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Asia Pacific Geoparks Network

CELEBRATING EARTH HERITAGE –
SUSTAINING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Annual Report 2024

by

JIN Xiaochi, FURUSAWA Kana, KOMOO Ibrahim



Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN)

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2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the Global Geoparks Network. The most important event of APGN in that year was the 8th APGN Symposium, at which a special ceremony celebrating the 20th anniversary of GGN was conducted. We held APGN AC and CC meetings and the APGN election during the symposium. Also in 2024, we celebrated the fifth APGN Week, we welcomed 6 new members, we actively involved in the 8th International Training Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks held in Xiangxi UGGp (China) and the 7th Regional Course on UNESCO Global Geopark held in Langkawi UGGp (Malaysia). We also supported and actively participated in several international activities organized by our members in conjunction with local/national governments.

In this report, we present, roughly in chronological order, the main activities/events organized and/or supported by APGN in 2024. Activities initiated and accomplished by various members are not repeated here; they will be described in detail in their respective annual reports to the GGN.

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6. The 8th APGN Symposium
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9. Let's Do It—APGN ZOOM Mini-Exchange

1. APGN Workshop on UGGps and SDGs

On 22 March 2024 (6:00 - 8:00 (GMT), APGN held its Online Workshop on UNESCO Global Geoparks and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Agenda 2030, as a regional follow-up event of the GGN Online Workshop on 5 February 2024. More than 120 participants took part in the workshop.

APGN Coordinator Xiaochi Jin made a welcome speech and introduced the workshop. GGN President Nickolas Zouros and Programme Specialist of UNESCO Beijing Office Ai Sugiura delivered welcome speeches.

Mega Fatimah Rosana of Indonesia, a member of the GGN SDGs Working Group, introduced in great detail the SDG template for UNESCO Global Geoparks and its aims. This template functions as a useful tool helping each UNESCO Global Geopark to note and check its activities towards the SDGs.

5 representatives of 5 UGGps presented their respective good practices in reaching different SDGs. Lulin Wang of Arxan UNESCO Global Geopark (China) used examples of how the forestry workers changed their roles from felling trees to activities of forestry economy to explain the contributions of the geopark (SDG 15: life on land).

Jemmy Riga S. of Merangin Jambi UGGp (Indonesia) introduced the actions of the geopark communities to protect water resources and waterfall geological sites and use them as a source of micro-hydropower plant (SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and SDG 13: Climate Action).

Koki Nagata of Aso UGGp (Japan) presented the geopark's the efforts made in Junior Geoguides program (SDG 4: Quality education).

Aejin Lee of Jeju Island UGGp (Republic of Korea) presented how the geopark to restore marine ecosystems and enhance biodiversity, and utilize sustainably marine resources (SDG 14: Life Below Water).

Tran Nhi Bach Van of Dak Nong UGGp (Vietnam) introduced a series activities of the Green Living



Campaigns in the geopark (SDG 13: climate action).

After the presentations, participants also shared examples of good practices in the Chat. The workshop provided a session for participants to ask questions on the presentations and give their comments on SDG template. Finally, the APGN SDGs Working Group was introduced by Kana Furusawa.

2. The Fifth APGN Week



GLOBAL
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22-28 April 2024, Starting with Celebrating the Earth Day

APGN
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Fifth APGN Week

Celebrating earth heritage - Strengthening networking

Examples of activities conducted by our members in Week

2.1 Common activities of 46 Geoparks in China

46 Geoparks in China launched on 22 April an event of Geoparks Mutual Exhibition and Interacting Activities. At this event every geopark held a poster exhibition of geosites, landscape, etc. of all the participation Geoparks in its indoor halls or open squares, which attracted a large numbers of visitors and school students, and has been proven to be an effective means to promote Global Geoparks. The number of participating Geoparks to this activity grows steadily since the first APGN Week. The exhibition continued to the end of the APGN Week. Another common event of these geoparks was the so-called geopark passport check-in, i.e. geoparks stamped on the visitors' geopark passport. At the same time, a series of popular science activities were organized by these Geoparks respectively. Some scenes of the event are shown below.



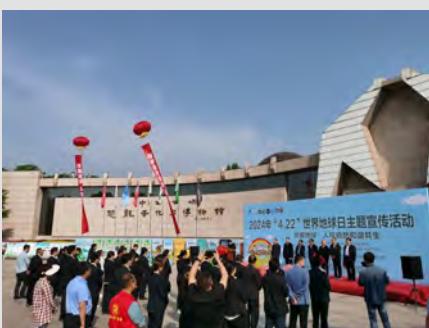
Yandangshan



Danxiashan



Enshi Grand Canyon-Tenglongdong



Funiushan



Kunlunshan



Leye-Fengshan



Leiqiong



Lushan



Zhangjiajie



Xiangxi



Sanqingshan

2.2 Dak Nong UGGp (Vietnam) held 3 activities during 22-28 April

2.2.1 Educational Workshops on Community-based tourism in Dak Nong Geopark

On April 22, Dak Nong UGGp Management Board and the Dak Nong district authority conducted a special training class, aiming to empower local village leaders, artisans, and members of traditional music clubs with the knowledge and skills needed to leverage the rich heritage of Dak Nong UGGp for the creation of distinctive and valuable tourism products.

