



**IGU E-NEWSLETTER**

Quarterly  
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Editor: *Giuliano Bellezza*

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*This Newsletter is directly circulated to more than 2000 individuals and bodies. Announcements, information, calls for participation in scientific events, programmes and projects are welcome. Please send them to [giuliano.bellezza@gmail.com](mailto:giuliano.bellezza@gmail.com) or [g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org](mailto:g.bellezza@homeofgeography.org)*

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## **1) REMARKS FROM PRESIDENT YUKIO HIMIYAMA**

### **English Version**

#### **Dear Friends**

When I was writing my Remarks for the last issue of the IGU e-Newsletter late in January, Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was still considered by many in the world as regional and controllable. However, on 30<sup>th</sup> January World Health Organization declared the outbreak to be a public health emergency of international concern. As everyone knows now, the last three months have presented extremely severe challenges for all of us personally, as well as for medical care services, economy, society and education etc. across the whole world.

It was on 19<sup>th</sup> February that I received an e-mail message entitled "Call for joint efforts to fight against epidemic" from Professor Fahu Chen, President of the Geographical Society of China (GSC), and Professor Guoyou Zhang, Vice President & Secretary General of GSC. They reported on the extremely difficult situation under the COVID-19 epidemic and the various efforts to overcome it in China. They said "... Stronger international cooperation is needed to jointly tackle this challenge. In defeating the epidemic, we would like to remain in close communication and coordination with International Geographical Union and will be open to any suggestions from you. We would also like to strengthen cooperation in epidemic control to jointly protect lives and health of our peoples and uphold global public health security." The IGU Executive Committee considered the message very timely and important, and forwarded it to all the Chairs of IGU National Committees, Commissions/Task Forces with my message as copied below, hoping that it be disseminated widely.

*As widely reported, the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) is spreading in China and in some other countries, and it may possibly even be poised to become a global pandemic. The virus not only endangers human life, but without effective measures it threatens to seriously impact our life support systems, economic, social, cultural and other activities. The situation is particularly acute in China where the disease started and is disrupting normal operations in that country. The message below, which has been sent from the GSC to the IGU, tells how geographers, along with many others in China, are striving to counter the disease, and stresses the need for us to strengthen international cooperation in controlling the epidemic and protecting lives and health of the people. The IGU community offers its support to our Chinese colleagues at this very difficult time and fervently hopes that their sterling efforts to contain the outbreak prove successful. On behalf of the IGU Executive Committee, I would like to thank Professor Fahu Chen, GSC President, and Professor Guoyou Zhang, GSC Vice President & Secretary General, for their timely message. Let us join together and do what we can to combat the outbreak of COVID-19.*

The responses from the chairs were quick, substantial and enthusiastic, and I believe our Chinese colleagues were encouraged greatly. The message from GSC was followed by proposals/reports from some leading geographers in China: Professor Liu Yansui, the Chair of the IGU Commission on Agricultural Geography and Land Engineering (AGLE), worked with the GSC and the Chinese Government, and reported on "COVID-19 Dynamic Monitoring System for National Prevention and Control (English edition 4.0)", which represents substantial work carried out by his team; Professor Fenzhen Su, the Chair of Commission on Geographical Information Sciences, reported on " COVID-19: Challenges to GIS with Big Data". This was a timely and eye-opening product of Commission on Geographical Information Sciences, achieved in collaboration with the State Key Lab of Resources and Environmental Information System of China and GSC. In fact it is no longer a 'report' but is available online in the new journal 'Geography and Sustainability' (see <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666683920300092>), with the first author being former IGU Vice President Professor Chenghu Zhou. This paper is also a product of IGU collaboration (see <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2095927320301663>). Another major report/proposal to COVID-19 came on 23<sup>rd</sup> February from Professor Thomas Krafft and Professor Paula Santana, the Co-chairs of the IGU Commission on Health and the Environment. The proposal included the following three plans:

1. Organising a dedicated special session (or plenary) in collaboration with colleagues from China CDC, WHO, CAS and the Commission at the upcoming IGC in Istanbul.
2. Organising an international expert workshop on COVID-19 and other (re-) emerging diseases back-to-back to the Commission's annual training course at CAS in Beijing (IGSNRR) that would specifically include the perspective of health geographers and spatial epidemiologists and inform on how to improve preparedness, academic teaching and public information.
3. Setting up a special working group to analyse the lessons learned in the context of interdisciplinary Global Health and using the comprehensive approaches of health geography and spatial epidemiology. This international special working group would start working this year with the perspective to provide a comprehensive report to the extraordinary IGC in Paris 2022.

It is noted that plan 3 above is already set into practice, as you find on IGU website (<https://igu-online.org/>). The IGU EC whole heartedly supports and endorses these initiatives.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March, another major report/proposal came from Professor Carlos Nunes Silva, the Chair of the IGU Commission on Geography of Governance. It is an action plan focused on the worldwide "Local Government Response Towards Covid-19 Pandemic": <https://sites.google.com/view/igucgog-covid19/home>. It proposes the following three main goals:

1. To collect evidence of the strategies, plans, policy measures, and actions taken by local government around the world towards the COVID-19 pandemic, making it available to all, as soon as possible, in the Commission website, in a way that this information can still be useful during the current pandemic.
2. To promote joint comparative research on the responses of local government towards the COVID-19 pandemic, its outcomes and impacts, to be carried out by members of the IGU Commission on Geography of Governance, and other interested partners, as soon as possible in the coming months.
3. To present, discuss, and publish the outcomes of the comparative research on the worldwide responses of local government towards the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific meetings and/or panels, as well as publications, will be considered in the 2021 and 2022 activity plans of the IGU Commission on Geography of Governance.

Professor Silva adds that the plan is open to the collaboration and support of other colleagues and other IGU members interested in these issues. The Executive Committee sees the plan a valuable, worthwhile challenge, and supports and endorses it.

The Executive Committee had its first meeting this year on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> April using the Zoom meeting platform. The meeting was originally planned to be held in Rome, then rescheduled for Istanbul, but then changed to a Zoom meeting due to the impossibility of holding a face-to-face meeting given the spread of COVID-19. It was the first Zoom meeting the IGU EC ever had, but we managed to have eight 1.5-2 hours' sessions in four days. The EC approved the Commission Excellence Award for the year 2019 be given to the Commission on Biogeography and Biodiversity. One of the important decisions made in the meeting was the postponement of the 34<sup>th</sup> IGC 2020 Istanbul scheduled from 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> August 2021, and the consequent postponement of International Geographical Olympiad. These were inevitable because of the severity of COVID-19. The General Assembly (GA) scheduled in the IGC 2020 Istanbul is postponed to the 2021 IGC, although some important agenda items will be executed soon electronically. The schedule for the execution of main items on the GA agenda is as follows:

Election of the IGU President and Executive Committee Members for 2020-2024 (1<sup>st</sup> May – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020)

Approval of new National Members (June – August 2020)

Approval of Commissions, Task Forces, and their Chairpersons for 2020-2024 (June – August 2020)

Report of the President for the Period 2016-2020 (June – August 2020)

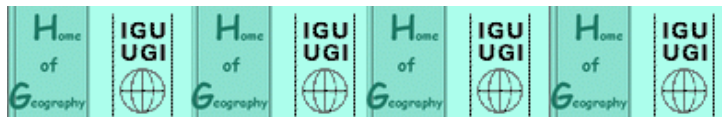
Report of the Secretary General and Treasurer for the Period 2016-2020 (June – August 2020)

Selection of the proposal for 37<sup>th</sup> International Geographical Congress (June – August 2020).

