

Minutes of the Business Sessions at the XXI International Grassland Congress Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China

Opening Business Meeting

IGC Chair (Gavin Sheath) welcomed delegates to the business session and emphasised how valuable it has been in working with the International Rangeland Congress and the China Organising Committee to develop and deliver the joint IGC-IRC 2008 Congress in China. The chair visited China five times to assist with the development of the Congress.

He acknowledged members of the IGC Continuing Committee who were in attendance: Dr Guy Allard (Canada, Region 1), Dr Masakazu Goto (Japan, Region 6), Dr Hossein Arzani (Iran, Region 7), Dr Maria Lourenco (Portugal, Region 8), Dr Johannes Isselstein (Germany, Region 9), Dr Geza Nagy (Hungary, Region 10), and Dr Frank O'Mara (Ireland, Immediate past host country). Apologies were lodged from Dr Maria Diaz Sanchez (Cuba, Region 2), Dr Raul Vera (Chile, Region 3), Dr Sujatha Premarante (Sri Lanka, Region 4), and Dr Apollo Orodho (Kenya, Region 11).

The Chair reported that Minutes of the XX IGC business meetings are on the IGC website, and therefore, they were not published in the IGC-IRC 2008 Proceedings. Copies of the minutes were made available at the meeting. An update was given on the Resolutions that were passed at the Ireland, XX IGC:

Resolution 1 expressed IGC thanks to Ireland Government, sponsoring organisations and named individuals for delivering a very successful Congress.

Resolution 2 recognised the excellent contribution of the scientific committee and editors of XX IGC.

Resolution 3 encouraged the Organising Committee of XXI IGC to stimulate a strong delegate attendance from all developing countries. China Organising Committee established an IGC-IRC 2008 website and delivered three Congress announcements to world delegates. However, it must be recognised that International Congress attendance is expensive. To that end, international sponsorship of \$US360K was obtained for supporting Developing Country delegates at this Congress. The great effort of Jim O'Rourke (IRC Chair) in gaining international sponsorship must be acknowledged.

Resolution 4 asked that a permanent IGC website be established. Such a site was launched in 2006 and has been overseen by Professor Guy Allard (Continuing Committee member – Canada). The efforts of Guy and Dr Raul Vera (Continuing Committee member – Chile) in establishing the site must be acknowledged. The Crop Science Society of America has provided the technical service for this website.

Resolution 5 asked that the revision of the Terminology for Grazing Lands and Grazing Animals be presented at the joint IGC-IRC Congress in 2008. While no separate publication was made, terminology statements have been included in the People & Policy in Rangeland book that was provided in the IGC-IRC registration bag.

Resolution 6 commended the decision to hold a joint IGC and IRC congress in China, 2008.

Resolution 7 asked the Continuing Committee to develop and implement ways to encourage student and young scientist participation; and to recognise outstanding students. Through discounted registration and delegate support, student delegates (237) were encouraged to attend the joint IGC-IRC 2008 meeting. No other initiatives were progressed.

Resolution 8 expressed concern about the decreasing funding for research and development in and for developing countries. IGC chair communicated this concern to FAO and notes that FAO is listed as a Supporter of IGC-IRC 2008.

In addition to the above activities, IGC arranged for the Crop Science Society of America to hold in its accounts, IGC funds (€1,000) that were granted from the surpluses of the Ireland Congress. A \$US10 levy on fully registered delegates at the joint IGC-IRC 2008 meeting will be lodged in this account.

No constitutional amendments were received prior to the 6 months preceding the IGC-IRC 2008 meeting.

The Nominations Committee was introduced: Dr Bob Clements (Australia), Dr Hossein Arzani (Iran), Dr Geza Nagy (Hungary), Dr John Milne (UK) and Dr Walter Ayala (Uruguay). This committee was charged with nominating first-term representatives to the Continuing Committee for the following regions:

- Region 3 : South America
- Region 5 : Oceania
- Region 6 : East Asia
- Region 7 : Middle East
- Region 8 : Mediterranean
- Region 10 : Northern Eurasia
- Region 11 : Africa (except regions 7 & 8)

The chair noted the unhealthy imbalance between first and second-term representation on the Continuing Committee.

The Resolutions Committee was also introduced: Dr Vivien Allen (USA), Dr Masakuza Goto (Japan) and Dr Maria Lourenco (Portugal). This committee was charged with bringing IGC resolutions to the final business session for discussion and approval.

Finally, the venue for the XXII IGC 2013 was announced. Enquiries to host this Congress were received from Central Europe, East Africa and Australia. The successful bid was Sydney, Australia, where the emphasis will be on Southern Australia grasslands and the theme "Revitalising Grasslands to Sustain Our Communities".

Closing Business Meeting

IGC Chair (Gavin Sheath) acknowledged the deaths of John Frame (UK) and Len't Mannetje (Netherlands). Both men made significant contributions to grassland research and management; and were longstanding participants in IGC.

