

IYPE-International Year of Planet Earth - [www.yearofplanetearth.org](http://www.yearofplanetearth.org)  
**2007 Progress Report of the South African  
National Committee**



Unyaka weentjhabatjha weplaneti **yephasi**  
Isayensi yephasi yomphakathi

Ngwaga ya boditshaba wa planete ya **lefatshe**  
**Saentshe ya lefase ya setshaba**

Lembe ra pulanete ya misava misava **hinkwayo**  
**Sayense ya misava ya rixaka**

Unyaka womhlaba wokugubha inkayezi ezungeza **ilanga**  
**Ubunzululwazi Bomhlaba Obulungiselelwe Umphakathi**

Selemo sa bosetjhaba sa **lefatshe**  
**Kopano ya dithuto tsa mahlale lefatsheng**

Ngwaga wa bodit\*habat\*haba wa **Lefatshe**  
**Saense ya lefatshe ya set\*haba**

Nwaha wa Pulanete ya Lifhasi ya **dzitshakatshaka**  
**Saintsi ya Lifhasi ya tshitshavha**

Internasionale jaar van die planeet **arde**  
**Aardwetenskap vir die samelewing**

## Introduction

The national committee IYPE was appointed by NRF in August 2007. Since then it has met twice: first, hosted by NRF in Pretoria, on 25 September 2007; and second, hosted by AEON, at the University of Cape Town, on 09 November 2007.

Composition of the National Committee ([2] = number of meetings attended)\*:

Prof M de Wit (chair) [2]	University of Cape Town
Ms S Frost-Killian [2]	Council for Geoscience (PTA)
Dr I Ansorge (dep. chair) [2]	University of Cape Town
Dr L Holtman [1]	University of Western Cape
Prof J Compton [2]	University of Cape Town
Dr MA Dhansay [2]	Medical Research Council
Mr A Cooper [2]	CSIR
Dr GA Botha [2]	Council for Geosciences (PTMB)
Mr A Chuntharpursat [2]	SAEON
Prof LM Magi [2]	University of Zululand
Mr M Makwarela [1]	Department of Science and Technology
Mr B Mantlana [2]	SANBI
Prof McCourt [1]	University of KwaZuluNatal
Prof Bob Scholes [0]	
Dr Mphepya [0]	
Dr Munsami [0]	DST
Mr M Nxumalo [2]	NRF
Mrs B Molefe [2]	NRF
<i>Suggested additions in 2008:</i>	
Dr. J Miller	University of Stellenbosch
Ms R Dada	University of KwaZuluNatal and SABC
AN OTHER	

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\*At the second meeting, it was suggested that people who did not attend 3 meetings in a row would be asked to stand down.

## International Committee meetings

National committees are obliged to report their IYPE activities to the International secretariat. To facilitate this, meetings are held during various international science conferences. The first meeting of National IYPE committees was held in the USA, October, 31, 2007, during the Annual conference of the geological Society of America, in Denver, USA

Dr Greg Botha attended the National IYPE committee meeting in Denver on behalf of the SA national committee. Dr Botha's Report is attached (Appendix I). Dr Botha

successfully launched South Africa on the international IYPE 'radar screens'. Overall Dr Botha was impressed with the IYPE plans of other countries. He reports that many countries were already well on the way to formulating concrete national events for IYPE in 2008. He expressed his concern that RSA was behind in this respect and needed to catch up fast.

## **Science Projects based on the IYPE Science Plan**

The international community has chosen 10 major themes as a focus for IYPE. The RSA committee members selected individuals responsible for each of the themes. Where there is no representation amongst the committee members, others in the geoscience community would be contacted and/or co-opted.

- A Groundwater - towards sustainable use;
- B Hazards - minimizing risk, maximizing awareness;
- C Earth & Health - building a safer environment;
- D Climate - the 'stone tape';
- E Resource issues - towards sustainable use;
- F Megacities - going deeper, building safer;
- G Deep Earth - from crust to core;
- H Ocean - abyss of time;
- I Soil - Earth's living skin;
- J Earth & Life - the origins of diversity.

## **Special Issue of Quest Magazine as a national contribution to IYPE**

The committee approached the Academy of Science of SA to dedicate the first issue of 2008 of their popular science magazine 'Quest' to IYPE. This magazine has a wide distribution in South African schools and is for sale in many stores, including CNA. The IYPE Quest issue therefore has the potential to reach many learners, as well as university students and the general public. The issue will highlight all aspects of the 10 IYPE topics mentioned above within a South African and/or African context. In all some 14 articles have been submitted to the editorial office by members of the SA national committee and other invited experts. A provisional index of the articles is attached (Appendix II). Because of the relatively late start with RSA plans for IYPE, deadlines for submission of the Quest articles were very tight. Most of the selected authors were able to meet this schedule, and credit must be given to their hard work and commitment in this respect. It is hoped that that volume will go to the press by mid-January, 2008, to be published in time for the International launch of IYPE in Paris in February 2008. The committee's decision to go ahead with this Quest issue was based in part on the premise that it would allow SA dignitaries to present this volume as a tangible contribution at the Paris launch to convey South Africa's commitment to IYPE. Extra copies of the Quest issue will be printed to distribute to the many delegates at the Launch, including over a 1000 young students and learners from all corners of the world.