With a total of 70 enthusiastic participants, the training class served as a platform for collaborative learning and exchange of ideas. Facilitated by experts in heritage preservation and sustainable tourism, the session delved into the historical and cultural significance of Dak Nong UGGp, shedding light on its unique geological formations, biodiversity, and indigenous traditions.

2.2.2. Talk show “Directions for Dak Nong tourism”

On April 24, Dak Nong TV station hosted a live talk show *“The Directions for Dak Nong tourism”*, at which Dak Nong UGGp representatives and district leaders from the territory were honored guests.

This highlighted geopark concept and how the UNESCO Global Geopark brand draws tourists' attention. Dak Nong UGGp representative also mentioned the 17 SDGs that GGN and APGN encouraged geopark members to actively involve to



reach the aim of sustainable development. This live talk show was also livestreamed via Facebook, allowing viewers to interact directly with guests.

2.2.3 Volcanic Cave Partnership Hub-Fun games

This online activity took place on April 25 and was co-hosted by Rinjani-Lombok, Dak Nong, Aso, and Jeju UGGps, as four geoparks inked a multilateral cooperation agreement during 10th Conference of Global Geoparks in Morocco. At the event, participants were given the opportunity to put their knowledge and quick thinking to the test using Kahoot activities designed to challenge and entertain. With questions ranging from geological information to fascinating facts about the four geoparks. Following the games, the floor was available for vibrant conversations and fascinating Q&A sessions, allowing participants to delve into the four geoparks' characteristics. Finally, the events concluded with the announcement of the four winners with the highest scores from each geopark.



2.3 Hong Kong UGGp (China) held Science Popularization and Exchange Event with Shenzhen Dapeng Peninsula National Geopark

To commemorate Earth Day on 22 April 2024 and the 5th Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Week, Hong Kong Geopark co-organized a science popularization and exchange event with Shenzhen Dapeng Peninsula Geopark, the Shenzhen Geological Society, and the Shenzhen Association of Geohazard Prevention and Geoenvironment Protection.

The Shenzhen Geological Society and Hong Kong Geopark delivered lectures at the Shenzhen Dapeng Peninsula Geopark Museum introducing the geology, landforms and geological history of Shenzhen and Hong Kong to the public, teachers and students. Then the participants conducted a joint field excursion to explore the geological heritage of Shenzhen Dapeng Peninsula Geopark and had an in-depth exchange on geological research, park management and planning. This event established a milestone for ongoing cooperation and exchange between two geoparks.



2.4 Langkawi UGGp (Malaysia) conducted several programs

18-24 April 2024 – Joint Exchange Event between Hong Kong UGGp and Langkawi UGGp

Hong Kong UGGp, the Association for Geo-conservation of Hong Kong, and Langkawi UGGp jointly organized a special exchange event. Fourteen Hong Kong Geopark guides (R2G) and representatives of R2G tour operators visited Langkawi UGGp for a 7-day exploratory exchange to promote the development of geotourism and foster collaboration between geoparks. It included field visits, cultural experiences, sharing sessions and lectures with official organizations.



22 April 2024 - Earth Day Celebration, Nature Walk at Taman Legend

A total of 30 participants comprising students, homemakers, LADA staff, and nature enthusiasts joined the 'Nature Walk' program organized in conjunction with Earth Day 2024.

Participants were taken on a walk in the Legend Park by Mr. Zoher Mustan, a tour guide and nature guide for this program, providing interesting insights and information about the natural environment, particularly in the land of Langkawi. After a group photo session, participants were taken to the area of tree planting. A total of 3 saplings of the *kelat paya* tree species (*Eugenia oleina*) were planted.



25 April 2024 – Earth Day Celebration: Geopark to School Program

Langkawi UGGp together with Langkawi District Education Office and all 32 schools in Langkawi came together to show their commitment to celebrate the Planet Earth. All 32 schools in Langkawi were given fruit tree seedlings to be planted at their respective schools.



24-30 April 2024 – Visit by Aso UNESCO Global Geopark, Japan

The Langkawi UGGp received a visit from the Aso UGGp led by Mr. Koki Nagata, Director of Aso UGGp, Mr. Yusuke Watanabe, Vice Director of Aso UGGp, Mr. Yoshiki Izawa, Partnership Designer, and Ms. Koharu Soejima, International Coordinator.

The delegation also participated in the Earth Day Celebration at Sekolah Kebangsaan Kedawang and was taken to visit several geosites of the Langkawi UGGp, including Machinchang Cambrian Geoforest Park, Kilim Karst Geoforest Park, and the Langkawi Geopark Discovery Centre.

Mr. Koki Nagata also participated in the 7th Regional Course on UNESCO Global Geopark as speaker with a presentation of Japanese Geopark Best Practices.



2.5 Lushan UGGp (China) held Educational Activities

Besides the common activities of Geoparks mutual exhibition and interaction, Lushan UGGp organized a variety of on-site popularization activities in geopark school, museum and ropeway station to raise the public's awareness of environmental conservation so as to better protect the environment and promote sustainable development.



