



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
11 September 2018, Adamello Brenta UNESCO Global Geopark, Italy**

MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS PRESENT:

Aniello Aloia (Italy)
Alireza Amrikazemi (Iran)
Alexandru Andrasanu (Romania)
Erika Anderkova (Slovakia)
Melanie Border (United Kingdom, GGN ExB)
Amina Bouraqia (Morocco)
Maurizio Burlando (Italy, GGN ExB)
Charalampos Fassoulas (Greece)
Tuncer Demir (Turkey)
Jean-Luc Desbois (France)
Marie-Luise Frey (Germany, GGN ExB)
Hartmut Escher (Germany)
Cesar Goso (Uruguay)
Oliver Gulas (Austria)
Qingcheng He (China, APGN)
Asier Hilario (Spain)
Xiaochi Jin (China, GGN ExB)
Barnabás Korbély (Hungary)
Vesa Krökki (Finland)
Soo Jae Lee (Korea)
Kirstin Lemon (Ireland)
Freddy Manongi (Tanzania)
Godfrey Nowlan (Canada)
Roland Oberhansli (IUGS observer)
Jose Luis Palacio (Mexico)
Martina Pásková (Czech Republic)
Margarete Patzak (UNESCO, GGN ExB)
Alain Petit (Belgium)
Kristin Rangnes (Norway, GGN ExB)
Bojan Rezun (Slovenia)
Gretha Roelfs (Netherlands)
Sigurdur Sigursveinsson (Iceland)
Efthymios Tsiolakis (Cyprus)
Jakob Walløe Hansen (Denmark)
Mahito Watabe (Japan, GGN ExB)

Jianping Zhang (China, GGN ExB)
Yuan Zheng (China)
Nickolas Zouros (Greece, GGN EXb)
Setsuya Nakada (Chair AC)
Elizabeth Silva (Vice-Chair AC, Portugal)

1. Welcome and Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted as circulated. The Chair reviewed the first meeting of the Advisory Committee indicating that comments had been collected from 18 countries on the operations of the Global Geoparks Network Association. The main observations were that:

- Transparency of GGN operations needed to be improved
- Asia Pacific Geoparks Network should be more visible
- European Geoparks Network evolving quickly
- Need for creation of new regional networks

ACTION: If your country is not one of the 18 who responded to the request for annual reports, please send in your report as soon as possible to Setsuya Nakada.

2. Status Report on Global Geoparks Network Association

The President Nickolas Zouros gave a brief review of the status of the GGN Association from 2016 – 2018. He referred the members of the Advisory Committee to the printed *Report of the GGN Executive Board on the Activities 2016-2018* that was circulated at the meeting.

He recognized the key role played by the regional networks and the formation of a new regional network for Latin America and the Caribbean this year, that held in first meeting at the 8th International Conference.

He also recognized the establishment of seven Working Groups on the following topics: Geo-Hazards, Volcanic Areas, Geological Heritage Assessment, Tourism, Education, Sustainable Development Goals and Island Geoparks. He thanked participants for their work in these working groups.

He acknowledged the work of the GGN Communications Committee, which has been responsible for improving the transparency of GGN activities. He listed their accomplishments: the GGN NewsFeed, the GGN Calendar of Events, the GGN Website, the GGN presence in social media (through Facebook and Weibo), the GGN Map in both 2017-18 and 2018-19, the GGN Brochure, the GGN Newsletter (issues released January, April, and September 2017, and January, June and September 2018) and the GGN Promotional Video.

Nickolas Zouros went on to outline the involvement of GGN with UNESCO in the context of UNESCO Global Geoparks. This includes being an ex officio member of UNESCO Geoparks Council and ex officio participation in the UNESCO Geoparks Bureau. It also involves

maintenance and deployment of the pool of experts (roster of evaluators) for UNESCO Global Geopark evaluations and revalidations. The payments made by UNESCO Global Geoparks to GGN provide US\$120,000 to UNESCO operations related to geoparks. GGN also organizes meetings, capacity building and promotional activities. It also gives out GGN Best Practice Awards and GGN Awards.

Finally, GGN is active in promoting geoparks in the international tourism market. It partnered with the International Year for Sustainable Tourism for Development in 2017. It participated in several tourism fairs, including FITUR in Madrid (2017, 2018), ITB in Berlin (2017, 2018 and the ITB Hong Kong (2018).

The Chair thanked Nickolas Zouros for his summary of GGN activities and achievements in 2017 and 2018.

Some members of the Advisory Committee had comments on the progress report. Elizabeth Silva (Portugal) suggested that the future reports should highlight what has been achieved and which of the goals had not been fully achieved so that the Advisory Committee can focus on what remains to be done. Martina Pásková (Czech Republic) suggested that more communication and more visibility would be valuable. She suggested that we think of UN Ambassadors, prominent sports figures and actors to help promote geoparks. Hartmut Escher agreed but wondered how each country can actively support geoparks. He suggested each country should develop a strategy and share it with others. Alexandru Andrasanu (Romania) suggested that it would be easier to respond to the progress report if we have had a chance to read it, but since it only came out in time for the 8th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks, most people had probably not read it. There was agreement with this assessment.

Elizabeth Silva (Portugal) suggested that we consult the United Nations in New York to find out what the current issues are, so that we could focus on some of these for the next international meeting.

