

2016 International Year of

# **GLOBAL** *understanding*

**IYGU**

Proclaimed by the international councils  
of the natural, social, and human sciences  
(ICSU, ISSC and CIPSH)





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The 2016 ***International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU)*** is based on an initiative of the International Geographical Union (IGU) that seeks support for its widespread implementation beyond the field of science. We invite you to support this vital initiative.



## GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING: AN ESSENTIAL HUMAN CONDITION

***In the face of global change, we must think globally.***

***Local actions alter global processes.***

***Global understanding clarifies the connections  
between the local and the global.***

Global thinking and global action demand global understanding. This International Geographical Union (IGU) initiative aims to bridge the gap in awareness between local acts and

global effects through research, education, and information. The IYGU encourages and empowers all people to make their daily choices in the light of our global challenges.

## WHAT DOES THE IYGU DO?

*The IYGU connects local actions and global challenges.*

*The IYGU focuses on the global sustainability of local action.*

*The IYGU recognizes culturally different paths to global sustainability.*

The International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU) addresses the ways in which we inhabit an increasingly globalized world. How do we transform nature? How do we build new social and political relationships for the emerging global reality? Societies and cultures determine the ways

we live with and shape nature. They influence how we perceive the global consequences of our everyday actions. We need to understand what our daily actions mean for the world as a whole in order to overcome global challenges.

The IYGU flows from agendas for global sustainability research established by the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC); it contributes to the Future Earth program in manifold ways.

By promoting a new level of focused research collaboration, the IYGU reinforces existing UN priorities. IYGU corresponds to the demands of the post-2015 Development Agenda.

## IYGU OBJECTIVES

*To integrate natural and social sciences.*

*To provide scientific and public support for UN priorities.*





An aerial photograph of a complex multi-level highway interchange with several overpasses and ramps. A large, semi-transparent circular graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image, featuring a stylized spiral or swirl design in the center. The background is a light olive green.

## LINKING THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL

*Everyday actions matter for global climate change.*

*Everyday decisions depend on lifestyles.*

*A global view reduces the risk of regional conflicts.*

Our world faces social, cultural, and economic change, as well as a changing climate. Human actions play a key role in creating such world-wide challenges. However, human actions also provide solutions.

If individuals know what their day-to-day routines mean for the planet, they can take appropriate action. Global understanding helps overcome the knowledge-action gap and supports policy decisions that promote sustainability.



## PEOPLE'S POLITICS

*Global problems require sustainable solutions.*

*Sustainable change should emerge from the bottom.*

Global challenges require swift, yet considered, goal setting and political action. We cannot afford to wait for the ideal decision-making body or a global jurisdiction – it may never happen. Instead, change should come from the bottom.

Individuals make choices, vote, and drive policies at the local, regional, and national levels. Widespread global understanding embeds awareness of the global consequences of individual choices. IYGU wants sustainable change that starts from the bottom.

## THE PUBLICATIONS



These six open access publications – each with a triple focus – will address everyday behavior in the light of the post-2015 Development Agenda, the connections between the global and the local, and actions to improve global sustainability.

## THE PUBLICATIONS



A first set of publications will summarize relevant current knowledge. A second set, produced after the IYGU, will evaluate, collect, and promote the results in research, teaching, and information.





## SCIENCE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

*Everyday life and science belong together.*

*Global understanding is based on joint social and natural science research.*

*Research should address the logic of everyday life.*

Global understanding calls for the reconciliation of the global and the local, of science and everyday lives. The IYGU focuses on essential daily activities such as eating, drinking, housing, working, travelling, and communicating.

Why do we make the choices that we do? Which societies – rich and poor – make more globally sustainable choices? Natural and social scientists will jointly provide answers.



## SUSTAINABILITY AND GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING

*Global change may be climatic, social, cultural, and economic.*

*Climate change is an example of the links between global and local effects.*

*Societies need global understanding to manage change sustainably.*

Global sustainability cannot come about without local sustainability. Actions that may seem disconnected in space and time are often fundamentally linked. Many people know about the need for sustainability, but few make the corresponding decisions.

Global understanding empowers people to make such connections.

