



## GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK

International Association on Geoparks

### CELEBRATING EARTH HERITAGE – SUSTAINING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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[www.globalgeoparksnetwork.org](http://www.globalgeoparksnetwork.org)

## 5<sup>th</sup> GGN Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday 6 September 2023, at 11:15 – 13:00 (Morocco time)

M’Goun UNESCO Global Geopark

<https://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/?p=7904>

### MINUTES

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#### 1. Welcome and adoption of the Agenda

##### 1.1. Welcome from Chair

*Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan)* opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He pointed out the importance of a face to face meeting after 3 years of online meetings, summarized the work that has been done by the GGN Advisory Committee during the previous meetings and the actions for the preparation of the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025.

##### 1.2. Agreement of the agenda

The agenda was adopted unanimously.

##### 1.3. Greetings from the GGN

*Nickolas Zouros (GGN President)* greeted the meeting, thanked M’Goun UNESCO Global Geopark for its great efforts and the tremendous work for the organization of the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on UNESCO Global Geopark, the warm hospitality and the generous offer for the organization of the International Fair for the first time after the pandemic.

He distributed the following GGN printed documents, magazines and materials and thanked Tony Ramsay for the editing of the GGN magazines:

*A. GGN printed documents and magazines*

- 1. Status Report on the GGN Association 2022- 2023;*
- 2. GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025;*
- 3. 4<sup>th</sup> GGN Ordinary General Assembly;*
- 4. 'Geodiversity in UNESCO Global Geoparks' magazine;*
- 5. 'Geoparks Going Green' magazine;*
- 6. GGN Map 2023/2024;*

*B. USB flash drive with all the GGN documents and publications in digital form;*

*C. GGN flag.*

*D. GGN Membership Cards (for all the GGN Institutional, Individual and Honorary members according to the GGN Statutes)*

## **2. Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> GGN Advisory Committee meeting**

The minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> GGN Advisory Committee meeting were approved unanimously by the GGN Advisory Committee members.

## **3. Status Report on the GGN Association 2022-2023**

*Nickolas Zouros (GGN President)* pointed out that the GGN summarize on this report the activities that were organized during the last two difficult years after the pandemic. The GGN was one of the most active international networks during the difficult years of the pandemic. Main target of the GGN during the last two years was to keep the operation of the GGN high, to continue the activities, to promote and raise the profile of the UNESCO Global Geoparks. The GGN implemented the majority of the activities of the previous Strategic Plan 2021-2022. The GGN is very proud for the report because it represents the work of all Geoparks.

He gave a brief review of the Status Report on the GGN Association for the years 2022 and 2023 and mainly referred to the following actions which were implemented with success:

- The GGN capacity building activities e.g. international courses, evaluators' seminar etc.;
- The new communication tools and publications (digital and printed);
- The revalidation and evaluation missions;
- The two initiatives in collaboration with UNESCO: (1) UNESCO/GGN Grant for Africa and the Arab States and (2) UNESCO/GGN Grant for Small Island Developing States (SIDS);
- The advisory missions in Africa for the creation of Geoparks in areas where there is not so good representation;
- The GGN Executive Board meetings with observers from UNESCO, IUGS, EGN and GeoLAC regional Networks and Youth Forum;
- The GGN initiatives like the Film Festival and Best Practice Awards;
- The welcome events that the GGN organized for its new members;
- The digitals campaigns of the GGN like the 'Discover the Earth's hidden treasures' digital campaign and the 'Geodiversity wonders in Geoparks'

digital campaign which organized on the occasion of the International Geodiversity Day etc.);

- The international fairs which organized in collaboration with the GGN Regional Geoparks Networks;
- The GGN collaborated with IUGS and participated in the programme for the nomination of the 100 geological heritage sites and the creation of a new framework for the evaluation of the international value of the geological sites.

The Chair thanked Nickolas Zouros for his summary of the GGN activities and achievements in 2022 and 2023.