My term as IGU President ends on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020, i.e. the last day of the postponed 34<sup>th</sup> IGC 2020 Istanbul. An EC meeting will be held in Istanbul, if possible, on 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to

wrap up the mission of the four years' term. A follow-on meeting of the EC members for 2020-2024 will follow immediately after conclusion of the wrap-up meeting. Please note 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020 be the last day of the term of the IGU EC, Commissions and Task Forces for 2016-2020. Let us conclude our activities for 2016-2020 in good shape and develop them further into 2020-2024. We now face huge challenges created by COVID-19 and amplified by various political, socio-economic and human actions or inactions. Let us maintain and improve our local, regional and global life support systems by consolidating and extending our networks of flows of information, data, knowledge and wisdom- not only within the geographic community but also beyond it - to overcome COVID-19.

**Yukio Himiyama,**  
*President of IGU*



## **2) IGU AND COVID 19: CHINA-IGU MAILS EXCHANGE**

*On February 19<sup>th</sup> the Geographical Society of China called IGU for taking joint initiatives on COVID 19. President Himiyama immediately answered and asked the Geographers' Community to cooperate. In order to give a full vision of the opinions expressed, I tried to gather the correspondence exchanged and arrived to HofG until 15th April 2020.*

**1) Wednesday, February 19, 2020 4:08 PM**

Call for joint efforts to fight against epidemic

Dear Professor Yukio Himiyama, President of the International Geographical Union, (cc Professor R.B. Singh, Secretary-General of the International Geographical Union)

Greetings!

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Chinese government has taken the most comprehensive, strict and thorough prevention and control measures to fight against this epidemic. WHO officials and many other government and healthcare officials across the globe are applauding China's unprecedented and aggressive response, which shows that China is highly responsible, not only for the Chinese people's health but also for the sake of global public safety.

At this critical moment, Chinese government is making all efforts in medical treatment of the patients for reducing severe and fatal cases. A national expert group has been assigned to speed up the research and development of vaccines. In tackling the outbreak, the State Council of China has established a centralized dispatch system for the distribution of medical personnel, medical supplies and citizen's daily necessities. Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping and Chinese government, the prevention and control work has achieved positive results and the epidemic

situation has shown positive changes due to concerted hard work. We have full confidence in our ability to prevail over the epidemic at an early date.

The fearless and selfless Chinese scientists, doctors and nurses are the mainstay in this battle, making strenuous efforts to counter the epidemic. GSC is working closely with its members, branch societies and partners by mobilizing scientists and professionals with expertise on scientific research, policy-making and science communication in the epidemic control. Since the outbreak of the epidemic, GSC has actively coordinated all resources available to fight against the disease through expanding scientific knowledge, analyzing and predicting epidemic trends, providing advices to the government and public on measures to protect health and prevent and control the spread of the virus and so on.

Virus knows of no national boundaries, but the worst of times reveals the best in people. Stronger international cooperation is needed to jointly tackle this challenge. In defeating the epidemic, we would like to remain in close communication and coordination with International Geographical Union and will be open to any suggestions from you. We would also like to strengthen cooperation in epidemic control to jointly protect lives and health of our peoples and uphold global public health security.

Sincerely yours,

Professor Fahu Chen, President Geographical Society of China

Professor Guoyou Zhang, Vice President & Secretary General Geographical Society of China

[gsc@igsnr.ac.cn](mailto:gsc@igsnr.ac.cn)

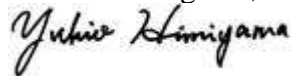
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2) President Himiyama answer on 23 February 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As widely reported, the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) is spreading in China and in some other countries, and it may possibly even be poised to become a global pandemic. The virus not only endangers human life, but without effective measures it threatens to seriously impact our life support systems, economic, social, cultural and other activities. The situation is particularly acute in China where the disease started and is disrupting normal operations in that country. The message below, which has been sent from the Geographical Society of China to the IGU, tells how geographers, along with many others in China, are striving to counter the disease, and stresses the need for us to strengthen international cooperation in controlling the epidemic and protecting lives and health of the people. The IGU community offers its support to our Chinese colleagues at this very difficult time and fervently hopes that their sterling efforts to contain the outbreak prove successful. On behalf of the IGU Executive Committee, I would like to thank Professor Fahu Chen, GSC President, and Professor Guoyou Zhang, GSC Vice President & Secretary General, for their timely message. Let us join together and do what we can to combat the outbreak of COVID-19.

With Best Regards,



Yukio Himiyama, IGU President

e-mail: [himiyamay@kkd.biglobe.ne.jp](mailto:himiyamay@kkd.biglobe.ne.jp)

[yukiohimiyama@gmail.com](mailto:yukiohimiyama@gmail.com)

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3) Monday 24 February, from IGU Comm. on Health:

Dear Prof. Yukio Himiyama,

Thank you for forwarding the communication on COVID-19 signed by our Chinese colleagues of the Geographical Society of China: Professor Fahu Chen and Professor Guoyou Zhang and for your request for any suggestions by the IGU Commissions. The IGU Commission C16.20 on Health and Environment and our commission members closely follow the enormous effort of our Chinese colleagues to contain and combat the current outbreak. The Commission has closely collaborated during the last decade with Chinese colleagues at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (IGSNRR) and at China CDC and Beijing CDC on (re-) emerging infectious diseases, environmental health and global health. We are fully aware of the major achievements of the Chinese CDC system in building up an effective surveillance and response systems after the SARS crisis that has helped in the case of COVID-19 to intervene much earlier and much more effective than during the previous outbreak. Both my co-chair Professor Paula Santana and I are fully committed to support our Chinese colleagues in their efforts to contain the outbreak, to enhance preparedness for future outbreaks and to contribute to a better understanding of the causes, necessary responses and adequate preparedness measures among the general public. And it goes without saying that this is a global issue and not a Chinese crisis and therefore requires concerted action of the international community.

