

Report April-July to the IGU Executive Committee of IGU at the Kyoto Meeting

Benno Werlen, Executive Director of IYGU

The most important news first: On Monday, July 22, the East African Delegation has submitted the Draft Resolution on behalf of Rwanda to the office of the Executive Board of UNESCO. Herewith the **political application process** and the whole IYGU project entered its decisive stage.

The last step of preparation prior to this submission involved a meeting with the Hon Minister L. Mushikiwabo on Friday, July 19, at the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** in Kigali. It went very well. After the presentation of the current stage of the IYGU we discussed the Draft Resolution (see attached), its implications for the IYGU Action Plan and the IYGU Regional Action Centers, specifically the African one which is planned to be located in Kigali. In addition, we talked about the structural reorganization of the IYGU and a stronger integration of Rwanda into that structure. Furthermore, we were talking about the diplomatic application process and the division of labor between the Ambassador to UNESCO Hon J. Kabale and the IYGU in the next steps ahead.

The **Regional Action Centers (RACs)** will give the IYGU a presence and an identity at the regional and national level. The RACs will coordinate all the IYGU activities in cooperation with the Global Secretariat in Jena (Germany) and the Executive Director. The official title of the RACs will be: "IYGU Regional Action Center for Africa (or America; Asia..) in Kigali (etc.)."

The **hosting institution** of a RAC is preferably a department of geography at a well-established university with a good reputation. Alternatively, a ministry, for example a ministry of education, science and technology or a ministry of the environment may also host a RAC. However, a variety of educational institutions as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations are also possible hosts. Of course the reach and topical orientations will depend on the hosting institution. Each of them will work as self-responsible unit.

The **aim of the RACs** is to include the social and natural sciences as well as the humanities in the planning and implementation of their specific IYGU activities. The RACs will mainly act as hubs to coordinate the communication networks and action patterns of the IYGU at the regional level. The hub concept is related to the bottom-up structure of the IYGU program. The activities encompass several fields and types of action linked to the basic guidelines of the program's rationale and objectives. The IYGU is scheduled for 2016 and is preceded by a year of preparation (2015) and a year of harvest/ evaluation (2017).

The **use of the IYGU and UNESCO logos** would of course be tied to this framework and its related rules and is to be determined in a mutual agreement or contract. A first such agreement for the RAC in Beijing for Asia has been signed early May 2013. The proclamation of 2016 as the UN International Year of Global Understanding by the UN General Assembly would give the starting signal for the RACs to commence operation under the abovementioned framework. Whether this will be the case in December 2013 or in April 2014 will have to be clarified over the course of the next weeks.