



Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN)

CELEBRATING EARTH HERITAGE – SUSTAINING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Annual Report 2019

by

JIN Xiaochi, Ibrahim KOMOO, Setsuya NAKADA



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2019 is another year to be remembered. The most important event of the year is the 6th Symposium of Asia Pacific Geoparks Network, which was successfully held in Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp), attended by more than 600 delegates. With respect to conditions of the UGGps in Asia-Pacific region, APGN coordinated and/or supported various activities to serve the purpose of promoting UNESCO Global Geoparks, publicizing the philosophy and ideas of UNESCO Global Geoparks, introducing the operation guidelines and procedures of UNESCO Global Geoparks, and sharing best practices. We report here, in roughly a temporal order, activities and achievements which are instrumental for the healthy development of APGN. Many activities initiated and accomplished by different member geoparks are not repeated here, because they have been described in detail by member geoparks in their respective annual reports to the GGN. We acknowledge their achievements with sincere appreciation.

1. APGN coordinators attend international workshops in Huanggang-Dabieshan UGGp and Ly Son - Sa Huynh aUGGp

An international Workshop on Geopark's Stimulation of Local Communities was held on 10 May 2019 in the Huanggang-Dabieshan UGGp, China, which was associated with the unveiling ceremony of the stone tablet of the geopark. The then Coordinator HE Qingcheng and Vice-Coordinators Setsuya NAKADA and LEE Soo Jae were invited to attend the workshop. Dr. Lee gave a presentation with title "Management strategy of UNESCO Global Geopark". Prof. Nakada gave a presentation with the title of "Experiences of Japanese Geoparks". The workshop aimed at how Geopark can improve local development.

Another International Conference on Heritage Value of Ly Son-Sa Huynh Aspiring Geopark was held in Quang Ngai City of Vietnam during 18-19 June 2019. Experts from France, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand attended the conference. The UGGp Council Chair, Guy Martini, and the then APGN Vice-coordinators, Setsuya NAKADA and LEE Soo Jae were invited.



Workshop on Geopark's Stimulation of Local Communities



Dr. Lee presenting Management strategy of UNESCO Global Geopark



Left, Guy MARTINI at the International Conference on Heritage Value of Ly Son-Sa Huynh Aspiring Geopark, Vietnam; right, Setsuya NAKADA (3rd from left) with other participants.

2. The 6th Symposium of Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network



Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network held its 6th Symposium from 2 to 6 September 2019 in Rinjani-Lombok UNESCO Global Geopark, Indonesia. More than 600 delegates from the Asia-Pacific region and other continents took part in the symposium. The Lombok Raya Hotel is the main venue of the symposium

The symposium had 30 sessions on the following 5 topics: 1) Empowering local socio-economic for sustainable development; 2) Engaging communities, geohazard risk and recovery; 3) Networking volcanic and karst landscape global geoparks; 4) Popularizing scientific knowledge for public education; 5) Promoting aspiring global geoparks. The symposium received 109 abstracts for oral presentation, and 97 abstracts for poster presentation.

Parallel to the Symposium the 3rd UNESCO Global Geoparks Evaluator's Seminar took place on 5 September 2019. Most evaluators of the Asia Pacific region participated in the seminar. After several lectures with discussions, the seminar closed with the completion of test sheets by all participants.

Three mid-symposium excursions exploring the Geopark were arranged on 3 September for delegates with different preferences. These excursions demonstrated the geodiversity and rich historical



and culture heritage of the Rinjani-Lombok UGGp.

Folklore and intangible heritage performances were arranged in several occasions, which well demonstrated the vitality of traditional cultural activities. The Geo-Fair of local products and Intangible Heritage Exhibition of APGN (and aspiring) members opened through the symposium, and enjoyed by all participants.



