

COMMISSON REPORT

COMMISSION ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION

2008 – 2012

1. MEMBERSHIP

a) Commission Chair

Name	Mail Address	Telephone Fax	E-mail
Chairs			
Bicalho, Ana Maria (Brazil, 2007-2012)	Departamento de Geografia IGEO-CCMN, Cidade Universitária Ilha do Fundão 21910-900 - Rio de Janeiro - RJ Brazil	+55-21-22707773 +55-21-25983280	anabicalho@hotmail.com
Laurens, Lucette (France, 2007-2012)	Département de Géographie Université Paul Valéry Route de Mende 34 199 Montpellier cedex 5 France	+33-4-99612746	laurens@supagro.inra.fr

b) Steering Committee Members (2008-2012)

In 2009, three members of the Steering Committee were replaced: Karl Martin Born, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany; Cia Yunlong, Beijing University, China and Leslie Duram, Southern Illinois University, United States.

New members added were: Mary Cawley, National University of Ireland-Galway, Ireland; Irit Amit Cohen, Bar-Iban University, Israel; Ana Maria Viegas Firmino, New University of Lisbon, Portugal; Doo-Chul Kim, Okayama University, Japan and Lučka Lober, Maribor University, Slovenia (see table below).

Name	Mail Address	E-mail
Born, Martin (Germany) 2004-2009	FR Angewandte Geographie Freie Universität Berlin Malteserstr.74-100 D-12249 Berlin Germany	kmborn@geog.fu-berlin.de
Duram, Leslie (United States) 2004-2009	Dept. of Geography Southern Illinois University 4529 Faner Hall Carbondale, IL 62901-4514 United States	duram@siu.edu
Gautam, Naresh Chandra (India) 2004-2009	Centre for Land Use Management 25-24/1, East Anand Bagh Malkajgiri Hyderabad - 500047 India	ncgautam@yahoo.com
Yunlong, Cia (China) 2004-2009	Dept. of Resources, Environment and Geography Peking University Beijing 100871 China	caiyl@urban.pku.edu.cn
Sorensen, Tony (Australia) 2004-2012	Dept. of Geography and Planning University of New England Armidale NSW 235 Australia	Tony.Sorensen@une.edu.au
Cohen, Irit Amit (Israel) 2009-	Dept. of Geography Bar Ilan University Ramat-Gan Israel	amitirit@zahav.net.il
Cawley, Mary (Ireland) 2009-	School of Geography and Archaeology National University of Ireland Galway Ireland	mary.cawley@nuigalway.ie
Firmino, Ana (Portugal) 2009-	Dept. of Geography & Regional Planning Universidade Nova de Lisboa Av. de Berna, 26-C 1069-061 Lisbon Portugal	am.firmino@fcs.unl.pt
Kim, Doo-Chul (Japan) 2009-	Dept. of Rural Environment Management Graduate School of Environmental Science Okayama Univesity 3-1-1 Tsushima-naka Okayama 700-8530 Japan	kim@cc.okayama-u.ac.jp
Lober, Lučka (Slovenia) 2009-	Dept. of Geography Faculty of Arts University of Maribor Koroška cesta 160 2000 Maribor Slovenia	lucka.lorber@uni-mb.si

c) Commission Members

Membership as defined by participation in the commission events over the four year period ending 31 December, 2011, involved a total of 247 geographers attending annual meetings, regional conferences or international congresses coming from the following regions and countries:

Africa: Burundi (1), Cameroon (1), Morocco (2);

Asia and Oceania: Australia (10), China (4), India (8), Indonesia (1), Iran (2), Israel (28), Japan (10), Malaysia (1), the Philippines (2), Vietnam (1);

Europe: Austria (2), Belgium (9), Bosnia (1), Croatia (8), the Czech Republic (14), Finland (1), France (3), Germany (1), Ireland (22), Italy (3), the Netherlands (2), Poland (3), Portugal (3), Romania (5), Slovenia (37), Spain (36), Sweden (1), Turkey (1), the United Kingdom (6);

Americas: Brazil (9), Canada (1), Chile (1), Ecuador (1), Mexico (1), the United States (5).

