

# CODATA

## SPECIAL ISSUE

Committee on Data for Science and Technology

## CODATA Celebrates its 45th Birthday

December 2011

**President of CODATA appointed Academician to the Chinese Academy of Sciences**

CODATA would like to congratulate **Professor GUO Huadong** on his appointment as member of the Earth Science Department of the Chinese Academy of Sciences on 9th December 2011. Information on this and Professor GUO's scientific work can be found on [http://english.ceode.cas.cn/ns/events/201112/t20111209\\_79917.html](http://english.ceode.cas.cn/ns/events/201112/t20111209_79917.html)

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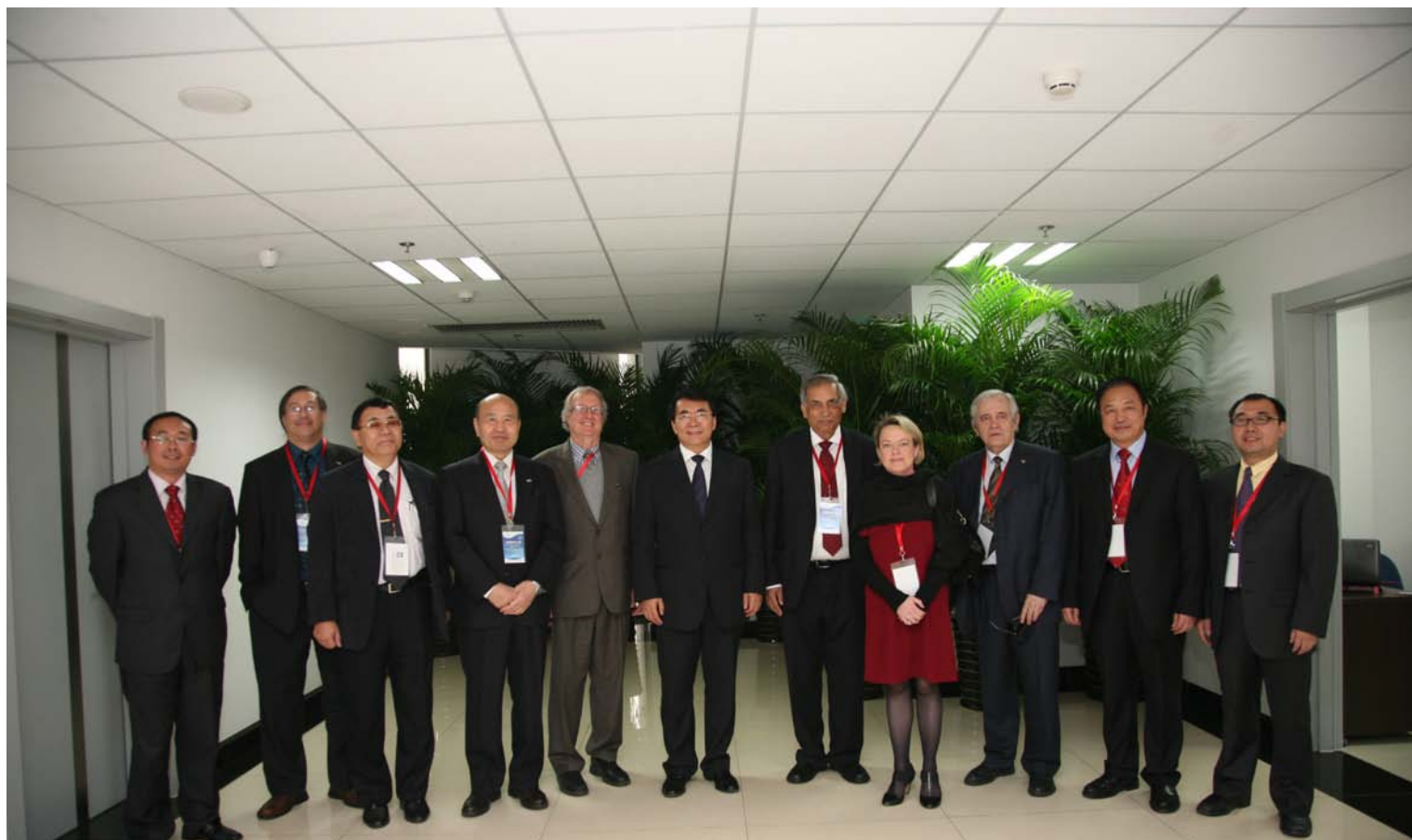
### FOREWORD

Over 45 years ago a number of visionary scientific leaders came together with a clear recognition that the advancement of science was dependent on the preservation of accurate scientific data and the availability of these data for future generations. They further recognized that an international network dedicated to this mission was essential in order to realise this objective - thus CODATA, the ICSU Committee on Data for Science and Technology, was born.