2.6 Zhijindong UGGp (China) went into communities to promote geohazard protection and reduction

In addition to the common event of mutual exhibition and interaction of 46 Geoparks in China, staff members of Zhijindong UGGp went into Daping Township to communicate with the local villagers, in order to advance geohazard prevention and control knowledge. Staff members distributed brochures to the local

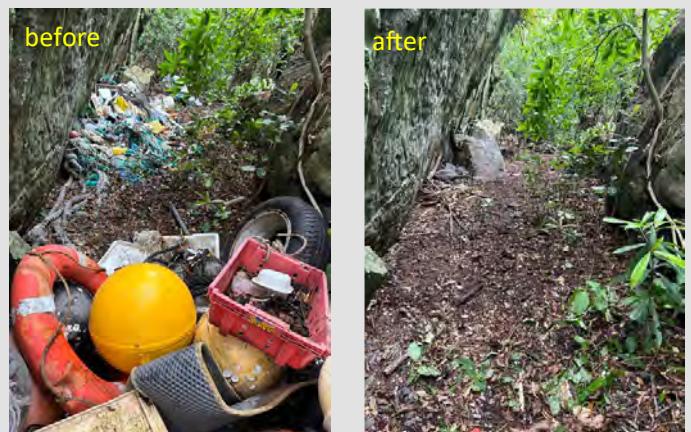
residents, explained the knowledge with interactive question and answer. They used a more understandable language and way to convey the ideas, so that the residents of the community can better catch the important points of how to keep their living environment safe.



2.7 Muroto UGGp (Japan) conducted 3 activities

Muroto Cape Clean-up Activity on 26 April 2024

- Objective: To preserve the landscape and beautiful scenery by collecting wastes along the Muroto Cape
- Participants: 18 citizens
- Outcome: large amount of garbage, like floating buoy balls, filled in a 2-tons truck



Geopark Study at Muroto High School on 22 April 2024

- Objective: For the students to think about "Planet vs. Plastic," which was this year's International Earth Day's theme.
- Participants: 8 students
- Activities: The students came up with the plastic items of which they use daily, and thought about how they can substitute them with something else.
- Outcomes: One group (of 4) came up with 22 ideas as the other (of 4) with 29. Besides the ideas such as "plates, cups, folks and spoons can be replaced by wooden ones," some said "calculator to abacus" and "comb to bamboo comb." This discussion left them a question, "Does replacing the plastics mean going backward?"



Participated in the 1st Collaborative Seminar Between Geoparks in Japan and Finland

- Date: April 22nd, 2024
- Objective: To develop the further tie especially in education, all participating geoparks share their educational initiatives and challenges.
- Learning: Finland's Geoparks' unique features and attractions, different from Japanese Geoparks. Unique educational programs as well as exchange programs with other geoparks.

2.8 Tianzhushan UGGp (China) Carried out Science Popularization Activities

Tianzhushan UGGp held science popularization activities with the theme of "Planet vs. Plastics" to promote the dissemination of earth sciences knowledge and sustainable development.

On April 22, Tianzhushan UGGp, together with Qianshan City Ecological Environment Office and Qianshan Pailou Central Primary School, carried out activities, including the launching ceremony of the main Earth Day event, a visit to the Tianzhushan Geopark Museum, a campus popular science exhibition, and a field trip to fossil sites, which were very much loved by students.



2.9 Toba Caldera UGGp (Indonesia) organized a Seminar on Comprehensive Geosites

Toba Caldera UGGp organized seminar on comprehensive Geosites Management, with the collaboration of the Agency of business and tourism management consultant, who is here to meet the needs of local governments and tourism actors in realizing sustainable tourism. The seminar took place in Sibaganding Geosite.

The activity was attended by 16 Geosite Managers, business actors and community leaders, who spoke about the environment, cleanliness, minimizing the use of plastic in each geosite, utilizing geological and cultural sites as places to visit that display correct information, and maintaining their sustainability.



2.10 Wudalianchi UGGp (China) held a series of popular science activities

Wudalianchi UGGp and local government jointly organized a series of popular science activities for World Earth Day with the theme of "Cherish the Earth - Harmonious Coexistence between Man and Nature" to further enhance people's awareness of loving the earth and protecting their homes, and promoting sustainable development.

Children from the First Primary School listened to the popular science lectures on "Stories of the Earth for Billions of Years" and "Garbage Classification and Earthquake Disaster Prevention and Reduction". The interactive experience of the "Garbage Classification" game combines the educational concept of "learning while playing and playing while learning" with the concept of environmental protection, so that students can improve the accuracy of garbage classification in interesting games, and further enhance everyone's environmental awareness.

In the event of "Environment-Friendly Creative Handicrafts Selection" held in a kindergarten, children and parents used waste paper shells, cans, popsicle sticks and other wastes to make cleverly designed and creative artworks and small inventions, which not only improved the children's creativity and hands-on ability, but also cultivated children's environmental protection and energy-saving awareness.



2.11 Xiangxi UGGp (China) held a Series of activities

On the morning of April 22, 2024, Xiangxi UGGp and local government held a series of activities at the Geopark Museum. At the launching ceremony, a promotional video of Xiangxi Global Geopark on celebrating the 20th anniversary of the GGN was shown, and the plaque of the Creative Base of Xiangxi Photographers Association was unveiled.

The activities included a thematic photo exhibition of Xiangxi UGGp, display of partners' products, popular science quizzes, community health consultations, exhibition of the protection of wildlife and plants, and online quizzes to win prizes. Thereafter, photographers visited the Red Stone Forest in Guzhang, Furong Town in Yongshun, Luota in Longshan, Shibadong in Huayuan, and Aizhai in Jishou, using their cameras to capture the beauty of Xiangxi Global Geopark.



