

**30<sup>th</sup> International Geological Congress**  
SNS Business Meeting - Beijing, August 6, 1996

A Business Meeting of the Neogene Subcommittee was called during the second day of the International Geological Congress in Beijing, in the same day of Symposium 1-9 organized by the Subcommittee (see report in this issue) in order to discuss the following agenda:

1. Call to order;
2. Adoption of the agenda;
3. Registration of participants;
4. Report of SNS Chair for the period 1992-1996;
5. New officers elected for the term 1996-2000;
6. New members (voting and corresponding);
7. Financial situation;
8. Relationship with "adjacent" subcommittees;
9. Plans for future activities;
10. Any other matter.

1. - 3. The agenda was adopted with an addition (proposed by R. Benson): 9bis. Reports in WG activities.

Eighteen scientists took part to the meeting (see list) including the chairman, chairman elect, one corresponding and nine voting members from Italy, China, Japan, Taiwan, France, Great Britain, Holland, Germany and United States.

4. In her final report, M.B. Cita outlines the activities carried out by the Neogene Subcommittee in the inter-Congress period 1992-1996.

She starts briefly summarizing the history of the Subcommittee, which was appointed in 1971 with R. Selli as chairman, several years after the initiation of scientific activities of a Mediterranean Neogene Stratigraphy Committee of ICS. In 1980, J. Senes was elected as chairman, with F. Steininger as vice-chairman and J. Halmai as Secretary. The two latter are still in charge, whereas M.B. Cita was elected in 1989 and re-elected in 1992. The entire bureau steps down after the present congress.

She then explains the past and present structure of SNS, which has four Regional Committees (RCMNS on Mediterranean, RCANS on Atlantic, RCNNS on Nordic and RCPNS on Pacific), some very active, other less dynamic, formally elected and with definite membership: their chairmen and vice-chairmen are ex-officio voting members and their secretaries are ex-officio corresponding members of SNS.

Working groups are informal, are temporary and have no definite membership, with the exception of the Paleogene/Neogene WG, which was completely independent in the past.

Membership is large, with 31 voting members and 20 corresponding members. Following the recommendations of ICS, a partial renewal was undertaken in 1995; the new rules state that a voting member cannot serve longer than two inter-congress terms (8 years) and that one third of membership has to change every year. The first recommendation is well accepted, whereas the latter is rejected, because it does not guarantee enough continuity.

Cita then reports on the scientific and organizational activities carried out since the SNS business meeting held in Kyoto during the 29<sup>th</sup> IGC.

In order to revitalize the subcommittee, to try a better coordination and to eventually arrive at the publication of a Neogene Newsletter, notwithstanding the bad financial situation (see later on), she distributed to the voting members a Questionnaire with 12 questions (see report on Neogene Newsletter n. 1). The response was quite positive, both in terms of contributions for the Newsletter and of position towards the GSSP concept. Indeed, 13 members were in favor of the concept, but 12

were against or abstained. However, the positive answers were so convincing and appropriate, that the decision was made to start the new adventure.

Neogene Newsletter n. 1 was distributed in July 1994, followed soon after by a workshop organized in Southern Italy on marine sections potentially usable as reference for the Lower, Middle and Upper Pleistocene. This informal workshop was sponsored by the Italian Commission on Stratigraphy, by AIQUA (Italian Association for the Quaternary) and by SNS.

It was attended by the first vice-chairman of ICS M. Bassett. Purpose of the workshop, widely reported on Italian and American journals, was to counter the action undertaken by INQUA to undermine the Plio/Pleistocene GSSP defined in Southern Italy, and visited during the workshop, which was run in the "show-and-tell" style.

Among the accomplishments of SNS to be mentioned we have:

- The approval by the Paleogene and by the Neogene Subcommissions of the Neogene GSSP at Carrosio, Northern Italy; the proposal was approved by postal ballot by ICS in 1995 and ratified by IUGS in 1996.
- The approval by the SNS of the GSSP of the Late Pliocene Gelasian Stage at San Nicola, Sicily; the proposal was approved by postal ballot by SNS in 1995, by ICS in 1996 and ratified by IUGS this week.
- The publication on the Geological Society of America Bulletin (end 1995) of an important article, by Berggren, Hilgen, Langereis, Kent, Obradovich, Raffi, Raymo, and Shackleton, which represents the outcome of the Pliocene Time-Scale working group, appointed at the SNS business meeting held in Barcelona in 1989.
- A business meeting of SNS was held in Bucarest on September 6, 1995, during the RCMNS Congress, and reported in Neogene Newsletter n. 2. In the same occasion a Workshop on the Miocene/Pliocene boundary was convened by Cita and Benson, and attended by all the protagonists working on that subject.
- Finally, a proposal was created in the spring 1996 for the definition of the GSSP of the Middle Pliocene Piacenzian Stage and distributed by postal ballot in mid-May.  
It was a great success! Of the 31 voting members, 28 answered YES (26 by the deadline of July 15, and two expressed during the meeting, because the scientists asked to do so) and 3 did not answer. The postal ballot was extended to the corresponding members: 8 answered, all with a YES vote.  
This is an extraordinary result, and demonstrates that we learnt the lesson on how to propose an acceptable GSSP!!  
The document is published in this issue.
- Last but not least is the organization of Symposium 1-9: the idea of convening a symposium was first discussed at the Kyoto business meeting, and was successfully organized (see report further on).

