

## **Report of the President**

Port Elizabeth, July 2017.

Looking back on my Presidency, it seems appropriate to summarize the changes that IAHS has gone through since I took over from Gordon Young in 2013. These changes are many. I have grouped them under six headings: our science initiatives; the organisational changes made to prepare ourselves for the coming decades; inclusiveness; the changes in our publication strategy and the way how we communicate with the public; and the expansion of medals and our honours programme. Finally I'll present some of my ideas for the future.

### **IAHS Science initiatives**

As President-elect (2011-2013), I was responsible for closing the PUB decade, which we concluded with the Delft Symposium "Completion of the IAHS decade on Prediction in Ungauged Basins and the way ahead" (23–25 October 2012), which also celebrated the 90th anniversary of IAHS. This symposium had three important outputs: the review article led by Markus Hrachowitz on "A decade of Predictions in Ungauged Basins (PUB)" published in HSJ (Hrachowitz et al., 2013), providing an overview of the insights gained and the research produced during the PUB decade; the Synthesis book by Blöschl et al. (2013), providing a synthesis of the theory of prediction in ungauged basins across processes, places and scales; and the book edited by Pomeroy et al. (2013) on practical experiences of putting PUB into practice. These are extremely valuable and well cited results of a dynamic decade, which was initiated by Kuni Takeuchi and Murugesu Sivapalan, and which was embraced by the entire hydrological community, mobilizing scientists from all over the world and adopted by major hydrological communities, including AGU and EGU.

During the Delft conference also the kick-off meeting was held for the follow-up decade, initiated by my predecessor Gordon Young and led by Alberto Montanari, which was (again) inspired by Murugesu Sivapalan who launched the concept of "Socio-hydrology" (Sivapalan et al., 2012). Alberto Montanari subsequently produced the science plan for the new decade on "Panta Rhei, Everything Flows" dealing with changes in hydrology and society (Montanari, 2013). During my Presidency, we have had two successful biennia, led by respectively Alberto Montanari and Hilary MacMillan, in which Panta Rhei, just like PUB, became the major research initiative of the hydrological community, bringing together a large group of active scientists from different disciplines and backgrounds. Already now, the momentum of Panta Rhei is so large, that it will certainly become as big a success as PUB was. I am happy to see that after these two successful biennia Giuliano de Baldassarre has agreed to become the leader of the third biennium.

### **IAHS organization**

When I entered the Presidency, it was clear that the financial basis of IAHS was no longer sound. For many years it had relied on book sales. These book sales were constantly declining as the world was becoming more digital. As a result, our income was no longer in balance with our expenditure and, even worse, we were experiencing an alarmingly negative trend. We had to reduce our overhead, which implied not only reducing the size of our office, but also of the Board of IAHS Ltd. We also needed to wrap up our US office, IAHS Inc., which existed for the operation of the Treasury and for the American book sales. Finally, we had to update the IAHS Ltd. governing document to

continue to function as a UK registered Charity. Finally, we had to close the US account and open a Euro account for our international activities.

The main thing that had to be revised was our publication model, and related to that a downsizing of the staff that had been engaged by producing, selling and shipping our books. Fortunately, this downsizing could be achieved naturally, without unwanted and undeserving decisions. The staff we had relied on for all these years was highly professional, very loyal and very dedicated to our association, and we are very grateful to them for what they have done. For many of our members these ladies were the face of our association. Jill Gash was happy to retire, but still helps out occasionally, and Penny Perrins found an interesting job elsewhere. Cate Gardner, who had been running the office for many years also wanted to retire, but we were very happy to retain her within our community as our Treasurer and Chairman of the IAHS Ltd Board. We hired Claire Lupton as the executive secretary to follow-up Cate, and Frances Watkins continued as editorial manager of publications (essentially HSJ).

That brings me to the Board of IAHS Ltd. and to the position of IAHS Treasurer. Chuck Onstad retired as Treasurer in 2016 after having served our Association for several decades in different capacities, for which we are immensely grateful. We are very happy that Cate, after her formal retirement, was willing to take over this important position within the IAHS executive board and at the same time take over the position of Chair of IAHS Ltd from Des Walling. Des chaired the IAHS Board in an exemplary manner for 20 years and made an outstanding contribution to IAHS both as a scientist, an officer and an executive. We are very grateful to him that he guided us through the difficult process of reducing the size of the IAHS office and Board and the revision of our publication contracts. We thank the outgoing board members John Rodda, Gwyn Rees, Chuck Onstad and Des Walling for their many years of dedication to the IAHS Ltd. Board, which from 2015 onwards consists of Cate Gardner as Chair of IAHS Ltd. and Treasurer of IAHS, Mike Acreman as Secretary of IAHS Ltd., the President (Hubert Savenije), the General Secretary (Christophe Cudenneq) and the Editor (Demetris Koutsoyiannis or one of his co-editors).

