders: Martin Kirkbride and Andy Dugmore; 17 delegates
- Karst in Ireland: Geomorphology, Hydrology and Resource Management; Leaders: John Gunn and David Drew; 10 delegates
- Land Use and Rural Sustainability in Scotland; Leader: Sandy Mather; 64 delegates
- Exploring Central Glasgow A series of one day excursions in Glasgow by members of the Geography Department, University of Glasgow 129 delegates
  - Andy Cumbers and Gesa Helms *'Urban regeneration in the centre of Glasgow'*
  - Gareth Rice *'Glasgow retailing: the New York of the North'*
  - Jo Sharp and Ronan Paddison *'Renewing the city: from property-led to culture-led regeneration'*
  - Andrew Gibb *'The changing townscape of Glasgow'*
- Transport histories and futures in Glasgow; Leaders: Iain Docherty and Jon Shaw; 19 delegates
- An Historical Geography of Edinburgh; Leader: Charles Withers; 43 delegates
- Loch Lomond, Glen Coe and Glen Roy; Leaders: Doug Benn and John Gordon; 39 delegates
- Geomorphology of the Cairngorms; Leaders: Alan Werritty and Colin Ballantyne; 15 delegates
- Coastal Processes and Management in the Dornoch and Moray Firths; Leader: Jim Hansom; 17 delegates

Tours were organised by Glasgow Tourist Board throughout the week. 5 tours, one per day, were attended by a total of 129 delegates. Non-UK delegates particularly value tours and fieldtrips, and representing 98% of attendees.

- 5.5 **Press** – Press activity was led by the press team from the Royal Geographical Society with IBG, Jonathan Breckon, Tina Gardner and John Williams. Leading up to the Congress they provided press releases to the national UK media. Coverage in the main broadsheets throughout the week was substantial especially The Guardian, Times, Telegraph and Independent. Radio and television, local and national, picked up on several stories including the flooding in Perthshire, place names, dust and 'four wheel drives' in the Sahara, and wave influence. Post the Congress, international media coverage continued especially throughout Europe.

Media coverage was, however, sustained throughout the week. *The Guardian*, for example, ran 9 articles over 5 days, including a full page article on the third page of the news section of the paper. A large amount of preparation was required to sustain this coverage. For example, 11 press releases were drafted before the conference. The environment correspondents from the national press joined us in the press office of the IGC for the whole week which is indicative of their belief in the quality and news value of geographical research. The timing of the conference in August, which is usually a quiet time for the press, also assisted us in getting positive national media interest.

The coverage showed a balanced mix of physical and human geography and also local (e.g. stories targeted at Scotland) and global issues (e.g. dust in the global system). Academics involved also came from a range of institutions from across the UK and abroad (e.g. Universities of Aberdeen, Barcelona, Glasgow, Oxford, Surrey, Stirling and the Delft University of Technology). Highlights of the media coverage include:

- 9 articles in Guardian over 5 days and a three-quarter page article on page 3
- 5 articles in Independent including a double page spread on the importance of geography based around an interview with the Director of RGS-IBG.
- articles in Daily Telegraph
- articles in The Times plus an editorial
- International coverage. Very widespread for 2 stories: press releases entitled 'Dust storms to choke global environment' and 'Why big business needs a geography lesson'
- Scottish broadcast. Local, regional and national Scottish broadcast gave extensive coverage of the research presented in Glasgow.

**5.6 Special publications, national country four-yearly reports and the General Assembly** – At the IGC it is customary for national delegates to present a report of the 'state of geography' or their geographical activities for the preceding four-year period. These reports are presented to the General Assembly of the Congress, attended by national delegates and which takes place each of four afternoons during the Congress.

Some countries opted for a stand at the Exhibition (e.g. Germany, Australia) to distribute their publications, while others chose to have one inserted in the delegate pack (e.g. Switzerland). The trend among national delegates in 2004 is to produce a less elaborate volume than at previous Congresses, with copies for all delegates. Some countries produced a CD Rom.