On behalf of the IGU Commission C16.20 on Health and the Environment we would like to propose three immediate activities:

1. With the support of the IGU executive and the local organisers the IGU Commission on Health and the Environment could organise a dedicated special session (or plenary) in collaboration with colleagues from China CDC, WHO, CAS and the Commission at the upcoming IGC in Istanbul.
2. The Commission could organise an international expert workshop on COVID-19 and other (re-) emerging diseases back-to-back to the Commission's annual training course at CAS in Beijing (IGSNRR) that would specifically include the perspective of health geographers and spatial epidemiologists and inform on how to improve preparedness, academic teaching and public information.
3. The Commission could set up a special working group to analyse the lessons learned in the context of interdisciplinary Global Health and using the comprehensive approaches of health geography and spatial epidemiology. This international special working group would start working this year with the perspective to provide a comprehensive report to the extraordinary IGC in Paris. The three suggestions are complimentary and intended to demonstrate our willingness and ability to engage and to respond scientifically adequate and sound to an international crisis that requires international collaboration and solidarity as well as our joined efforts as scientific community. In the case that you do agree with our proposals we would kindly request an endorsement and the support of the IGU executive to further proceed.

With kind regards

On behalf of the IGU Commission C16.20 on Health and the Environment

Prof. Thomas Krafft

Prof. Paula Santana

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4) Tuesday 25 February; in attachment GEMDS, Global Epidemic Monitoring and Decision-making System

Dear IGU president Himiyama and members,

This is Yansui Liu, chair of the IGU Commission on Agricultural Geography and Land Engineering (IGU-AGLE). We highly appreciate the joint efforts call initiated by the Geographical Society of China (GSC) , and the quick response from President Yukio Himiyama and other colleagues.

As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has now spread to 29 countries and infected nearly 80,000 (2634 dead cited WHO) globally. During the past month, we have experienced very strict epidemic prevention while carrying out epidemic and geography related research. The epidemic spreading, regional prevention and control, scientific decision support for the government should be a comprehensive geographical problem. Thus, we geographers can do something together, to contribute to the fight against the coronavirus. Considering the current epidemic situation, we hereby would like to share with you several proposals.

1) To jointly develop a Global Epidemic Monitoring and Decision-making System (GEMDS). Our research group at Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences has developed a National Novel Coronavirus Monitoring System (NNCMS, V2.0) under the guidance of CAS and GSC, which can record and follow individual's health situation and make prediction of the epidemic. Several consulting reports for Chinese government were produced according to the analysis supported by the system. As far as we know, several teams of Chinese geographers have carried out relevant systematic research. Any ideas to develop GEMDS and volunteers are welcome to join these works.

2) To suggest IGU organizing experts to investigate and analyze the epidemic situation and make modelling prediction at both national and global levels. All this works finally turns into IGU research reports which are to submit to WHO and other relevant countries or regions.

3) To initiate several projects in the fields of Global Epidemic Monitoring and Decision-making System (GEMDS) for public health and hazards controlling based on the research practice of the novel coronavirus. We appreciate the support from IGU and joint applications and international cooperation are encouraged.

Do hope you can evaluate the proposals and make feedbacks. We sincerely hope IGU can make in-time contribution to the global coronavirus prevention. Enclosed is the manual of NNCMS in Chinese, and we can offer other languages version if necessary. Finally, wish you all the best and good health.

With kind regards,

On behalf of the IGU C17.39 Commission on Agricultural Geography and Land Engineering (IGU-AGLE)

Professor Yansui Liu ([liuys@igsnrr.ac.cn](mailto:liuys@igsnrr.ac.cn) [liuyansui@126.com](mailto:liuyansui@126.com))

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(The attachment can be seen in [www.homeofgeography.org/Covid19](http://www.homeofgeography.org/Covid19))

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5) Tuesday 25 February, from Maria Paradiso

Dear All

Thanks a lot for the debate.

It is interesting to assess how social media and TV push fears and corrupt information.

More than a prediction system there is a problem of hospital facilities taking into account that since this kind of flu spread more rapidly there is a problem of lack of reanimation structure.

Intensive therapy. It looks like a more severe flu. Not more than this. Vulnerable people are those aged and diseased.

It is indeed a problem that in our global age an accent should be put in my opinion on the weakening of the Welfare State with less investment by politics and governments on rethinking and enlarging provision of care in light of new flues. There could be room for geographies of welfare and public health in terms of infrastructure and their distribution. Debate on health governance. Media amplification of risks. Much debate I guess for human geographies and global issues regarding the political cultures everywhere which limit public care.

Just thought

Best regards

Maria Paradiso

Chair of IGU Commission C16.30, Mediterranean Studies

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6) Wednesday, 26 February: On behalf of the Romanian National Committee, Romanian Geographical Society and of the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, we express our support for all Chinese colleagues to overcome the difficult situation related to outbreak of COVID-19.

Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy, experienced excellent long time connections based on bilateral agreements of our Academies, visiting and receiving visits of many distinguished Chinese colleagues in Romania.

We are sure that you and all international community will continue to collaborate to combat the outbreak of COVID-19. Let's hope to meet together in an IGU meeting soon.

With best wishes,

Academician Prof. Dan Balteanu – Chair of the IGU Romanian National Committee,  
Director Institute of Geography, D. Racovita 12, 023993

Dr. Monica Dumitrascu – Vice-President of the Romanian Geographical Society  
Sector 2, Bucharest, Email: [igar@geoinst.ro](mailto:igar@geoinst.ro)

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7) Friday 27 Febr., from Prof: Himiyama

Dear Professor Liu,

Thank you for your enthusiastic proposal. Let me discuss the matter with the Executive Committee colleagues.

For that it would be very useful if there is an English version of the manual of NNCMS.

Sincerely Yours,

Yukio Himiyama

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8) Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March, from Geographical Society of China

Dear Prof. Yukio Himiyama and colleagues of IGU community,

Since the outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), many colleagues from international community have expressed their understanding, sympathies and support to the Geographical Society of China, Chinese geographers, and Chinese people in combating the COVID-19 epidemic in different ways.

In the letters, they highly commended the efforts China and Chinese scientists have made in the epidemic control and appreciated the courage and confidence shown by Chinese people in the battle. We are pleased and grateful that many of them have demonstrated their willingness to contribute scientifically through research collaboration on geography and epidemic to counter with the disease.

On behalf of the Geographical Society of China, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to all the colleagues and friends who are willing to provide any kind of support and help. Special thanks to Prof. Yukio Himiyama, President of IGU, for forwarding the call for joint efforts within IGU community and mobilizing geographers worldwide to join the combat with the virus. Many thanks to Prof. Thomas Krafft and Prof. Paula Santana, co-chairs of IGU Commission on Health and Environment, and Prof. Yansui Liu, chair of IGU Commission and Agriculture Geography and Land Engineering, for their timely responses and proposals to tackle this global issue. We think these proposals are all good and helpful. We strongly support them and are glad to work with our colleagues on the proposals.