Another important change is that from 2016 onwards, we are allowed to have individual membership of IAHS. Originally, IAHS was bound by the general IUGG statutes that limit membership to Country Representatives. Member countries pay an annual fee, which pays for the organisation of IUGG and IAHS as one of its subsidiaries. IUGG recently revised its statutes allowing for (paid) individual membership, and IAHS can, as a consequence, do the same. In the past, science was steered by country member organisations, but nowadays, science is much more initiated and carried out by individual researchers (as is the case in e.g. AGU and EGU). Also we noted that countries are generally less willing to pay for their national representation in earth sciences. Especially developing countries are underrepresented, which conflicts with our global mandate. So both for practical and strategic reasons, there was a need to diversify our representation and income. IAHS has always had individual (unpaid) membership, but this was limited to receiving our newsletter. In the future, we shall gradually move towards a combination of country membership (which retains the right of nomination of the President and Secretary General) and individual membership. For now, the individual membership is still free, but gradually we shall introduce paid membership, with warranty for those who have limited capacity to pay. People who attend IAHS conferences will acquire membership through the registration fee. Annually they will be asked to renew their membership, which will give them a reduction on the registration

fee of IAHS meetings at the same price. In that way, the transition will be smooth and at no cost to people who regularly attend our conferences.

In addition, we changed the way of how we organise our conferences. In the past every local organising committee set up their own system of registration, paper submission and review. We now have a contract with Copernicus, who deals with these complex procedures in one consistent way, which makes the organisation of our conferences and abstract review more professional and more systematic. The Port Elizabeth meeting is the first IAHS Scientific Assembly organised through the Copernicus system, which must be followed by each subsequent IAHS Scientific Assembly (every four years), but which since Dublin (2014) should also be used for all other conferences convened by IAHS.

As a result of all these measures, I am happy to say that our finances are sound again. In the beginning we were looking at a very uncertain future, whereby the costs of running our organisation and producing our publications were out of balance with our income at a worrying rate. But this situation has now changed completely. From now on our balance is positive again and we will be able to run our Association sustainably as a Charity, whereby we can use the positive balance for supporting science and scientists in less endowed regions.

### **Inclusiveness**

This brings me to our efforts to make IAHS more inclusive and to obtain more involvement of the developing world. In March 2016, we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with WaterNet (the Network for Science Cooperation and Capacity Building in Southern Africa, <http://www.waternetonline.org/>), whereby we co-sponsor their annual Symposia and provide support to scientists for attending international conferences (<http://www.waternetonline.org/articles/2016/03/15/signing-of-memorandum-of-understanding>). During my Presidency IAHS co-sponsored several WaterNet Symposia and supported key note lecturers including Christophe Cudennec, Günter Blöschl, Murugesu Sivapalan and myself. We shall continue to do so in the coming years, and I hope to continue to act as a liaison with WaterNet during my term as Past-President.

One of the fruits of our intensified contacts with Southern Africa is that we are very happy that we hold our Scientific Assembly in Port Elizabeth this year. We are very grateful to Denis Hughes (our 2016 Volker medalist) and Graham Jewitt for hosting our assembly and we look forward to a very fruitful and inspiring meeting.

Another initiative undertaken was to make extra efforts to increase the participation of scientists from developing countries in IAHS. In 2013 we nominated Xia Jun as Honorary Vice-President, charged with the special task of increasing the involvement and participation of scientists from developing countries and to increase the membership of countries in Africa and Asia, for which we formed a special Working Group on Representation of Developing Countries chaired by Xia Jun. In addition, Thorsten Wagener took the initiative to form a Hydrological Education Working group, aimed at establishing "An IAHS Global Hydrology Mentoring Network, which the Bureau welcomed.

### **IAHS publications**

Maybe the biggest transition that IAHS has gone through is the change from hard copy Red Book production to open access publishing of conference proceedings in PIAHS (Proceedings of the IAHS), published by Copernicus (<http://www.proceedings->

international-association-of-hydrological-sciences.net/) and led by Christophe Cudennec as Editor in Chief. PIAHS exists since 2014 and is the continuation of the Red Book series. This is why the first volume of PIAHS has number 364, building on the fully digitized Red Book series that has existed since 1924. Already we are at Volume 375 and the publication of the proceedings of the Port Elizabeth meeting are underway.

