

Centennial of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics

UNESCO, Paris, France, 29 July 2019

Formed in Brussels, Belgium, on 28 July 1919, the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) celebrated its 100th anniversary at the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). More than 150 scientists and science policymakers joined the IUGG event in Paris on 29 July 2019. The program of the event can be found [here](#).



Participants of the IUGG Centennial Celebration Day at UNESCO

Since its inception as a union of international scientific associations, IUGG has developed into a prominent scientific organization promoting Earth and space sciences worldwide in the complicated political, economic and scientific landscapes of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. The IUGG's mission is to advance, strengthen, and promote further Earth and space sciences for the benefit of humanity through international research cooperation and development, and to communicate the knowledge to governments and policymakers. For the decades ahead, IUGG envisions a future Earth that is environmentally sustainable and where societies are resilient against natural hazards. The celebration of the centennial was not only a reminder how important international scientific cooperation has been and is and how IUGG science and science diplomacy have developed over the last century, but also a highlight of the importance of future scientific development toward solutions of urgent problems of society, especially to those related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

IUGG places particular emphasis on the scientific problems of economically less-developed countries by sponsoring activities relevant to their scientific needs. In addition to the many beneficial relationships that IUGG Associations develop with partners, IUGG, as a whole also develops and maintains formal contacts with a wide range of organizations, including the International Science Council (ISC) and its international scientific unions and interdisciplinary bodies, UNESCO, and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

“The earth sciences hold the record of our small planet, a record stretching back 4,600 million years” reminded *Shamila Nair-Bedouelle*, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for the Natural Sciences. “Humanity has been here just for a tiny fraction of that time, yet it is increasingly obvious the threat we pose to life on earth. We have a short time to transform modern society in order to secure a sustainable future for all and our collaboration with the IUGG and several other scientific

unions and associations is of vital importance for us.” **Heide Hackmann**, ISC Chief Executive Officer, **Elena Manaenkova**, WMO Deputy Secretary-General, **Ricardo Mena**, UNDRR Chief of Support and Monitoring of Sendai Framework Implementation, and **Lassina Zerbo**, CTBTO Executive Secretary welcomed the conference participants, told about cooperation between their organization and IUGG, and congratulated the Union with the Centennial anniversary.

The Opening ceremony was followed by the award ceremony, where Centennial Memorial Plaques were presented to IUGG Founding Members [Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America] and to its Partner organizations. **H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco** received IUGG Honorary Membership for his “outstanding contributions to the promotion of climate change, water, biodiversity and oceanographic research”. In His speech, H.S.H. Prince Albert II mentioned: “On the occasion of the centenary of your international union, I am very honoured and proud that you have granted me honorary membership. I see it as both a recognition for the secular action of my country in the field of oceanography and as an encouragement to continue and extend my personal commitment, faithful to the ideas of the person who brings us together today, Prince Albert I.” (AIZ note: Prince Albert I was an inaugural IUGG Vice President).

The IUGG Centennial event featured four topical Sessions. The 1st Session with contributions to “Earth and Space Sciences and Society” was chaired by IUGG President Kathryn Whaler. Presentations were given on “Centennial of the International Cooperation in Earth and Space Sciences” by **Alik Ismail-Zadeh** (ISC and IUGG), “Climate and our Planet” by **Valérie Masson-Delmotte** (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC), and “Disasters and Society” by **Marcia McNutt** (National Academy of Sciences, USA).

The 2nd Session, chaired by IUGG President-elect **Chris Rizos**, received contributions on the topics “Earth Science for Sustainable Development” from **Sierd Cloetingh** (Utrecht, The Netherlands), **Kurt Lambeck** (ANU, Australia), **Vladimir Ryabinin** (IOC/UNESCO), **Alberto Montanari** (Bologna, Italy and EGU President), and **Abdelkrim Aoudia** (ICTS, Trieste, Italy).

The 3rd Session, entitled “Strengthening International Cooperation in Science and Education in a Multi-Cultural World”, was organized as a panel discussion and moderated by IUGG Immediate Past President **Michael Sideris**. Panelists were **Robin Bell** (Columbia University, USA and AGU President), **Paul A. Berkman** (Tufts University, USA), **Anne Cazenave** (Obs. Midi-Pyrénées, France), **Athena Coustenis** (Paris Observatory, France), and **Ligia Pérez Cruz** (UNAM, Mexico and President of the Mexican Geophysical Union).

The 4th Session, also a panel discussion, was focused on the “21st Century Triad: Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction”, and moderated by **Alik Ismail-Zadeh**, the Immediate Past Secretary General of IUGG. **Michael Rast** (European Space Agency), **Harsh Gupta** (National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad, India and Past President of IUGG), **Heike Langenberg** (Nature Geoscience), **Detlef Stammer** (University of Hamburg, Germany, and World Climate Research Program) and **Kristof Vandenberghe** (UNESCO Earth Science Section) participated in the panel discussion.

Finally, the **PhiloGaïa Orchestra** performed a composition “We love our planet!” based on geophysical images.

The video recording of the event is available at [YouTube](#). More information on the IUGG Centennial can be found [here](#).



Alik Ismail-Zadeh presents the IUGG Centennial Book to H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco surrounded by Mr. Lassina Zerbo of CTBTO (on the left side) and Ms. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle of UNESCO (on the right side).



Alik Ismail-Zadeh gives a lecture at the IUGG-UNESCO event



PhiloGaia Orchestra performance

(photos by UNESCO/C.Alix)