



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH CORPORATION

First Meeting of the Board

Condensed Minutes

At the Geological Society of London,
Burlington House, Piccadilly,
9 & 10 January 2007

Present: Bobrowsky, Peter (Chair); Cloetingh, Sierd; Dent, David; Derbyshire, Edward; Eder, Wolfgang; Harris, Charles; Jackson, Ian; Janoschek, Werner; Kerridge, David; Kindler, Pascal; Ludden, John; Manning, Aubrey; McArdle, Peadar; Meidla, Tonue; Missotten, Robert; Mulder, Eduardo de; Piller, Werner; Quesada, Cecilio; Rubio, Eduardo; Selinus, Olle; Seltmann, Reimar; Serva, Leonello; Stedra, Veronica; Toteu, Félix; Tsukuda, Eikichi; Van Impe, William F.; Wang Wei; Wang Yanjun; Wells, Stephen G.; Woodfork, Larry, D.; Yang Xuejun.

Apologies from absence: Nickless, Edmund and Nield, Ted (in part) owing to the launching of the Bicentenary of the Geological Society of London, and Dr. Zhang Hongren (President IUGS)

The meeting opened at 1005h GMT.

1. Welcome. The Chair extended a welcome to all Board members, representatives and observers, and extended special thanks to Edmund Nickless and the Geological Society for hosting the meeting. Edmund Nickless responded, welcoming the participants.

2. Opening of the International Year's Triennium

Goodwill Ambassador Aubrey Manning spoke of the considerable work and great patience needed in setting up an international year which, in this case, was already a wonderful achievement. He concluded by congratulating the former Management Team for having come so far. Werner Janoschek thanked Professor Manning on behalf of all present, and presented him with a large rock sample of boulangerite.

3. Addresses welcoming the International Year

Robert Missotten, representing IGCP and UNESCO, expressed his pleasure with the status of the Year, pointing to the culmination of UNESCO involvement in 2008. UNESCO is the only UN body with a long-term commitment to the Earth Sciences. Its 5 intergovernmental programmes will also provide visibility for the Year. UNESCO proposes to open the UN Year of Planet earth in Paris in February 2008.

Peter Bobrowsky, representing IUGS President Dr. Zhang Hongren, emphasised the uniqueness of the Year as an initiative, saying that it is unlikely that there will be any comparable opportunity for such an Earth science venture in the lifetimes

of those present. He welcomed the “shared umbrella” that this International Year provided for a Unions and other related organisations.

Sierd Cloetingh reminded the meeting that the ILP was one of the Year’s Founding members. We should be grateful to Eduardo de Mulder and his colleagues for bringing us to this point. The Year is desperately needed.

4. Tour de table. See list of those present (above).

5. Status of the International Year of Planet Earth Corporation.

(a) Eduardo de Mulder, Executive Director of the Corporation, spoke to this item. He stressed the clear separation between Secretariat and Board, as set out in the Business Plan.

He reminded the Board that IUGS and UNESCO as the IYPE initiating bodies had veto powers within the Board. The following representatives were recognised; Kerridge (IUGG), Dent (ISRIC), Van Impe (FIGS: IAEG, ISSMGE, ISRM), Nickless (GSL), Eduardo de Mulder (seconded to represent GSNL). The Associate Partners present at the meeting included IPA, IAGOD, CGMW, and GSAfrica. The Geological Society of America (GSA), the European Geosciences Union (EGU) and the Instituto Geológico y Minero de España (IGME) are International Partners, which group has elected Stephen Wells (GSA) as its representative on the Board for this meeting.

The three main areas of activity are Development (fund raising), Science and Outreach. Development is in need of a Chair, and suggested individuals are welcome from Board members. Derbyshire was accepted as Chair of the Science Programme Committee (SPC) and Nield as Chair of the Outreach Programme Committee (OPC); in these capacities both have a seat on the Board.

Regional representation was proposed as follows: North America – Woodfork, Latin America – Rubio, Europe – Eder, Africa – Toteu, Asia – to be determined (but Yang Xuejun accepted the responsibility for the current meeting). The current expected total of Board seats is 26-28, dependent on the number of Regional representatives, but this number may have to increase as Sponsors and Donors (contributing 1M US\$ or more) come in.

For the daily operations of the Board, a group of 6 or 7 Board members (Chair, Vice Chair, leaders of the SPC, the OPC, the Development Committee, and the representatives of IUGS and UNESCO) will jointly constitute the Board of Officers.

Eduardo de Mulder pointed out that the Chairmanship of the Board was still to be filled. Several names were proposed for consideration. There was also discussion on the vacant position of Chair of the Development Committee.