In the afternoon of 2 September 2019, the APGN Advisory Committee (AC) met in the Mandalika Room, Lombok Raya Hotel. The agenda of the meeting is 1) Coordinator's report (HE Qingcheng); 2) Recent progresses of UNESCO Global Geoparks and GGN (ZOUROS Nickolas); 3) APGN Rule of Operation (RO); 4) APGN website; 5) Proposal of Venue for the 7th APGN Symposium; 6) Election procedures of AC members and coordinator/vice-coordinators ([Minute of AC meeting on 02 Sep. 2019](#)).

The APGN Coordinating Committee (CC) meeting was held immediately after the AC meeting in the evening of 2 September 2019, in which New Coordinators and new Advisory Committee members of the APGN were elected ([Minute of CC meeting on 02 Sep. 2019](#)):

Top, cutting ribbon for Geo-Fair; upper left, Geo-Fair visiting; Upper right, Folklore performance; lower left, CC meeting; lower right, excursion to an old village



Coordinator: Prof. JIN Xiaochi - China

Vice Coordinator: Prof. Ibrahim KOMOO -
Malaysia

Vice Coordinator: Prof. Setsuya NAKADA -
Japan

APGN Advisory Committee:

JIN Xiaochi - China

Ibrahim KOMOO - Malaysia

Setsuya NAKADA - Japan

Alireza AMRIKAZEMI – Iran

Azmil Munif Bin Mohd Bukhari – Malaysia

Kana FURUSAWA – Japan

HE Qingcheng – P.R. China

JING Zhixing – P.R. China

Yunus KUSUMAHBRATA - Indonesia

LEE Soo Jae – Republic of Korea

SUN Li – P.R. China

Sommai TECHAWAN – Thailand

TRAN Tan Van – Vietnam

Mahito WATANABE – Japan

Kristof VANDENBERGHE, Representative of
UGGp Secretariat

Nickolas ZOUROS, Representative of GGN

Meeting of the newly elected AC on 06 September 2019

The new Advisory Committee (AC) held its meeting in Senaru Restaurant, Hotel Lombok Raya in the morning of 06 September 2019, with the following topics ([Minute of AC meeting on 06 Sep. 2019](#)): 1) Quorum and Majority, following the GGN Statutes; 2) Proposal of APGN Geoparks Week, starting from the 22nd April, the Earth Day, and lasting 7 days; 3) Other regional networking, capacity-building and promotion activities; 4) Possible Skype meeting in the future; 5) Other possibilities of face to face meeting; 6) Any other issues.

Participants of the meeting applauded the proposal of APGN Geoparks Week, thinking it would be an efficient measure to promote Global Geoparks and increase the visibility of APGN.

Right, lovely volunteers posing
Bottom, evaluator's seminar



3. Capacity building undertakings

1) Langkawi Regional Course

The Langkawi course is a regional course with participants from mainly Southeast Asia countries. APGN vice coordinator Ibrahim Komoo is a key advocate of the course. Target group of the course are managers and technical staffs of UNESCO Global Geoparks, Aspiring UNESCO Global Geoparks and National geoparks. The 4th Regional Course on UNESCO Global Geopark was conducted from 7 to 11 October 2019 in Langkawi UGGp with the theme of ‘Geotourism and Community Participation’. 40 participants from Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Morocco and Uzbekistan took part in the course. 10 renowned speakers from Malaysia, China and Kazakhstan shared their experience in geopark management.

This course aims at boosting and enhancing connectivity of Global Geoparks, sharing experiences, and advocating the sustainable development of Geoparks. It combines talk by experts, group discussions and activities, thematic forum, field trips to geo-sites and ‘My Geopark Story’ sharing sessions.

Participants gave very positive feedbacks and reviews about the course. Uzbekistan for the first time send two participants from Ministry of Science and Environment with the aim to establish Geopark in Central Asia.



