



**INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION
(IGU / UGI)**

**COMMISSION ON LAND DEGRADATION AND DESERTIFICATION
(COMLAND)**



REPORT OF ACTIVITIES: 2019

Andrea Vacca (Chair) and Owen Graham (Secretary)

December 2019

www.comland.org

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The Commission on Land Degradation and Desertification (COMLAND) is a Commission of the International Geographical Union (IGU). See <http://igu-online.org/> for further information on the IGU.

0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF COMLAND

Most environments are affected by common factors that favour and increase land degradation processes. Two main topics are widely responsible: a) climatic conditions and changes, and b) anthropic impacts through land use. There is an urgent need to achieve a better practical and theoretical understanding of land degradation processes which affect the world's landscapes. In order to achieve these objectives, the working plan of the Commission is as follows:

- to promote and coordinate interdisciplinary research on land degradation and desertification in our changing global environment;
- to study the effects of environmental change, both natural and human induced, and their implications for land degradation and desertification;
- to conduct regional case studies under different climatic regimes and environmental risks (forest fires, floods, river channel changes, soil-erosion, water depletion, water quality), study the planning and design of conservation measures and the potential conflict between ecological sustainability and economic viability;
- to alert authorities as to the importance of adequate surveillance of land degradation processes;
- to develop and communicate the best techniques for monitoring changes and collecting data, and
- to sponsor and support activities leading to exchange of information regarding land degradation and desertification.

I COMLAND MEMBERSHIP

Steering Committee

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COMLAND MEMBERS – members per country

(country unknown)	30	Korea, Rep.	3
Australia	27	New Zealand	3
USA	22	Slovenia	3
Poland	18	Canada	2
China	17	China, Rep. (Taiwan)	2
United Kingdom	15	Thailand	2
Israel	13	Albania	1
Germany	12	Algeria	1
Iceland	11	Argentina	1
Brazil	8	Belgium	1
Italy	8	China (Hong Kong)	1
India	6	Greece	1
Netherlands	6	Iran	1
Portugal	6	Ireland	1
South Africa	6	Mexico	1
Spain	6	Mongolia	1
Austria	5	Nigeria	1
France	5	Romania	1
Hungary	5	Russia	1
Japan	4	Singapore	1
Armenia	3	Sweden	1
Chile	3	UAE	1
Finland	3	TOTAL	270

People are welcome to join COMLAND by sending their name, affiliation, country and email via the “Contact” page on the www.comland.org website. Members will be sent emails on an irregular basis advising of meetings and other relevant matters including messages from the IGU

II MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES

COMLAND continues to be an active IGU Commission, and since the 2008 IGU Congress in Tunis has been productive from the standpoint of the organization of meetings, publications, awards, and in the addition of new Members and Steering Committee Members.

2019

International Symposium on Gully Erosion (ISGE) 21-27 July 2019, Townsville Australia:

The 8th ISGE focused on gully erosion processes, measurement techniques, modelling and management. The Symposium and fieldwork locations in Townsville, Queensland were significant given their proximity to Australia's Great Barrier Reef and considerations of sediment and reef quality. Australian national TV news carried a brief news story on the Symposium. Whilst COMLAND contributed funding that specifically helped young scientists attend the event, the short Symposium lead time and restrictive academic calendars affected the availability of members to attend. The funding sponsorship was acknowledged on the Symposium website.

South African Association of Geomorphologists (SAAG) Biennial Conference 16-17 September 2019, Chintsa East, South Africa:

A special COMLAND Session was convened at this Conference through Rhodes University. There was also a pre and post conference field trip. Kate Rowntree (COMLAND Steering Committee Member) coordinated COMLAND's input. COMLAND provided financial sponsorship that supported active attendance by several young scientists. The sponsorship was gratefully acknowledged. Although the conference had a strong soil erosion theme, the 10 posters and 25 oral papers (4 of which in the COMLAND session) were presented on a range of topics in geomorphology. Forty one delegates attended the conference which included at least 2 COMLAND members.