3. 2018-2020 GGN Action Plan

3.1 Strategic Plan 2018-2020

The Strategic Plan for 2018-2020 is published in the booklet for the 2nd GGN Ordinary General Assembly (p. 48-50) to be held on 12 September 2018 at 16:00-20:00. The plan contains actions under 10 different headings. Unfortunately, it has only just been distributed, so it is difficult for the Advisory Committee to respond in detail today.

The principal elements of the strategic plan were outlined by Nickolas Zouros as follows:

- A, The GGN will continue to enhance the good practice developed in 2016-2018 giving emphasis to GGN functions and communication (e.g. continuing the GGN NewsFeed).
- B, Continue to strengthen the collaboration between GGN and UNESCO Global Geoparks (e.g. develop proposals for consideration by UNESCO Global Geoparks Council)

C, Encourage the efficient functioning of regional networks and the establishment of networks in regions that do not currently have one.

D, Encourage institutional and individual members of GGN to collaborate and improve quality and service in geoparks.

E, Encourage the current working groups, task forces and committees to work efficiently towards concrete results (e.g. complete final reports)

F, Work with David Randle and Associates to improve marketing and communication strategy and practice (e.g. implementation of the strategic plan on marketing and communication).

G, Continue to ensure the financial stability of GGN in order to support UNESCO Global Geoparks (fees are to be maintained at current levels).

H, Continue to organize capacity building activities (e.g. implementation of courses, seminars and workshops in all regions).

I, Continue to promote the Geopark Brand (e.g. work with international tourism organizations, develop marketable products such as souvenirs).

J, Continue to promote International Networking (e.g. collaborate with IUGS and IUCN).

3.2 Evaluator Selection and Management Procedures

Nickolas Zouros provided a brief review of the new evaluation procedures and training. GGN is creating a database of evaluators and missions conducted and feedback received. The plan also calls for the definition of senior evaluators (those who have conducted 6 or more evaluations or revalidation missions. Whenever possible a senior evaluator will be paired with an evaluator (someone who has conducted fewer than six evaluations and revalidations). Evaluator training is required for both evaluators and senior evaluators and training courses will be conducted on all continents. Senior evaluators are required to evaluate evaluators on the same mission. Both the senior evaluator and evaluator will also be evaluated by the geopark that is being evaluated or revalidated. Evaluators and senior evaluators will be expected to attain satisfactory scores in assessments from the geopark. Evaluators will not qualify as senior evaluators unless their scores from senior evaluators and the geoparks are satisfactory. Retraining may be required for those senior evaluators and evaluators who are assessed unfavourably.

The floor then opened for comments from the Advisory Committee members. Jean-Luc Dubois (France) and Asier Hilario (Spain) expressed appreciation for the new procedures and the ideas expressed in the documents to maintain qualified evaluators. A question was raised as to whether it was possible to match evaluators with specific geological knowledge for the geopark. Nickolas Zouros said this is done whenever possible.

The last line of article 1 states that: “the database will be accessible through the GGN website”. Several committee members expressed concern that the database of evaluators may contain

personal information and should therefore not be online, because it would conflict with privacy rules on the internet. Nickolas Zouros indicated that no personal data is stored online.

Gretha Roelfs (Netherlands) asked about the difference between an inferior score and a standard score in the evaluation of evaluators and senior evaluators. There seemed to be some confusion about this and members suggested that the scoring system to be used should be reviewed before implementation. Elizabeth Silva (Portugal) indicated that we need to find a way to make evaluators and senior evaluators as responsible as possible, because it is important to evaluate geoparks consistently and according to the guidelines and procedures.

Nickolas Zouros indicated that this is an initial attempt to standardize procedures for evaluation and feedback is welcome. Hartmut Escher (Germany) and Elizabeth Silva (Portugal) indicated that every member should take a close look at this question and respond to the Advisory Committee, so that it can provide advice on this matter to GGN. Some discussion on timing of responses ensued, resulting in the following action item.

ACTION: All members of the Advisory Committee to conduct a review of the Evaluator Selection and Management Procedures within their countries and report to Chair Setsuya Nakada by 31 October.

4. GGN 2019 Membership Fees

No changes are being made to the membership fees for 2019. There was support for this and no discussion.

5. UNESCO Global Geopark Programme

There was a brief discussion of how many UNESCO Global Geoparks a country can have. Hartmut Escher (Germany) expressed the view that this should be based on the geology and geodiversity of the country. Jean-Luc Dubois asked if each country should be working on this. Dubois and Kristin Lemon (Ireland) suggested that decisions for geopark proposals should be made at the country level.

6. Other Business

Roland Oberhansli (Observer from IUGS) raised the issue of Patrick McKeever's departure from UNESCO. He suggested a vacuum had been created by this departure and efforts should be made to ensure that he is replaced by another geoscientist. Margarete Patzak (UNESCO) indicated her support for this idea.

ACTION: Chair Setsuya Nakada to inform the upcoming 2nd General Assembly of the GGN Association that a letter should be written to UNESCO indicated that we support the replacement of Patrick McKeever with another professional geoscientist.

The meeting had representatives of 32 of the 38 countries who have members on the Advisory Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 18:36.

Minutes prepared by Godfrey Nowlan (Canada)