Also our journal HSJ has seen some changes. Demetris Koutsoyiannis took over from Zbigniew Kundzewicz and the Editorial Board was revised and expanded. We are extremely grateful to Zbigniew for leading the journal for so many years, with so much dedication and enthusiasm. It is thanks to him that the journal has such a solid foundation and reputation. Please visit the web site of HSJ and read the beautiful words that Demetris wrote to recognise Zbigniew's work (<http://iahs.info/Publications-News/Hydrological-Sciences-Journal.do>). Also please have a look at the nice paper in HSJ by Koutsoyiannis et al. (2016) in honour of Zbigniew. I am happy to say that the journal is doing very well, with a constantly growing impact factor (2.222 in 2016) and attracting good quality papers. The excellent quality of our journal is largely due to the high professionalism and dedication of Frances Watkins, our journal manager, who is meticulously going through every paper and providing so much valuable editorial support to our authors.

Another thing that we had to change was the bilingual publication of papers in HSJ. We noticed that publications in French were generally read much less, and seldom referred to. This was not to the benefit of the excellent science presented in these papers, and it also implied quite some effort by the publisher and a team of French checkers. We therefore decided that from now on, publications in HSJ are English only and that we will continue to provide editorial support to those in need, if possible.

Finally, our web site and newsletter were modernised and held up to date. Claire Lupton takes care of this and we have all seen how professional this is done. We are very happy that Claire has joined our team and is operating our office so professionally.

### **IAHS honours**

Since 1981, IAHS hosts the International Hydrology Prize, which it awards jointly with WMO and UNESCO. In 2014, we decided to extend the prize to recognize the two different aspects of hydrological sciences: Hydrology as an Earth Science, making fundamental advances in our understanding of how the hydrological system functions; and Hydrology as a Water Resources Science, contributing to better management of our water resources and the understanding of human-water interactions. These two awards were named after two icons of IAHS and former awardees of the International Hydrology Prize: Jim Dooge (awarded in 1983) and Adriaan Volker (awarded in 1984). I am happy to be able to award these prizes this year in Port Elizabeth to two other icons of IAHS: Zbigniew Kundzewicz and Dan Rosbjerg. The two prizes are by now well established and very much appreciated by the international community

In addition to the International Hydrology Prize, we have the Tison award for the best publication in HSJ, which this year will go to Mohammad Merheb from Lebanon. The Tison award is very much appreciated and many of our best officers once won it when they were younger.

Finally, I think we need to expand our honours programme by establishing the award of IAHS Fellow. IUGG has already established it several of our former officers (Henny Colenbrander, John Rodda, Arthur Askew, Uri Shamir, Kuni Takeuchi and Gordon Young) were the first to receive it.

## Looking ahead

There are still a few things that need to be done in the near future. New Statutes will have to be approved that will make clear what the roles, duties and benefits are of our individual members, as compared to our traditional country membership. Also we'll have to set up a system of on-line voting to replace the traditional snail-mail system mentioned in our statutes.

More importantly, we shall have to rethink how we organise ourselves through our Commissions. Our Commissions have been set-up in a very sub-disciplinary fashion, which often limits the so necessary cross-cutting research. Let's not forget that hydrology knows no boundaries between sub-systems. There is no such thing as water that remains entirely on the surface, above the surface, or under the surface. There is also no water that does not interact with the ecosystem, the human managed system, or undergoes quality changes. Breakthroughs in hydrology can only be achieved if we collaborate among sub-disciplines of hydrology and with other connected disciplines such as atmospheric sciences, geology, social sciences, management sciences and economics (and I probably miss a few). Our commissions should reflect such interdisciplinary initiatives and I hope that in Port Elizabeth we shall make a start with rethinking the structure of our Commissions.

## Finally

I would like to thank you for all your support during my four years of presidency. But I would like to give my special thanks to Christophe Cudennec, with whom I have worked so well during these last 4 years. I look back with great pleasure on the many joint activities we undertook, the friendship we shared, and our excellent cooperation in trying to achieve our common goals. If there was anything that I achieved during my term, then this is thanks to our outstanding, intensive and amiable cooperation.

It would be my pleasure to continue to support the society as Past-President under the leadership of Günter Blöschl and afterwards in whichever way I can support the Association. I wish the Association a healthy and long-lasting future.

Sincerely,

Hubert Savenije,  
President of IAHS (1913-1917)

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