5. The new officers elected in 1995, which will start their activity after the present Congress are:

prof. D. Rio, University of Padova, Chairman;

dr. F. Rögl, Museum of Natural History, Vienna, first vice-Chairman;

prof. H. Tsuchi, University of Shizuoka, vice-Chairman;

dr. W.J. Zachariasse, University of Utrecht, vice-Chairman;

dr. D. Castradori, Agip S.p.A., S. Donato M. (Milano), Secretary.

6. The following new members were nominated and appointed:

Voting members:	prof. N.H. Shackleton, Cambridge
	prof. G.B. Vai, Bologna
	prof. R. Bernor, Washington.
Corresponding members:	prof. Giu Zhanwiangh, Beijing
	dr. E.A. Vangengeim, Moscow
	prof. Molina Cruz, Mexico City
	dr. P. Smolka, Münster
	dr. I. Raffi, Chieti.

Their mailing address is reported in the adjoined list at the end of this issue.

7. Cita reports on the financial situation for the last three years.

The situation is bad, because the contribution allocated by IUGS through the International Commission on Stratigraphy is inadequate, and does not even cover the mailing costs. In concrete, the contribution for 1994 has been 1288 dollars, versus reported expenditures for 8250 dollars. The contribution for 1995 has been of 1755 dollars, versus reported expenditures for 8850 dollars. The contribution for 1996 has been of 1530 dollars. The regional committees are underfunded by SNS, and the working groups are not funded at all. There is no apparent relationship between the amount and the quality of work done and the contributions allocated by IUGS. Obviously, the scientists involved must have access to independent research funds in order to carry out the expected activity.

8. The relationships with the Paleogene subcommission used to be very close, and excellent, when the late Graham Jenkins was the chair. Now, after his premature death one year ago, Hanspeter Luterbacher has been elected chairman, with Jan Hardenbol as secretary. We hope that the relationships among the two subcommissions continue in the future to be close, and good.

The relationships with the Quaternary Subcommission instead are very bad, as bad as they can be. It is the so-called INQUA/ICS controversy, concerning the Quaternary GSSP defined in the Vrica section. The problem derives from an obvious anomaly concerning the existence, the composition, and the style of work of the Quaternary Subcommission, which is quite independent from ICS, and is indeed the Commission on Stratigraphy of INQUA. The chairman changed three times in three years: Bowen, then Richmond, then Partridge. SNS is entirely ignored. INQUA directly urged the Executive Committee of IUGS to appoint an ad-hoc committee to solve the controversy. Enclosed is a letter that SNS chairman wrote last May, pointing out very clearly the irregular procedures followed and the critical position of SNS. The three scientists appointed by ICS chairman Remane, after consultation with Cita, are Shackleton, Van Couvering and Vai. All were, or are now, voting members of SNS, so that they can feel fully responsible for the sake of stratigraphy.

9. Cita asks chairman elect Rio to chair this part of the meeting, since she will step down after the Congress.

Gladenkov proposes a new initiative, that is the creation of regional monographs on the Neogene of the world: a discussion follows with interventions by Van Couvering, Cita, Berggren. The initiative receives little support, being considered very time-consuming and expensive, also in the light of the recent, painful experience of John Van Couvering on the Pliocene/Pleistocene boundary, and of the bad financial situation (see above).

Shackleton recommends that in the future plans for the definition of GSSPs in the Neogene, sections that have an astronomically controlled signature are preferred.

According to Rio, the activity for the next four years should be concentrated on the definition of boundary stratotypes for the Miocene stages, following the style that proved to be successful for the Pliocene. The postal ballot should be launched only when all the correlation problems are solved, and the definition appears clear, unambiguous and acceptable.

The Messinian GSSP seems almost ready: candidate sections to be critically compared in order to make the best possible selection include:

Monte Casino (northern Italy)  
Metochia (Gavdos)  
Faneromeni (Crete)  
Bou Regreg (Morocco).

