

INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION CONFERENCE IN MOSCOW, 17–22 AUGUST 2015: GEOGRAPHY, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY FOR OUR FUTURE EARTH

In 2015, Moscow will host the Regional Conference of the International Geographer's Union (IGU) for the third time since the International Geographical Congress of 1976, when over 2,000 participants from around the world gathered in the Soviet capital for lectures, discussions, workshops and excursions. The pace of global transformation has since accelerated in directions that seemed unimaginable four decades ago. The 2015 Regional Conference will be an opportunity for the world geographical community to reflect upon these transformations as well as the future course of human civilisation in relation to pressing socio-environmental challenges. The motto of the conference is "Geography, Culture, and Society for our Future Earth".



IGU MOSCOW 2015

ABOUT THE IGU

The IGU is among the world's oldest international research associations. The first International Geographical Congress was held in Antwerp in 1871, and subsequent meetings led to the establishment of the IGU in 1922. Today its members hail from over 100 countries, united in cultivating geographic research and education worldwide. In addition to its General Assembly, Executive

Committee and National Committees, the IGU includes special commissions, task forces and study groups engaged in ongoing collaborative projects. Dr. Vladimir Kolosov, from Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU) in Russia, is currently serving as President of the IGU from 2012 to 2016.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is central to the IGU's operations and long-term objectives, as evident in recent initiatives dedicated to urban ecology, geographical education and building a database of related peer-reviewed journals. The most ambitious IGU initiative at present is the UN International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU), aimed at fostering international cooperation based on awareness of the relationships between local actions and global problems. The IGU also facilitates the participation of geographers in world scientific communities through official affiliation with the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC).

The International Geographical Congress is held every four years. The 2012 event took place in Cologne, and the next will be in Beijing. IGU Regional Conferences are annual, hosted within the past few years in Tel Aviv, Santiago and Kyoto. The 2014 conference will take place in Krakow, followed by the 2015 programme in Moscow.

IGU 2015 REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN MOSCOW

IGU Moscow 2015 will focus on five main themes: Urban Environment, Polar Studies,

