



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

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



**REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2021**

Matija Zorn (Chair) and Owen Graham (Secretary)

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[www.comland.org](http://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 the exchange of information regarding land degradation and desertification.

## I COMLAND MEMBERSHIP

### Steering Committee

#### **Chair:**

Assoc. Prof. Matija Zorn

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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	13	Algeria	1
Iceland	11	Argentina	1
India	11	Belgium	1
Brazil	8	China (Hong Kong)	1
Italy	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	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>278</b>

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

Members are encouraged to attend events which are hosted by COMLAND or have COMLAND presence or support. This encourages networking and professional development.

## 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.

### 2021

COMLAND's direct face-to-face activities in 2021 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The membership is optimistic that previously scheduled and new face-to-face meetings will occur during 2022.

#### **34<sup>th</sup> International Geographical Congress (IGC 2020) – Istanbul, Turkey. August 16–20 2021**

COMLAND hosted an on-line session titled *“Land degradation and desertification: new research and its implications for monitoring and mitigation”* that was chaired by COMLAND Steering Committee member Andrea Vacca. The scheduled COMLAND Business Meeting was postponed to the IGU 2022 conference in Paris.

#### **International Workshop on Geography and Sustainability 2021 – Beijing, China. November 23–24 2021**

COMLAND had organised a special session on land degradation that was chaired by the commission chair. The conference/workshop was organized on-line by the IGU Commission on Geography for Future Earth in cooperation with several other IGU commissions including COMLAND.

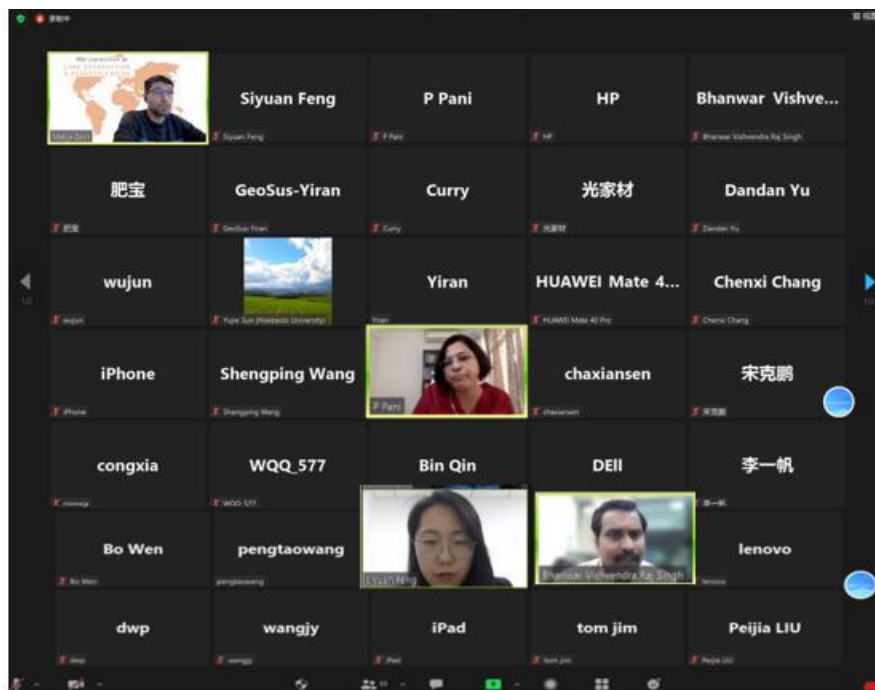


Figure: Some attendants of the COMLAND session.

#### **IGU Paris 2022: Time for Geographers – Paris, France. July 18–22 2022**

COMLAND will host a session titled *“Land Degradation: An Underestimated Environmental Challenge”* that will be chaired by three COMLAND Steering Committee members (Owen Graham, Andrea Vacca and Matija Zorn). Development of the session proposal was done in 2021. A Business Meeting will also be held at the conference. COMLAND is planning to work with the Congress organisers to help support attendance by some young scientists.

**International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) Conference on Geomorphology - Coimbra Portugal. September 2022**

COMLAND is considering its participation which would include papers, a Business Meeting, field activities and proposed support to Organisers to assist young scientists to attend the Conference.

### **III NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION:**

**Cooperation with the World Association of Soil and Water Conservation (WASWAC) and the International Union of Soil Sciences (UISS)**

COMLAND supported “Protecting the Soil is Protecting the Climate” initiative by the WASWAC and UISS to raise awareness and promote the significance and implications of the world’s soil systems as climate regulators.

**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 and Commission on Geography for Future Earth.

## **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](http://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 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 2021 were cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that these and other events will be reconvened in 2022.