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36th INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS RESCHEDULED FOR 9-14 NOVEMBER 2020

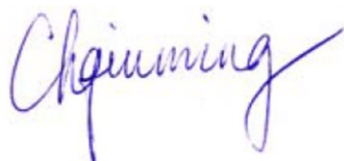
The COVID-19 epidemic is causing considerable disruption worldwide. In view of the health risk and mindful that about 5,000 delegates from 120 countries were then registered, on 21 February the Government of India announced the postponement of the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC), originally scheduled for 2-8 March, to a date to be defined later. Such momentous decision came to a point when preparations for the IGC were being finalized and delegates were getting ready to travel to India. IUGS believes that it is now of paramount importance for the parties involved in the Congress to quickly reach a consensus on a common line of action, in order to provide all the participants (delegates from Adhering and Affiliated Organizations, representatives of IUGS Commissions, Task Groups and Initiatives, registered members, exhibitors, industrial and scientific sponsors, observers) with clear, unequivocal information.

The parties involved in different roles in the IGC are: (i) the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), i.e. the constituted entity that has assumed legal and financial responsibility for the forthcoming IGC; (ii) the International Geological Congress Committee (IGCC), i.e. the IUGS-IGC joint committee dealing with IGC matters, which may be called upon by the LOC for advice; and (iii) the IUGS Executive Committee (EC), i.e. the IUGS body responsible for the overall administration of the Union. Following a proposal by the LOC on 24 February to postpone the IGC to November, the IUGS EC has agreed to that request. An informal poll, held amongst the National Delegates to the IGC and the other Council participants, reached the same conclusion. After these results, it was the turn of the IGCC to vote on the LOC proposal, which was unanimously endorsed on 26 February. On 27 February, the LOC released the results of an official poll according to which 86% of the 2,400 respondents are willing to participate in the November IGC.

The duration of the present epidemic is not foreseeable. Nonetheless, the IUGS will provide full cooperation to the LOC in order to meet the new timeline. To this end, we urge all IUGS constituent bodies to plan to ensure the highest level possible of participation in the 36th IGC in November. It is essential that, as in the past, the four-year cycle of IUGS activities is formally reported. Among other matters, the progress of all IUGS bodies must be reviewed, new officers must be elected, and the venue for the 2028 IGC decided. We commend the Indian Local Organizing Committee for its resilience in the face of a most unexpected event which has put at risk years of dedicated preparatory work. It is now crucial that all 5,000 registered participants receive clear information on the new program and activities as soon as they become available, as well as details on the handling of previous hotel and Congress registrations.

During its 142 years of history, the International Geological Congress has weathered all kinds of unexpected events. For the common good of the global geological community we should now all strive to ensure that the 2020 edition is a success.

Best regards,



Prof. Dr. Qiuming Cheng  
President, International Union of Geological Sciences

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