2.12 Yandangshan UGGp's (China) activities with students

Yandangshan UGGp launched a series of activities in the Lingfeng Area of the geopark with the theme of "Cherish the Earth and Harmonious Coexistence between Man and Nature".

Students from Jingshan Public School in Yueqing City, Yandang Town No. 1 Primary School, and Yandang Town No. 5 Primary School took part in environmental protection activities with geopark staff. The children read the "Loving our Earth Initiative", performed the "Shangchunshan" flower ball gymnastics. And a ten-meter painting drawn by the students of Yandang Town No. 1 Primary School was displayed on the site, illustrating blue sky, white clouds, clean water, green mountains, birdsong and flowers. At the same time, the Nanjing Geological Survey Center presented rock specimens to the Yandangshan Museum.



At the geopark museum, popular science guides explained students about the origin and significance of World Earth Day, introduced the characteristics and basic knowledge of the Yandangshan Global Geopark, and led the students to recognize rocks and minerals.

During the APGN Week, Yandangshan UGGp organized primary and secondary schools in Yueqing City, Wenling City and Yongjia County, to carry out the "World Earth Day Theme Painting Competition". A total of 25 schools participated in the competition, and the number of submissions reached 865 works. The children's enthusiasm for protecting the environment and cherishing

geological heritage was shown in the paintings.

At the same time, Yandangshan UGGp attracted the attention and participation of many netizens by holding online activities such as the World Earth Day Science Popularization Game, the #I and Global Geopark 20 years# Weibo topic check-in event, and the collection of "The Most Beautiful Earth Imprint" photography works.



2.13 Yanqing UGGp (China) conducted several activities

On April 22, the 55th "World Earth Day", the Yanqing UGGp organized a promotion activity in the open square of the Yanqing Geopark Museum. Display boards were placed in front of the Museum to introduce the knowledge of Global Geopark and guide everyone to start from daily life, cherish resources and protect the environment. A total of more than 500 promotional materials were distributed to visitors, including various promotional leaflets, Yanqing Geopark Rubik's Cube, Fragrant Wood Fan, T-shirts, aprons, Global Geopark passports, Earth Day theme notebooks, umbrellas, playing cards, flying chess, environmentally friendly cloth bags, etc. Yanqing Geopark Museum stamped "Yanqing Global Geopark" for every citizen who received a Global Geopark passport.



Geopark staff members went into Qianjiadian Central Primary School and gave a popular science lecture, introducing the typical geological and geomorphic landscapes of the area and popularizing the concept of harmonious coexistence between man and nature. Thereafter, students had a guided walk in the Geopark.



Students observed dinosaur footprints on the sandstone layer, learned about the formation process of footprint fossils, and why dinosaurs footprints are seen now on the cliffs. They observed petrified woods, observed the strips and annual rings of them, learned the formation process and mechanism of how trees in the Jurassic Period became today's fossils. They got more understanding about the scientific value of all these fossils. While walking in the woods, they carefully cleaned up plastic garbage.

2.14 Zhangjiajie UGGp's (China) popular science activity

On April 22, Zhangjiajie UGGp launched opening ceremony of APGN Week and celebrating the 20th anniversary of GGN in Geopark museum. The Geopark organized online and offline popular science activities. Released popular science books for people to understand more comprehensively the geological heritage and other natural heritage of the Geopark. Exhibited posters introducing other 45 Geoparks who took part the common event. More than 300 people participated in the activity.



2.15 Zigong UGGp's (China) activities

Zigong UGGp held 3 celebratory activities during the 55th World Earth Day and the 5th APGN Week.

2.15.1 Popular science lectures and school activities

On April 19 and April 22, staff members of the Geopark visited the Zhengzi Town Primary School in Rongxian County, Shuguang Lusheng Experimental School in Zigong, and the Nine-year school in Liqiao Town, Fushun County to conduct popular science lectures, explaining the origin of World Earth Day, the environmental challenges the Earth is facing, and ways to protect the environment.



2.15.2 Community public welfare classes

On April 20, staff members of the Geopark visited Shengjing Community of Zigong city to conduct the "Youth Power - Earth Hope" public welfare class. Staff members communicated with 40 families on the history of life evolution on Earth. Participants also personally experienced the process of converting solar energy into electricity and then into kinetic energy by constructing solar-powered windmills. They also gained an understanding of the application of renewable energy in daily life.