(b) The Secretariat is now established at the NGU in Trondheim, Norway, with Eduardo de Mulder as its Executive Director. This outcome was seen as a wise decision, and will carry with it a strengthening of the Year and the forthcoming IGC in Oslo.

(c) Approval of the Statutes and Bye-Laws. A revised Statutes document was later put before Board members and was **accepted**.

The Bye-Laws were **Agreed nem. con**, subject only to minor textual amendments.

6. Implementation of the International Year of Planet Earth at the national level.

Eduardo de Mulder made a general statement on this process. By the time of the Board meeting, 31 National Committees had been set up. He then asked the Board to observe one minute's silence in memory of Satoru Ohya, who had been a very active worker for the Year and the initiator of the Japanese National Committee. He went on to propose that a special medal be struck for exceptional achievements in the National Committees, to be known as the Satoru Ohya Medal for Planet Earth. This was **Agreed nem. con.**

He then invited representatives of National Committees (NCs) to present key items and issues briefly. Reports were then delivered by **U.S.A., China, France, Japan, Sweden, Estonia, Cameroon, Czech Republic, The Netherland, Peru, Spain, Ireland, U.K., Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Germany, Canada, Australia, and Brazil.**

In the ensuing discussion, the need to disseminate nationally-generated ideas to all committed nations involved in the Year was stressed, in part through national websites. The Executive Director stated that the outcome of the Board meeting would be made available on the Year's website. NCs might well provide a 2 page summary of its plans and ideas.

Robert Missotten commented that UNESCO will emphasize political activity with reference to 2008 as the UN Year. It is important to assure politicians that the Year's operations are by no means all 'bottom up' in approach; some 'top down' elements are vital. The ideas and initiatives generated by the Year need to be brought to all nations of the world, making use of the 191 national ambassadors in UNESCO, and the 191 UNESCO National Commissions. All nations will receive the Director-General's statement on the Year and will be asked to ensure that it is a success.

The Year thus needs a "Help Desk", perhaps as part of its website/web portal so as to be more pro-active with NCs.

By 2009, key outcomes of the IYPE could be condensed into an intelligent package, which could be used to sustain dialogue with governments for years ahead. A template/mechanism is needed to bring this about.

7. Science programme

(a) A report on the principal planned activities for 2007 was pre-circulated.

(b-1) A statement on the formation and current status of the Year's 10 Science Implementation Teams (SITs) was pre-circulated.

In the ensuing discussion, some flexibility may be needed to guarantee the fullest possible representation across specialist fields, such as geo-engineers, most readily by expansion of SIT memrship. The addition of a clause to the Terms of Reference (ToR) to the effect that SITs could include "8 to 10" members might solve this problem. This was **approved.**

The apparent need for an additional ToR paragraph dealing with the *powers* of SIT Leaders was also endorsed and **approved, new con.**

It was **noted** that such changes may eventually have to be reflected in **changes to the Bye-Laws.**

The SPC Chair was asked to act upon the suggested changes.

The current composition of the 10 SITs was **approved, nem con.**

(b-2) The SPC Chair spoke briefly about the composition and size of the future Science Programme Committee. This was **approved, nem con.**

(b-3) The SPC Chair introduced a discussion on the need for action in appointing a Vice-Chair of the SCP, as approved by the Management Team. A proposal to nominate additional candidates was **agreed**. The SPC Chair was then asked to email Board Members, setting out the expected duties of an SPC Vice-Chair.

(c) In view of the fact that expressions of Interest are submitted by way of the website of the Year, managed by Ted Nield, this item was deferred to Item 8.

(d) The Executive Director spoke briefly about the representation of the Year at the forthcoming IGC, Oslo 2008. He and the SPC Chair are members of the International Panel for the IGC. The IYPE will have particular exposure during Plenary sessions. The next GSA meeting (Denver) will include opportunities for contributions on all 10 of the Year's themes, as will the EGU. IUGG will also involve the Year in several ways. Details of the Year's representation in other organisations are listed in the Year's publications and Status Report.

The Board and SIT Leaders were cautioned to expect no financial support for their efforts in 2007, and that association with flagship projects already under way should be sought (as achieved by the Deep Earth SIT).

There was a call for guidance notes on how to prepare a proposal. Each SIT Leader could be asked to provide a paragraph on this topic. **The SPC Chair agreed.**

8. Outreach Programme

The Chair of the Outreach Programme Committee, Ted Nield, summarised the current status and operations of this programme. The Year's Outreach is very distinctive, being different from that of UNESCO, for example. The building of Outreach projects will take place largely as a 'bottom up' process. As to Expressions of Interest, 28 have been received for Science projects and 21 for Outreach. There is a great deal of interest, with many enquiries. The pressure of work on the Outreach Chair will become considerable during this Bicentenary Year of the Geological Society, and this must be a matter of concern.