The Royal Scottish Geographical Society produced a special issue of their journal, *Scottish Geographical Journal*, distributed via their stand. The Royal Geographical Society with IBG presented a special issue of each of the Society's three journals: *Area* (The 2001 Census), *Geographical Journal* (Environment and development in the 21 century) and *Transactions* (State of the art in geography in the UK today), distributed via the delegate pack. Additional hard copies of the three RGS-IBG journals were available at the Blackwell and RGS-IBG stands.

**5.7 Poster Competition** – The International Schools poster competition was organised by Alan Doherty, with members of the Scottish Association of Geography Teachers (SAGT), planned as a substantial change to the student quiz. The posters were displayed in The Lighthouse (Glasgow) and subsequently formed the special Christmas exhibition in the Pavilion of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) in London in December 2004 where it was visited by some 4,500 viewers over a three-week period. This provided an unbeatable shop window for younger members of the discipline.

Eighteen countries forwarded their posters to Scotland, although over thirty had registered their participation in the event. All continents except North America were represented. The age range was 10-14 years. The winning prize was a two-week visit to Glasgow, partly sponsored by SAGT awarded to thirteen year old Nikolina Georgieva, the winner from Bulgaria. Nikolina gave an impressive PowerPoint presentation, in English, on the Tuesday lunchtime of the Congress. "Balkan Holidays" were thanked for contributing to her flights.

**5.8 Closing Ceremony** – The Closing ceremony lasted one hour on Friday late afternoon, after the end of the academic sessions, and was attended by 650 delegates.

- Ken Gregory, Chair of Congress, discussed events during the week and progress made together with giving thanks to all involved during the meeting.
- The President of the IGU, Anne Buttner, presented laureates (to Paul Claval, Maria Teresa Guitierrez de McGregor, Robert W Kates, Mohammed Shafi, Harley J Walker, Alan Wilson) introduced a 2- 3 minute video clip of Mikhail Gorbachov receiving his Planet and Humanity Award, and concluded by listing academic achievements during the Congress.
- Adalberto Vallega, the incoming President of the IGU, spoke on the theme of aspirations for the next 4 years.
- The Secretary General of the IGU Ronald Abler thanked the Organising Committee.

- The Tunisian Ambassador in the UK, followed by Adnane Hayder, the leader of the Tunisian delegation, spoke on behalf of the Tunis Congress. This was followed by the official handing over of the IGU flag to Tunis.
- It was reported that future IGU meetings will include a 'regional' meeting in Brisbane, Australia in summer 2006, and that the 31<sup>st</sup> International Geographical Congress will be held in 2008 in Tunis. A 'regional' meeting will be held in Tel Aviv in 2010. At the General Assembly held at the Congress, Germany was voted to be the host for the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Geographical Congress, 2012 to be organised in Cologne.
- In his concluding remarks, Ken Gregory Chair of Congress thanked especially the IGU and invited everyone to a short reception with an opportunity to toast the future of the IGU, its officers and the Tunisian Congress.

## **6. Comments on the financial outcome**

- 6.1 The audited accounts are in a separate document, available on request to The Head of Finance, Royal Geographical Society with IBG, 1 Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2AR. A modest surplus has been achieved and this arises primarily because the numbers of delegates registering on site at the Congress was much greater than anticipated. Expected registrations at the Congress had been based upon figures from previous years and from comparable events but the eventual numbers proved to be much greater.
- 6.2 A payment was made to IGU as they requested and consistent with payments made from previous congresses. In view of recommendation 4 in section 7 below we strongly recommend that this sum should be used to support the 31<sup>st</sup> Congress in Tunis.
- 6.3 A fund is established as the 30<sup>th</sup> International Geographical Congress fund in parallel with the 20<sup>th</sup> IGC fund founded after the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1964. The award by the Royal Society was made from the 20<sup>th</sup> IGC fund, and since 1996, when the award was made by the Royal Society, the 20<sup>th</sup> IGC fund has been transferred to the RGS-IBG. We therefore propose that the outstanding balance is established as a 30<sup>th</sup> International Geographical Congress fund and that this is used to:
- a. Provide financial support as 30<sup>th</sup> International Geographical Congress bursaries for UK researchers early in their academic career to attend international geographical conferences.
  - b. Support two annual 30<sup>th</sup> International Geographical Congress lectures: one to be held in Scotland and one to be held elsewhere in the UK, to enhance outreach to the wider geographical community.
- The fund will be administered, and the awards approved, by the five Directors and Dr Craig.