2.15.3 Organized Geopark exhibitions and presented popular science materials to the public

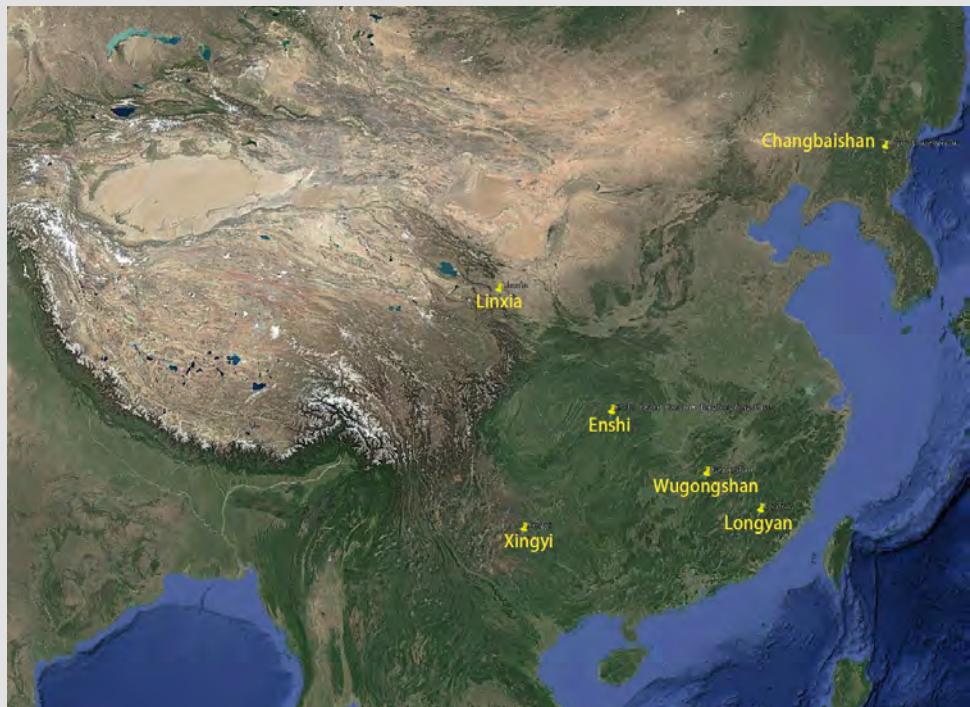
From April 19 to 28, the Zigong Global Geopark held a World Earth Day themed exhibition and provided free popular science books, brochures, and other materials to the public.



3. APGN welcomed 6 new members

On the occasion of the International Earth Day & the 20th Anniversary of the Global Geoparks Network, UNESCO and the Global Geoparks Network co-organized the Welcome Digital Event for the 18 new UNESCO Global Geoparks on Monday 22 April 2024, at 11:00 GMT. Of the 18 new UNESCO Global Geoparks 6 are also new members of APGN, namely,

- Enshi Grand Canyon-Tenglongdong Cave, China
- Linxia, China
- Longyan, China
- Mount Changbaishan, China
- Wugongshan, China
- Xingyi, China



The reason of why 6 new UGGps this time were all in China could be attributed to that the evaluation missions to the aspiring UGGps in China scheduled in 2020, 2021 and 2022 were postponed to 2023, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and accidentally, there was no qualified aspiring UGGp in other countries in the Asia Pacific region in 2023.

4. The 3rd Thailand Geoparks Network Symposium

The Thailand Geopark Network Symposium started in 2022 and has become a very important mechanism of communication and sharing amongst UNESCO Global Geoparks, as well as national and local geoparks. This symposium has been supported by GGN and APGN since the very beginning.

The third Symposium with the theme of “Geopark for sustainable local development” was held from 24 – 25 June 2024 in Khon Kaen, hosted by Khon Kaen aspiring UGGp, Khon Kaen Provincial Administrative Organization (KKPAO), Department of Mineral Resources (DMR), Mineral Resource Regional Office 2, and Faculty of Science, Mahasarakham University.



In addition to welcome and opening speeches of national and provincial officials, GGN President Nickolas Zouros and APGN Coordinator Xiaochi Jin delivered opening remarks by means of video clips. UGGp Council and APGN AC member Setsuya Nakada made a presentation with the title "Guidelines for the Management of UNESCO Global Geoparks Towards the sustainable Development Goals".



Dr. Apsorn Sa-Ardsud, Director of Geology Division, DMR reported the “Current Progress of Thailand’s Geoparks and TGN Establishment for Sustainable Development”. Dr. Adichart Surinkham Presented the “(Draft) Geological Heritage Conservation Policy and Geopark Framework of 2022 – 2037” of Thailand. This was followed by a Seminar: A Groundbreaking Comeback - Khon Kaen Geopark and the Return

of Dinosaur Excavation after 30 Years, operated by Dr. Varavudh Suteethorn, Dr. Nares Sattayarak, Mr. Sudham Yaemniyom, and Dr. Ruja Ingkawat. On the second day, parallel sessions of Geopark Management & Networking, SDGs Achievement by Geopark, and Geodiversity/Paleontology were held with presentations of participants from global and national geoparks in Thailand.



5. The 5th Geotourism Festival & International Conference — Rinjani-Lombok UGGp

The 5th Geotourism Festival & International Conference with the theme “Volcano as a World Class Sustainable Geotourism Destination” was held in 3 venues in 2 countries, namely in Ijen UGGp (pre event) and Rinjani-Lombok UGGp (main event) of Indonesia, and Sydney, Australia for the post event. Activities carried out in Indonesia are under the coordination of the Indonesian Geoparks Network (JGI) and in partnership with Asia Pacific Geoparks Network, while activities in Australia are coordinated by the Australian Geoscience Council (AGC) during June 26 - July 19, 2024.