There are a number of regular participants who go to the commission events almost every year so that the sum of the participants per event (listed in the next section) is greater than the total number of geographers who have participated in commission events over the four year period.

2. MEETINGS

16th Annual Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems – Jaca, Zaragoza and Teruel, Spain – 4-8 August, 2008

The 2008 colloquium of the Commission was a pre-30th International Congress of Geographers event organized by Professors Luisa Maria Frutos, Eugenio Climent and Enrique Ruiz of the Universidad de Saragossa in 4-8, August with the general theme of *New Ruralities and Sustainable Use of Territory*.

There were 54 participants from Burundi (1), Morocco (1), Spain (28), Portugal (2), Italy (1), France (1), Germany (1), the United Kingdom (2), Ireland (1), Belgium (2), the Czech Republic (1), Slovenia (1), Turkey (1), Israel (1), India (1), Japan (4), Australia (2), Canada (1) and Brazil (3). The activities were divided into paper presentations (39) and field excursions.

Presentation themes

- The concept of sustainability in rural areas and its analytical and methodological implications
- Experience and good practices of sustainable development in rural areas
- Agricultural policies and sustainable development
- The role of social capital in rural development
- The process of urban acculturation in rural areas
- Multi-functionality and dynamism of rural areas

Field excursion themes (North and East Central Spain)

- North Spain-Jaca - the high basin of the Gállego river in the Pyrenees, water and snow issues, rural depopulation, winter tourism, historical origins of Spanish nation building
- International Expo Saragossa 2008 - water and sustainable development
- East Central Spain - Teruel-Albarracín mountains - farming, logging, crafts, heritage tourism, historical conflict between religious groups

31st International Congress of Geographers – Tunis, Tunisia – 12-15 August, 2008

The Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems had 4 sessions with 15 presentations at the 31st International Congress of Geographers on 13 August, 2008. Papers were presented by geographers from Cameroon (1), Morocco (1), Portugal (1), Sweden (1), Poland (1), Romania (1), Iran (2), India (1), China (1), Philippines (2) and Brazil (2) which treated the following subjects:

- Water management and sustainable rural development in semi-arid zones
- Natural resources and rural tourism
- Urban and urban-fringe agriculture
- Rural-urban migration and remittances
- Bio fuel production and land use competition with food production
- Land use competition and environmental issues on the Amazonian frontier

17th Annual Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems – Maribor, Primoski and Ljubljana, Slovenia – 13-18, July 2009

The 2009 colloquium of the Commission was held in Maribor, Slovenia between 13-18 July and organized by Prof. Lučka Lorber of the University of Maribor, together with the University of Ljubljana and the University of Primoski. The general theme was *New Challenges for Sustainable Rural Development*.

The colloquium successfully attracted a large number of East European geographers, who made up the majority of participants: Slovenia (36), Croatia (7), Romania (3), Bosnia (1), the Czech Republic (6) and Poland (1). The rest were from Austria (2), Germany (1), the Netherlands (1), Italy (2), Spain (3), Portugal (2), France (3), Ireland (1), the United Kingdom (1), Turkey (1), Israel (1), India (2), Indonesia (1), Japan (2), Australia (5), Canada (1), the United States (2) and Brazil (4). The activities were divided into paper presentations (79) and field excursions.