The GSSP of the Zanclean Stage and the Miocene/Pliocene boundary requires additional discussion, because Benson insists, on behalf of his working group, in proposing a boundary stratotype which does not coincide with that at the base of the type-section at Capo Rossello, informally defined by Cita in 1972, and consistently used in the last twenty years.

Investigations in progress in the Middle and Late Miocene look promising.

**9bis.** Benson reports on the activity of the Working Group on the Miocene/Pliocene boundary.

A voluminous publication is in press documenting all aspects of the composite section containing the proposed GSSP. It will be published by the Geological Service of Morocco and distributed in a few months.

He also reports on the Working Group chaired by Semenenko, on the trans-Caspian/Mediterranean correlation. Paleomagnetic investigations planned, but not accomplished so far, could eventually be carried out by the very active Utrecht group: Langereis and Krijgsman will work in that area in the framework of the Peritethys project. Contacts will be taken timely in order to combine the efforts.

**10.** At the end of the meeting, the opportunity to convene a workshop among key-scientists involved in the near future was discussed.

Cita announces that she - along with Judy Mc Kenzie - is convening a conference on Mediterranean Neogene paleoceanography dedicated to discuss cycles, events and sea-level changes, in late September 1997 in Erice (Sicily). The conference will be preceded by a three days excursion with visits to classical outcrops. Circulars are distributed to the participants (see further on).

A full program of activity of SNS is presented in the article by D. Rio in this issue.

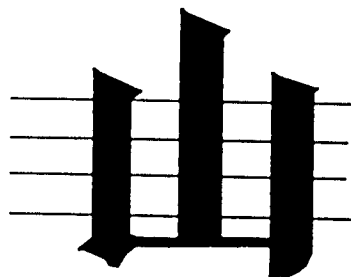
Beijing, August 13, 1996  
Milano, September 4, 1996

Maria Bianca Cita

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON STRATIGRAPHY

SUBCOMMISSION ON NEOGENE STRATIGRAPHY SNS



Chairman: Maria B. Cita: Department of Earth Sciences, University of Milano, Via Mangiagalli 34, I-20133 MILANO, ITALY  
Phone: 39-2-23698249; Fax: 39-2-70638261

Secretary: Janos Halmaj: Hungarian Geological Institute, XIV, Népstadion út 14, POB 106, H-1442 BUDAPEST, HUNGARY  
Phone: 1-2511768; Fax: 1-2510703; Telex: 1-225220 mafi h

Vice-Chairman: F. Steininger: Institut für Palaeontologie der Universität Wien, Universitätsstr. 7/11, A-1010 WIEN, AUSTRIA  
Phone: 222-40103 (ext. 2497); Fax: 222-4020533

30<sup>th</sup> International Geological Congress  
SNS Business Meeting - Beijing, August 6, 1996

List of participants

Name Institution Signature

Alekseev

GEOLOGICAL INST.  
MOSCOW, RUSSIA

*M. Alekseev*

RICHARD H. BENSON

Smithsonian Inst. USA

*R.H. Benson*

W. A. BERGAREN

Woods Hole Oceanographic  
Institution, Woods Hole, MA

*W. Bergaren*

C. G. LANGEREIS

Utrecht University (NL)

*C.G. Langereis*

W. KAYGUSMAN

Utrecht University

*W. Kaygusman*

J. P. AUBRY

Université de Montpellier

*J.P. Aubry*

John van Couvering

American Museum  
of Natural History, New York

*John van Couvering*

Kluck Shackleton

Cambridge Univ.

*Kluck Shackleton*

Tochilina Svetlana

Pacific Oceanological Institute

*Tochilina Svetlana*

WANG Pinxian

Tongji University, Shanghai

*Wang Pinxian*

Ryuichi TSUCHI

Shizuoka Univ., Japan & RCPNS

*Ryuichi Tsuchi*

Domenico RIO

Dept. of Geology - Univ. of  
Padova (Italy)

*Domenico Rio*

Muhong Chen

South China Sea Institute  
of Oceanology, Academia Sinica

*Muhong Chen*

Peter P. Sinolka <sup>Germany</sup>  
Univ. Munich  
Geol. Institute / IGCP-347

P.L.L.  
P.L.L.

Gladenkov Yuri  
Geolog. Institute  
Acad. Sci. Russia  
Moscow Russia

Min-Pen Chen  
(naniofossil)  
Meri CIARANFI

Institute of Oceanography  
National Taiwan University  
Dept. Geology and  
Geophysics - Bari Univ.  
Italy

Philip  
Meri

MARIA BIANCA CITA

DIP. SCIENZE DELLA  
TERRA UNIV.  
MILANO ITALY

Maria