

PRACTICAL GEOGRAPHY AND 21ST-CENTURY CHALLENGES

The International Geographical Union Conference dedicated to the centenary of the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow, Russia, 4th–6th June 2018)

This meeting was organised by the Institute of Geography RAS in cooperation with M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Russian Geographical Society, etc. It was attended by participants from over 35 countries. Welcoming addresses were given by:

- Vladimir Kolosov, post President of the IGU,
- Olga Solomina, Director of the Institute of Geography RAS
- Vladimir Kotlyakov, Honorary President of the Russian Geographical Society,
- The Chairman of the National Committee of Russian Geographers.

The Conference was organised in the Palace of Science as Headquarters of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The Plenary Session saw 10 general lectures given by speakers from Russia, China, France, Belgium, Germany, the USA and Japan. In turn, the several Special Sessions were dedicated to: health geography, the potential for geographical education, land-based solutions in a changing environment (land degradation), the shaping of a greater Eurasia (one belt-one road), and the agenda for mountainous areas 10–15 other sections were linked with various problems in the spheres of physical or economic geography.

Unfortunately, as the issues of the above kinds proved very difficult to separate, subject matter was sometimes returned to repeatedly. However, the whole Conference made plain the importance of the problems discussed in respect of the progressing degradation of natural resources in various of the Earth's climatic zones. Given that Russian territory is also diverse from this point of view, opportunities presented themselves for a great variety of climatic-zone transformations to be indicated, with

these seen to be accelerating, and indeed passing beyond the threshold at which a danger is posed, not only to ecosystems, but also to human belongs. Indeed, at some points, participants seemed so overloaded by apparently-irreversible problems that it was difficult for possible solutions to gain discussion.

I am of the view that the record from this meeting should gain publication in several volumes to be distributed around the world, with the particular problems raised being discussed in detail. One of leading questions highlighted and needing to be resolved is that revolving around water resources.

The Moscow meeting represented a first, very important step to discussing regulation (not only on the global, but also on the zonal or state levels) of the circulation of matter and energy. However, the next step is known, and should entail translation of what are conclusions important for millions of people. These are also of course matters for politicians and businesspeople, who tend to think a great deal about the local scale. Hence, they should take a look at what is going on in their surroundings and then try to find people responsible for disorders that have been intensifying for decades now.

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