**Decision:** The GGN Advisory Committee members unanimously approved the Status Report on the GGN Association 2022-2023.

#### **4. GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025**

*Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan)* referred to the structure of the GGN Advisory Committee and its main function which is to advice the GGN Executive Board and the General Assembly of the GGN on matters concerning the policy, programmes, procedures, finances, amendments to the Statutes of the GGN and to promote the activities of each country and asked the members for their comments and suggestions on the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025.

*Nickolas Zouros (GGN President)* informed that the following GGN National Fora/Committees have already sent their comments on the Strategic Plan by the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2023 (<https://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/?p=7904>):

- Chinese Geoparks Network
- German Geoparks Forum
- Spanish Geoparks Forum
- UK Committee for UNESCO Global Geoparks & Irish UNESCO Global Geoparks Committee

He outlined the principal elements of the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025 and focused on the following:

- The GGN will strengthen its administration due to the increased number of Geoparks (Strategic Action 1);
- Encourage the contribution of the GGN Working Groups (Strategic Action 1);
- Establish a stronger communication mechanism (Strategic Action 1);
- Continue to support and collaborate with UNESCO for the operation of the UNESCO Global Geoparks programme – The programme is strongly supported by all the members of the network that are offering voluntarily their contribution to the evaluation and revalidation exercises and other activities of the Geoparks (Strategic Action 2);
- Encourage the strong collaboration with the GGN Regional Networks (Strategic Action 3);
- Encourage the creation and operation of National Geoparks Networks (Strategic Action 4).
- Support the Creation of National Geoparks Networks (Strategic Action 4). This is a new action that should be developed as it is very important to act also strongly at the national level and to persecute for the need of organizing also activities in the national level.

- Encourage the use of local languages at the national level (Strategic Action 4).
- Support the Institutional members, encourage to use more the advice of the GGN Individual members and the advice and experience of the Cooperating and the Honorary Members (Strategic Action 5).
- Create new GGN initiatives like the Film Festival and Best Practice Awards (Strategic Action 6).
- Encourage the participation of more young people inside the network and support the operation of the National Geopark Youth Fora (Strategic Action 6).
- Encourage the engagement with the SDGs (Strategic Action 7).
- Continue to work for the organization of capacity building activities in collaboration with UNESCO (Strategic Action 9).
- Continue to work for the marketing and promotion of the network (Strategic Action 10).
- Encourage all Geoparks to participate in the celebration 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the GGN and organize events in local, regional and national level and engage their local communities in these activities – Encourage all Geoparks to use this opportunity in order to promote the network (Strategic Action 10).
- Continue to promote International Networking e.g. collaboration with IUGS, IUCN etc. (Strategic Action 11).

Taking in mind the comment by the UK and Ireland, he suggested the members of the GGN Advisory Committee developing a global strategy not only for two years (as the GGN Statutes requires) but for a decade e.g. for the decade 2025-2035.

He invited all GGN Advisory Committee members to continue working all together in order to face the challenges for the years to come and create a common road to the future.

***Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan)*** asked the members to National Fora/Committees that have already submitted their comments to present a summary of their comments.

***Kirstin Lemon (UK)*** informed that the main comment from the UK was that the GGN should prepare a five to ten years strategy. There are some other minor comments like the change of age for the youths and another point is connected with the work at the national level.

***Karmah Salman (Spain)*** pointed out that for the action plan the network needs real actions. The Spanish Geoparks Forum suggests developing actions and also presenting who will be in charge for these actions.

***Hartmut Escher (Germany)*** mentioned that the strategic plan is really ambitious, visionary and sometimes there is the feeling that many developments are coming. He pointed out that there is need for more discussion on: (a) how the actions of the Strategic Plan are related to the operational guidelines in the Documents A and B for the recertification process; (b) if the actions of the Strategic Plan are relevant for the recertification; (c) how to implement the youth forum in every Geopark as it is an extra effort; (d) the time frame which is missing from the Strategic Plan.

