



4th GGN Advisory Committee Meeting (digital)

Tuesday 28 February 2023, at 12:30 GMT

MINUTES

1. Welcome and adoption of the Agenda

1.1. Welcome from Chair

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Expressed his sorrow and condolences for the victims of the earthquake in Turkey and proposed that the GGN should provide all necessary help.

1.2. Agreement of the agenda

- The agenda was adopted unanimously.

2. Minutes of the 3rd GGN Advisory Committee meeting

The minutes of the 3rd GGN Advisory Committee meeting were adopted unanimously by the GGN Advisory Committee members.

3. GGN Action Plan 2024-2025

2.1. Comments from Chair

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) presented the summary document with the comments and suggestions from the GGN Advisory Committee members on the GGN Strategic Plan 2022-2023 and asked them for their comments or suggestions by Sunday 5th of March, as the final document will be submitted within March 2023.

2.2. Comments from the GGN

Nickolas Zouros (GGN Executive Board President) thanked the GGN Advisory Committee for the work done so far during the last three GGN Advisory Committee meetings and the summary that has been prepared by Prof. Setsuya Nakada. This summary document will be discussed in the next GGN Executive Board meeting in order to explore how these proposals can be used in the future. Reminded that the GGN Strategic Plan 2022-2023 was submitted

for discussion in the GGN General Assembly during the Jeju conference in December 2021 and suggested the GGN Advisory Committee members preparing the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025. This document should be ready until the end of May. Stressed out that it is essential to work on the future of the GGN, find new ways of operation and build a better GGN the years to come. What is lacking is the support of national authorities and the support of local communities. The GGN Advisory Committee should play a crucial role in this as it is composed by the people of the National Fora or national networks of Geoparks. Until now the GGN has focused on organizing all its activities using the English language, but there is an increasing demand for the use of other languages. It is the moment of strengthening the national networks of Geoparks as they can play a crucial role in order to communicate the message of the Geoparks in the different languages but also to work more closely with the local communities. This will be a big change and instead of organizing conferences, various activities at the global level and just for the people who are speaking English we should organise activities at the local level and using the local languages and not exclude the local people who don't speak English. All the GGN documents should also be translated to the local languages. The National Fora should be encouraged to take responsibilities such as participating in the Tourism Fairs with the support of the GGN. All the GGN Advisory Committee members should explore new ways of how the message of the GGN can reach the local communities, by breaking the language barrier. In this way we can have more effectiveness in using the local languages in our activities at the national level, we will raise the profile of the GGN and UNESCO Global Geoparks to our national authorities, to our partners, we will receive more support to our activities and our message will reach our local communities.

2.3. Comments from the GGN Advisory Committee members – Reports and concerns from National Chair

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) reminded of the role of the national Geoparks Committees as it is mentioned in the guidelines of the UNESCO Global Geoparks and suggested finding ways to implement the promotion of Geoparks in the level of a country which would eliminate the language barrier.

Sarah Gamble (Canada) asked if the suggestions of the GGN Advisory Committee for the GGN Strategic Plan 2022-2023 have reached the GGN Executive Board.

Nickolas Zouros (GGN Executive Board President) informed that the final document with the GGN Advisory Committee suggestions for the GGN Strategic Plan 2022-2023 was submitted to the GGN Executive Board by Setsuya Nakada recently and will be discussed during the next GGN Executive Board meeting.

Sarah Gamble (Canada) asked if the work of the National Fora will be embedded into the strategic plan to support maybe new national fora that maybe don't understand their full role. This would be very helpful, because in the annual reports that are submitted by the National Fora it is not clear what has to be reported, it might be helpful to think about what things should be done.

Hartmut Escher (Germany) suggested closer collaboration of UNESCO Global Geoparks with UNESCO WHS and MAB in order to raise the profile of UNESCO Global Geoparks. It could be done under the motto "Winning new friends for the Geoparks". In Germany they are developing a programme among UNESCO Global Geoparks together with the German Environmental Foundation and the support of other consultants, addressing Education for Sustainable Development and each Geopark is addressing a special issue that is relevant to the region. Mentioned that it is very important to address the young people and in Germany they are working on that.