A friend in need is a friend indeed. We know we are not alone and you are together with us! Your great support will undoubtedly enhance our confidence in winning the fight with the virus and getting through the difficult time. Hope to see you all as soon as the battle is won!

Sincerely yours,

Professor Fahu Chen, President Geographical Society of China

Professor Guoyou Zhang, Vice President & Secretary General Geographical Society of China

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9) Monday 3 March, from President Himiyama to IGU-AGLE

Dear Professor Liu,

Thank you very much for your encouraging and informative proposal. The IGU Executive Committee discussed the matter, and decided to send you the message below:

The IGU Statutes (see <https://igu-online.org/organization/statutes/>) point out, among others, the following items as IGU objectives:

I. Denomination, Objectives and Domicile of the Union

B. The purposes of the International Geographical Union are:

1. to promote the study of geographical problems;
2. to initiate and co-ordinate geographical research requiring international co-operation and to promote its scientific discussion and publication.

Therefore, the purpose of the proposed plan fits the IGU objectives perfectly.

It looks that the proposal was made by IGU Commission on Agricultural Geography and Land Engineering in cooperation with China-Beijing National Committee for the IGU. As is seen in the IGU Statutes items shown below, the IGU Commission and the National Committee can work together to realize the proposals.

#### VI. Commissions

G. A Commission may undertake research contracts and may request grants from national or international, or other appropriate, organizations. Commissions must inform the Executive Committee of the action taken and the results achieved.

#### II. The Membership of the Union

D. The Committees for the IGU shall promote the objects of the Union in their respective countries with specific reference to international aspects.

(note: 'Committee' here denotes 'National Committee')

At this stage the EC believes that the research and related activities on COVID-19 should be conducted or promoted by the existing Commissions and National Committees with the support of the EC wherever it is necessary and possible.

Let's work together for our common goal!

Sincerely Yours,

Yukio Himiyama, IGU President

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10) Wednesday 4 March, From Prof: Liu Yansui

Dear President Himiyama,

After receiving your reply, our IGSNRR-CAS team is very grateful. In recent days, with the attention and support of the Geographical Society of China (GSC), we have organized scientific research forces in a timely manner and devoted them to the developing of " COVID-19 Dynamic Monitoring System for National Prevention and Control (English edition 4.0)" and the producing of relevant English manuals in response to the general needs of different countries around the world. Today, it has been completed and passed the network debugging. The system operation and functions are all normal

According to WHO report 43, COVID-19 is spreading rapidly around the world (out of China), reached 72 countries by 3th March with more than 10566 infections and 166. Coronaviruses have no borders, and science-technology have no borders, we hope that geographers can do something, especially give full play to the supporting role of Geography in the dynamic monitoring and scientific decision-making of epidemic prevention and control.

Now, on behalf of our expert team and with the friendship of many Chinese geographers, I'd like to submit "COVID-19 Dynamic Monitoring System for National Prevention and Control (English edition 4.0)" to you and IGU led by you. Our biggest wish is that the IGU will make great achievements in the process of global epidemic prevention and control. It is hoped that the IGU will play a leading role in organizing and mobilizing all committees and relevant national

geographic societies to recommend this monitoring system, and accurately serve the national and regional epidemic prevention and control work. At the same time, recommend this monitoring system to WHO. International geographers are willing to contribute our expert wisdom and professional strength to global COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control.

Best wishes,  
Yansui LIU

(IGU COVID 19 can be found in: [www.homeofgeography.org](http://www.homeofgeography.org)  
then open COVID 19 and IGU COVID Dynamic Monitoring System)

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**11) Wednesday 4 March**, from G.Bellezza

Dear Prof. Liu,  
as past IGU Vice President (2008-2014), I am editing since 2003 the website [www.homeofgeography.org](http://www.homeofgeography.org) and the quarterly IGU Newsletter. In case you didn't receive it, I attach a copy here.

I received your mail with the COVID 19 Dynamic Monitoring System, and I already posted it in the website, and also diffused to the Presidents of Association of Italian Geographers, the Association of Italian Teachers of Geography and of Italian Geographical Society. Be sure that I continue the task of editing IGU Newsletter and HofG website with the aim to make people know that Geographers are doing many important things, beside teaching Geography.

Some weeks ago I couldn't imagine to live in the second Nation for COVID 19, but let me add that is probably due to the fact that our public health system immediately started to check thousands of people for Coronavirus: something many other European States began only last week, if at all (and the same, I think, in the USA).

With all my best wishes,  
Giuliano Bellezza

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**12) Thursday 5 March**, from Liu Yansui:

Dear Professor Giuliano Bellezza,

My team and I thank you very much for your prompt reply, recommending the "COVID-19 Dynamic Monitoring System for National Prevention and Control (C19-DMS)" to the Italian geographical community in the first time. You are a famous geographer and past IGU vice president. Your support and recommendation will be conducive to the practical application of C19-DMS.

Today's latest data show that the number of countries with coronavirus epidemic increased to 76, with 5328 people infected in South Korea and 33 dead, followed by Italy, with 2502, but 79 dead. In the case of China, we are very sad to see these rising data. In this regard, we geographers should be able to do something! In China, since February 13, the COVID-19 Dynamic Monitoring System for National Grassroots Prevention and Control (v 3.0) developed by us had played an important role in non-contact reporting, dynamic monitoring and statistical analysis of grassroots epidemic. Many Chinese geographers have done outstanding work.

Dear president, IGU is the highest organization in international geography. In this global epidemic prevention and control battle, IGU, geographical societies and geographers of all countries have

the conditions and ability to play an important supporting role, which still needs to strengthen the organization and publicity work, so that the world can know IGU and Geographers. We have the feelings and ability to make important contributions to it! I would like to ask you to continue to promote and recommend the C19-DMS, including on the website of IGU home page and relevant committees. If we can make a special issue of IGU Newsletter, the recommended effect will be better. Thank you very much 🙏!

In November 2018, I was elected TWAS Fellow, and went to Trieste city, Italy to attend the 28th Academician Conference, and visited several beautiful Italian cities! I wish you and your families, and all Italian people a smooth and healthy life!

With all my best wishes,  
Yansui LIU

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**13) Friday 6 March, from IGU Commission on Health:**

Dear colleagues,

Further to our exchange of ideas and proposals for engaging in the scientific debate on COVID 19 (SARS-CoV-2) we would herewith like to confirm that we will go ahead with the preparations for the strategy that we outlined in our message to the IGU president and that was subsequently endorsed both by the IGU executive and the Geographical Society of China.