***Nickolas Zouros (GGN President)*** replied that the GGN strategy is a general description of actions. It is not necessary the Geoparks to participate in all actions. It is obvious that there are actions that cannot be delivered by all Geoparks, the network needs a general description of actions but this is not connected with the assessment of

the Geoparks. Regarding the Youth Forum, there is a need to engage new people inside the network and work in the local level. There were many requests from different countries wishing to change the age of youths. The Executive Board taking in mind all these requests for change of the age of the youths who can participate in the Youth Forum decided to adapt them in order to give the opportunity for more young people to be engaged in the network.

**Zheng Yuanyuan (China)** suggested strengthening the GGN brand but also strengthening the evaluators' training.

**Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan)** asked all GGN Advisory Committee members to comment on the GGN Strategic Plan.

**Mikko Kiuttu (Finland)** informed about the discussion they had the Geoparks in Finland about the development of network and the strategic plan and expressed their questions about the evaluation system, especially now that the Network is growing and more specific how the network can secure that the evaluation missions and reports are equal for every aspiring Geopark and how can also guarantee the quality level in the future.

**Martina Paskova (Czech Republic)** commented that the GGN Strategic Plan and the certification system of UNESCO are completely different instruments and levels. The certification system of UNESCO comes with many requirements, has criteria, and instruments like the Documents A and B. It seems strange to accommodate the strategy and activities of the network with an instrument of how to check a Geopark is functioning to the future. The strategy is something different, has a different purpose. The strategy is for the future, what policies the network will have and to what activities should stress.

**Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan)** commented that the evaluations are tools of how the Geoparks work. The background of the activities should be based on the strategic plan. The Documents A and B are not part of the Strategy.

**Tran Tan Van (Vietnam)** mentioned that agrees to have a long term strategy e.g. 10 years plan and suggested organizing 3 ways of preparing such a strategy. The one is the top down e.g. the climate change scenario, the IPCC prepares a global scenario and then each country does one. Then to go down to regional networks and then to the national networks e.g. Vietnam in the next 10 years has already decided of how many Geoparks wants to have and how to expand the network and what kind of distribution to have and step by step works in order to develop and increase the number of Geoparks. Second, there are many types of management bodies in the different countries and suggested finding out the most rational model for such management body. Third, it is important to find out how to ensure the financial stability for each Geopark, how to collect the fee for example is a good topic for discussion.

**Helen Jansen (New Zealand)** mentioned that in the strategic plan there is no point related to the indigenous populations and suggested considering and talking about it, particularly in the long term Strategic Plan.

**Tuncer Demir (Turkey)** mentioned that some of the suggestions of the Strategic Plan are general and suggested giving more detailed information on how to implement them (e.g. the establishment of National Bodies, the creation of the Youth Forum).

*Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan)* mentioned that the Strategic Plan gives the general direction and it is reasonable if more communication is needed and if different approaching style is also needed as there are difference between each country on how they understand the document and how they can develop an action.

*Martina Paskova (Czech Republic)* mentioned that all the information about the creation of the Youth Forum has been uploaded on the GGN website.

*Setsuya Nakada (Acting Chair of the GGN Advisory Committee/Japan)* informed that the GGN Executive Board has asked the GGN Advisory Committee members to finalize this Strategic Plan until the end of this year or beginning of the next year and invited all members, who haven't sent their comments, to send their comments and suggestions.

**Decision:** The general trend of the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025 was unanimously accepted by the members of the GGN Advisory Committee.

The discussion and submission of proposals for the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025 will continue until the end of December 2023, after which the GGN Strategic Plan 2024-2025 will be finalized.

The development of a global strategy for a decade e.g. for the decade 2025-2035 was unanimously agreed by the members of the GGN Advisory Committee.