Presentation themes

- Human resources and social capital
- Global economic and policy impacts on rural areas
- New products and services in the changing countryside
- Environmental challenges
- Global economic and policy impacts on rural areas
- New products and services in the changing countryside

Field excursion themes (Eastern, Central and Coastal Slovenia)

- Maribor-Meranovo - historical crossroads of Central-South Europe, role of the University of Maribor in technical improvement of the Slovenian wine industry
- Eastern Slovenia - rural depopulation, decline of rural villages, forest re-vegetation, rural spas and tourist development
- Central Slovenia-Ljubljana - rural-urban development in and around the Slovenian capital, historical process of ethnic-nation building
- Coastal Slovenia-Primorska - port revitalization, holiday homes of Western Europeans, changing historical international boundaries and national identity

18th Annual Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems – Ramat-Gan, Israel – 6-11 July, 2010

The 2010 colloquium of the Commission was held as a pre-IGU regional conference event organized by Prof. Irit Amit-Cohen at the Bar Ilan University in Ramat-Gan between 6 and 11, July. The general theme was *Sustainability in Transition and the Changing Faces of Rural Areas: Environmental, Social, Cultural and Economic Dimensions*.

There were 54 participants who came from Israel (27), the Czech Republic (4), Belgium (6), France (1), the Netherlands (1), Germany (1), Portugal (2), Ireland (1), Japan (3), Vietnam (1), Australia (5) and Brazil (2). The activities consisted of paper presentations (32) and field excursions.

Presentation themes

- Natural resource management in rural areas
- Climatic change impact in rural areas
- Agricultural, environmental and rural policies in sustainable development
- Geographic mobility and its impact on rural community structure
- The role of social capital and governance in rural development
- Multi-functionality and dynamism of rural areas
- History, tradition and rural heritage

Field excursion themes (Central and Northern Israel)

- Judean Hills and Jerusalem - urban encroachment on kibbutz, ancient land use
- Jordon Valley - land use and water issues
- North - historical inter-ethnic relations and conflict, kibbutz and moshavat re-adaptation to neo-liberal economic policy and religious, battlefield and heritage tourism

IGU Regional Conference – Tel Aviv, Israel – 12-15 July, 2010

The Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems organized 2 sessions with 7 presentations at the Tel Aviv congress on 13, August. Participants came from Israel (2), Holland (1), Finland (1), Poland (1), United States (1), China (1) and Brazil (1). The subjects treated were:

- Rural buildings and heritage landscapes
- Rural households and livelihoods in less developed countries

- Urban-rural fringe and second homes in the countryside
- Consumer organizations and organic agriculture
- Political conflict, development projects, community relocation and rural livelihood

19th Annual Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems – Galway, Ireland – 1-7 August, 2011

The 2011 colloquium of the Commission was organized by Prof. Mary Cawley at the National University of Ireland Galway between 1 and 7 August and the general theme was *The Sustainability of Rural Systems: Local and Global Challenges and Opportunities*.

There were 70 participants from Ireland (22), the United Kingdom (4), France (2), the Netherlands (2), Belgium (2), Portugal (3), Spain (6), the Czech Republic (8), Romania (1), Israel (2), Indonesia (1), China (1), Japan (6), Australia (3), Canada (2), the United States (3) and Brazil (2). The activities consisted of paper and poster presentations (51) and field excursions.

Presentation themes

- Land use, agriculture and food: issues of local sustainability in a global context
- Heritage, tourism and environment: challenges and opportunities
- Rural society, population and settlement under conditions of economic and social change
- Governance and rural development: progress and prospects
- Innovative approaches to employment in rural areas
- Rural society and sustainable energy

Field excursion themes (Western Ireland)

- West Galway Gaeltacht - creative rural industries, local development initiatives, language and cultural planning
- County Mayo - sustainable land use planning in the coastal zone, examples of rural tourism, upland agriculture land conservation in a vulnerable landscape
- South Galway and County Clare - alternative energy; land conservation in a vulnerable landscape, commodification of natural resources for rural tourism and commodification of natural resources for tourism