Since our last communications we have been consulting with our commission members and other colleagues in China and in other affected regions. We are now preparing the necessary steps both for the ICG session and the proposed workshop in Beijing and will be in contact with the Turkish local organisers and the colleagues at CAS and GSC regarding the next steps. As agreed, we will keep the IGU secretariat continuously informed about the progress.

In the last days we have received a lot of supporting communications from many colleagues and also further proposals for example from the IGU Commission on Agricultural Geography and Land Engineering. We highly welcome these suggestions and ideas and will follow up directly with our various colleagues.

The IGU Commission on Health and the Environment is aware that we are still at an early stage in the development and that considerable joint effort is needed before we will have a comprehensive understanding of the necessary consequences resulting from this outbreak regarding prevention, preparedness and managing. Again we would like to point out that China has done tremendous work to contain the outbreak. This has been acknowledged in the recent report of the WHO-China joint mission on COVID-19 that described China's response to the outbreak as follows: "In the face of a previously unknown virus, China has rolled out perhaps the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort in history." Unfortunately, we are now seeing that other regions might be less well equipped to effectively respond.

There will be considerably lessons to be learned based on a thorough and sober analysis. Geography and Health Geography in particular have much to contribute to this analysis and should therefore engage in the scientific and societal debates. But this needs to be based on sound scientific work and open academic discourse and must avoid short-lived conclusions or recommendations.

With kind regards

On behalf of the Commission  
Prof. Dr. Thomas Krafft  
Prof. Dr. Paula Santana  
Chairs IGU Commission on Health and the Environment

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**14) Saturday 8 March, from President Himiyama**

Dear Professor Liu,

Thank you very much for your " COVID-19 Dynamic Monitoring System for National Prevention and Control (English edition 4.0)", which represents substantial work carried out by your team, with the strong support of China-Beijing National Committee for the IGU, for the benefit of the society. The IGU Executive Committee admires your devotion and tireless effort to it and congratulates you for your achievement so far. We hope that the newly developed system is effectively used, tested and further improved for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 in China, and shows itself as a good example of what type of system could be put in place to help slow the spread of the virus. The balance between social benefit and privacy varies from country to country and it is not an easy issue, but nevertheless there are many lessons to be learned from that in other countries. Please keep the world geographic community informed of the progress of your courageous work.

Sincerely Yours,

Yukio Himiyama, IGU President

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**15) Thursday 12 March, from Fenzhen SU**

Dear President Himiyama and colleagues of IGU,

Following the call from IGU, our commission on GIS with the State Key Lab of Resources and Environmental Information System of China and the Geographical Society of China (GSC), finished the report of GIS fighting against COVID-19 in China.

[Report attached.](#)

*(Report posted also in [www.homeofgeography.org/COVID19/Covid 19 and challenges to GIS with Big Data](http://www.homeofgeography.org/COVID19/Covid%2019%20and%20challenges%20to%20GIS%20with%20Big%20Data)).*

Best wishes for you all,

Fenzhen Su, Chair, International Geographical Union (IGU) Commission on Geographical Information Sciences);

11A Datun Road, Chaoyang District

Beijing 100101, China

Email: [sufz@reis.ac.cn](mailto:sufz@reis.ac.cn)

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**16) To: Professor Fenzhen Su, the Chair of Commission on Geographical Information Sciences**

Dear Professor Su,

Thank you very much for your report " COVID-19: Challenges to GIS with Big Data". It is really a timely eye-opening product of Commission on Geographical Information Sciences achieved with

the State Key Lab of Resources and Environmental Information System of China and China-Beijing National Committee for the IGU represented by the Geographical Society of China (GSC). The IGU Executive Committee sees this report an extremely valuable contribution to the fight against COVID-19 not only in China, but in the whole world, and believes that it should be known widely. Please keep the world geographic community and beyond informed of further progress of your work and its effect.

Sincerely Yours,  
Yukio Himiyama, IGU President

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**17) From Wenwu Zhao and Boje Fu and others (including Mike Meadows)**

A systematic approach is needed to contain COVID-19 globally

Link <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2095927320301663>

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**18) Thursday 2 April, from the IGU Commission on Geographical Education**

Fellow Geography Educators

In these difficult times, how we respond to the challenges will have both immediate and downstream impact on education.

I am sure you must be inundated by news about the CoVID19 pandemic locally, and from around the world on a daily basis. Many of us live in places where restrictions on movement and lockdowns are imposed and educators around the world have to adapt to remote teaching and online learning very quickly.

Many institutions have moved the majority of their course offering to online platforms. We are mindful however that while our faculty engage in remote teaching, that it must result in meaningful online learning. Further downstream, we also need to consider how best education can prepare our children to handle the social emotion aspects of such unprecedented disruptions. We need to show our children the resolve and commitment to come through this better than before. Resilience, adaptability, collaboration and empathy become important values for our children.

As a community of geography educators, we could tap into the collective wisdom and resources that colleagues around the world have adopted during these extraordinary times. But we first need to know what to look for and where to find them.

So as a start, we will be asking for colleagues who have resources or online learning packages that you are using for geographical education to share the information about these resources through a quick poll we will be conducting.

Please fill up the form by 9 April: <https://forms.gle/W5rrht1pcdHbifoz5>

Once we have collated these resources, we will publish it on our CGE website for all members to refer too.

Hopefully this will allow us to tap into a wider range of resources to support online learning for Geography.

We will need to stand together (though physically apart) and support each other through this crisis. This crisis will come to pass, and we will emerge stronger and better prepared our future collaboration.

Keep well and stay healthy. Hope to see everyone in person really soon.

**Chew-Hung CHANG and Clare Brooks**

**0000000000000000**

**19) Thursday 2 April**, from G.Bellezza to the IGU Commissions Chairs

Dear Friends Chairs of IGU Commissions,

Look in the mail above, where under the QR code is written: *Once we have these resource we will publish in our* etc. In a few minutes I'll post this first announce in the point News 2020, in the website [www.homeofgeography.org](http://www.homeofgeography.org): this is a sort of little brother of IGU-online, where every commission has (since 2004) a dedicated space in the point "IGU e-Archive".

I hope to receive from you in the next days a good number of adhesions and proposals, in order to post the complete collection in the next IGU Newsletter, to be diffused by the end of April. All this, of course, remembering that every further development in homeofgeography website will remain under the direction of Professors Chew Hung Chan and Clare Brooks.

I forward to all of you the mail below, just received from the Commission C16\_10.

I fully agree with the spirit of their mail, particularly with the spirit of the conclusion, and being in the third week of quarantine, though with no symptom at all, I can only say you TAKE CARE, wishing all the best,

Giuliano Bellezza

**0000000000000000**

**20) Thursday 2 April**, from Prof. Chew-Hung CHANG

Dear Professor Giuliano Bellezza

Thank you for forwarding this to the IGU community. These are exceptional times and every single effort counts.