SAAG Conference field trip delegates

IGU Thematic Conference TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL CULTURAL LANDSCAPES 24-26 September 2019, Koper Slovenia:

This IGU Thematic Conference had a papers Session with a solid range of presented papers on issues of relevance to COMLAND. The following COMLAND sessions took place during the Conference: 1) Session B of 25 September, titled “LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND GLOBAL CHANGES”, with five oral presentations, 2) Session E of 25 September, titled “PAST AND PRESENT LAND DEGRADATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTS”, with four oral presentations, and 3) Session B of 26 September, titled “LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND GLOBAL CHANGE”, with four oral presentations. Moreover, two posters related to the COMLAND sessions were presented in the Poster Session (25 September). Each COMLAND Session was attended by 20-25 delegates.

A COMLAND Business Meeting was convened that was open to all participants. Seven attendees requested to become COMLAND Members. The three days of papers were supplemented by an afternoon field trip on each day. An additional 2 day field trip from Koper to Ljubljana highlighted dramatic issues that were relevant to the overall conference themes. COMLAND provided sponsorship that helped young scientists actively attend the conference.



Delegates of the IGU Thematic Conference in Koper (Slovenia)

2020

34th International Geographical Congress 17-21 August 2020, Istanbul Turkey:

COMLAND has confirmed its Session Proposal with the Conference Organisers. A Business Meeting will also be held during this Congress.

Proposals for COMLAND meetings and field trips in coming years will be publicised by email and on the (www.comland.org) website when further developed and agreed to by the Steering Committee.

III NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION:

Other IGU Commissions:

COMLAND has an active working relationship with the Commission on Hazard and Risk and is developing such relationship with the Commission on Land Use and Land Cover Change.

- COMLAND and the Commission on Hazard and Risk jointly Chaired papers sessions at the Regional Conference on Geomorphology Athens 2019 and at the IGU Thematic Conference Koper Slovenia 2019
- The IGU Thematic Conference Koper Slovenia 2019 was co-organized by COMLAND together with the following IGU Commissions: Land Use and Land Cover Change, Biogeography and Biodiversity, Local and Regional Development, and Mediterranean Basin.

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ):

Following the successful Tasmanian Meeting and field trip (October 2014), COMLAND has maintained irregular liaison with the EIANZ with the view to investigating the potential for future collaborative events.

South African Association of Geomorphologists (SAAG)

COMLAND cooperated with SAAG in the organization of the Biennial Conference 2019.

IV PUBLICATIONS

COMLAND continues to publish papers from its sponsored sessions and conferences, with most appearing in international peer reviewed journals. This is on an opportunistic basis.

Selected papers from the COMLAND Meeting in Slovenia (June 2016) have been edited and compiled for a special edition of the Journal *Land Degradation & Development*. The edition title is: "The Role of Historic Impacts on Modern Environmental Processes and Management" ([https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1099-145x.historic-human-impacts](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/(ISSN)1099-145x.historic-human-impacts)). Publication date was 9 July 2019. The guest editors were Drs Paul Hudson and Matija Zorn.

The COMLAND website is maintained by the COMLAND Secretary and operational costs are covered through IGU grants. The COMLAND website contains information that includes upcoming and past meetings, the Steering Committee, awards, reports and publications. The website contains all of COMLAND's available archival information. Web URL: www.comland.org

COMLAND Members receive occasional emails that publicise upcoming COMLAND and some IGU events. Members are referred to the COMLAND website for the latest information on matters. This communication takes the place of newsletters.

V USE OF IGU GRANTS:

The IGU Grant to COMLAND is used for operational expenses in maintaining the COMLAND website on a commercial platform (www.comland.org) which includes domain registration expenses, website hosting and internet access charges.

COMLAND has also supported events / conferences that are relevant and/or advantageous to COMLAND's interests. The COMLAND Steering Committee has agreed that these funds are allocated to events to support the active attendance of young scientists. It is usually at the discretion of the event organisers on who and how these funds are allocated or pooled. COMLAND seeks recognition through verbal acknowledgement and use of its logo where possible.

Events financially supported in 2019 were:

- 8th International Symposium on Gully Erosion, Australia
- South African Association of Geomorphologists Conference, South Africa
- Thematic IGU Conference, Slovenia

VI U.N. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG)

U.N. Sustainable Development Goals are addressed here:
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

The COMLAND Steering Committee has analysed its Objectives and activities with reference to the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals and Targets. At the request of the IGU Executive Committee, it has identified specific Goals and Targets where COMLAND *can* and *could* contribute.