The IYGU's main goal is to promote global understanding so that actions and decisions yield sustainable outcomes, every day, all over the world.



## SUSTAINABILITY AND GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING

*Global understanding is a bridge builder ...*

*... changing from knowing about sustainability to living sustainably.*



## HOW CAN IT BE DONE?

*The IYGU will make global processes and challenges understandable.*

*The IYGU will encompass research, teaching, and information.*

*The IYGU will highlight the power of everyday local choices for global change.*

*The IYGU will remind global citizens of their global responsibilities.*

The IYGU aims to yield deep, but actionable, insights into the ways all peoples can live together more sustainably. The focus will be on developing strategies for targeted local projects with a global reach. There are three elements to this: research, education, and information. Research will bring scientists together to understand the global impacts of everyday local activities related

to culture, society, economy, and nature.

The IYGU will empower bottom-up movements for sustainable everyday politics. Classrooms throughout the world will use the research results at all educational levels. The IYGU will provide information and promote knowledge sharing to increase public awareness by means of publications, computer games, TV programs, etc.

## HOW CAN IT BE DONE?

*The IYGU will strengthen collaboration between the natural, social and human sciences,*

*will identify local actions' global effects,*

*will empower individuals to change locally to have a global effect.*

***Ultimately,  
the IYGU will encourage everyone  
to make daily decisions in the light  
of global challenges.***



# ORGANIZATION OF THE IYGU



**Executive Director**  
Prof. Benno Werlen (Germany)

**Patrons**  
Dr. h.c. Eliezer Batista (Brazil), Key initiator of the Rio Summit 1992  
Prof. Yuan-Tseh Lee (Taiwan), Nobel Prize laureate in Chemistry  
Prof. Klaus Toepfer (Germany), former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); inductee into the Kyoto Earth Hall of Fame

**Advisory Board**  
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Prof. Bruno Messerli (Switzerland), Director of UN International Year of Mountains  
Prof. Eduardo de Mulder (The Netherlands), Director of UN International Year of Planet Earth



# ORGANIZATION OF THE IYGU

The IYGU’s program is guided by world-leading social and natural scientists, as well as philosophy and humanities scholars from the Global North as well as from the Global South.

**Steering Committee**  
Ron Abler (USA); Anantha Duraiappah (Malaysia); Lord Anthony Giddens (UK); Heide Hackmann (South Africa); Gudmund Hernes (Norway); Vladimir Kolossov (Russia); Sebastian Lentz (Germany); Robyn Longhurst (New Zealand); Lindisizwe Magi (South Africa); Manasse Mbonye (Rwanda); Gordon McBean (Canada); Margaret Robertson (Australia); Ebrima Sall (Senegal); Adama Samassékou (Mali); Lukas Sosoe (Ghana); Shangyi Zhou (P.R. China)

**Scientific Panel**  
Ibidun Adelekan (Nigeria), Irasema Alcántara-Ayala (Mexico), Habib Ben Boubaker (Tunisia); Georg Gartner (Austria); Yukio Himiyama (Japan); Alik Ismail-Zadeh (Russia); Peter Jackson (UK); Jacques Lévy (France); Reinhard Mechler (Austria); Chipso Plaxedes Mubaya (Zimbabwe); Luiz Oosterbeek (Portugal); John Pickles (USA); Armin Reller (Germany); Lauren Resnick (USA); Hartmut Rosa (Germany); Saskia Sassen (USA); Allen Scott (USA); Walter E. L. Spiess (Germany); Nico Stehr (Germany); Mathis Stock (Switzerland); Farhana Sultana (Bangladesh); Peter Taylor (UK); John Urry (UK)

**Outreach Panel**  
Karl Donert (UK); Aharon Kellerman (Israel); Rupert Maclean (Australia); Lauren Resnick (USA); Margaret Robertson (Australia); Eric Tsang Po Keung (Hongkong, P.R. China)

