



International Year of Planet Earth

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PROGRAMME

**International Year of Planet Earth
Global Launch Event**



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Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General
of UNESCO on the occasion of the Global Launch Event
of the International Year of Planet Earth

UNESCO, 12 and 13 February 2008



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

International Year of Planet Earth will focus on the fundamental role of the Earth sciences in maintaining a healthy Earth system, thus enabling our modern society to plan for sustainable development within the context of global climate change.

This is a timely and pertinent initiative. Never before in history has the Earth been subject to such rapid and profound changes, both in terms of the physical environment and of social transformations.

The Year has set itself the ambitious target to foster closer collaboration between the international community of Earth scientists and policy-makers, government planners and the private sector worldwide. Indeed, we must ensure that the knowledge we possess about our planet is efficiently used in a coherent way to make the Earth a safer and more prosperous place for all.

Numerous scientific and outreach activities have been planned for the Year. More than 60 national committees have so far been created to coordinate activities for the Year on the country level. These activities fall under one of ten broad themes, chosen for their relevance to society and outreach potential. These are: Groundwater; Hazards; Earth and Health; Climate; Resources; Megacities; Deep Earth; Ocean; Soil; and Earth and Life.

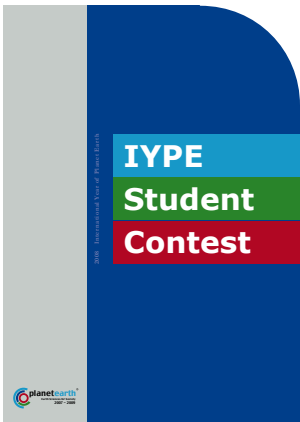
For today's global launch event, leading politicians, heads of geoscientific organizations and renowned individuals from the business sector have been invited to share their views on societal problems relating to the Earth and to put forward solutions or ideas for mitigation.

In addition, young people have been invited to our debates in order to raise their interest in science, as well as contribute their perspective to Earth-related issues that will greatly affect them in the coming years. We must encourage youth to choose careers in science and technology. Indeed, many more young minds are needed for the development of a knowledge-based society.

I trust that today's IYPE celebration is only the starting point for many geoscience outreach activities, in all regions of the world and throughout the Year, and that these activities will lead to a long overdue recognition of the important contribution of the Earth sciences to society.

Koïchiro Matsuura





International Student Contest

It is considered that the creativity and perception of students will contribute to new perspectives on the major themes of the International Year of Planet Earth. Therefore, the IYPE Organization decided to set up an International Student Contest. Winners of this contest are invited to participate in the Global Launch Event of the International Year of Planet Earth.

Students from all over the world responded to this initiative and created essays, poems, drawings, video messages and other contributions on the IYPE themes. They approached their preferred topic(s) from their own, personal perspective, driven by their individual cultural background and education. The best approximately 130 works were selected by the National Committees and the IYPE Outreach Programme Committee.

Three out of all award-winning students have been selected to perform or display and comment upon their work on stage during the Global Launch Event as an introduction to each of the three debates.

Apart from participating in the Global Launch Event, students are invited to join an official visit to the Museum of Natural History.

Geo Song

Not only will the students be part of the discussions, they will also participate in the Geo Song “Mother Earth” during the first day of the Global Launch Event. The song has been especially composed for this occasion and, in order to generate a sense of community and to ensure maximum involvement on the part of the audience, all award winning students from every continent will perform in this choral presentation. They will be accompanied by three musicians. The stage setting and coaching of the students will be carried out by M-A-S Productions.



Moderator Day 1

Prof Aubrey Manning

Independent Correspondent

Professor Aubrey Manning is a renowned zoologist, writer, broadcaster and one of the Goodwill Ambassadors for the International Year of Planet Earth. His television and radio work has inspired new interest in Earth sciences and the way in which they integrate with life sciences (BBC Two's 'Earth Story' and BBC Radio Four's 'The Rules of Life'). He read Zoology at University College London before completing a doctorate in animal behaviour at the University of Oxford. He joined the University of Edinburgh as an Assistant Lecturer in Zoology, rising to Professor of Natural History. He is currently Emeritus professor.



Moderator Day 2

Marina Mielczarek

Independent Correspondent

Marina Mielczarek is currently Grand Reporter at Radio France Internationale. As a field journalist for more than 12 years, she has travelled through many continents, especially in developing countries in Africa and Asia reporting on current scientific and societal issues. She carries out investigations on international politics focussing on the challenges of the 21 century such as the population balances, access to education, water, demographic ageing, architecture, prostitution, aids, drugs and prisons. She teaches at l'Institut Pratique du Journalisme IPJ for 5 years.





Session 1

Population growth and climate change: challenges for planet Earth

Introduction

By 2050, almost 3 billion more people will live on this planet, mostly in cities. Together, they will need more resources (water, energy material, minerals, metals, soils for food) and their joint impact on planet Earth will probably be much heavier than today. Humankind not only impacts the planet's climatic conditions but has become a geological agent by moving more Earth materials than all natural geological processes together. This unprecedented and dynamic force does not threaten Earth itself but it is having increasing impacts on our planet's life support systems. The challenge is for us to bring ourselves and our demands more into balance with all other natural forces. Only then shall we secure a long-term future for humanity and much of the rest of life.