Pre Event

26 - 28 June 2024 | Venue: Ijen UGGp - Indonesia

- Geopark Youth Program Competition
- Geopark Youth Exhibition
- Geopark Youth Camp
- Field Trip "Ijen as a Part of Gondwana"

Main Event

4 - 6 July 2024 | Venue: Rinjani-Lombok UGGp - Indonesia

- International Conference
- Paper presentation
- Geo-exhibition
- Rinjani Geopark Film Festival
- Cultural Event
- Workshop
- Field trip
- IGY Conference

Post Event

18 - 19 July 2024 | Venue: Sydney - Australia

- Workshop
- Poster & Geoproduct Exhibition
- Fieldtrip

The Main Event in Rinjani-Lombok UGGp on 4-6 July 2024, at the Lombok Raya Hotel (Mataram City) for indoor events and Senaru Village for field trip. It was attended by 112 participants from 8 countries and was officially opened by Acting Governor of NTB Province. The opening speech was also given online by the APGN Coordinator (Xiaochi JIN) and the President of GGN (Nickolas Zouros). The Main Event included:

1. International Conference

The keynote presentation was given by Prof. Setsuya Nakada from Japan. The conference was



then operated in 3 panels with their respective topics as (1) All Leaders Talk, regional government policies in geopark development; (2) Volcanic Geotourism Development; (3) Wallacean Avifauna.

2. Parallel Scientific Class included (1) Geotourism development, (2) Linkage between geological, biological and cultural diversities in geotourism, (3) DRR in geotourism, (4) Wallacean Avifauna in volcanic landscape.

3. The art and cultural performances held at The 5th Geofest in Lombok were the Asih Trasne and Gumelan Dances. The Asih Trasne Dance was represented by Teater Putih, University of Mataram. Meanwhile, Gumelan is a type of traditional art that plays musical instruments such as flutes and gamelan instruments.

4. Geofair displayed geoproducts or activity programs from various partners.

5. Workshop was held on the results of the previous year's Geofest, where one of the results obtained was the existence of the Geotrail Ring of Fire and Geotourism Interpretation. This workshop was carried out by forming small groups where each group appointed a leader to present the results of the discussion.

6. Field Trip was attended by 45 people and was held in Senaru Village on July 6, 2024. Senaru Village is at the foot of Mount Rinjani which is one of the entrances to the climb, as well as part of the Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone and includes several geopark sites in the Rinjani-Lombok Geopark area.



6. The 8th APGN Symposium

The 8th Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium and conjunct UGGp Council meeting, GGN Executive Board meeting, APGN AC and CC meetings were held in the Cao Bang UGGp from 08 to 15 September 2024.

The UGGp Council meeting (08-09 September) discussed the evaluation of 18 new UNESCO Global Geopark applications, discussed 4 deferred aspiring UNESCO Global Geoparks from 2021, discussed the 39 revalidations of existing UNESCO Global Geoparks without size modifications, discussed 1 size modification of <10% for existing UNESCO Global Geoparks, and discussed several other items. The results of the meeting can be seen at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/N-EXPLORE-5c261fcc-51c6-4435-9938-8dfe5a0a2af0>



In the morning of 11 September, the APGN Advisory Committee (AC) met at 09:00. After adopting the agenda, the CEO of the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) Haslina Binti Abdul Hamid gave an introduction about their willingness to host the 9th APGN Symposium. The manager of Langkawi UGGp Azmil made a presentation of their bidding for hosting the 9th APGN Symposium in 2026. AC members commented, questioned and made suggestions, to which Azmil and the Langkawi team responded and explained. The AC Members were satisfied with the presentation and subsequent explanations and agreed unanimously that the 9th APGN Symposium be held in Langkawi UGGp in 2026.

The GGN ExB meeting was held on 10 September whole day dealing with the following issues:

- 1) the 20th Anniversary of the Global Geoparks Network;
- 2) GGN Activities--Congress/Symposium/Conferences in 2024;
- 3) Celebration of International Days in 2024;
- 4) Capacity building activities;
- 5) GGN Activities in 2025;
- 6) GGN Strategy and Operation.



The AC Members discussed and agreed to form an ad hoc Group of Election to take care the election of new APGN AC Members, the Coordinator and Vice Coordinators by the Coordination Committee. The approved ad hoc Group of Election consisted of Setsuya Nakada, Yuanyuan Zheng, Min Huh and three volunteers who served the symposium.

As additional issues of the meeting, Nickolas Zouros emphasized the promotion tools for the 20th Anniversary of GGN, asked geoparks to communicate their promotion activities with GGN, like we did before for SDGs, Geohazards reduction, and said that GGN would compile a volume to present it to other organizations and the public society. Min Huh introduced the preparation of the Pusan IGC and activities related to Global Geoparks. Nickolas Zouros thanked Min Huh for organizing the IGC and more importantly for the geoparks session.



The APGN Coordination Committee (CC) met at the second half of the morning, immediately after the AC meeting. After adopting the agenda of the meeting by CC members, Xiaochi Jin invited the GGN President to deliver an Opening address. Thereafter, Xiaochi Jin made the APGN Business report for the period from September 2023 to September 2024, reviewing the activities, events and achievements of APGN. Subsequently, national representatives made brief presentations on the work of respective countries, in alphabetic order, China, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea R., Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

After the presentations the ad hoc Group of Election was introduced to all CC members.



The election was held in the afternoon coordinated by the ad hoc Group of Election. The results are as follows.

APGN Coordinators:

JIN Xiaochi (China), Coordinator

FURUSAWA Kana (Japan), Vice-Coordinator

KOMOO Ibrahim (Malaysia), Vice-Coordinator

* The status of national representative continues until elections according to the [Rules of Operation of the \[Country Name\] Global Geoparks Network \(\[C\]GGN\)](#) are carried out in these countries, and then the newly elected coordinators of [C]GGNs will take the place of national representative in the APGN AC.