I trust you are keeping well. Let me know if there are other way we can stand in solidarity to overcome this difficult time.

Best wishes.

Dr Chew-Hung, CHANG

Chief Planning Officer and

Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Studies Education Academic Group, National Institute of Education

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**21) Saturday 4 April**, from Dr. M.M.Sheikh

Dear Professor Giuliano Bellezza

STAY HOME, BE SAFE.

Greetings from the Journal of Global Resources.

Hope you are staying at home during the lockdown and safe. We are also doing so. Stay home



stay safe.

In this time of COVID-19, we pray God, help us be healthy, calm and patience. We are publishing a special issue on COVID 19, If you have any paper send by 21 April 2020. The online paper will be published in May 2020. The detail is enclosed.

Have a safe time.

Regards

Dr. M. M. Sheikh

Associate Professor & Head, Department of Geography, Government Lohia College

CHURU- Rajasthan, INDIA

Email: [mmskh@rediffmail.com](mailto:mmskh@rediffmail.com)

22) Monday 13 April

Hi Prof Giuliano Bellezza

In additional to the Geographical Education resources that Commission 16.10 is collating, the flagship journal of our commission “International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education” has published an article on “What does “crisis” education look like?”, highlighting the importance of educating students to critically engage information and having empathy during times of crisis.

To quote ” The COVID-19 issue is not a purely epidemiological phenomenon. It is also a social phenomenon and education for crises such as this should include teaching about the need for empathy. “

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10382046.2020.1730095>

Full text is available for free for now.

Hope this helps.

Chew-Hung

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23) Wednesday 15 April

Dear Giuliano,

Many thanks for your email.

During the past two months, the geographers from a number of professional teams in China have made great efforts in contributing to win the global coronavirus interdiction war. Among them, “COVID-19 Dynamic Monitoring System for National Prevention and Control (English edition 4.0)” was developed by IGU Commission on Agricultural Geography and Land Engineering, the Key Laboratory of Regional Sustainable Development Modeling of CAS, which has provided a system platform service for the implementation of contactless reporting, dynamic monitoring and management decision-making of epidemic situation in villages and communities across the country. Early March, the IGU Commission on Agricultural Geography and Land Engineering (AGLE) has shared this system and provided thoughtful technical services free of charge to the organizations that need it. The development and application of epidemic prevention and control system will play an important role in battling the COVID-19 globally.

Fortunately, China's epidemic prevention and control has made decisive achievements, and all work and life have basically entered a normal state since this month. Wish Italy and the world a great victory as soon as possible!

In addition, we also have researched the influences of the outbreak of COVID-19 on the national poverty alleviation. At the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a commitment "to eradicate poverty everywhere, in all its forms and dimensions by 2030". By adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders moved past poverty reduction and set out to achieve sustainable development that "leaves no one behind". China also proposes to eliminate absolute poverty and to ensure the entry of all impoverished areas into a well-off society by 2020. There was no doubt that this outbreak increases the difficulty of winning the battle of poverty alleviation. The return of migrant workers is restricted and the income of poor families has been affected due to the coronavirus disease pandemic. This is going to happen globally with the COVID-19 spreading. In this context, we hereby propose that the commission is going to set up an international working group to research the impact of epidemic on poverty reduction and sustainable development at the face of SDGs. We warmly welcome the global researchers and scholars to join us.

Wish you all the best and good health.

With kind regards,

Professor Yansui Liu

Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences  
And Chair of the IGU Commission on Agricultural Geography and Land Engineering.

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#### **24) Wednesday 15 April, From Carlos Nunes Silva**

Dear Giuliano

Thank you for your email related to the initiatives on Covid-19.

In response to your request, I send below a short text about an initiative being developed by the IGU Commission on Geography of Governance for your information.

Yours sincerely,

Carlos Nunes Silva

Chair of the IGU Commission on Geography of Governance (C16.12)

IGU Commission on Geography of Governance

The IGU Commission on Geography of Governance (IGU-CGoG) has been preparing an Action Plan focused on the worldwide "Local Government Response Towards Covid-19 Pandemic":

<https://sites.google.com/view/igucgog-covid19/home>

The "IGU-GoG COVID-19 Action Plan" has three main goals:

1. First, in the coming weeks and months, we aim to collect evidence of the strategies, plans, policy measures, and actions taken by local government around the world towards the COVID-19 pandemic, making it available to all, as soon as possible, in this website, in a way that this information can still be useful during the current pandemic.
2. Second, to promote joint comparative research on the responses of local government towards the COVID-19 pandemic, its outcomes and impacts, and lessons for the future, to be carried out by members of the IGU Commission on Geography of Governance, and other interested partners, as soon as possible in the coming months.

3. Third, to present, discuss, and publish the outcomes of the comparative research on the worldwide responses of local government towards the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific meetings and/or panels, as well as publications, will be considered in the 2021 and 2022 activity plans of the IGU Commission on Geography of Governance.

The IGU Commission on Geography of Governance is open to the collaboration and support of other colleagues and other IGU members interested in these issues.

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25) Tuesday 21 April, from Prof. Priyad Vyas

Thanks for linking with web site, we are also working to analyse information of COVID-19, in terms of cause and effect at regional level in western India particularly in Rajasthan , India. We all geographers are devoted to serve our community towards humanity.

With regards,

Prof P R Vyas , Professor in Geography,

M L Sukhadia University, Udaipur , email : [prvyasgeog@gmail.com](mailto:prvyasgeog@gmail.com).

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26) Wednesday 22 April from G.B.

Dear Prof.Vyas,

I am glad when contacting India, particularly Rajasthan: I've been there from Delhi the first time in 1972, a long trip in pullman, worth every minute. We stopped in Jodhpur, Jaipur and finally in Jaisalmer: I'll never forget, though I sure that too many things changed since. Now I know that is just a short trip by plane: I am glad to save my memories, and not so willing to go there once again.

Finally, in Italy, as in many countries is forbidden going out of home, if not to buy food or medicines, or medical visits: so it will be good to know if you could send information about the situation in your region (on a world standard, Rajasthan is a State, somehow larger than Italy and more populated).

Here we are doubtful: is epidemic/pandemic going down or not? We are only quite sure that bad numbers are not growing in Italy since more than a week.

Regards and best wishes,

Giuliano Bellezza

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27) Monday 27 April from Carlos Nunes Silva

Dear Giuliano

Thank you for your response. I can add some short information about postponing the Conferences planned for 2020.