IGU Regional Conference – Santiago, Chile – 1-18 November, 2011

The Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems organized 5 sessions with 17 presentations at the Santiago conference on 14 and 15, November. The sessions were meant to embrace Latin American geographers, which they did. Participants came from Chile (1), Brazil (5), Ecuador (1), Mexico (1), the United States (1), Spain (2), Slovenia (1), India (2), Malaysia (1) and China (1). The session subjects were:

- Agriculture and environment
- Farm systems and sustainability
- Cultural identity and rural dynamics
- New rural diversity
- Regional dynamics

FUTURE EVENTS

20th Annual Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems – Prague, Czech Republic – 20-26 August, 2012

The 2012 colloquium of the Commission will be a pre-32nd International Congress of Geographers event organized by Prof. Radim Perlín and Prof. Ivan Bičík at Charles University in 20-26, August with the theme of *Unity and Diversity of Rural Regions* (contact: perlin@natur.cuni.cz).

The colloquium has the objectives of deepening ties with the Land Use and Land Cover Change commission and East European geographers. The event is still in the registration phase so that the number of participants is still not available. As usual, the activities will be divided into days and part-days of paper presentations and field excursions.

Presentation themes

- Agro-complex on the move – new challenges, new problems
- Fair trade, eco, bio – the future or merely popular trends
- Agriproduction in the globalizing world
- Diverse rural areas, diverse problems, diverse solutions
- Can we effectively grow energy in fields?
- Social networks – a new possibility for local development

- Rural-urban – cooperation or competition?
- New functions, new activities in rural space
- Rural, cultural and social heritage under global influence
- Environmental risks in contemporary rural space

Field excursion themes (Western Czech Republic)

- Prague hinterland – landscape and agricultural transformation, suburbanization versus second home ownership and recreation
- Western Bohemia - successful and unsuccessful farms, restituted farms, agro-cooperatives, agro-factories, agro-brown fields, rural development and problems in small rural municipalities, problems concerning land ownership, relationships between restored property owners and agro-factories, national park and landscape management, cultural heritage in rural municipalities.

32nd International Congress of Geographers – Cologne, Germany – 26-30, August 2012

The Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems organized two general sessions: Sustainability of rural systems in global economic and environmental issues and Sustainability of rural systems in localities and regions. Of the 38 proposals, 30 were approved for oral presentation with the authors coming from Germany (4), the Netherlands (1), Italy (3), France (1), the United Kingdom (1), Norway (1), Portugal (2), Spain (1), Iran (1), Nigeria (1), Zambia (1), South Africa (1), Venezuela (1), Brazil (5), Japan (4) and Vietnam (1). The presentations are grouped into 7 sub-sessions treating the following 5 topics:

- Sustainability of rural systems in localities and regions
- Consumer markets, quality aggregated value and rural sustainability
- Multi-functionality and socio-economic opportunity in the countryside
- Rural-urban interaction and competition for land and resources
- Social networks, scales of connectivity and governance.

21st Annual Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems – Nagoya, Japan – 29 July-4 August, 2013

The 2013 colloquium of the Commission will be a pre-Kyoto Regional Conference event organized by Prof. Koji Kobayashi of Nagoya University and Prof. Doo-Chul Kim of

Okayama University (contact: kim@cc.okayama-u.ac.jp). The overall theme and sub-themes of the event are still to be determined.

The colloquium has the objective of deepening ties with Asian geographers building on the consolidated base of Japanese geographers. There will be two days of oral presentations and four days of field excursion.

Field excursion themes (Southern and Central Japan)

- Atsumi Peninsula – neo-productivist agricultural development in the most important vegetable and flower production area in Japan, which arose along the Toyokawa irrigation canal complex, contrasting productivist agriculture with recent eco-farming trends
- Central Highlands and Noto peninsula – remote mountain villages, small-scale farming and forestry and marine coastal ecosystems, the role of rural tourism for reviving remote rural areas suffering from abandonment, UNESCO World Heritage Site and FAO Global Important Agricultural Heritage System designated areas
- Biwa Lake – wetland protection, biodiversity and the shift from agrochemical water pollution to environmental friendly agriculture

IGU Regional Conference – Kyoto, Japan – 4-9, August, 2013

The Commission intends to have sessions at the IGU Regional Conference to be held in Kyoto, Japan in 2013, which is still in the planning stage.