Dr. Ibrahim Komoo speaking



Talk and Sharing Session



Group activities – TV Interview



Field trip – Machinchang Cambrian Geoforest Park

2) Beijing International Training Course

This International Training Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks Management and Development has become a very important capacity building mechanism in the Global Geoparks community. It plays an increasingly critical role in raising the capability of Geopark managers and local government officials who are responsible for Geopark affairs, especially those in the Asia-Pacific region. APGN will continue supporting this training course, and take it as a substantial capacity-building activity of APGN. The 5th International Training Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks Management and Development was held from 28 October to 3 November 2019 in Beijing and Dengfeng, jointly organized by China University of Geosciences (Beijing), Songshan

UNESCO Global Geopark and Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences. The 5th training course received support from UNESCO Global Geoparks Secretariat, UNESCO Beijing Office, Global Geoparks Network (GGN), Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN), and Chinese Geoparks Network (CGN). The lecturers are top international Geopark experts from the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council, Global Geoparks Network Executive Board, universities and Geoparks.

At the opening ceremony, APGN coordinator JIN Xiaochi, among others, congratulated the organizers and the supporting organizations on their continued endeavor of making this training course an excellent capacity building tool. Heads of the organizers gave their welcome speeches.



At the opening ceremony, Upper, Ms QIAN Junfei on behalf of UGGp Secretariat and UNESCO Beijing Office; GGN President Prof. N. Zouros; APGN Coordinator Prof. JIN Xiaochi; Lower, Vice-President of Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences Prof. WU Zhenhan; Mr. SHI Zhangeng, Vice Mayor of Dengfeng (Songshan UGGp); Chairman of China University of Geosciences (Beijing) Prof. MA Junjie

The first part of the 5th training course was held in China University of Geosciences, Beijing. There were about 80 Participants from China, Benin, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, DPR Korea, Kirgizstan,

Mozambique, Namibia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. Lectures and panel discussions were on the following topics: 1) UNESCO Global Geoparks - Global Geoparks

Network; 2) UNESCO Global Geoparks: Philosophy and Concepts; 3) UNESCO Global Geoparks – Regional Networking and Activities; 4) UNESCO Global Geoparks: Networking, Operation and Activities; and 5) Strengthening UNESCO Global Geoparks Common Activities in Asia and

Pacific region.

The 1st APGN Geoparks Week – 22-28 April 2020 was introduced by APGN Coordinator JIN Xiaochi at a panel discussion. The panel and the audience had a good interaction, and proposed many possibilities of activities.



The second half of the 5th training course was conducted in the Songshan UGGp in Henan province. There the emphasis was on Geosite interpretation and Geopark Museum – Visitor Center management. Methodology, facilities and successful cases of Earth heritage interpretation were explained and discussed. One day field excursion in the Songshan UGGp gave participants a chance to gain practical experience. It was also a

good opportunity to check the Songshan UGGp.

Additionally, 5 Chinese Geoparks (Songshan, Hong Kong, Huangshan, Zhangye, Xiangxi) and the Dong Van UGGp of Vietnam shared their experiences. Colleagues from Saudi Arabia, DPR Korea and the Longyan Aspiring Geopark of China presented their work on Geopark development.

Left upper, colleague from Saudi Arabia talking; left lower, Prof. Komoo commenting; right, certificates awarding





Group photo in Songshan UGGp

3) Japan-Thailand Workshop

The Joint Workshop on Capacity Development of Geoparks in Thailand and Surrounding Countries was held from 4 to 8 December 2019 in Khorat aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark and Satun UNESCO Global Geopark, Thailand. This workshop was co-organised by Japanese Geoparks Network (JGN) and Department of Mineral Resources of Thailand (DMR). APGN attaches much importance to this kind of capacity building activity. JGN delegates, led by APGN Vice Coordinator Setsuya Nakada, shared experiences and knowledge on Geopark activities with over 130 participants from Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

The participants also gave presentations and showed the situation and potential for Geopark development in their countries. In Myanmar they started the preparation for establishing the national committee for Geoparks. However, one delegate from Myanmar mentioned that they didn't have enough information before – especially about the holistic approach – but, through this Joint Workshop, he found that many elements are important for Geopark, especially the engagement of local communities. The participants from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam were very fascinated by the local people and what they have experienced in Khorat aUGGp and Satun UGGp.



