



# General Assembly

Cologne, August 29, 2012

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The Tenth General Assembly of the Commonwealth Geographical Bureau was held at the 32nd Congress of the International Geographical Union, at the University of Cologne, on Wednesday August 29, 2012, commencing at 10.00hr.

### 1. ATTENDANCE:

Present were:

Professor J.A. (Tony) Binns - President (Dunedin, New Zealand)  
Professor Elizabeth Thomas-Hope - Secretary (Kingston, Jamaica)  
Professor Nigel Walford - Treasurer (Surrey, UK)  
Subhash Anand (Delhi, India)  
Mr Manabjyoti Barkakaty (Khetri, India)  
Professor Lex Chalmers (Waikato, New Zealand)  
Dr Dhanjit Deka (Guwahati, India)  
Mr. Bimal Kumar Kar (Assam, India)  
Dr Suraj Mal (Delhi, India)  
Professor Janet Momsen (UK)  
Dr. N. Nagabhusanam (Tirupati, India)  
Dr Guy Robinson (Australia)  
Dr. Rana Sarmah (Assam, India)  
Dr. R.B. Singh (Delhi, India)  
Dr. Henry Yeung (Singapore)

### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Professor Tony Binns (Chairman), called the meeting to order at 10.00hr, and welcomed all present.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were tendered on behalf of Professor Adamu Tanku (Nigeria), and Professor Victor Savage (Singapore).

## **3. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

The Agenda was unanimously accepted.

## **4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Prof Binns presented a summary of his Report (attached) and its acceptance was proposed by Prof. Janet Momsen and seconded by Dr. Bimal Kumar Kar.

## **5. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Prof. Thomas-Hope presented a summary of her Report (attached) and its acceptance was proposed by Prof Janet Momsen and seconded by Prof R.B.Singh.

## **6. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Prof. Nigel Walford presented a summary of the Treasurer's Report (attached), and its acceptance was proposed by Prof. R.B. Singh and seconded by Prof Lex Chalmers.

## **7. MATTERS ARISING**

### **7.1 Election of Executive Officers of the Management Committee**

Nominations had been received by the due date circulated (July 30, 2012) for Executive Officers of the Management Committee, as follows:

President – Prof. Tony Binns

Proposed by Professor Adamu Idris Tanko, Department of Geography, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

Seconded by Dr. Kabba Santigie Bangura, Department of Geography, Faurah Bay College Campus, University of Sierra Leone, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Secretary – Prof Elizabeth Thomas-Hope

Proposed by Dr. Victor R. Savage, National University of Singapore

Seconded by Prof Tony Binns, University of Otago, New Zealand.

Treasurer – Professor Nigel Walford

Proposed by Prof. Guy M. Robinson, University of South Australia

Seconded by Prof. J.A. Binns, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

All persons proposed were duly elected by unanimous vote of the members present.

## **7.2 Election of Regional Representatives to the Management Committee**

7.2.1 The following Members were nominated to stand for a further term (2012-16), having indicated their willingness to do so.

West Africa – Professor Adamu I. Tanku (Bayero University, Nigeria)

Proposed by Nigel Walford, seconded by Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, and duly elected by those members present.

Southern Africa – Dr. Shari Daya (University of Cape Town, South Africa)

Proposed by Bimal Kumar Kar, seconded by Dr. Nagabhushanam, and duly elected by those members present.

South Asia (not India) – Prof. M. Shamsul Alam (University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh)

Proposed by Bimal Kar and seconded by Mr. Manabjyoti Barkakaty, and duly elected by those members present.

Southeast Asia – Prof. Henry Yeung (National University, Singapore)

Proposed by Prof Tony Binns and seconded by Prof Janet Momsen, and duly elected by those members present.

Australasia and the Pacific – Professor Guy Robinson (University of Southern Australia)

Proposed by Prof. R.B.Singh, seconded by Prof Henry Yeung, and duly elected by those members present.

Member for South Asia (India) – Professor N. Nagabhusanam (S.V.University, Tirupati, India)

Proposed by Dr. R.B. Singh, seconded by Dr. Suraj Mal, and duly elected by those members present.