3. NETWORKING

a) Collaboration with Other IGU Commissions

- Regular participation of Land Use and Land Cover Change commission members in the annual colloquia of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems
- Collaboration in the organization of the 2010 Israel colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems by the chair of the Local Development commission
- Organization of the 2012 Czech annual colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems by Land Use and Land Cover Change commission members
- Organization of a meeting of the Population Geography Study Group of the Royal Geographical Society and Institute of British Geographers under the auspices of the

Population Geography Commission of the IGU at the National University of Ireland, Galway, 2010

- CSRS members also participate in other commissions, the most common being: Cultural Approach in Geography, Land Use and Land Cover Change, Local Development and Population Geography

b) Collaboration with Other International, Intergovernmental and Multidisciplinary Groups - 2008-2012

Members as individuals or groups have participated in collaboration with different national and international research, planning and extension institutions. The following information refers to that available for the members of the Steering Committee only:

- Participation in bilateral, multidisciplinary projects of the research arm EMBRAPA of the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture with the German universities, University of Cologne, University of Jena and University of Leipzig concerning agro-ecological farming systems and participatory rural development in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil
- Head of bilateral project between the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and Michigan State University through the Brazilian and US National Science Foundations concerning socio-environmental issues in the Amazon region
- Participation in bilateral projects between the Brazilian National Science Foundation and the L'Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, France, concerning regional development in the Amazon region
- Participation in the Project RUFUS, Rural Future Networks, financed by the European Union in the area of the Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities involving University of Leibniz, University of Hanover and Sprint Consult, Germany; Delft Technical University and Wageningen University, Holland; University of East Anglia, UK; Lund University, Sweden; New University of Lisbon, Portugal; Polish Academy of Sciences; Scuola S'Anna, Pisa, Italy; University of West Hungary, Hungary; Institut National de Recherche Agricole, CEMAGREF, Montpellier and INRA, Mirecourt, France
- Participation in the project Territory, Rural Development and Sustainable Agricultural Modes of Production in Areas Susceptible to Desertification in Brazil, Portugal and Cape Verde involving the Federal University of Paraíba, Brazil; University of Cape Verde, Cape Verde and New University of Lisbon, Portugal
- Participation in the Network Consortium 2H2S which promotes intellectual exchange between European Universities and promotes multidisciplinary research in sustainable

human sciences, involving the University of Cluj, University of Napoca and University of Timisoara, Rumania; University of Novi Sad, Serbia; University of Bamberg and University of Tübingen, Germany; University of Angers and University of Nantes, France; University of Valencia and University of Jaume I, Spain; New University of Lisbon, Portugal

- Head of bilateral project between Dept. of Geography, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Dept. of Geography, University of Tubingen, Germany
- Scholarly exchange involving Professor Guy Robinson (University of South Australia), Professors Mary Cawley and Michael Cuddy (National University of Ireland Galway) and Professor Michael Woods, (Aberystwyth University, UK)
- Through the Local Development Commission, collaboration with the Polish Academy of the Sciences
- Scholarly exchange with the Tinbergen Institute, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Holland
- Collaboration with Quadrennial meetings of the Network of English-Speaking Rural Geographers (Brandon University, Manitoba, Canada, 2010, Spokane, US, 2006).
- Work with members of the Western Regional Science Association (now headquartered at Brown University, Rhode Island, US)
- Participation in the Australian Research Council Research Network on Spatially Integrated Social Science, a network including geographers, economists, sociologists, psychologists, demographers, and political scientists
- Editors and editorial board of geographical journals: Geographical Research, Australasian Journal of Regional Studies, Journal of Rural Studies, Revija za Geografaijo, Espaço Aberto, Espaço e Cultura, Horizons in Geography
- Participation in founding of the Korean Rural Geography Association
- Participation and organization of Korea-China-Japan Joint Conference on Geography
- Coordinator of bilateral project between Okayama University, Japan and Hue University, Vietnam concerning sustainability of rural and environmental systems
- Cooperation with SEAGA (Southeast Asian Geography Association).