APGN Advisory Committee (AC):

CHAN Yu Nam (China), Elected Member

JIN Xiaochi (China), Elected Member

FURUSAWA Kana (Japan), Elected Member

KOMOO Ibrahim (Malaysia), Elected Member

TRAN Tan Van (Vietnam), Elected Member

HUH Min (Korea, R), Coordinator of Korean (R.) GGN

ZHENG Yuanyuan (China), National Representative*

KUSHMHBRATA Yunus (Indonesia), National Representative*

AMRIKAZEMI Alireza (Iran), National Representative*

SUGAWARA Hisanari (Japan), National Representative*

MOHD BUKHARI Azmil Munif (Malaysia), National Representative*

TECHAWAN Sommai (Thailand), National Representative*

TRINH Hai Son (Vietnam), National Representative*

PINAT Joanne (The Philippines), One UGGp country

ZOUROS Nickolas, GGN Representative

VANDENBERGHE Kristof, UNESCO Representative

2024 marked the **20th anniversary of the Global Geoparks Network** (GGN), a special celebrating event in conjunction with the 8th APGN Symposium started with a grand scene at 16:00 of 11 September. GGN President Nickolas Zouros gave a presentation on the development of GGN. UNESCO Assistant Director General and Head of Cao Bang Province addressed at the ceremony. GGN Secretary General Guy Martini and representatives of Regional Geoparks Networks recalled the development of their networks and contributions to the GGN.



Also at this ceremony, the chair of the International Commission on Geoheritage, Asier Hilario, announced the names of Global Geoparks of APGN whose geological sites successfully entered the list of the Second 100 IUGS Geological Heritage Sites. He awarded the certificates to the representatives of these Geoparks.



IUGS Geological Heritage Sites

GGN would never forget the people who have contributed to the development of GGN. At this occasion, GGN awarded the colleagues in Asia Pacific region who had made significant contributions to the GGN in the past 20 years. These colleagues were invited to come on the stage and awarded certificates (picture next page).



The celebrating event incorporated as well performances by local artists and ended with revealing a big cake for the 20th Anniversary of GGN.



This was a part of the awarding activity of GGN during its 20th anniversary. Serial ceremonies were held at the meetings of other regional Geoparks Networks to award excellent colleagues in different regions.

The opening ceremony of the 8th APGN Symposium was held on 12 September. As a prelude the ribbon-cutting of the GeoFair was carried out in early morning, Guests from UNESCO, Vietnamese central government and Cao Bang provincial government, and GGN President and APGN Coordinator cut the ribbon. GGN ExB members, UGGP Council members and delegates from the APGN family witnessed the event.



At the opening ceremony in the auditorium, addressed the representatives of Cao Bang provincial government, Vietnamese National Commission for UNESCO, APGN, GGN, UNESCO and Vietnamese central government. Thereafter, started the grand art performances by local artists and folklore performers.



As a session for all participants the “UGGp Gathering” was held in the auditorium in the morning after the opening ceremony. This was a best practices sharing session with one speaker from each country of APGN.

Bohol Island UGGp (Philippines) shared practices in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management; Langkawi UGGp (Malaysia) shared practices in Geopark corners and Geopark module; Merangin Jambi UGGp (Indonesia) shared practices in harmonizing indigenous wisdom and renewable energy for Geopark sustainability; Cao Bang UGGp (Vietnam) shared practices in cultural heritage conservation and equal live hood improvement; Qeshm Island UGGp (Iran) shared practices in gender equality & women empowerment; three UGGps (Japan) together shared the actions of Geoparks and JGN after the 2024 Noto



Peninsula Earthquake in Japan; Min HUH (R. Korean GGN) shared practices of Korean (R) UGGps in achieving SDGs; Hong Kong UGGp (China) shared practices in promoting villagers' stories online as an initiative to unite the local communities; two UGGps in Thailand together shared practices in the local community-driven approach.

The parallel scientific sessions of the symposium with the themes of respectively 1) Local and indigenous knowledge, engagement of local and indigenous people in Geopark activities, 2) Geohazard, natural disaster risk and climate change reduction and adaptation, 3) Heritage inventory, protection and sustainable use, 4) Geoparks and regional Sustainable Development Goals, 5) Geopark education and science popularization, 6) Aspiring Geoparks - difficulties and challenges, and 7) (jointly with IGCP-700) Paleozoic carbonate buildups, their landforms and fossil contents — scientific and geotouristic values, ran in the afternoon of 12 Sept, whole day of 13 Sept. and the morning of 15 Sept.



Two routes of excursion were arranged on 14 September for participants to get to know intensively about Cao Bang UGGp, the host of the symposium. As always these excursions are important chances for geopark colleagues to find out both the excellent sides and the shortcomings of the geopark, and to share ideas and experiences on improving the quality of Geoparks. Many participants have seen and experienced for the first time the geological heritage sites and cultural heritage items that are quite different from theirs.



After several days intensive sessions, meetings, partner connections, geopark products promotions, etc., the closing ceremony of the 8th APGN Symposium took place at 15:30 of 15 September. Following a short fashion show demonstrating local materials and styles, the APGN Coordinator gave an address mainly thanking the organizer, the volunteers, supporters and importantly all the participants. Then the GGN issued the certificates to its new members and Geoparks that passed the revalidation in Asia



Pacific region. The symposium organizer awarded the winners of photo competition that depicted the scenes during the symposium and excursion.