On 30th of October 2011 in Beijing, China, this organization celebrated its 45th anniversary. Its expanded mission "to strengthen international science for the benefit of society by promoting improved scientific and technical data management and use" builds on that established by its forefathers 45 years ago. Leading scientists came together not only

to celebrate some CODATA success stories over this period but also to recognise, as the organization moves forward, it must also adapt to meet future challenges facing the data community. What follows in this Newsletter Special is simply the essence of the event that took place on October 30th, together with some photographs. A special video, commissioned to commemorate the gathering, is available online: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIAoAQu\\_qjs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIAoAQu_qjs)





*BAI Chunli, The President of Chinese Academy of Sciences, center of photo, meets with CODATA Delegation*

## CODATA 45 YEARS ON !

The meeting “Data-Intensive Science and Discovery - CODATA 45 years on”, held at the headquarters of the Center for Earth Observational and Digital Earth-, (CEODE), Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, brought together over a hundred leading scientists to celebrate CODATA’s birthday. The meeting was intended not only to bring together the CODATA family after nearly a half-century of service but also to integrate different aspects of data science covering science and policy, national and international organizations, as well as public and private institutions. Participants came from industry, government and academia. Details of the Agenda can be found on <http://www.codata.org/CODATA%2045%20Agenda.html>

Included among the participants were the President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the current CODATA President, its two Vice-Presidents, three former CODATA Presidents, the President of ICSU,

the President-elect of ICSU, the Chair and incoming Chair of the Scientific Committee of the international program on “Integrated Research on Disaster Risk” and President of the International Geographical Union to name but a few.

In his remarks of welcome, BAI Chunli, President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, thanked

CODATA for the “level and scale of cooperation they have brought to modern science” contributing to making digital scientific data and knowledge openly available to society.

Yuan-Tseh Lee, Nobel Laureate and President of ICSU, emphasized the fact that since data are now ‘more plentiful’ and ‘more complex’ one



*Yuan-Tseh Lee, President of ICSU*

big challenge faced by the scientific community is to ensure the quality of the data.

CODATA was honoured that one of its outstanding luminaries, Professor SUN Honglie, former Vice-President of ICSU and former Vice-President of CODATA also participated at the event. One important facet of CODATA he recognized was its ability to truly act as an international forum that facilitates the opportunity for scientists to meet the “world’s leading experts in the field of scientific data and build up cordial and constructive working relationships with them”. This was reflected in the outstanding high level of scientific expertise and knowledge represented by all participants at the event. The level of interaction between such high-level scientists was indeed one of the successes of CODATA—45 years on.

Recognizing the importance of interaction with other international organizations addressing data challenges, CODATA signed two Memoranda of Understanding at the event in a special “Hand in Hand” session. One was with the International Program on “Integrated Research on Disaster Risk”. This CODATA/IRDR initiative recognizes that natural and man-made disasters continue to increase around the world. These in turn also affect increasing numbers of people. There is a need to understand more fully why this is happening and the repercussions of these disasters from both environmental and human perspectives. The availability of reliable and accurate data on hazards, exposure, vulnerability and impacts is essential to this understanding. These are issues that concern and challenge both organizations.

The other Memorandum of Understanding was with the “International Society for Digital Earth”. This CODATA/ISDE initiative is exploring the feasibility of establishing a comprehensive, integrated system for storing, sharing, viewing and analyzing an unprecedented wealth of information pertaining to any given geographic location. Without doubt it is an ambitious goal in which data management plays a



*CODATA signs Memorandum of Understanding with IRDR. GUO Huadong, President of CODATA, left, shakes hands with Gordon McBean, then Chair of the IRDR Scientific Committee*



*CODATA signs Memorandum of Understanding with ISDE. Takashi Gojobori, a Vice-President of CODATA, left, shakes hands with Milan Konecny, a Vice-President of ISDE*



*CODATA 45th Banquet*



*Launch of the Digital LIN CHAO Geomuseum*

key part and toward which CODATA is well positioned to contribute.

The launch of the Digital LIN CHAO Geomuseum also took place in the “Hand in Hand” session, forging collaboration with the International Geographical Union (IGU). Ron Abler, President of IGU, remarked that the museum commemorates one of the “giants of Chinese and International geography” and “I believe he is well pleased to have this ceremony held in conjunction with CODATA’s forty-fifth anniversary, not only much of his work relied on the careful analysis of sound data, but a new milestone of opening digital geographical knowledge and data in the information society”.

One of the most beneficial outcomes of having a diverse group of participants at CODATA—45 years on was the increased awareness of data issues. Many of our guests and participants would not necessarily consider themselves as data science experts, though they rely heavily on data in all their research. While every researcher collecting or using data should not be expected to become a data scientist, they are aware of issues pertaining to data quality, standards, sharing and preservation. This awareness needs to extend throughout policies and practices, something that CODATA strives to accomplish, and it is in raising that awareness that CODATA—45 years on celebrated as one of its achievements.

The event was not all talk and no play. The participants were invited to a special banquet to mark the event generously hosted by our Chinese colleagues.

As stated at the beginning, this summary gives only a limited impression of the event. Details on all sessions as well as speakers who participated and presented at the meeting will be available in an online report in early 2012. Furthermore, a detailed publication celebrating CODATA’s 45 year history will be launched at the 23rd CODATA International Conference in Taipei in October 2012.

Finally CODATA International would like to take this opportunity to thank its Chinese colleagues for all their support in making the event an outstanding success. We would like to extend a very special thank you to Mr. HONG Tianhua and his colleague Mr. LIANG Dong from CEODE.