Member for East Africa. As there were no nominations Prof Guy Robinson, who is in contact with Geographers in East Africa, agreed to explore the possible candidates and submit a nomination at a later date.

Member for the Americas. The previous representative, Prof Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, indicated that she would like a younger scholar to take over this position and proposed Dr. Therese Ferguson, University of Guyana. The nomination was seconded by Prof. Janet Momsen, and the candidate duly elected by those members present.

7.2.2 Prof Thomas-Hope (Secretary), proposed the motion that Prof Sudepto Adhikari be thanked on behalf of the CGB for his conscientious contribution as member for India. This was unanimously supported by all present.

7.2.3 It was also proposed that in future there should be an additional Member for India to reflect its large membership of the CGB. This was agreed but the point was made that the constitution would need to be changed accordingly so this would have to be circulated and the matter brought to the next meeting of the CGB.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **8.1 Financial Viability**

The President indicated the challenge of financial sustainability that the CGB currently faced. Whereas in the past the Commonwealth Foundation (CF) made a regular contribution to the core funding of the CGB, this no longer occurred. Application for assistance had to be made for specific activities, as was the case with respect to the food security workshop held in Sierra Leone (2011). Commonwealth Foundation support was also based in activities for which participation prioritized civil society.

The Treasurer stated that the CF no longer wanted to be the sole source of income for the CGB so to be even considered by the CF, it was necessary to obtain other funds that could provide counterpart funding. One of the factors affecting CGB core funding was that there was no system of subscription for membership of the CGB; membership was nominal and carried no commitment. Comparison was made with other organizations, such as the Commonwealth Language and Linguistics Association, which has regional chapters, each levying a local membership fee. The money was collected by having a regional event and this was counted by the CF as membership of the global organization.

Prof. Wolford suggested that the CGB adopt a similar model (see paper attached).

The proposal was tabled that the CGB should seek to establish, within the next two years, a regionally-based membership system with a specific activity which would enable membership payments to be made.

Prof Chalmers suggested that we could seek collaborative funding within the IGU, since we are already firmly established within this global organization. The CGB could then join with an IGU Commission to apply for IGU funding. This would be an appropriate approach since: a) the CGB is already under the IGU umbrella and b) IGU Commissions can apply for small amounts of money to support related activities.

Prof Thomas-Hope suggested that application for funds could be made for IGU Regional conferences and pre-Congress conferences.

Prof Singh proposed that every participant should contribute a small sum of money to the regional IGU group. This could be done by using part of the registration fee for a regional/local conference, towards the CGB membership. He suggested that CGB and National Associations could have joint/combined events.

Prof Yeung said that he would raise with the Board of the Journal of Tropical Geography the possibility of its making a contribution to the CGB within the context of its own guidelines to support professional development. If this were agreed by the Board, he would propose that the subvention (perhaps around 1,000 pounds per year) be made for a 5-year period in order to fund a specific activity relating to the support of future scholarly activity.

The question was raised of whether the Australian Journal might also be in a similar position to assist.

## **8.2 Workshops**

President indicated that ETH had suggested that the CGB sponsor Food Security Workshops in small island states – with one in the Caribbean and one in the Pacific (the latter possibly organized by New Zealand and Australia).

There was also interest in a food security workshop being held in India.

A possible timeframe could be 2014 for Small Islands; and 2015 for India.

### **8.3 CGB participation**

As participation in the CGB meetings was always low and the activity confined to a business meeting at the IGU, it was suggested that we expand the CGB activity in the future. Access to the email addresses of Commonwealth Geographers could be sought from the IGU secretariat so that there was wider dispersal of information. Additional events would also be necessary so that the business meeting was not the only point of contact. There would be the need to organize one or more thematic sessions in association with other IGU Commissions in which a number of Commonwealth Geographers already participated. Prof. Thomas-Hope suggested that additionally, a social event at the IGU could be arranged.

As the next IGU Congress is due to take place in Beijing in 2015, contact should be made with the Chinese Geographers in good time. Prof. Yeung knows the Beijing Geographers well and offered to make contact with members of the Chinese Academy.

### **9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11.30hr.