

UNESCO and IYPE: Planet Earth in our hands

Our common focus

On Thursday, June 5, Mr. Koiichira Matsuuara, Director-General of UNESCO addressed the world's community at the occasion of World Environment Day 2008:

“We understand enough today, in terms of the nature, scope and impact of environmental degradation and climate change, to know that we must act – and now. A new culture of consciousness is emerging – one that unites the nations and people of the world in a common fight for sustainability”





IYPE programme in The Netherlands

MijnAarde (MyEarth)

In *MyEarth*, "My" stands for the National Committee of The Netherlands' firm belief that each member of mankind should (learn to) develop responsibility for the future of our planet by taking an active part in all kinds of activities pertaining to the global, national and local response of System Earth to environment and climate change now and in the decades ahead.



Impression of activities

Yellow: Scientific Programme
Green: Outreach Programme

On the site www.mijnaarde.nl more information is available for each event.

The activities reflect the System Earth Approach of the Dutch National Committee, i.e. Earth Sciences in its broadest sense. Consequently, the scientific components of *MyEarth* mirror the input and integration of results obtained from studies covering a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines. In the Outreach Programme these components are exposed in synergy with input from society in general, in particular from (semi-) governmental institutions and industry.

Programme elements

Science

The National Committee's call to establish links with national and international scientific organizations to collaborate in the context of IYPE was greatly welcomed. As a result, around 20 (inter)national congresses, symposia and workshops have been scheduled for 2008-2009. These scientific events cover the seven major, interrelated themes of the *MyEarth* Programme: 1) Earth and Cosmos, 2) Sealevel and Climate, 3) Water, 4) Geobiodiversity and Ecology, 5) Geomorphology, Landscape development and Urbanization, 6) Soils, and 7) Underground Space, Resources and Energy. All activities mirror a cross-disciplinary approach of conference topics. It goes without saying that many of these address the future of the densely populated Dutch Rhine – Meuse – IJssel Delta System, particularly so in view of current and future challenges resulting from the effects of e.g., climate change and population growth.



Education

This is a major element of the *MyEarth* Programme, meant to trigger the interest of young people with respect to past, present and future of our fascinating Planet Earth. The educational activities accommodate the widely diverging state of knowledge and understanding potential of the various age categories, as reflected in stages of education ranging from elementary through secondary school, up to college and university level. Young children, for instance, are stimulated to get familiar with nature conservation and the very principles of earth system history through introducing global aspects as well as features characteristic for their own life habitats.



At the high school – college level, various contests have been organized in the context of creative workshops on e.g., climate and energy coupled with the envisaged development of Rotterdam mainport. A nation-wide film contest focussing on life in a possible future greenhouse world provides another example of major education activities. Up into 2009, the *Geotruck*, a “mobile classroom”, travels through the country and the adjacent Flanders region, paying a visit to numerous high schools. Students can play the sophisticated “*Earth Quest*” game, dedicated to climate change, water, energy supply and resources. Reports on many of the education activities are included in special *MyEarth* columns in the bi-monthly periodical “*Krant van de Aarde*” (*Newspaper Earth*).

Outreach

Outreach activities take place all over the country. Invariably, they start from attempts to raise synergy between the numerous scientific, governmental and industrial “shareholders” involved in defining and solving present-day and future problems. This facilitates to explore in a truly cross-disciplinary way all kinds of possible scenarios for anticipated features of change in the forthcoming decades. Equally, it will help to better define the impact each scenario may have on environments and conditions of life. Such scenarios for features of change are being developed on nation-wide, regional and local scales. No doubt the regional and local scenarios will fundamentally contribute to get the various levels of society more easily involved in terms of awareness and participation.

Recently, several events have been organized, which served to initiate comprehensive clusters of fully integrated outreach activities, such as those pertaining to 1) *Building with Nature* (the



official start of the Dutch MyEarth Programme), 2) Sealevel Changes, and 3) Vital Soils. More such opening events are envisaged for late 2008 and early 2009, to be dedicated to 4) Underground Space, 5) Biodiversity / Ecology, 6) Mainport development, 7) Urbanization, 8) Living below Sealevel, and 9) Rural areas, Agriculture and Recreation. In addition, some, primarily geographically delimited, regions will play a prominent role in the Outreach Programme. These include the estuarine Southwestern Delta of Zeeland / southern Zuid Holland, the Rhine – Meuse – IJssel River System, the IJsselmeer (former Zuyder Zee), and the Wadden Sea. As a rule, the Dutch outreach events are organized by the Stichting Planet Earth Foundation and private partners, in close collaboration with public and societal organizations.



More information: www.mijnaarde.nl



Contact

Secretariat Stichting Planet Earth Foundation

PO Box 420

2800 AK Gouda

The Netherlands

E: info@stichtingplanetearth.nl

T: +31182 - 540910

F: +31182 - 540911

Secretariat National Committee of the Netherlands IYPE

TNO Built Environment and Geosciences

PO Box 80015

3508 TA Utrecht

The Netherlands

Contact: prof. dr. Johan E. Meulenkamp, Chairman of the National IYPE Committee of The Netherlands and of the Stichting Planet Earth Foundation