## **7. Recommendations**

Based upon our experience over more than 10 years of preparing for the 30<sup>th</sup> IGC we make the following recommendations for consideration by future organisers and we will be pleased to amplify any points further as necessary.

- 7.1 As national and international risks, political and financial, become more uncertain it is necessary for some organisation to underwrite the organisation of an International Geographical Congress. It is increasingly unlikely that national societies can do this and it is possibly inevitable that the IGU will have to assume financial responsibility for future congresses. The IGU should review the situation in fairness to future organising committees.
- 7.2 We contend that it is unreasonable for a small committee (5 individuals in our Committee of Directors) to have the ultimate financial responsibility if circumstances beyond their control mean that there are insufficient delegates attending. We are grateful that the plans that we made were successful so that we did not have a problem but it was not clear until less than four weeks before the Congress began that our arrangements would be financially secure. There should be a method of financially underwriting the Congress organisers.

- 7.3 We strongly advise future organising committees to maintain a regularly updated statement (in addition to minutes of committee meetings) to demonstrate the ways in which they have exercised due diligence during preparations for the Congress. The statement that we maintained eventually extended to 8 pages, 44 items, and the latest version was formally agreed at each meeting of the Organising Committee, and in due course by the Directors of the Company.
- 7.4 The IGU Executive asks organisers to contribute to the Promotion and Solidarity Fund from the budget of the Congress. Although we had stated that we could not guarantee such a contribution unless we exceeded our break-even budget, we were able to contribute a sum of 20,000 US Dollars. Thus we hope that the contribution of 20,000 US Dollars made from our budget might be used to assist the organisers of the 31<sup>st</sup> Congress in Tunis. We recommend that such an amount should be used as a contribution to the next International Congress and at least to underwriting the budget for the next Congress.
- 7.5 We encourage future organisers to include associated conferences within, or in parallel with, the IGC wherever possible. We were very grateful to those organisations that joined us in this way and appreciate how delegates value fewer rather than more separate meetings. We recommend that clear formal understanding of arrangements are agreed between the Congress Organising Committee and the organisers of associated conferences.
- 7.6 We were not clear prior to the final year before the 30<sup>th</sup> Congress exactly what costs of the IGU Executive would fall upon our Congress budget. Such costs ultimately contribute to the delegate fee. We suggest that it is emphasised that there can be no possibility of final bids to, or demands upon, the Congress budget by the IGU Executive. We recommend that all IGU costs are kept to a minimum and clarified as early as possible to avoid any budget uncertainty.
- 7.6 Although abstracts of all papers were published in the past this proved impossible for us with 2150 abstracts to deal with. We found that abstracts provided to delegates on a CD Rom worked effectively and delegates appreciated lighter luggage. We recommend that future organisers provide abstracts on the Congress website prior to the event and on a CD Rom at the Congress, with computers available for delegates to view the abstracts.
- 7.7 It is essential that the deadlines set for early registration are adhered to and clearly understood. When we set our deadline for early registrations and abstracts we stated that they would not be accepted unless the registration fee was received. Because we had many cases where payment was not received by the early registration date, considerable uncertainty about our programme and our budget was produced. We appreciate the problems of individual delegates who may not be able to secure funding support until they know that their paper has been accepted, but we advise future organisers to pay particular attention to the issue of payments made by the early registration date.
- 7.8 We found that it is essential to have a clear understanding of the provisions that will be made by the Bank holding the Congress account. Our experience was that the Royal Bank of Scotland did not give much attention to such matters until approximately one year before the Congress but it is then too late to clarify what arrangements will obtain. Particularly if an overdraft facility may be required it is essential that the arrangements relating to the Bank provision, including credit card arrangements, are determined as early as possible.
- 7.9 We chose to employ Professional Conference Organisers, Meeting Makers, and were pleased with the way in which they acted, supported by our own Executive Officer. With hindsight we realise that we should have made a decision in 1996 as to whether we would employ conference organisers or not. Although it is often suggested that organising in-house may be more economical, for a conference of this scale with such a high proportion of overseas delegates, we know that in the UK and elsewhere it is no longer possible for organizations such as Universities or Geographical Societies to support conferences and their organisation without levying commercial rates for staff time and for accommodation. Hence we recommend that future