Group photo of participants after the opening session



Final meeting of the workshop at Satun UGGp



Welcomed by pupils with dance and song



Visiting Geosite in Satun UGGp

4) Advisory mission and Networking

Vice Coordinator Ibrahim Komoo has participated in several advisory and promotional activities. From October to November 2019, he was invited to provide advisory services to Raja Ampat, Padang and Meratus aspiring geoparks in Indonesia; and to Kinabalu and Delta Sarawak aspiring geoparks in Malaysia.

As a representative of and ambassador for APGN, he has been actively promoting Global Geoparks, particularly in the Asia Pacific region, as a vehicle in supporting local people livelihood and creating awareness to policy makers and tourists on geohazards and natural disasters as

well as promoting the concept of sustainable development as an integrated approach to development to the general public.

From 20 to 25 November, Ibrahim was invited to represent APGN at the First African Geoparks Network meeting in Rabat, Morocco. During the meeting, he presented a paper entitled ‘APGN as networking mechanism of UNESCO Global Geopark Asia Pacific region’. From 24 to 27 Januari 2020, as the Vice Coordinator of APGN/ Vice President GGN, he was invited to attend an International Forum on Telling Lives Stories from Natural Disaster in Kobe, Japan.



Left, First African Geoparks Network meeting in Rabat, Morocco; right, International Forum on Telling Lives Stories from Natural Disaster in Kobe, Japan.

4. APGN Promotion

1) Social media, Website, News Briefing

After the 6th APGN Symposium, we started to consider how to further promote APGN and the idea of Global Geoparks in a more efficient way. As the first measure we decided to open APGN account on several popular social media. Soon APGN appeared on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Weibo](#), which were quickly welcome by visitors. These provide a very good platform, enabling us to timely communicate with a wider community.

We also renovated our website (<http://asiapacificgeoparks.org/>), which now appears in a more energetic layout and enriched content.

We also created a new communication tool, the APGN News Briefing, to timely brief new activities, announcements and initiatives to all APGN members by email. [Two issues](#) were edited in November and December 2019, which can be downloaded from APGN website.

2) Preparation of the 1st APGN Geoparks Week

The idea of initiating the APGN Geoparks Week was approved at the AC Meeting on 06 September 2019. APGN Geoparks Week starts on the Earth Day 22 April.

For the 1st APGN Geoparks Week, we had the following plan:

Slogan: Strengthening UNESCO Global Geoparks Common Activities in Asia Pacific region

The idea is

- to increase the visibility of Global Geoparks
- to demonstrate the synergy of celebrating geological, cultural, historical and intangible heritage of Global Geoparks
- to make local people more proud of their hometown
- to increase the momentum of sustainable development of local communities

Activities: all members of APGN take part in various coordinated activities, which include but are not limited to:

- Earth Day celebration
- Promotion of Geoparks and the UGGp philosophy
- Interaction among sister Geoparks
- Interaction among Geoparks with similar/same kinds of geoheritage
- Geoparks go into school/community
- Geohazards mitigation education/demonstration
- Geoheritage interpretation; E-classroom
- Cultural and intangible heritage demonstration/performance
- SDGs and Asia Pacific UGGps

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APGN Members were encouraged and asked to share the information of their possible activities during the APGN Geoparks Week.

5. Geoparks evaluated and revalidated

In 2019, in the Asia Pacific region

4 aspiring UGGps received evaluation:

1. Xiangxi (China)
2. Zhangye (China)
3. Hantangang (Korea Rep. of)
4. Dak Nong (Vietnam)

1 Deferred UGGp Application was assessed:

2018 Toba Caldera (Indonesia)

9 UGGps received revalidations:

1. Dunhuang (China)
2. Taining (China)
3. Tianzhushan (China)
4. Zhijindong Cave (China)
5. Gunung Sewu (Indonesia)

6. Mount Apoi (Japan)
7. Muroto (Japan)
8. Toya Usu (Japan)
9. Langkawi (Malaysia)

2 UGGp Extension Requests (<10%) were evaluated:

1. Dunhuang (China)
2. Zhijindong Cave (China)