Issues

What will planet Earth look like in 2050? Is the impact of climate change on humankind only ever negative? Are there limits to sustainable urban growth? How are these concerns addressed in national and international policy making? How can science and technology contribute to solving problems related to climate change for growing populations?



Dr Renate Christ

Secretary of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Dr Renate Christ is Secretary of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that, together with Albert Arnold (Al) Gore Jr., received the Nobel Peace Prize 2007 “for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change”. Renate Christ has worked at the European Commission DG XI, the UN Environment Programme and the Austrian Ministry of the Environment being responsible for climate change and other issues. She was a lecturer and carried out research at several universities and institutes. She holds a Ph.D in eco-physiology from the University of Salzburg.



Prof Ruud Lubbers

Former Prime Minister of the Netherlands

As a citizen of Rotterdam, Ruud Lubbers became involved in the environmental problems in that city and port already at the end of the sixties of last century. That went on as a Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy from 1973 - 1979, and as a Prime Minister from 1982 - 1994. Those decades he worked very much in tandem with Gro Harlem Brundtland. Together with Maurice Strong, Michael Gorbachev and Steven Rockefeller he was instrumental in the Earth Charter. He is a patron of IYPE and still active in the Earth Charter Initiative, but is also key to the Rotterdam Climate Initiative and the World Ports Conference on Climate July 2008.



Prof Ghislain de Marsily

French Academy of Sciences

Ghislain de Marsily is Emeritus Professor of Applied Geology at the University Pierre et Marie Curie – Paris VI and at the Paris École des Mines. His research interests include aquifer management and protection; waste disposal (including nuclear waste); global watershed functioning (surface water quality, human impact assessment and ecosystem protection); global water resources and sustainable development. He is a member of the French Academy of Sciences where he coordinated the preparation of Science and Technology Report “Continental Waters” of the Academy, published in 2006.



Ms Arti Mehra

Mayor Delhi, India

Ms Arti Mehra, educated at Delhi University, is the Mayor of Delhi, an office to which she was unanimously elected at her first attempt. Her youthful energy and reputation as a dynamic personality is in tune with the considerable demands of Indian social and political leadership. She has been elected for the third time as a Member of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and has shown herself to be a dedicated and considerate member of that Corporation for the past ten years.



IYPE Launch Event Tentative Programme

Day 1 12 February 2008

08.30 Registration of guests at UNESCO Headquarters

10.00 Opening by Master of Ceremony Dr Ted Nield
Chair of IYPE Outreach Programme Committee

Address by UNESCO Director-General
Koïchiro Matsuura

Address by Prof Zhang Hongren
President of the International Union of Geological
Sciences (IUGS)

Address by Prof Larry Woodfork
Chair of the IYPE Board of Directors

Introduction by Nicolas Sarkozy
President of the French Republic

Statements by Heads of State/Ministers and UN Heads

Presentation of Paris Declaration

Introduction to the sessions by Prof Aubrey Manning
Independent correspondent

13.00 Lunch and Press

15.00 Cultural Event

15.20 Theme 1: Population growth and climate change: challenges for planet Earth

Introduction by moderator Prof Aubrey Manning

Student winner of IYPE contest reads his/her winning
essay

Views on theme by Dr Renate Christ
Secretary of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate
Change (IPCC)

Views on theme by Prof Ghislain de Marsily
French Academy of Sciences

16.20 Coffee / Tea breaks

16.40 Views on theme by Prof Ruud Lubbers
Former Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Views on theme by Ms Arti Mehra
Mayor of Delhi, India

Discussion with audience chaired by
moderator Prof Aubrey Manning

Concluding remarks by moderator
Prof Aubrey Manning

19.00 - 21.00 Evening Reception

IYPE Launch Event Tentative Programme

Day 2 13 February 2008

09.00 Arrival of guests at UNESCO Headquarters

09.30 Opening by Master of Ceremony Dr Ted Nield
Chair of IYPE Outreach Programme Committee

Introduction by Prof Mohammed Sheya
Minister Plenipotentiary, United Republic of Tanzania

09.45 Theme 2: Earth resources: threat or treat?

Introduction by moderator Marina Mielczarek
Independent correspondent

Student winner of IYPE contest reads his/her winning essay

Views on theme by Thierry Desmarest
Chair of the Board of Directors of Total

Views on theme by Dr Mark Myers
Director of United States Geological Survey

Views on theme by Vice Minister Wang Shouxiang
Ministry of Land and Resources of the People's Republic
of China

Discussion with audience chaired by moderator Marina
Mielczarek

Concluding remarks by moderator Marina Mielczarek

11.20 Coffee / Tea breaks

11.40 Theme 3: Geohazards: minimizing risk, maximizing awareness

Introduction by moderator Marina Mielczarek

Student winner of IYPE contest reads his/her
winning essay

Views on theme by Prof Peter Hoeppe
Münich Reinsurance, Germany

Views on theme by Prof Sospeter Muhongo
Director Regional Office for Africa of the International
Council for Sciences (ICSU), South Africa

Discussion with audience chaired by moderator
Marina Mielczarek

Concluding remarks by moderator Marina Mielczarek

13.15 Closing remarks by UNESCO Director-General
Koïchiro Matsuura

13.25 Video message by Sir Arthur C. Clarke
Sir Arthur C. Clarke Foundation



Session 2

Theme 2: Earth resources: threat or treat?

