

Brief Report meeting of the National Committees for IYPE in Africa

Date: 9 May 2008

Place: Ngorodoto Mountain Lodge, Arusha

Participants: Read B. Mapeo (Botswana), Jean Ndimubandi (Burundi), Sigha Nkamojou (Cameroon), Moloto A Kenguembag (Central African Republic), Elud Mathu, Margaret W. Maimba, Boniface Wanyama, Walter O. Oyawa, Kimani Humphrey, Julius K. Mwangi, Moses N. Masibo (Kenya), Bhanoodoth Lalljee (Mauritius), Ezzoura Errami, Nasser Ennith (Morocco), Luis Costa Junior (Mozambique), Victorina Niku-Paavola (Namibia), Abdul-Fatah Shittu (Nigeria), Mamadou Fall (Senegal), Maarten de Wit (South Africa), Hudson Nkotagu (Tanzania), Vincent Kawamya (Zambia), Sospeter Muhongo (ICSU-Africa; Chair IYPE SPC), Thomas Schlüter (UNESCO-Africa Nairobi), Felix Toteu (Representative for Africa in IYPE Board), Larry Woodfork (Chair IYPE Board) and Eduardo de Mulder (Executive Director IYPE Secretariat).

Apologies were received from the representative of Egypt.

After a welcome by the Chair of the Board, some general information concerning the relation between the National Committees and the IYPE Corporation was given by the Executive Director. This was followed by brief updates of the situation of the IYPE National Committees in the various African countries, given below in alphabetical order.

Botswana (mapeorbm@mopipi.ub.bw)

Read Mapeo informed the meeting that a National Committee had been established. The Committee comprises members from government ministries/departments, the National UNESCO Commission and has representatives of NGOs (University, Student Geological Association and relevant industries). The Chairperson is the Chair of the Botswana National Commission for UNESCO. Two meetings have been held so far to inform its members as to the purpose and value of IYPE for Botswana and to the expectations raised by IYPE in the country. The NC is in the process of preparing a list of activities and a Calendar of events. The NC observed that several of the current and upcoming activities in Botswana would also fit well in the framework of IYPE. To avoid duplication and to economize on the limited available budgets, it has been decided that these activities should be included in the Calendar of events of other government ministries and be dedicated to the IYPE.

Burundi (jean.ndimubandi@gmail.com)

Jean Ndimubandi informed the meeting that a National IYPE Committee has not yet been established in Burundi.

Cameroon (lucsigma@yahoo.fr)

The National IYPE Committee (NCC) has been operational since 6 August 2007 and is chaired by Dr Joseph Victor Hell, Director of the Institute of Geological and Mining Research (IGMR). The Committee is composed of members from the 6 state universities and from the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation.

Soon after its formation, the NCC was involved in preparing the contribution of Cameroon to the exhibition "Planet Earth: from Space to Place" held at the

UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in October-November 2007. A short film and images on the Lake Nyos disaster were prepared for the exhibition. Another event held between 3 and 5 October 2007 was the "Week of Scientific Research and Innovation in Cameroon" (JERSIC) where geoscientific data and information available at the Institute for Geological and Mining Research was made accessible to the public including many students. The NCC also conducted the process to select students for the "IYPE Student Contest" by the end of 2007. The three selected Cameroonian students effectively attended the IYPE Global Launch Event in Paris 12-13 February 2008; two of them were also present together with a member of the NNC at the IYPE Africa Regional Launch Event (8-9 May 2008) in Arusha, Tanzania. In August 2008, the 21st commemoration of the Lake Nyos disaster will be a nationwide event with radio and television programmes, a site visit, and enhancing the awareness of populations living in the area.

Central African Republic (molotokg@yahoo.fr)

Moloto A Kenguembag informed the meeting that a National IYPE Committee in Central African Republic was created in January 2008 but that the Committee could not become operational due a change in government in the same month. As long as no financial resources would become available the Committee will remain inactive.

Kenya (mwigacigua@yahoo.com)

The National Committee for Kenya was formed in February 2008 and has 16 members drawn from universities, Government ministries, industries, NGOs, and representatives of the Founding Partners of IYPE. The activities are coordinated by the National Council for Science and Technology under the Environmental and Earth Sciences Schedule which forms the Secretariat. The NC has conducted the following activities:

Identified the institutions to be represented in the 10 subcommittees dedicated to the 10 IYPE Science themes; they have held one meeting and more will follow;

Nominated institution representatives for these subcommittees;

Prepared a budget for the National Launch event and other outreach activities;

Presentation of the budget to relevant Ministries and NGOs;

Requests for sponsorship (not yet successful); and

A tentative programme has been prepared for the National Launch to be held once sufficient funds become available.