## **IYPE international Student competition**

In order to ensure global student participation during IYPE, The International Year of Planet Earth Corporation organized an International IYPE Student Contest. All 18-22 year old students from around the world were invited to participate in this IYPE Student Contest. To enter the IYPE Student Contest, all students were invited to approach one of the 10 designated IYPE topics in a creative way. This might vary from writing an essay, song or poem, producing a drawing or painting, making a short video film, a cartoon story, a photograph, et cetera, and where relevant reflecting a focus on local cultures.

All work produced was evaluated by national committees, and the five best per nation were selected as award-winners. Winners have been invited by the International YPE Committee to take a four-day (11-14 February) trip to Paris, entirely free of charge, and to participate in the Global Launch Event of the International Year of Planet Earth on 12 and 13 February 2008. Some 350-500 students will be present. The travel and accommodation costs of the winners are paid for by their respective countries.

### **South African National IYPE Student Contest: 5 win a trip to Paris**

The international deadline for the competition was 07 December, 2007; South African students were notified of this competition in early October and given an end of November deadline to have their work adjudicated on time. 3 members of the South African National IYPE Committee acted as judges. 28 entries were received, and 5 winners selected. The standard was sufficiently high to recommend that these 5 best entries should be invited by the NRF to attend the Paris Launch. The details of winners of the South African competition were submitted to the international office of IYPE. A list of all global winners (including the 5 South Africans) was announced by in mid-December by the International secretariat of IYPE (see Appendix III).

*The South African winners (listed in order of merit) are:*

Inka SCHOMER; Maura PELLETTIERI; Fulufhelo MUNYAI; Stephanie ACKERMANN; Laura BYRNE

## **2008 IYPE South African EVENTS**

The national committee recommended the following national events:

- **September 2008** to be designated IYPE month in South Africa. Early 2008, members of the committee will consolidate a series of co-coordinated events for this month.
- The South African launch of IYPE to be held during the Grahamstown Science Festival (**16-21 April, 2008**). The chair has met with International Science (ISL) Liaison Manager Ms Siphokazi Ndudane to start formalizing this in early 2008. A sub-committee chaired by John Compton will facilitate this launch.

Dr J Compton designed an IYPE poster for South Africa. The poster has incorporated the IYPE logo translated into 8 national languages by various members of the committee. With time other languages can be added. Early 2008, this poster and a covering letter will be sent from the NRF to the other RSA organizations for their representation and input to the national IYPE committee. Other major national Geoscientific organizations such as Geological Society of SA, SASQUA, CGS, SAAG, ICSU, NRF and its facilities, Business Schools, University Faculties of Geosciences, Health Sciences, MRC and Government Departments such as DoE, DEAT, DME, DST etc. will be asked for their input and collaboration, and will be encouraged to organize their own IYPE events.

## **2008 IYPE *International* EVENTS**

- a. **IYPE global launch event, Paris, 12-13 February, 2008.** This will be a high profile launch, hosted by UNESCO and attended by UN general secretary, national heads of state and relevant ministers. A thousand invited guests, including some 350 young students from all parts of the world are expected to attend. The SA National committee recommends that a party of about 10 people from South Africa attend this event (this will include the 5 students and a selected teacher; 3/4 committee members [including the NRF member of the IYPE secretariat, Ms Busiswa Molefe]). Official letters were sent separately to the NRF/DST from the International Year of Planet Earth Corporation inviting South African ministers and other dignitaries to attend this high profile launch. Ms Busiswa Molefe is facilitating the travel of the students and SA Committee members. Dr Greg Botha, Ms Sue Frost-Killian and Busiswa Molefe will be the official delegate of the South African National Committee.)
- b. **IYPE Africa launch event, Arusha, Tanzania, 08-09 May 2008.** This will be a high profile African launch, organized by the Tanzanian government (The original date of 22 and 23 May, 2008, has recently been changed to 08-09 May, 2008). It is of interest to note that Tanzania was the country that first suggested the idea of an IYPE at the UN; and that Tanzanian scientist, Dr Sospeter Mohongo, an early supporter of the IYPE, and now Director of the ICSU Regional Office for Africa, based at the NRF, was recently elected as Chair of the International Committee of IYPE. Dr Ansorge and Prof de Wit of the national committee have indicated that they would be able to attend this event. Professor de Wit and colleagues will be launching their African Corridors Project at this event for which a special session has been set aside.
- c. **IYPE special events, 33<sup>rd</sup> International Geological Congress, Oslo, Norway, September, 2008.** It will be important for some South African delegates to represent our IYPE committee, because this event occurs during the SA month of IYPE. It may be possible to connect South African university students with events in Norway via satellite or internet facilities.

Maarten de Wit  
Chair SANC IYPE, December, 29, 2008

To Follow

## **Appendix I**

Report by Dr Greg Botha on the National IYPE committees meeting held on October, 31, 2007, during the Annual conference of the geological Society of America, in Denver, USA

## **Appendix II**

Index of SA IYPE Quest volume

## **Appendix III**

Student Participants from National Committees  
per 20 December 2007. [South African students highlighted in red]