Best regards

Carlos

**IGU COMMISSION GEOGRAPHY OF GOVERNANCE (C16.12) - CONFERENCES IN 2021**

### **1. IGU Commission Geography of Governance Annual Conference 2021**

The IGU Commission Geography of Governance 2021 Annual Conference will take place in Poznań, Poland, on 23-25 June 2021. More information will be available soon in the commission website: <https://sites.google.com/site/igugeogov/next-conferences>

### **2.IGU Thematic Conference "Heritage Geographies: Politics, Uses and Governance of the Past" - 2021**

The IGU Commission Geography of Governance is one of the Commissions engaged in the organization of the IGU Thematic Conference "Heritage Geographies: Politics, Uses and Governance of the Past". The conference, due to take place in Lecce, Italy, in May/June 2019, was postponed to 26 - 28 May 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The IGU Commission Geography of Governance holds 4 sessions in this conference: Session 12. Local Government and the Governance of Urban Heritage (IGU Commission; Session 13. Citizen Participation in the Governance of Urban Heritage (IGU Commission on Geography of Governance); Session 14. Smart Governance and Urban Heritage (IGU Commission on Geography of Governance); Session 15. Urban Planning and Heritage (IGU Commission on Geography of Governance). For additional information see the conference website:

<http://conference.unisalento.it/ocs/index.php/heritagegeographies/heritagegeographies>

### **3. 34th International Geographical Congress 'Geography: bridging the continents' - 2021**

The 34th International Geographical Congress 'Geography: bridging the continents' due to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in August 2020, was postponed to 16-20 August 2021, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The IGU Commission Geography of Governance holds 10 sessions in this conference: Session 1. Citizen Participation In Urban Governance: Formal And Informal Community Engagement In Local Government Policies; Session 2. Climate Policy And Local Governance; Session 3. Inter-Municipal Cooperation; Session 4. International Cooperation Of Local And Regional Authorities; Session 5. Local Government Reforms: Decentralization V. Centralization; Session 6. Metropolitan Governance: Trends, Models, Challenges; Session 7. Migrants and Refugees Democratic Rights In Local Governance; Session 8. Shrinking Cities, Expanding Metropolises, De Populated Villages: The Governance Responses; Session 9. Spatial Justice and The Right To The City: The Role Of Local Government; Session 10. Transnational And Transcontinental Networking And Policy Learning. In addition to these sessions the IGU Commission Geography of Governance intends to hold an additional session on the responses of local government towards the Covid-19 pandemic. For more information see the Congress website: <http://www.igc2020.org/en/> .



## **3) SOME PERSONAL POW**

### **3.1) Activities of IGU V.P. R.B. SINGH**

**1 i.** Organizing IGU Commission Liaison and Planned Multi Commissions (5) supported 14<sup>th</sup> IGU India Burdwan Conference, March 6-8, 2020: Actively involved in organizing the IGU India Conference supported by 5 IGU Commissions: Biogeography and Biodiversity, Geoheritage, Hazard and Risk, Climatology, Young and Early Career Taskforce etc. The IGU India Conference-15<sup>th</sup> in the series of Theme based organized by International Geographical Union (IGU) in the recent past in India. Apart from large participants from India, Asian participants from Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Australia and Sri Lanka participated. IGU President Professor Yukio Himiyama addressed the Inaugural session through video conferencing. ISC also addressed the Inaugural session. Two messages includes Dr. Mathieu Denis and Prof. Ruth Fincher: <https://igu-online.org/> <https://igu-online.org/welcome-address-from-international-.../>

**Poster Award Organized for International Geographical Union Taskforce for Young and Early Career Geographers at IGU India, Burdwan, 2020.**

For the fifth time a Poster Session in the memory of Dr. Manju Singh was organized at IGU India in collaboration with IGU Taskforce and it carried best young scientist awards evaluated by Eminent Jury members. IGU TF Chair and Secretary were present.

iii. IGU Secretary General **Attended International Science Council -Scientific Committee:** Urban Health and Wellbeing-a System Analysis Approach at Xiamen, China during November 7-9, 2019. Interaction with Dr. Mathieu Denis, Science Director of the ISC and IGU Chair of Urban Commission Prof. Celine Rozenblat for close cooperation with IGU. Also chaired a session at 6<sup>th</sup> Conference on Urban Health and wellbeing and interacted with Chinese geographers.

**2. i. Interaction with Japanese Geographers** at HINDAS 5<sup>th</sup> regular seminar at Delhi University-Hiroshima University, on 26<sup>th</sup> December such as Prof. K. Tomozawa and CHEN, Lin, Hirishima University together with KUWATSUKA, Kentaro, (Ryukoku University, Japan) related to IGU events.

ii. Delivered keynote address at the Asia-Pacific Hydrology and Water Resources Seminar at IIT, Roorkee and interacted with many water resources experts including Professor Kaoru Takara, Dean, Kyoto University.

iii. Collaborated with UK geographers from University of Bath Spa, Dr. Esther and Dr. Richard Johnson under UGC-UKIERI International Project on Indian Himalayan Flood Database for DRR. Discussion with IGU Steering Committee Member Professor K. Kimoto, Japan at Indian Science Congress where I delivered Presidential Address of the Earth System Science Section.

iv. Contributed to **Indo-Nepal Social Scientists meet** including at ICSSR under leadership of Professor V.K. Malhotra, Member-Secretary, ICSSR and Dr. Deepak Kumar Adhikari, Director, Neeti Anusandhan Pratishthan,

v. Interaction with **Canadian geographer Prof. Garry Fehr**, Associate Vice President, University of the Fraser Valley, Canada on Farming Technology on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019

vi. Organised **International Mountain Day Program together with IGU and FAO Country Director Mr. Tomoko Shichiri, UN Representative in India**, Col. Rabindranath, Mountain India People Forum and several community leaders.

vii. Chaired session on Resilience of Built Environment at the **Global Symposia on Disaster Resilient Smart Cities**, organised by Special Centre for Disaster Research, JNU, New Delhi. Good interaction with leading scholars of the world on role of IGU in DRR.

viii. Participated in the Organising committee of the 2021 IUSSP International Population Conference December 5-10 at Hyderabad on February 8, 2020.

### 3. i. Several Proposed Volumes under New Springer Series on Sustainable Development Goals together with Mike Meadows.

<http://www.springer.com/series/15486>

<https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811520969>

[New Book: Spatial Information Technology for Sustainable Development Goals](#)

### ii. Advances in Geographical and Environmental Sciences for IGU Related Publications

This Springer series is continuing with 11 books that have been published. See link below:

<http://www.springer.com/series/13113>.

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-981-13-6671-0>

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-58039-5>

## 3.2) G.B. HofG Editor in quarantine

I tried several times to remember 10 February 2020, but nothing comes to my mind: strange, because it was in Italy the first day of national lockdown, or quarantine if you prefer.

