



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

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



REPORT OF ACTIVITIES: 2020

Matija Zorn (Chair) and Owen Graham (Secretary)

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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

Chair:

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Steering Committee Changes:

Associate Prof. Andrea Vacca retired from the Chair position after 4 years and resumed his position as a Steering Committee member.

Dr. Matija Zorn was nominated and approved by the Executive Committee to the Chair position after Assoc. Prof. Vacca's tenure.

New Steering Committee members were welcomed:

- Prof. Sunil Kumar De (India)
- Dr. Chiaki T. Oguchi (Japan)

Dr. Gregor Ollesch (Germany) retired from the Steering Committee after his term expired.

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	8	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	5	Singapore	1
Armenia	3	Sweden	1
Chile	3	UAE	2
Finland	3	TOTAL	274

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.

2020

COMLAND’s direct face to face activities in 2020 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The membership is optimistic that previously scheduled and new face to face meetings will occur during 2021.

34th International Geographical Congress (IGC 2020) - Istanbul Turkey. August 2020

Scheduled COMLAND Session titled “Land degradation and desertification: new research and its implications for monitoring and mitigation”. Proposed papers by several COMLAND Members. Scheduled COMLAND Business Meeting. Proposed support to Organisers to assist some young researchers attend the Congress. All activities were cancelled and are planned for the deferred Congress in 2021.

International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) Conference on Geomorphology - Coimbra Portugal. September 2020

COMLAND was considering its participation which included papers, a Business Meeting, field activities and support to Organisers to assist young scientists attend the Conference. Development of proposals were deferred for consideration in 2021.

III NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION:

Cooperation with ISC (International Science Council) and UNDRR (UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction)

COMLAND cooperated in the UNDRR/ISC Sendai Hazard Definitions and Classification Review reviewing the Hazard Information Profiles (HIPs) of some geohazards and some environmental hazards.

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.

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 and maintains active liaison through cross-membership at Steering Committee level.

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.

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.

In 2019 editing was completed on a special issue of the journal *Land Degradation and Development* titled "The Role of Historic Human Impacts on Modern Environmental Processes and Management". All the papers from this special issue were published on-line in 2018 and 2019:

[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)

Papers were included in regular journal issues in 2019 and 2020, including the introductory paper, where it was acknowledged that the special issue was published in collaboration with COMLAND:

Hudson, P. F., Zorn, M. 2020: The role of historic human impacts on modern environmental processes and management: Introduction to special issue. *Land Degradation & Development* 31(17). DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1002/ldr.3328>

V ARCHIVAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

Archival material is available from the Commission's Annual Reports. These usually include relevant photographs from meetings, field excursions and other events.

VI 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. This means that any COMLAND funding support is usually to event organisers and not directly to individuals. COMLAND seeks recognition through verbal acknowledgement and use of its logo where possible.

Events proposed for financial support in 2020 were cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that these and other events will be reconvened in 2021.

VII 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.