organisers of International Geographical Congresses decide at the initial stage whether to employ professional conference organisers or not.

- 7.10 The IGU Executive made travel grant awards to delegates. The submission of grant applications was made through the IGU Executive, who made the awards, including cash awards at the Congress. Some financial transactions were made at the Congress. The RGS-IBG and the RSGS handled the awarding of their grants independently of the Professional Conference Organisers to minimise possible confusion. We recommend to future organisers that they should not handle the allocation of the travel grant awards and that this responsibility rests with the IGU Executive.
- 7.11 We experienced a higher rate of no-shows for paper presentations than expected. In some instances this arose because delegates who had registered did not attend, but in many cases it was delegates who had registered, submitted their abstract, had their presentation timetabled and yet did not turn up at the allocated time to deliver their paper. We advise future organisers of the need to address the problem of speakers attending to present their papers however difficult this may be.
- 7.12 To assist organisers of future Congresses we have produced a time-line of actions that need to be in place. This was not available to us in 1996. While local circumstances will necessitate some variation on this the broad model should be helpful. We advise future organisers of the need to clarify the timeline with the Executive when the bid for the Congress is accepted.

## **8. Final thanks**

Individual members of the Committee of Directors provided enormous support and assistance over many years leading up to the very successful 30<sup>th</sup> IGC and we are extremely grateful to them, to Professor George Gordon who acted as Honorary Treasurer during the final year, to members of the Organising Committee who were involved since 1996 and especially to Professor Robert J. Bennett who was very influential in the early stages of preparation, and Dr Johnathan Young who helped with the early foundations and especially the contacts with all the IGU Commissions. In addition we are conscious of the very many individuals and organisations who have contributed in significant ways over a decade. The Royal Society and the British Academy are especially thanked. Our sincere thanks to everyone who supported us in so many diverse ways.

Ken Gregory, Lorraine Craig  
October 2005

## **Appendix 1 – Geographical breakdown of delegates and activities**

### **Delegates**

84 countries were represented at the Congress which breakdown approximately as:

Central and South America	2%
Africa	3%
Australasia:	4%
Middle East	4%
North America	11%
Asia	14%
UK	30%
Europe and Russian Fed	32%

### **Congress dinner and ceilidh**

The fee for the dinner and ceilidh was not included in the registration fee. It was attended by 311 delegates which breakdown approximately as:

Central and South America	1%
Africa	4%
Australasia	5%
Middle East	1%
North America	14%
Asia	15%
UK	21%
Europe and Russian Fed	39%

### **JIGC dinner**

The JIGC dinner, the fee not included in the registration fee, was attended by 166 delegates who mainly participated in the JIGC part of the Congress

Central and South America	2%
Africa	3%
Australasia	5%
Middle East	3%
North America	13%
Asia	17%
UK	35%
Europe and Russian Fed	22%

### **Accompanying Persons Tours**

The 5 Accompanying Persons Tours, the fee for which was not included in the registration fee, took place during the week of the Congress. They were attended by 120 delegates which breakdown approximately as:

Central and South America	4%
Africa	8%
Australasia	6%
Middle East	7%
North America	13%
Asia	41%
UK	2%
Europe and Russian Fed	19%

### **Fieldtrips**

The fieldtrips, the fee for which was not included in the registration fee, were attended by 353 delegates which breakdown approximately as:

Central and South America	3%
Africa	6%
Australasia	4%

Middle East	3%
North America	14%
Asia	24%
UK	6%
Europe and Russian Fed	40%

**IGU travel grant awards**

58 awards were made to delegates who attended the Congress. 17 awards were made to delegates who did not attend and their award was cancelled without any payment having been transacted. The breakdown of award was as follows:

Central and South America	7%
Africa	22%
Australasia	0%
Middle East	2%
North America	5%
Asia	30%
UK	0%
Europe and Russian Fed	33%

**Royal Geographical Society with IBG and Royal Scottish Geographical Society travel and registration grant awards**

The RGS-IBG and the RSGS together awarded 48 grants to delegates who all attended the Congress. These awards were predominantly made to postgraduate students in the UK, but were not restricted to those early in their career if the delegate was from outside the UK. The distribution was as follows:

Central and South America	5%
Africa	5%
Australasia	5%
Middle East	3%
North America	0%
Asia	20%
UK (postgraduate awards)	30%
Europe and Russian Fed	22%

## **Appendix 2 – Participant groups**

### **List of IGU Commissions and RGS-IBG Research Groups participating in the Congress**

C00.01	Climatic Changes and Periglacial Environments
C00.02	Climatology
C00.03	Coastal Systems
C00.05	Evolving Issues of Geographical Marginality
C00.06	Gender and Geography
C00.07	Geographical Education
C00.08	Geographical Information Science
C00.09	Geography and Public Policy
C00.10	Geography of the Information Society
C00.11	Geomorphic Challenges for the 21st Century
C00.12	Hazards and Risks
C00.13	Health and Environment
C00.14	History of Geographical Thought
C00.15	Karst
C00.16	Land Degradation and Desertification
C00.17	Marine Geography
C00.18	Modelling Geographical Systems
C00.19	Monitoring Cities of Tomorrow
C00.21	Sustainability of Rural Systems
C00.22	World Political Map
C00.23	Biogeography and Biodiversity
C00.24	Diversity in Mountain Systems
C00.25	Fluvial System Research
C00.26	Applied Geography
C00.27	Geography of Tourism, Leisure, and Global Change
C00.28	Global Change and Human Mobility
C00.29	Land Use and Land Cover Change
C00.30	The Cultural Approach in Geography
C00.31	Local Development
C00.32	Water Sustainability
T00.01	Megacities

### **Research Groups of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) present at the Congress**

- Biogeography Research Group
- British Geomorphological Research Group
- Coastal and Marine Working Group
- Contract Research and Teaching Forum
- Developing Areas Research Group
- Economic Geography Research Group
- Higher Education Research Group
- Historical Geography Research Group
- History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group
- GI Science Research Group
- Geography of Leisure and Tourism Research Group
- Geography of Health Research Group
- Mountains Research Group
- Planning and Environment Research Group
- Political Geography Research Group
- Postgraduate Forum
- Post Socialist Geographies Research Group
- Quantitative Methods Research Group
- Rural Geography Research Group

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- Social and Cultural Geography Research Group
- Transport Geography Research Group
- Urban Geography Research Group
- Women and Geography Research Group

**Other groups who participating in the Congress**

- Regional Studies Association
- Regional Science Association International
- Association for Geographic Information
- British Cartographic Society
- Commonwealth Geographical Bureau
- Council of British Geographers
- European Geographical Organisation
- International Association of Geomorphologists
- International Cartographic Association
- International Committee on Urban Form
- International Committee on Urban Form
- International Council of Scientific Unions
- Latin American Network of Geographical Studies
- Mediterranean Network of Geographers

Ken Gregory  
Lorraine Craig  
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