**International Relations & Fundraising**  
Sybelle De Jongh (Brazil); Inguelore Scheunemann (Brazil)



PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS OF IYGU



**ISSC**  
International Social Science Council



**CIPSH**  
Conseil International  
de la Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines



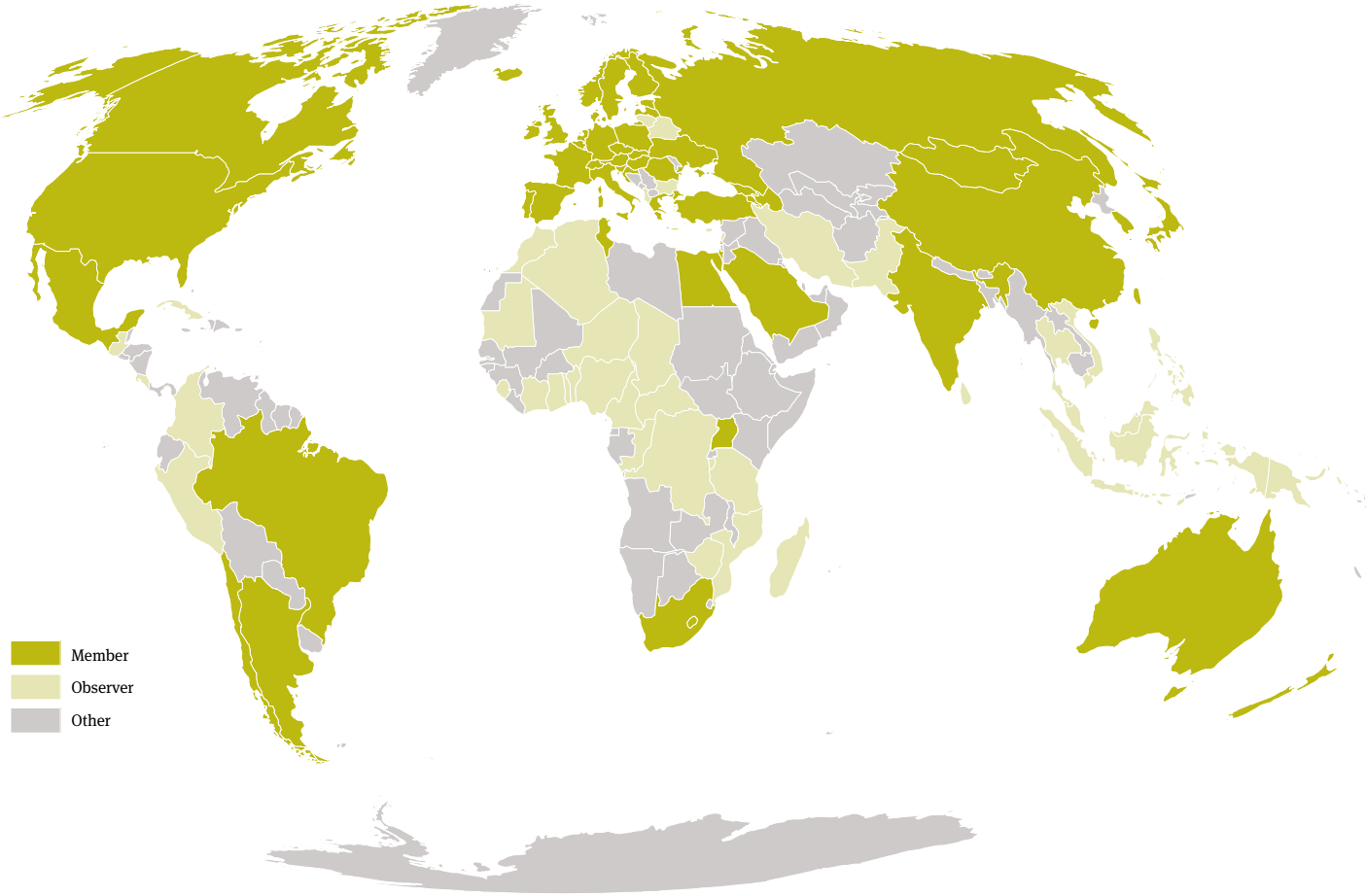
**ICSU**  
International Council  
for Science



**IGU**  
International Geographical Union

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS OF IYGU

World Map of IGU Member Countries



Member  
Observer  
Other





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