Jose Maria Barrera (Spain) suggested that (a) the GGN Advisory Committee needs to work in parallel with the GGN Executive Board in order to work more effectively, (b) it would be important to have an evaluation of the GGN Strategic Plan 2022-2023 in order to know if the objectives set remain operative.

Yuanyuan Zheng (China) informed that in China they are organizing every summer an annual conference with all the Chinese UNESCO Global Geoparks. The last two years this conference did not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference will be organized again this year. Between the Chinese UNESCO Global Geoparks are relationship groups that have as a common feature a certain topic. Most of the Chinese Geoparks are preparing for their evaluation or revalidation. The Chinese Geoparks will also organize many activities in the frame of the International Mother Earth Day celebration.

Martina Paskova (Czech Republic) informed (a) the Geoparks in the Czech Republic meet with the Slovakian ones the last one and a half year trying to work together, (b) about the difficulties in disseminating the Geoparks' concept at the national level due to lack of financing, (c) that they are trying to use existing organizations in the country in order to develop the idea of Geoparks. The local "Geopark heroes" could be part of the best practice awards, in order to demonstrate how their activities are appreciated.

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) informed that in Japan exists a national network consisting of 35 national Geoparks and 9 UNESCO Global Geoparks. The Network is very active and organizes training courses for new Geoparks' staff members, has working groups with different thematic, organizes several annual meetings in order to give the chance for communication. They are using the feedback from the GGN Executive Board members, the evaluators and the Advisory Committee members in order to raise the quality of the Japanese Geoparks. For the evaluation process they are using a similar system like the one UNESCO uses, in order to keep the quality standards high.

Clare Glanville (Ireland) informed that in Ireland the three UNESCO Global Geoparks and the one aspiring Geopark meet twice a year to share ideas, strategies, plans and events. They have a public outreach, in a form of conference, held once per year. As they don't have a Youth Ambassador they are currently working on that, by firstly informing young people about the Geoparks and then finding the suitable person to become their youth ambassador. They also work together with the UK and last year they organized together a conference on climate adaptation.

Anna Begengren (Sweden) informed that in Sweden they are trying to organize the work in a national level. There is one UNESCO Global Geopark and two national Geoparks and also some aspiring areas. For the moment the Swedish forum is not functioning very well. The UNESCO National Commission has established an IGGP committee which has also been nominated and works as the National Forum for Geoparks. This means that in Sweden the National Forum for Geoparks that is mentioned in the GGN website is equal to the IGGP Committee nominated by the National Commission. Suggested having more clear guidelines and structures for the National Fora. Asked if other countries also have IGGP committees like in Sweden and if those are functioning as the National Forum or if they are two different entities.

Nickolas Zouros (GGN Executive Board President) explained that the IGGP is a programme of UNESCO and it is completely different from the GGN. The IGGP national commission is under the UNESCO National Commission. The National Fora are part of the internal structure of the Global Geoparks Network Association. The GGN National Fora are different than the IGGP National Commissions.

Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan) informed that in Japan the Geoparks' committee is outside the Japan UNESCO National Commission. The

Geoparks' committee task has been recognized by the Japan UNESCO National Commission and has to do with what is relevant to strengthening the Geoparks in Japan.

Tuncer Demir (Turkey) informed that in Turkey recently the UNESCO National Commission established a National Forum without informing Kula-Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark on their intentions. The initiative came from areas that don't have a UNESCO Global Geopark in Turkey and they didn't inform the only UNESCO Global Geopark in Turkey, so the question is if they have the right to do so.

Nickolas Zouros (GGN Executive Board President) mentioned that Turkey is represented in the GGN by Kula-Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark. It is up to the authorities of Turkey what they want to do, but concerning the GGN Kula-Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark is representing Turkey as it is the only member of the GGN in Turkey. The GGN cannot interfere in any government's policy, but the GGN recognizes Kula-Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark as the official representative according to its Statutes.