Mauritius (vlalljee@yahoo.uk)

The National Committee for Mauritius first met on 4 February 2008. It consists of 10 persons representing a wide variety of research institutes and government departments and is chaired by Dr. B. Lalljee. The NC plans to:

- launch a nation-wide awareness campaign
- include NGOs in its networks
- hold a National Workshop on Geohazards in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

- organize a series of talks (with interactive computer displays) on topical environmental issues such as cyclones, landslides, flooding, tsunamis, drought, erosion, etc.
- organize debating contests on national television on environmental topics/geohazards by University students
- prepare publicity materials to raise awareness of geohazards
- organize information campaigns and encouragement to young scientists for preparation of project proposals
- organize contests for preparing pamphlets/posters on specified geohazard topics relevant to Mauritius
- organize contests for the preparation of models/projects on relevant topics by secondary school students.

In order to explore options linking these activities with similar activities by other Government Ministries as well and NGOs, a 1-day Workshop was organized by the Municipality of Vacoas-Phoenix and the Kabir Society of Mauritius (a registered NGO) together with the Chairman of IYPE Mauritius. On that occasion, he gave a talk on: The effects of climate change on SIDS with special reference to Mauritius. The Workshop was attended by over 100 participants including high school students and representatives of the Meteorological Office, Ministry of Housing & Lands, Ministry of Public Utilities, Ministry of AgroIndustry & Fisheries, Ministry of Environment & National Development Unit. A similar programme is presently under discussion with the Mauritius Council for Social Service (an umbrella organization that groups over 100 registered NGOs in Mauritius and Rodrigues). The official launch of IYPE Mauritius is scheduled for the near future depending on availability of key personalities.

Morocco (erramiezzoura@daad-alumni.de)

Mrs Zohra Errami reported that a late 2007 (28 November – 5 December) combined scientific meeting was held under the IYPE label in El Jadida: 'Cratons, metacratons and mobile belts' (IGCP 485) and 'The Rheic Ocean: Its Origin, Evolution and Correlatives' (IGCP 497), together with a field trip. On February 20-21, 2008, the Royal Academy of Sciences organized a 2-day IYPE outreach activity. A series of activities took place during the last week of April, 2008, including a round table on 'Climate change and economic development in Africa' in collaboration with the Confederation of African Students in Morocco, conferences on 'Earth Science for society' for scholars, and conferences on 'Environment and future' for the students of the Chouaib Doukkali University (El Jadida) and the National School of Economy and Management. In the same period, the 'Association of Civilisations without Borders' organised a one week event dedicated to the importance of the preservation of our environment. Again in that week, the first International Colloquium on Scientific and Touristic Speleology on 'Underground world: heritage and sustainable Human development vector' was organised in Agadir. The following future IYPE labelled events are being prepared:

- a competition on 'Arts and Geosciences' for secondary schools in the El Jadida Province but probably expanding to a national level (in collaboration with 'Civilizations without Borders' and the 'Association of African Women Geoscientists');

- On 12 June, a round table will be held on 'Climate change and its impact on our environment: the role of the Cinema', in the Faculty of Sciences, Chouaib Doukkali University, El Jadida, organized by the Association of African Women Geoscientists in Collaboration with the Association of Ivory Coast Students in Morocco;
- a 2-day outreach event 'Earth Sciences: sustainable development vector' to be held on June 14 -15, dedicated to the IYPE and organized by the Moroccan Association of Earth Sciences;
- On 25 June, a conference will be held on Teaching Earth sciences from School to University at the Aïn Chock Faculty of Sciences Hassan II University in collaboration with L'Académie Régionale de l'Education et de la Formation du Grand Casablanca
- On 7-8 October 2008, the 4th Environmental Symposium of the German-Arabic Scientific Forum on Environmental Studies will be held in Fez;
- In 2009, the 6th International Colloquium (Magmatism, Metamorphism and Associated Mineralizations, 3MA, will be organized by the Faculty of Sciences and Technics (Beni-Mellal) from April 23-24.

