

2020: global environment's big year

Professor Roger Crofts CBE, Chair, RSGS

2020 will be an action-packed year for global bodies dealing with the most crucial issues facing people and the planet; and geographers are playing leading roles in the activities.

The **UN2020 Initiative**, reflecting the United Nations' 75th anniversary, will take stock to strengthen the UN system with all parties, importantly including civil society. It will focus on multilateralism to combat the threats of nationalism, and on such major issues as climate change, military conflict and inequality, all within the context of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

In preparation for these meetings, the **Convention to Combat Desertification** met to review controls on and review issues about the further loss of productive land due to desertification, land degradation and drought which affects so many countries around the world, including the UK.

The **Convention on Biological Diversity** will meet in October 2020 in China to agree a new 2050 vision, *Living in Harmony with Nature*. It aims to be "ambitious, transformational, scientifically sound and responding to national needs." This is necessary given the continued loss of biodiversity globally and the sixth extinction crisis, caused by human activity.

A meeting of the UN **Framework Convention on Climate Change** (COP26) will be held in Glasgow in November 2020. It will focus on implementation of the Paris Agreement and developing ways of ensuring that action is taken to make sure targets are met.

And in Marseille in June will be the 70th anniversary **World Conservation Congress** of the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). I hope to attend, to participate in the discussions and launch a book on geoheritage conservation.

2019 has been another very busy year with RSGS. 2020 promises to be busier still!

Global biodiversity mapping

Countries need integrated maps of biodiversity and ecosystem services, to design and implement national policies for halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity and for curbing net



Areas of global significance for biodiversity conservation and carbon storage. Source: Nature Map



Areas of global significance for the restoration of biodiversity and carbon storage. Source: Nature Map

greenhouse gas emissions from land use. In September, the Nature Map consortium released two new maps that integrate available data on terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystem carbon stocks, designed to help governments operationalize targets for biodiversity conservation and

restoration. Check out Nature Map (naturemap.earth) as they release additional data layers throughout 2020.

50 youth-led solutions

SDSN Youth, a programme of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, has launched the third edition of the Youth Solutions Report, identifying 50 youth-led projects that are accelerating global progress on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

See www.youthsolutions.report/2019report for more information.



SDGs



Climate Solutions



We were pleased to find specific mention of the RSGS in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government announced in September, in regard to our Climate Solutions course. Aimed at middle and senior managers across Scotland, the course

aims to short-cut vast amounts of literature and provide decision makers with the know-how to implement solutions to the climate emergency. The full course, which is supported by the Universities of Stirling and Edinburgh, the Institute of Directors, and the Scottish Government, is set to roll out in early 2020: please contact enquiries@rsgs.org for further information or to get involved.

get involved!

Levison Wood in Perth

3rd February

We are delighted to announce that explorer, writer, photographer and television personality Levison Wood will speak for the Society! Famous for walking the Nile, the Himalaya, the Americas and, most recently, Arabia, Levison will be sharing behind-the-scenes stories from his journeys of discovery that have inspired several popular television documentaries and best-selling books.



Levison will speak at Perth Concert Hall on Monday 3rd February 2020 at 7.30pm. Tickets are likely to sell fast, so please call 01738 621031 or visit www.horsecross.co.uk to secure your seats. And to whet your appetite, see pages 6-7 for his interview with our Writer-in-Residence Jo Woolf.

book a ticket!