4. PUBLICATIONS

Most of the publications have been collections of papers presented at the annual colloquia. The edited books are organized around the themes of each colloquium and usually published six to twelve months after the event. Consequently, the publications are not mere proceedings. Individual authors are encouraged to take into account comments made at the time of their presentations as well as to mature their ideas according to general themes of the colloquium. In the last few years we have been trying to publish selected papers in special numbers of journals. All the publications use a process of peer review.

FRUTOS, L.M., CLIMENT, E. and RUIZ, E. (eds.). 2008. Abstracts of the 16th Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems. Saragossa, Spain: Universidad de Zaragoza. Paper, 78 pages.

FRUTOS, L.M., CLIMENT, E., RUIZ, E., BICALHO, A.M. and LAURENS, L. (eds.). 2009. New ruralities and sustainable use of territory. Saragossa: University of Saragossa/CSRS-UGI (collection of papers presented in the 2008 colloquium). Paper, 32 chapters, 545 pages, ISBN 978-84-92774-55-5.

LORBER, L. (ed.). 2009. Abstracts of the 17th Colloquium of of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems. Maribor, Slovenia: University of Maribor. Paper, 107 pages, ISBN 978-961-6656-31-3.

LORBER, L. (ed.). 2009-2010. Revija za Geografaijo 7, 8, 9, 10. Maribor: University of Maribor (papers from the 2009 colloquium). 54 articles, 678 pages, ISSN 1854-665X.

COHEN, I.A. (ed.). Programme and Abstracts of the 18th Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems. Paper, 72 pages.

KERZAZI, M., AIT HAMZA, M. and EL ASSAAD, M. (ed.). 2011. Produits agricoles, touristiques et développement local. Casablanca: Association Nationales des Géographes Marocaines/CSRS-IGU (collection of papers presented in the 2007 colloquium). Paper, 32 chapters, 480 pages. ISBN 978-9954-30-180-7.

CAWLEY, M., 2011. Programme and Abstracts of the 19th Colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems. Paper, 81 pages.

COHEN, I.A. (ed.). 2012. Horizons in Geography. Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University/CSRS-IGU (collection of papers presented in the 2010 colloquium) (in press).

CAWLEY, M., BICALHO, A.M.S.M. and LAURENS, L. (eds.). 2012. The Sustainability of Rural Systems: Local and Global Challenges and Opportunities. Galway: National University of Ireland Galway/CSRS-IGU (collection of papers presented in the 2011 colloquium) (in press).

b) Salient insights and conclusions from colloquia and publications

- Concepts of rural space, open space and landscape have been developed with reference to sustainability and new forms and functions of the countryside in different regions of the world.
- Understanding of dramatic international contrasts in perceptions of rural problems, issues, and opportunities; analyses of their causes and theory development; and translation into regulation and remedial policy.
- Sharp contrast between rural regions of high population density and low density regions, between the developed world (basically OECD countries) and the developing world and between tropical, sub-tropical and temperate regions and between those countries with free-market policy and those with high levels of regulation and subsidy.
- The rise of new productive and service relationships for quality and differentiated markets which can increase farm income and quality of life through the development of agro-ecological farm systems related to consumer concern with food and environmental quality.
- Tourism related to heritage, cultural agricultural landscapes and natural environmental conservation areas which can generate new forms of employment in remote and stagnated agricultural regions and bring about local development but requires professional qualification and building new structures which depend on the availability of local capital and human resources.
- Spreading multi-functionality involving farm and non-farm activities alongside and on the same rural establishment which may overcome problems with overspecialization and falling farm income but can cause overwork, stress and conflict in rural land uses.
- The rise of bio fuel and other renewable energy based production in the countryside which can cause competition for land for food production and other agricultural uses as well as new sources of acoustic and visual pollution.
- Rural regions which developed high levels of income, sustainability and technological competence as opposed to others which struggle permanently with rural sustainability while dominated by the interests of urban societies in which they are embedded.
- The pace of rural change is speeding up while those living and working in rural society are steadily losing control politically and economically of their destinies due to economic globalization, rapid urbanization and technological improvement, growing ecological imbalances and resource issues, climate change and variability and rising agricultural demand in response to global industrialization.