The Resolutions Committee (Dr V. Allen, USA; Dr M. Goto, Japan; and Dr M. Lourenco, Portugal) tabled the resolutions they received.

Resolution 1 – The members of the XXI IGC express their sincere thanks to the Chinese Grassland Society and to all sponsoring organisations that enabled this first joint IGC/IRC congress to be held. The IGC congratulates the organising committee for putting together an outstanding experience. Within the Chinese Grassland Society, the delegates wish to express special thanks to Inner Mongolia Agricultural University, China Agricultural University, China Academy of Agricultural Science, and Lanzhou University for their outstanding support and numerous contributions. Special recognition is given to the many volunteers from these organisations who have helped in all ways possible to make this a successful event.

Carried: Unanimously

Resolution 2 – The members of the XXI IGC would like to recognise and thank the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region People's Government for the financial support and contributions to the logistics and services required in holding this joint congress. Without this commitment and support the congress would not have been possible.

Carried: Unanimously

Resolution 3 – The members of the XXI IGC recognise and thank the members and leadership of the VIII IRC for the opportunity to work together in this first joint meeting of these congresses and proclaim that this joint meeting has been a success in achieving our common objectives and interests.

Carried: Unanimously

Resolution 4 – Members ask that the organising committee of the XXII IGC continue with the practices established at the 1993 IGC aimed at stimulating a strong attendance of grassland researchers and practitioners from all developing countries. The members further request that a special effort be dedicated to encouraging attendance and participation by students and young professionals from around the world.

Carried: Unanimously

Resolution 5 – Resolved that the IGC actively encourage the participation of practitioners in their respective international activities and meetings, where ‘practitioner’ refers to those people who earn their principal living directly from the land including farmers, ranchers, or herders.

Carried: Unanimously

Resolution 6 – Whereas the importance of carbon sequestration, soil conservation, nutrient cycling, energy costs, and natural resource conservation continue to escalate, it is requested that future congresses place greater emphasis on agroforestry and agro-silvo-pastoral ecosystems as a sustainable alternative for livestock production.

Carried: Unanimously

Resolution 7 – Whereas temperate indigenous grasslands are critically endangered and urgent action is required to protect the services they provide to sustain human life, the XXI IGC resolved to call upon all sectors of society to collaborate in protecting these vital ecosystems.

Carried: Unanimously

Resolution 8 – Delegates at the XXI IGC request that revision of the Terminology for Grazing Lands and Grazing Animals be completed by the end of 2009 and presented at the IX IRC in Argentina (2011) and the XXII IGC in Australia (2013). This will require restructuring of the revision committee.

Carried: Unanimously

Resolution 9 – Given the demonstrated benefits of the joint IGC-IRC 2008 meeting in China, members of the XXI IGC request that future IGC Continuing Committees make every endeavour to conduct joint activities with the IRC in order to maximise synergies in knowledge, practice, and resources. More specifically, it is requested that the IGC Continuing Committee works with the IRC Continuing Committee to develop a joint Congress in 2015 where the location provides access to both grassland and rangeland systems; and the program gives focus to priority topics within both bio-physical and socio-economic themes.

Several delegates spoke in favour of the Resolution.

Carried: Unanimously

The Continuing Committee representatives who will complete their second term were acknowledged:

Region I [Canada, USA]
Region II [Central America]
Region IV [South East Asia]
Region IX [Europe]

Dr. Guy Allard, Canada
Dr. Maria Diaz Lanchez, Cuba
Dr. Sujatha Premaratne, Sri Lanka
Dr. Johannes Isselstein, Germany

The Nomination Committee (Dr. R. Clements, Australia; Dr. H. Arzani, Iran; Dr. S. Nagy, Hungary; Dr. J. Milne, U.K. and Dr. W. Ayala, Uruguay) announced the new representatives to the Continuing Committee:

Region III [South America]	Paulo Carvalho, Brazil
Region V [Oceania]	David Kemp, Australia
Region VI [East Asia]	Nan Zhibiao, China
Region VII [Middle East]	Hossein Barani, Iran
Region VIII [Mediterranean]	Claudio Porqueddu, Italy
Region X [Northern Eurasia]	Piotr Golinski, Poland
Region XI [Africa]	David Mwangi, Kenya
China Organising Committee	Yun Jin Feng, China

The chair noted the undesirable imbalance in the number of first and second term representatives and recommended that future Continuing Committees rectify that imbalance.

Dr David Kemp and Dr Richard Sheldrake introduced the XXII IGC venue (Sydney, NSW, Australia) to the delegates and issued an invitation to attend in 2013.

Returning and new members of Continuing Committee left the meeting to vote on the new IGC chair. Gavin Sheath then announced to the meeting that Dr. Guy Allard is the new chair of IGC Continuing Committee. Dr. Allard thanked the China Organising Committee, the previous Continuing Committee and Dr Sheath for their work over the last 3 years; and for a highly successful Congress.

The meeting then ended.