Introduction

Today, commodity prices are sky high because of an unprecedented demand for Earth resources. Extraction of natural resources and the economies of related industries are booming, but benefits are often spread unevenly among nations and people. Natural resource-rich countries do not necessarily invest their advantage in building more competitive and lasting economies. Extraction and processing of Earth materials is often associated with landscape destruction and environmental pollution. Sound stewardship also requires setting aside sufficient resources for generations to come. Humankind has always adapted to conditions of scarcity but the challenge we face today is to build economies that take into account the depletion of resources.

Issues

Are natural resources really becoming depleted? What is Science and technology contributing to address this problem? Can extraction and processing of natural resources be made sustainable and at affordable cost? How do industries contribute to the establishment of sustained socio-economic development? How does good governance contribute to optimizing a country's benefit from its natural resources? Do nations safeguard resources for future generations? Can scientists, industry and politicians produce more accessible information on resources and reserves so as to improve international relations?



Thierry Desmarest

Chair of the Board of Directors of Total

Thierry Desmarest is the current Chair of the Board of Directors of Total. He began his career in 1971 as head of the Mining Directorate in New Caledonia, before serving as a technical advisor at the Ministry of Industry (1975-1978) then at the Ministry of Economic Affairs (1978-1980). He joined Total in 1981 and was Chief Executive Officer from 1995 to 2007. He is a graduate of the École Polytechnique and of the École des Mines.



Wang Shouxiang

Vice Minister of the Ministry of Land and Resources

Wang Shouxiang was born in 1951 in China's Liaoning Province. He graduated from Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications with a bachelor degree in engineering. He worked successively as Division Director of the General Office of the State Council's Census Task Force, Division Director of the National Bureau of Statistics, Director General of the Department of Personnel of the Ministry of Supervision. He is now the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Land and Resources of the People's Republic of China.



Dr Mark D. Myers

Director, U.S. Geological Survey

On September 26, 2006, Dr Mark D. Myers became the 14th Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior. He is an internationally recognized geologist and former State Geologist and head of Alaska's Geological Survey. Mark Myers is an expert on North Slope (Alaska) sedimentary and petroleum geology and served as survey chief for field programs several arctic areas. He received his doctorate in geology from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks in 1994, specializing in sedimentology. He earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees in geology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Prof Peter Hoeppe

Münich Reinsurance

Prof Hoeppe joined the Munich Reinsurance Company in 2004. He was appointed Head of the Geo Risks Research Department in January 2005. Prof Hoeppe is scientific member of many scientific societies. From 1999 to 2002 he has been the President of the International Society of Biometeorology. He has held various expert functions in WHO and WMO. April 2007, Prof Hoeppe has been appointed member of the Global Warming Advisory Board of the Bavarian State Government.





Session 3

Geohazards: minimizing risk, maximizing awareness

Introduction

Planet Earth is not always in a state of balance, equilibrium and natural harmony. Indeed, dynamic processes in the interior of the Earth are often expressed at the surface which, in turn, sometimes enhances the impact of natural hazards that disrupt public life. Human occupation of the planet is subject to the inevitability of changing conditions in the Earth crust. Humankind may trigger, accelerate or even reduce the myriad of natural disasters and their consequent impact on communities. The physical occurrence and economic effects of natural calamities are not evenly distributed around the globe. Frequently, it is the less developed nations that suffer most of the human losses, while the more developed nations are ultimately exposed to the economic costs. Unfortunately, and for a wide variety of reasons, people will continue to live under conditions of increasing risk.

Issues

What are the real costs to human society of natural hazards? Will future generations suffer more or less from such hazards? How much do people contribute, directly or indirectly, to hazard-associated disasters? To what extent can natural hazards be predicted and their impacts mitigated by science and technology, now and in the foreseeable future? How can societies be made less vulnerable to the deleterious effects of natural hazards? What are the available science-based incentives that could be used to induce governments to minimize natural hazard risk? How can the (insurance) industry contribute?

Prof Sospeter Muhongo

Director Regional Office for Africa of the International Council for Sciences (ICSU)

Prof Sospeter Muhongo, a Tanzanian, is the Director Regional Office for Africa of the ICSU. He is the Chair of the Science Programme Committee (SPC) of the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE). He is a professor of geology at the Universities of Dar Es Salaam and Pretoria, and a fellow of seven highly learned professional societies. He has occupied numerous important national, regional and international professional positions dealing with science, technology and innovation. Prof Muhongo, recipient of numerous scholarly and professional awards, grants and fellowships studied geology at the Universities of Dar Es Salaam, Göttingen and TU-Berlin (Germany).



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