Mozambique (lopovasconcelos@gmail.com)

The NC began its operations in November 2007. One of the main issues is the preparation of the scientific activities prior to the 29th ICSU General Assembly and the visibility of the IYPE in that major science event. The activities include workshops on all Mozambican Provinces to discuss with the locals issues related to the main ICSU research topics, plus two topics of interest specific to Mozambique. A Seminar in Maputo prior to the opening ceremony will deal with "Science Day for Africa". Also some seminars will occur in Maputo the week before, dealing to several scientific topics. One of the priorities is the production of an IYPE brochure dedicated to Mozambique. The Mozambique Mining & Energy Conference for 2008 was held in Maputo, 16th-17th April, organized by AGMM (Geological Mining Association of Mozambique) and AMETrade (UK). On June 4-6, the National Geological Museum with the support of AGMM organized the 2nd Workshop on Geoheritage and Geoconservation.

Namibia (vniku-paavola@mme.gov.na)

Victorina Niku-Paavola reported that the Namibian National Committee was established in 2007. The Committee is chaired by Dr. Schneider and driven by the Geological Society of Namibia. The first IYPE Patron is the Founding President of Namibia, Dr. Sam Nujoma. The National Committee has organised a wide variety of activities, including:

- a permanent IYPE display in the Ministry of Mines and Energy;
- posters on the 10 IYPE themes in the Geological Survey of Namibia, also downloadable though the internet;
- articles on IYPE events published monthly in a newspaper weekend edition;
- an awareness raising campaign for youngsters through dissemination of the 10 IYPE posters by the Ministry of Education to all schools;
- traditional career fairs with a special focus on the increasing need for geosciences professionals.
- creation of the first African Geopark in Namibia.

Nigeria (ubundir@yahoo.com)

Abdul-Fatah Shittu reported that the Nigerian National Committee is in preparation and is well under way to become officially established later this year. This process is spearheaded by the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology. In the process of establishing a National Committee for IYPE in Nigeria, the thematic stakeholders and representatives have been identified and have set themselves up.

Senegal (mafallou@yahoo.fr)

The IYPE initiative was well received in Senegal where a National Committee (NC) is being prepared under the provisional leadership of Mrs. Sophie SIBY who approached the highest levels of Government to become involved in the IYPE. So far, this has resulted in support expressed by the former Prime Minister, who is an engineering geologist. However, when Mrs. SIBY herself became herself a Minister priorities demanded her immediate attention. The current National Committee in preparation consists of 8 persons: Mr Abdoulaye FAYE, Geology Department Chief, Mrs Sophie SIBY, Mr Mamadou FALL, Mr Mamadou GUEYE de l'IST, Mr WAGUE and Ms Marième Soda DIALLO. The NC in preparation met on 16 May during which a report on the Arusha event was presented and plans were developed to:

- Identify relevant parties beyond university and governmental circles;
- Exchange and learn from the experience of other national committees for IYPE;
- identify and develop relations with potential partners in order to produce a national programme, with emphasis on financial aspects, cooperation between geosciences communities and the government, UNESCO and BRGM contacts;
- identify particular Senegalese interests in the IYPE National Committee (gold mining, ICS, the Grande Cote project), recurrent flooding (plan JAXAAY), water quality and water availability, natural hazards, over-exploitation of natural resources (as forestry, farm lands) over-exploitation of marine sands (construction materials), and large infrastructural projects;

The NC in preparation has concluded that it will be necessary to bring together the main actors quickly, to define the organizational framework assuring institutional involvement, and to identify financial resources so as to realize activities (to run the Secretariat and the meetings).

South Africa (busiswa@nrf.ac.za)

The NC was appointed in September 2007 by the SA National Research Foundation. An IYPE poster has been widely distributed and an IYPE website has been set up. IYPE logos have been translated into 6 African languages. Through a national IYPE competition, five students were chosen to represent SA at the IYPE Global Launch Event in Paris. Laura Byrne was one of 3 students selected out of a total of 100 from around the world to present her contribution to the assembly. At the end of March, a special IYPE edition of the popular science magazine QUEST was published (through the SA Academy of Science) in time for South Africa's (Grahamstown) and Africa's