Some days before, on 31 January, Italy did close air contacts with China, and Chinese Government



was very upset for this, but something relevant had happen just that day in Roma, when 2 Chinese citizen had to be recovered in hospital, as affected by COVID 19: first cases in Europe. After a month they left the hospital and began recovery treatment. Finally, on 21 April they could go back home, gratefully thanking Italy. During this period the Italy-China relations had turned very much, arriving probably to the best point ever.

*(Some days later, the same Pope should celebrate in the empty St Peter Place, with no attending people.)*

By my part, I am still locked in, and to go out I need to demonstrate that I am going out for medical visit, to buy medicine or food.

But I and my wife are among the luckiest persons in Italy. We live in my wife's native home, far from downtown Roma, nearly in open country. Every day

we can run as much as we want; I admit that run is not really what I am doing: I am one of the slowest runners in the world.

My three sons will be glad to change position: one son lives with family in Stoneham, MA, quite far from Boston downtown, not so bad. One daughter is a lawyer in Milan, with two sons, school closed and no housekeeper. The other daughter teaches in NY, Columbia University. Because of this she can afford an apartment on Central Park; now from the window she has the privilege of a nice sight on the recently built COVID 19 Hospital.



Where I live, nothing can disturb my work for IGU, but this is somehow frustrating: new to post in the HofG website were only limited to report that this or that initiative has been cancelled.

*(The empty Spanish Step: this year no spring azaleas show)*

Consequently, no hope to receive some report: the Newsletter was approaching and remained empty. But the boring times were arriving to an end, when the Covid 19 arrived in Italy. Before we had seen something in newspapers, but the real beginning was on 31 January, when a Chinese couple, in their middle '60s, had to be hospitalized for COVID 19: all of a sudden, we learned that it was a reality, and not a nice one. the Government began to act slowly, but some days after became active, and very severely; nearly 50 days later, looks me like the delay had not be too long, a rather short one if anything. Back to the beginning, the rapidity of the Italian contagion has really been exceptional, and in a very few days Italy resulted as the second Country in the world to be so badly affected. The government suggest to the population to wear masks and going out the minimum possible, and alerted the European States to make the same, but with poor reaction. Some days later, on 10<sup>th</sup> February, the Italian lockdown began, and it is still operating. Now we know more about the beginning, and we can say that the first one to affect people had arrived from Germany, not from China. Moreover, the diffusion in Italy is opposite to the normal one, mainly due to the different attitude of the Italian Regions about health. National public funding for health has always been scarce, and actually lowered in the last years. In the most advanced regions (Lombardia, Piemonte, Veneto) the local administration favoured somehow, since the '90s, the private Clinic, of course more expensive. That's why the public health organisation was not prepared to the sudden increase of dangerous ill people.

On 9<sup>th</sup> February the lockdown was announced for the following day, and in the same evening an incredible amount of southbound people invaded Milan Central Railway Station: the morning after thousands possibly contagious persons arrived in the southern Regions. Very bad initiative, but with a geographic explanation: thousands of employees working in the norther factories were (and still are) southern Italy immigrates. A carefully hospitality cannot lead to heal, but surely staying in your home assisted by your family means a good mental attitude: surely an advantage. The regional Governors of Southern Italy strongly forced more the lockdown, and the population demonstrated their disappointment, but only speaking, maybe screaming: but didn't go in the street. Because of this, the badly internationally famed Italian *Mezzogiorno* remains the very less COVID 19 affected Italian Region.

I wrote some lines above, that in the second half of February China acted more openly toward IGU and Italy. Quite unexpectedly, Russian behavior has been the same, and even more unexpected and welcome were the health care professionals and medicine arriving from Cuba and Albania. After the European diffusion of COVID 19 nearly all European States followed what was being done in Italy. At last the President of the most powerful State in the world said “we will not make like Italy”: he was good prophet, now his State is the most suffering, country, and I am worried for my two married sons and four nephews living there. What about me? I decided to post in HofG website the first mail exchanged between the Geographical Society of China and Prof. Himiyama, then the contribute of the IGU Commission on Health and Environment, then the Contribute of IGU C17, of C18.39



AGLE, then, then ... well be patient. Apart from giving a quite good geographical explanation of the Italian diffusion of the pandemic, I dedicated the second part of this newsletter totally to these mails.

*(In the photo, Italian President Mattarella after paying a tribute to the Unknown Soldier of the First World War on 25 April, day of the freeing from nazi-fascism).*



#### 4) NUIT DE LA GÉOGRAPHIE

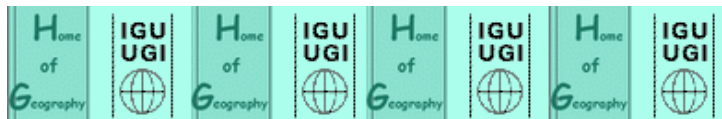
The French first organisers sadly had to tell that this year the many dozen initiatives all over the world were cancelled because of the restrictions due to Coronavirus.

Only one initiative, actually organised at the very last minutes, could be really start: in Italy. Some experts of virtual and social spaces had the idea of a *webinar*, so from 18 to 20 (well, late afternoon, not really in the night) they listen to some notes held by young university teacher, intervene, posed question, discussed on the answer.

Moderated by Egidio Dansero (Torino University), in the name of SOGEI (Sodalizi Geografici Italiani), the speakers were Franco Farinelli (Bologna University), Vittorio Colizzi (Tor Vergata



University, Roma), Emanuela Casti (Bergamo University), Paola Pepe (AIIG, Associazione Italiana Insegnanti di Geografia), Filippo Celata (La Sapienza University, Roma). After the discussion was open, and the initiative obtained a real success: active contacts have been nearly 900, beyond the more optimistic hopes. The Italian many activities of the *Notte della Geografia* were considered in 2019 as the best of the world, and this year there were about 15 initiatives already organized. Too bad renouncing to all this: with some knowledge of *social internet* it has not been easy, and the *webinar* has been a nice solution. Once again the French idea of a *Nuit Géo* found in Italy the most active participation: a great satisfaction for the young Italian geographers.



## 5) INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE COUNCIL



# International Science Council

FOR DIRECT LINK: [council.science](http://council.science)



## 6) FUTURE EARTH

# futureearth

**TO SEE LAST NEWS, CLICK:**

<https://futureearth.org/latest/news/>



## 7) UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY



**LINK TO THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE IS JUST:** <https://unu.edu/>



## 8) COMMITTEE ON DATA FOR SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY (CODATA)



DIRECT LINK, JUST TYPE: <https://codata.org/>



## 9) FORTHCOMING EVENTS

*(more information in the Home of Geography website, Events 2019)*

All the activities planned in these months before the IGU Congress in Istanbul have been postponed or cancelled