## **5. Any Other Business**

### **5.1. 2<sup>nd</sup> International GGN Film Festival – Best Practice Awards**

*Nickolas Zouros (GGN President)* announced the programme of the GGN meetings for the next days of the conference and informed about the 2<sup>nd</sup> International GGN Film Festival voting and the GGN Best Practice Awards:

#### *A. 2<sup>nd</sup> International GGN Film Festival*

All official representatives of the Geoparks will have to vote for the 3 awards of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International GGN Film Festival. The voting will be electronic through an email that all official representatives will receive in their personal email address.

All participant of the conference (members of no members of the network) have to vote for the 'Audience Award'– Each participant will vote in a paper (the voting paper will be distributed during the conference) – Each participant has only one vote.

#### *B. GGN Best Practice Awards*

The GGN Best Practice Awards which will be awarded during the closing ceremony of the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks.

The meeting close at 13:00 (Morocco time)

## Participants & Observers

a/a	PARTICIPANTS	Country
1	NAKADA Setsuya	GGN Advisory Committee Acting Chair / Japan
2	GULAS Oliver	Austria
3	PETIT Alain	Belgium
4	SELL Jaciele	Brazil
5	CALDER JOHN	Canada / GGN Executive Board member
6	HERRERA PINTOR Patricia Isabel	Chile
7	ZHENG Yuanyuan	China
8	PAVIC Goran	Croatia
9	KAZAMIA EVI	Cyprus
10	PASKOVA Martina	Czech Republic
11	WALLØE Hansen Jakob	Denmark
12	KIUTTU Mikko	Finland
13	PAGÈS Jean-Simon	France
14	HARTMUT Escher	Germany
15	FASSOULAS Chararalmpos	Greece
16	Thuridur Aradottir Brown	Iceland
17	AMRIKAZEMI Alireza	Iran
18	GLANVILLE Clare substitute	Ireland
19	KAUSCH Birgit	Luxembourg
20	Azmil Munif Mohd Bukhari	Malaysia
21	PALACIO Jose Luis	Mexico
22	ACHBAL Driss	Morocco / GGN Executive Board member
23	ROELFS Gretha	Netherlands
24	JANSEN Helen	New Zealand
25	RANGNES Kristin	Norway / GGN Executive Board member
26	RAMIREZ ANGULO Joaquin Yammil	Peru
27	DIN Karl Michael	Philippines
28	POROS Michał	Poland
29	RODRIGUES Joana	Portugal
30	LEE Soojae	Republic of Korea
31	GYÖRGY Balázs	Slovakia
32	FAJMUT ŠRTUCL Suzana	Slovenia
33	SALMAN Karmah	Spain
34	BERGENGREN Anna	Sweden
35	MWANKUNDA Joshua	Tanzania
36	THUNGPRUE Narongrit	Thailand

37	DEMIR Tuncer	Turkey
38	LEMON Kirstin	United Kingdom
39	BIDONDO ECHEVERIA Eugenio	Uruguay
40	TRAN Tan Van	Vietnam

a/a	OBSERVERS	
1	VANDENBERGHE Kristof	UNESCO
2	ZOUROS Nickolas	GGN Executive Board President / Greece
3	JIN Xiaochi	GGN Executive Board Vice President / China
4	KOMOO IBRAHIM	GGN Executive Board Vice President / Malaysia
5	MARTINI Guy	GGN Executive Board General Secretary / France
6	FREY Marie-Luise	GGN Executive Board member / Germany
7	FURUSAWA Kana	GGN Executive Board member / Japan
8	SÁ Artur	GGN Executive Board member / Portugal
9	ZHANG Jianping	GGN Executive Board member / China
10	BENTANA Konstantina	Executive Assistant GGN Secretariat / Greece
11	LAMBRAKOPOULOS Aggelos	Greece
12	VALIAKOS Ilias	Greece
13	Kombada Mhopjeni	Namibia
14	Buehenen TK	New Zealand
15	Michelle O’Grady	United Kingdom