

Short report on the 2009 IASPEI Scientific Assembly by Peter Suhadolc

The IASPEI Scientific Assembly was held in Cape Town, South Africa, 11-16 January 2009. The Assembly, held for the first time on the African continent, provided a very good platform for seismologists worldwide to meet and to discuss the latest developments in seismology and physics of the Earth's interior research. There were 347 participants from 60 countries registered for the Assembly. Eighty three of them were students, young researchers and researchers from less-developed countries who were partially sponsored.

Mr Thabo Guzi, gave the welcome address on behalf of Minister Sonjica. IUGG Vice-President, Dr Harsh Gupta, welcomed the participants of the Assembly, and opening remarks by the IASPEI President, Dr Wu Zhongliang, ended the formal part of the Opening ceremony. At the evening cocktail function, the MEC of community safety, Patrick McKenzie, gave his welcome speech, followed by the speech of Prof. Jay Barton, member of the CGS Board. A local Choir entertained the participants with Zulu songs and dances and a Marimba band played during the cocktail; a very enjoyable experience.

Three Keynote lectures were delivered at the Assembly: Tom Jordan talked on "Earthquake Forecasting and Prediction: Progress in Model Development and Evaluation"; Raoul Madariaga discussed "Earthquake Dynamics: from source to radiation"; and Guust Nolet presented "Seismic tomography and the dilemma of the Earth's heat budget".

The 32 symposia of the programme covered the spectrum of research related to IASPEI Commissions and current "hot" topics in seismology, in a total of 335 oral and 106 poster presentations. These included, a session on "Capacity building and capturing undergraduate students to Geophysics/Seismology", and two well-attended Panel discussions convened by R. Musson on: "Seismic Hazard: Living with Uncertainty" and "Earthquake Prediction: What the Future Holds". Several IASPEI commission and working group meetings were organized during the Assembly.

The Assembly was conducted at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, which proved to be a perfect environment for delegates. The Local Organizing Committee, with the determinant support of the South-African Council for Geoscience, did a great job ensuring a smooth management and enjoyable social moments. Participants will long remember the fabulous icebreaker at the splendid Lagoon Beach hotel with unrivalled views of Table Mountain, the post-poster wine and brandy tasting excursions and the IASPEI dinner at Moyo-Spier with face-painting and great African food. Several pre- and post-conference fieldtrips were also organized.

A Summer school was organized in conjunction with the IASPEI Scientific Assembly and held during the week after the conference ended, attended by 27 fully sponsored, mostly African participants. Lecturers at the school were: Prof. Aldo Zollo on "Real-time processing and seismic alert with examples of their implementation", Prof. Yehuda Ben Zion on "Introduction to physics of earthquakes and faults", Dr. Martin Mai on "Source modeling for near-fault ground motion simulations", Dr. John Douglas on "Seismic hazard assessment and empirical ground-motion prediction", Dr. Artur Cichowicz on "Introduction to mining seismology", and Prof. Colin Reeves on "African Geodynamics".

The products of IASPEI Scientific Assembly in South Africa, including adopted resolutions, abstract volumes, keynote lectures, and useful meeting data will be soon available at <http://www.iaspei.org/>