Robert Missotten said that UNESCO would welcome an extensive exhibition (perhaps created by a consortium 2 or 3 of the nations within the Year who would be in a position to contribute the necessary money, time and energy) to coincide with the General Conference of UNESCO in October 2007.

With reference to the planned Top Conference at UNESCO in Paris on 12 and 13 February 2008, one of the days will include a series of presentations by leading politicians, raising societal questions with a geoscientific dimension. This will be followed by some 3 scientific speakers who will address the questions raised, and then by some CEOs speaking about what they are doing or could be doing about these specific problems. About 1000 young people (14-17 years old) from UNESCO supported schools around the world will take part. IUGS, IUGG, IGU and others might be invited to assist.

Mr. Charles Ford made a brief presentation the offer by Boston & Hannah to publish up to 200,000 copies of a book on the Year, at no cost to the IYPE and largely paid for by included advertising that will be subject to the Board's approval. A decision will be made by the Board in due course.

The meeting was adjourned at 1735h.

The meeting was reconvened on 10 January at 0900h, with Wolfgang Eder (representing Europe) in the Chair.

Present. Attendance was as for 9 January, with the exception of Bobrowsky, Peter; Cloetingh, Sierd; Harris, Charles; Jackson, Ian; and Stedra, Veronica.

9. Financial status of the International Year of Planet Earth Corporation

The Executive Director spoke to this Item. The Financial situation, prospects, fund-raising strategy and plan for 2007 were summarised. At present, the cash balances in the Year's accounts are very low. Board members were asked to advise the officers concerning any potential funding sources known to them.

A list of Senior Advisers, Goodwill Ambassadors and Patrons was pre-circulated, followed by discussion.

With reference to **International Partners**, all relevant major organisations such as Geological Surveys, etc., are encouraged to sign up. Publishers might be more appropriately Sponsors rather than Partners.

The need to protect **the Year's logo** was under consideration by the Secretariat.

The Director-General of UNESCO is prepared to write to potential Donors and participants of **Partnership Conferences**.

It was noted that all **Foundations** are listed on the worldwide web and that all US cases have very strict rules that suggest that the Year is unlikely to qualify to receive support from most of them.

Werner Janoschek proposed that the Year should proceed to engage a fund-raising agency by tender. There was some strong support for this suggestion, although it was not put to the vote. He went on to suggest that it was important to operate with two distinct budgets, namely an International Year *administration* budget, and a budget for the science and Outreach programmes. He went on to present the financial report for 2006 and the Treasury Audit for 2005 and 2006

It was noted that, so far, there were not enough proposals to the science and outreach programmes to provide a breadth of choice adequate for approaches to potential donors.

The Executive Director will separately indicate items concerning the IYPE organisation (Secretariat and Board) and other items in the 2007 budget. he will also provide various options as to the 2007 budget, related to the levels of funds being raised in that year; a document will be circulated to the Board for comment as soon as practicable. This was widely endorsed by members, and was **approved, nem. con.**

It was not considered likely that Board members could be considered personally responsible for any failure to obtain money to pay the Secretariat, but this will be legally ascertained. It was noted that insurance against such liability was available in the USA and other countries.

As to the relation between available cash and the level of operations, the Executive Director stated that contingency plans exist whereby operations of the Secretariat could be reduced to a half-time basis. To overcome the first, financially difficult years, the IUGS offered to lend the Year a further US\$ 80,000.

With reference to **relations with concurrent initiatives**, the Executive Director pointed to the Celimontana Declaration, included in the Year's Business Plan, describing the mutual preparedness and willingness of IPY, IHY, and eGY to cooperate with each other. He also informed the meeting that IYPE has been invited to attend the launches of the IHY and the IPY in February and March 2007.

It was **agreed, nem. con**, that the Second Annual Meeting of the Board of the International Year will take place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, probably on 14 and 15 February 2008.

Finally, from the Chair, Wolfgang Eder thanked all members and representative of all attending organisations for their contributions over the two-day meeting, and respectfully requested that they motivate their Treasurers!

The meeting closed at 1055h.

Post Script: (Immediately following the closing of the meeting, several Board-Members expressed the need for an earlier Meeting as soon as mid-2007., also in Paris., Any such meeting will have to be funded from extra-budgetary sources, in view of the current state of the International Year's finances.)

Condensed by Edward Derbyshire
14 May 2007