- Reaction, resistance and pro-action of local political movements attempting community empowerment based on building social capital and alternative multi-scalar political networks with national and international environmentalist and social movements. Difficulties with governance involving participatory rural development in poor nations leading to the predominance of conflict over land and resources in contexts of extreme poverty.
- Cultural approaches to the countryside focussing on social diversity in the countryside, the symbolic importance of traditional cultural heritage for defining rural identity and differing environmental ethics and worldviews associated with specific peasant, modern and contemporary agricultural systems.

c) **Commission web site:** <http://www.geog.umontreal.ca/igu-rural-systems/>

The web page is in the process of being rebuilt and the new web address will be provided when this process is completed.

5. ARCHIVAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Copies of the above publications should have been sent by the local organizer-editor to the IGU archives at Villa Celimontana in Rome.

6. CONTINUATION

a) Name of the Commission: Sustainability of Rural Systems (no change)

b) Commission Mission

The overall mission of the Commission is the development and application of an internationally comparable research programme on the sustainability of rural systems in various regions of the world. The Commission's specific objectives are: 1) to further develop the concept of sustainability as applied to 'rural systems' including agriculture, communities, housing, industrial and service employment, recreation and tourism, as well as extractive activities; 2) to communicate the importance of understanding a wide range of 'driving' processes that affect the sustainability of rural systems, including natural environment, political, social and economic processes and 3) to foster research that incorporates the notion of the inter-relatedness of

structures and processes in rural systems, through a variety of linked spatial scales - international, national, regional and local.

c) Membership (2012-2016)

1 - Commission Chairs

The present co-chairs of the commission, Ana Maria de Souza Mello Bicalho and Lucette Laurens, have decided to turn the commission chair over to new people and the Steering Committee has approved the names of Ana Maria Viegas Firmino and Doo-Chul Kim, maintaining the same format of two co-chairs from different regions. So we propose these two geographers to co-chair the next period of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems.

Name	Mail Address	E-mail
Firmino, Ana Maria Viegas (Portugal) 2012-	Dept. of Geography & Regional Planning Universidade Nova de Lisboa Av. de Berna, 26-C 1069-061 Lisbon Portugal	am.firmino@fsh.unl.pt
Kim, Doo-Chul (Japan) 2012-	Dept. of Rural Environment Management Graduate School of Environmental Science Okayama University 3-1-1 Tsushima-naka Okayama, 700-8530 Japan	dc_kim64@hotmail.com

2- Steering Committee Members (2012-2016)

With the substitution of Ana Maria de Souza Mello Bicalho and Lucette Laurens as chairs by Ana Maria Viegas Firmino and Doo-Chul Kim in August, 2012, new openings will appear in the Steering Committee. Tony Sorenson has also reached the term limit and will be replaced. Roy Jones is a new member joining the Steering Committee now. With the change of the commission chairs and filling new openings in August, the Steering Committee will change considerably. New members will be nominated by the future co-chairs of the commission so that the Steering Committee will be expanded from the current situation:

Name	Mail Address	E-mail
Cohen, Irit Amit (Israel) 2009-	Dept. of Geography Bar Ilan University Ramat-Gan Israel	amitirit@zahav.net.il
Cawley, Mary (Ireland) 2009-	School of Geography and Archaeology National University of Ireland Galway Ireland	mary.cawley@nuigalway.ie
Lober, Lučka (Slovenia) 2009-	Dept. of Geography Faculty of Arts University of Maribor Koroška cesta 160 2000 Maribor Slovenia	lucka.lorber@uni-mb.si
Jones, Roy (Australia) 2012-	Faculty of Humanities Curtin Sustainable Tourism Centre Curtin University Building 209, Room 423 GPO Box U1987 Perth, WA 6845 Australia	r.jones@curtin.edu.au

d) Scholarly importance of the results to be achieved during the 2012-2016 period

1. Building equitable international scholarly exchange

Lead by a joint East-West chair and regionally diverse Steering Committee, for the coming period, the Commission through its colloquia and its publications will continue to contribute in a major way to building equitable international scholarly exchange in the sustainable rural development domain. Our past activities have helped construct a better understanding of the social construction of sustainable development around the world and the Proceedings that each colloquium has produced are generally regarded as being significant contributions to knowledge in the domain. The annual colloquia, alternating whenever possible between different countries and regions, will continue to increase the accessibility of our meetings to colleagues around the world. However, at the same time that we strive to embrace the participation of rural geographers from the host countries and regions in which the colloquia take place, the Commission tries to maintain the international character of its meetings so that they truly involve scholarly exchange between colleagues from around the world. In the coming period, the Commission will try to further diversify its colloquium venues with an eye to expanding the participation of rural geographers from regions still under-represented, particularly from Latin America, Asia and Africa. A first

step is the 2013 colloquium to be held in Japan which should facilitate the participation of Asian geographers.

2. Bridging geographic sub-fields

The Commission has maintained and will continue linkages with the Land Use and Land Cover Change commission. Nevertheless, the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems has a distinct identity embracing more social, cultural and political phenomena than this commission. While productive exchange occurs with this commission with regard to environmental and economic issues, a number of other key issues concerning the contemporary countryside in different parts of the world go beyond their specific interests. In the coming period the Commission will pursue new linkages with other IGU commission which also deal with social and cultural dimensions in rural areas. The relationship with the Local Development Commission could be strengthened. As some our members also participate in different activities of the Population Geography and the Cultural Approach in Geography commissions, a more direct future partnership could be attempted.

3. Embracing regional and cultural diversity in research on rural sustainability

Based on the annual meetings and organized sessions in the IGU regional and international congresses as well as the various publications produced over the years, the Commission has made substantial strides in contributing to the debate on global sustainable development. Coming from different cultures, the exchanges of our membership have confirmed that (rural) sustainable development is indeed a social construction and therefore highly variable from one culture to another. It is however subject to certain imperatives. The imperatives relating to the natural environment are relatively well known and understood – or at least widely acknowledged. However, there is much more debate about possible economic, social, cultural and political imperatives. The results of the exchanges between members of the Commission have certainly highlighted the importance of the social (social equity) and cultural (respect of differences between cultures, respect for cultural heritage and traditions) dimensions to rural sustainability and there has been substantial debate over the relationship between political systems and sustainability.

4. Understanding the interplay of global forces and scales of governance at work in participatory rural development

The Commission has stressed the importance of placing focussed locality studies, in themselves extremely significant for understanding processes, into the broader scheme of

things in the world, both in terms of the different national contexts in which locality studies have been undertaken and in terms of the broader international and world context. This is important if geographers are to have a significant impact on the construction of participatory development practice and governance around the world. Many of the commission members are themselves engaged in with different governmental and non-governmental agencies in their home countries or abroad and much of this experience is exchanged and debated in the annual colloquia and so taken back to be applied to their specific work. The end result is an ample multiplication and the international diffusion of ideas concerning sustainable rural development.

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