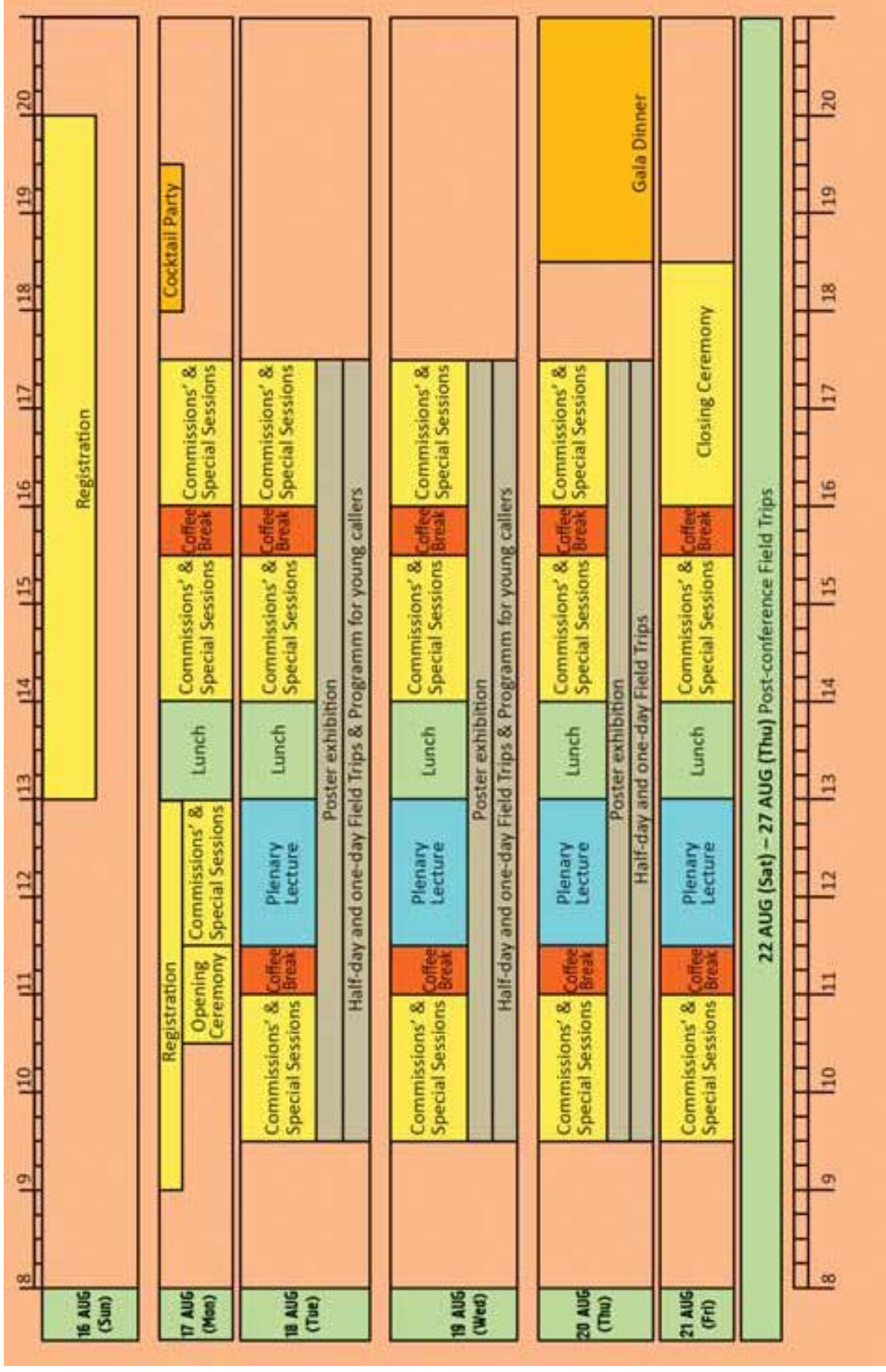


Fig 1. IGU-2015 conference program

Climate Change, Global Conflict, and Regional Sustainability. The programme is rooted in principals of diversity and interdisciplinary exchange. It will feature a variety of meetings, including plenary sessions, lectures, panel discussions, workshops and other events (Fig. 1). It will also provide opportunities for sharing ideas on IGU projects and on the role of geographers in international initiatives such as Future Earth.

Geographical education and integration of young scholars will be central to each of the conference themes. The programme will include two special events: the day of young scholars, with a competition for best presentation and other awards, and the special sessions "Academic Geography for Secondary Schools" and "Teaching Geography in the University." IGU Moscow will also incorporate the 2015 International Geographical Olympiad.

Conference proceedings will take place in the main campus of MSU, Russia's oldest, largest and most prestigious university. This vertical main building is a distinctive work of "socialist realist" architecture, rising 236 meters above a park along the Moscow River. Views of the city from the Department of Geography and museums on the upper floors are among the most breathtaking among many in Russia's capital. The university has two botanical gardens that contain rare plant species and medicinal herbs. It is also within a pleasant walk from the Sparrow Hills Nature Reserve, as well as Gorky Park and the Kremlin further along the river embankment.

The IGU 2015 organising committee encourages conference participants to enjoy campus tours and a variety of other excursions in and around Moscow. Following the conference there will be a series of planned trips to other parts of Russia, including St. Petersburg, the Golden Ring, the Upper Volga, Sochi, Kazan, Novgorod the Great and Valdai National Park. Conference excursions will offer a variety of options for informal interaction around geographical, cultural and historical interests.

EXPERIENCING RUSSIA

Russia has a longstanding geographical tradition that has given rise to education and research networks that incorporate 20 institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 20 research organisations of the Russian Hydro-Meteorological Service and more than 100 university departments. Russian geography is known for the study of human impacts on diverse environments, from urban to extremely remote. Local discoveries cover a range from socio-cultural phenomena to new rivers, lakes and mountain ranges added to the map as late as the 1940s. Progressive geographical theory and methods have encountered fertile grounds for development in Russia through practical application in a wide variety of ecosystems.

Russia's extraordinary social, cultural and environmental diversity offers rich material for scientific inquiry. Its territory spans nine time zones and eight climate zones – encompassing mountains, tundra, arid steps, deserts and the earth's largest coastlines, rivers and lakes. It includes landscapes that are comparatively untouched by human activity, covering over 60 percent of state territory. Even densely populated Moscow contains a national park and an extensive network of protected areas within its borders.

Moscow is Russia's ancient core as well as its current political, economic and cultural centre, with over 17 million people living within its metropolitan area. The capital's museums, theatres, public spaces, hotels and financial districts are prominent showcases for domestic and international visitors. At the heart of the city is the Kremlin, open to the public as a museum that features artefacts and settings of great historical importance. The urban environment embodies a history of bold political and economic transformations that remain strikingly present within its fabric. Moscow is also a crossroads between eastern and western destinations, with many forms of transportation to and from the city. Its three international airports are within a three-hour

Table 1. Important dates and deadlines for IGU-2015

Deadline	Activity
15 October 2014	Deadline for submitting session proposals
01 November 2014	Early registration begins
31 January 2015	Deadline for submitting abstracts for papers and posters
01 March 2015	Notification of the results of the abstract review
20 March 2015	Publication of the provisional conference program
10 April 2015	Deadline for early registration fee payment
10 June 2015	Deadline for regular fee payment

of flight of most European capitals, and it can be reached from the Pacific Coast on the Trans-Siberian Railway or by way of inland water routes from St. Petersburg.

Registration for IGU Moscow 2015 begins on 1 November 2014, and can be completed online at www.igu2015.ru. (Table 1).

The IGU 2015 Regional Conference is an important chance for geographers from around the world to share information and ideas in a fascinating location. It will offer a variety of opportunities for dialog within and between disciplines, covering key issues

in geography today. In this capacity, it will facilitate the contributions of geographers to global problem-solving through research and education.

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