Soojae Lee (Republic of Korea) Informed that five days ago they have formalized the Korean Geoparks Network consisting of five UNESCO Global Geoparks plus other National Geoparks. Soojae Lee was elected as the chairperson of the network. They started to build a comprehensive plan to work on Geoparks' activities both in domestic and overseas. They have a national legal framework on Geoparks. The central government and the local governments are very strong supporters for the Korean Geoparks Network. Emphasised that he encourages his Korean colleagues to work more to the international activities especially the ones initiated by the GGN members. They are planning the creation of one transnational UNESCO Global Geopark with North Korea which is waiting for the onsite evaluation.

Ilias Valiakos (Greece) Informed that in Greece they have currently seven UNESCO Global Geoparks and they have frequently meetings in the Hellenic Geoparks Forum in order to be updated and to seek opportunities for collaboration. In the meetings of the Hellenic Geoparks Forum also participates Troodos UNESCO Global Geopark as it is the only UNESCO Global Geopark in Cyprus. The Hellenic Geoparks Forum organizes an annual open conference in order to disseminate the idea of the Geoparks. Since its last meeting the structure of the Hellenic Geoparks Forum was reformed by having two coordinators, Charalampos Fassoulas and Ilias Valiakos. Three working groups on education, on promotion and development of common activities and geoconservation were formed.

Suzana Fajmut Štručl (Slovenia) informed that in Slovenia they have two UNESCO Global Geoparks (Karavanke/Karawanken and Idrija) and one aspiring Geopark. They are organizing meetings, common activities and they advice aspiring Geoparks. In their forum have been included people from the Slovenian tourism board and also from the Slovenian National Commission of UNESCO.

Mikko Kiuttu (Finland) informed that they have established a common project among the Finnish Geoparks which includes the four UNESCO Global Geoparks and one aspiring Geopark, which is about geotourism aiming to raise awareness about Geoparks at the national level, to promote them as sustainable tourism destinations and to create a common geotourism action plan. In the steering group are representatives from "Visit Finland" a national tourism organization and aim to promote Geoparks as destinations and to create a common round trip around Geoparks and thus gain more international visibility. The Ministry of Environment is responsible for the communication of the UNESCO designations, but in their webpage there is only reference about the WHS and MABs, but there is reference about Geoparks and this is something they want to change. They also want to apply for national funding for the Geoparks.

Joana Rodrigues (Portugal) informed that the UNESCO Portuguese National Commission created a new Portuguese Network in June including the five UNESCO Global Geoparks, the

aspiring Geoparks and representatives from other UNESCO designations, national authorities for tourism, energy, geology, nature conservation, and the Portuguese group for ProGeo. They have two meetings per year and a monthly monitoring meeting with the participation of one representative from each Geopark and one representative from UNESCO Portuguese National Commission in order to organize the action plan. They also have working groups that meet once per month on tourism, education, communication, climate change and local products, Geofood and local products.

Jose Maria Barrera (Spain) informed that the Spanish Geoparks Forum will meet on the 1st of March in order to prepare its participation in the next EGN meeting, the future activities and the final decision on the action plan of the Spanish Geoparks Forum.

Martina Paskova (Czech Republic) suggested creating a manual for the National Fora which could refer also the good practices, the composition of the fora which is more effective etc.

Ramirez Angulo Joaquin Yammil (Peru) – chat: “Good morning everyone, I apologize for not expressing myself in English but I understand you and I want to share a Brief Diagnosis of the UNESCO Intervention in Peru at the national level, on the one hand you have the UNESCO Commission that focuses its activities on education and culture and on the other another to the UNESCO Peru Office where the Science program is located, which maintains a close relationship with our Geopark but its priorities are in conservation projects and biosphere reserves that are in a national conservation committee, we do not have a national committee or forum to geoparks or geoheritage and as an activity in the 2024-2025 Strategic Plan seeing this need. We propose that viable Recommendations be provided, that is, they have given positive results for the strengthening of forums and committees at the national level, taking into account that new geopark projects are beginning in countries where we only have at least one Geopark”.

4. Any Other Business

4.1. 10th International conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks

Driss Achabal (Morocco) presented updated information on the 10th International conference on Geoparks (www.mgounggn2023.org).

Meeting close at 14:30 GMT

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