(Arusha, Tanzania) IYPE launches in April and May 2008, respectively. The Quest volume has been distributed to all South African schools, and is for public sale in bookstores. Copies are also available from the national IYPE office on request while stocks last. Much of the NC's activities are aimed at young people. South Africa's official IYPE launch at the annual Science Festival in Grahamstown attracted over 40,000 young visitors. SA also provided support for 10 South African Scholars to attend the IYPE Africa Launch in Arusha, Tanzania. These scholars took part in a competition against a group of Tanzanian counterparts to help launch the new "EarthAlive" and "Africa Corridors" board-game. At the same time, an IYPE booth was set up at the International Geosphere-Biosphere (IGBP) Congress, held at the International Conference Centre in Cape Town on 5-9th May. Some 450 international scientists attended and about 200 schoolchildren were informed about IYPE and took part in the Africa Corridors board game. September 2008 has been declared the national month of the IYPE. Wide participation of the media, educational organisations, museums, national and provincial departments, professional organisations and industry is envisaged. Nationwide IYPE knock-out school debates, implemented by the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SASTA) will be held in September. Fifty two schools have been selected across the country to participate in these National Schools Debates which will profile IYPE themes at provincial tournaments on 26 - 30 September 2008, and will culminate in a televised final at the end of the IYPE month. Public IYPE lectures will be delivered throughout the year in the different provinces. The KwaZuluNatal IYPE lecture series is already under way.

Tanzania (Hudson@udsm.ac.tz)

Hudson Nkotagu reported that the Tanzanian NC was formally launched in March 2007 by the Minister of Higher Education & Technology. A Workshop to raise awareness of the significance and value of the IYPE for Tanzania was held as early as 28 June 2006. That Workshop was attended by IYPE Patron and former President Mkapa, various Ministers and the Executive Director of the IYPE. It was followed by the signing of a MoU with the IYPE Corporation and by the production of a book containing the Proceedings. Since its launch, the NC has been very much occupied in organizing the African Launch Event (ALE) in Arusha and with the student Geo-Contest resulting in the selection of four award-winning students who went on a free trip to the Global Launch Event in Paris. The NC identified climate change, groundwater, geohazards and Earth & health as priorities in the IYPE science programme. Expressions of Interest on groundwater and geohazard issues were submitted to the IYPE Corporation for implementation once funds have been identified for this purpose. A major IYPE outreach activity is the establishment of an Earth Resource Museum at the Dodoma University preparations for which are in an advanced stage. Other outreach activities include: teaching journalists and secondary school teachers, writing a book on Earth resources in the country and awareness raising activities in general. The major sponsor of the ALE has been the Tanzanian government. Other sponsors were the Dutch government (bringing students and leaders from other African nations), the Kenyan High Commission to Tanzania, the UNESCO Cluster Office in Nairobi and the South African government (bringing South African students). In addition, the NC

was heavily involved in the pre- and post conference excursions. A separate report will be produced on the highly successful and video-recorded ALE which also resulted in adoption of the Arusha Declaration.

Zambia (vmkawamya@yahoo.com)

Vincent Kawamya reported that establishment of a National Committee is in preparation, spearheaded by the Geological Society. To that end a first meeting was held on 24 May 2007 involving eminent Zambian geoscientists from academia, the private sector and government institutions. In that meeting ideas were exchanged as to the type of activities that could be held in the framework of IYPE, and participants agreed to start without delay and to meet at least once every month. The NC is chaired by Mr. Davidson Mulela, former Minister of Mines and Foreign Affairs. Vice Chair is Kennedy Liyungu, the Director of the Geological Survey Dept. Vincent Kawamya is the Secretary of the NC. The Committee has several other members representing various projects, the Ministry of Water Affairs and private industry; it includes Prof. Imasiku Nyambe who is a Senior Adviser to IYPE. Activities planned include a national conference on the impact of the Earth sciences on the national economy to be held later in 2008, a project on vulnerability and effects of groundwater resources in Zambian communities and a project on radon impact on crops and health in the Copper belt (NW and S parts of Zambia). Outreach activities will pay significant attention to the inclusion of more women geoscientists in the booming mining industry. To that end the NC will actively proceed on an EU-supported project to popularize and market geosciences among female students at Senior High School and at entry University levels. The NC will be based in the Geological Survey Department (GSD). The GSD Director (Vice Chair of the NC) will act as the main link with the Zambian government. The NC is in the process of approaching the President of Zambia to become an IYPE Patron. A fundraising strategy is being developed.

At the end of the meeting the Chair of the IYPE Science Programme Committee (Sospeter Muhongo) informed the participants on the procedures concerning submitting Expressions of Interest for the Science Programme and on the important role of the ICSU Regional Office in Pretoria concerning IYPE. He encouraged all present to play an active role in IYPE. Finally, the representative of UNESCO, Thomas Schlüter, drew the attention of the participants to the important role the Nairobi office can play in science and outreach activities for IYPE in Africa.

Eduardo de Mulder
Executive Director IYPE Secretariat
4 July 2008