Thereafter, it was announced that the 9th APGN Symposium would be held in Langkawi UGGp (Malaysia). The APGN Flag was passed from the Cao Bang team to the Langkawi team.



Finally, the Cao Bang declaration was read, approved and signed. And the chair of the organizing committee announced the closure of the 8th APGN Symposium.



7. The 7th Regional Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks — Langkawi UGGp



The 7th Regional Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks with the theme '*Geopark Management and Community Engagement*' commenced with a dinner inaugurated by YB Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (NRES) on April 26, 2024, at Hotel Aloft Langkawi.

The course was attended by nearly 150 guests, including 80 participants, geopark partners, geopark ambassadors, geopark product representatives, course lecturers, and representatives from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

Eight speakers shared their knowledge and experience in developing and managing geoparks. Participants were also brought to visit several geopark sites and meet the local community and they exchanged thoughts and experiences in managing the geopark areas.



8. The 8th International Training Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks —Xiangxi UGGp

The 8th International Training Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks Management and Development was successfully held in Xiangxi UNESCO Global Geopark, China from 09 to 15 October. It was jointly organized by the China University of Geosciences (Beijing) and Xiangxi UGGp and coordinated by Prof. Jianping Zhang and Prof. Xiaochi Jin. This training course was substantially supported by GGN, UGGp Secretariat and APGN.



The opening ceremony, chaired by Prof. Jianping Zhang, was held in the morning of 10 October, representatives of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (Yan Chenggao), Hunan Provincial Forestry Bureau (Li Linshan), GGN (N. Zouros, video),

The invited lecturers were experienced geopark experts from the GGN ExB, UGGp Council, APGN AC, Geoparks and other institutions. The course also got strong support from Hunan Provincial Forestry Bureau and Xiangxi Municipal Government. More than 120 participants from 35 Global Geoparks, 3 aspiring Global Geoparks, and 11 related academic institutions from China, Saudi Arabia and Mongolia participated in the training course.

UNESCO UGGp Secretariat (K. Vandenberghe, video), APGN (Jin Xiaochi), Xiangxi Municipal Government (Liu Dongsheng) and China University of Geosciences (Beijing) (Ma Junjie,) delivered opening speeches.



2024 marked the 20th anniversary of the Global Geoparks Network. A special session celebrating the 20th anniversary of GGN took place after the opening ceremony. Some of the pioneers and promoters of geoparks in China were invited, including three GGN honorary members in China. Presentations including the

20 years of GGN (N. Zouros), history of EGN (G. Martini), history of APGN (I. Komoo), early history of Chinese geoparks (Jiang Jianjun) and Chinese geoparks achievements and contribution (Tian Mingzhong) were given to all participants. In the afternoon, a panel talk was organized on the past, present and future of the GGN.



A panel talk with three GGN honorable members as guest speakers (middle in the right bottom picture) was hosted by Guy Martini, at which these colleagues shared their experiences and legendary stories with the audience. The speakers also answered questions from the moderator and participants, making this talk a great memorable moment.



Another Panel talk with the lecturers on stage was done on the past, present and future of the GGN. It was aimed to provide an idea exchange forum with the audience.



From 11 to 15 October invited lecturers gave a series of lectures on the development of GGN, the philosophy and criteria of Global Geoparks, the procedures and key points for evaluation and revalidation, as well as the relationship between Geopark management and sustainable development, e.g. UNESCO Global Geoparks, philosophy and operation (N. Zouros), Global

Geoparks Network: Structure, Activities, Partnership and Future Perspectives (N. Zouros), Keys to building a successful Geopark (Guy Martini), Experiences of science popularization in Korean UGGps (Min Huh), The role of Geoscientists in Geopark management body (Ibrahim Komoo), Geosciences research and geological heritage evaluation in Geoparks (Xiaochi Jin), Geological

disaster Reduction and Management in UGGps (Setsuya Nakada), SDGs and UNESCO Global Geoparks (Marie-Luise Frey), UGGps' Gastronomy (Alireza Amirkazemi), Challenges of UNESCO Global Geoparks in China (Jianping Zhang). Also held were Panel talks, e.g. Ideas and Operational Guidelines of UNESCO Global Geoparks, Check list and Document A.



On 13 Oct., the International Day of Geohazard Risk Reduction, a specific workshop was carried out in the afternoon moderated by Prof. S. Nakada, head of GGN working group of Geohazard Reduction. All the participants in the audience, divided into 6 groups, actively responded the questions of the moderator and extensively discussed and shared their opinions.



An excursion in the Geopark took place on 14 Oct. The participants visited in the morning the Xiangxi Geopark museum, the main interpretation infrastructure of the Geopark, and the then, the Furong Town, a Cultural Heritage in Xiangxi Geopark. In the afternoon the participants visited the geological heritage sites of international significance. The excursion was an onsite learning and discussion trip. In the evening the participants experienced the indigenous culture in the Dehang Village of the Miao ethnic group.



At this training course, an exchange and sharing experiences session was held, a total of 9 Global Geoparks, 1 aspiring UGGp in China, delegates from North Riyadh Geopark in Saudi Arabia and delegates from Mongolia shared their good practices in Geopark development and put forward problems to be solved. The invited lecturers commented and shared their ideas and suggestions.





At the closing ceremony, the lecturers presented certificates to the participants. Prof. Jianping Zhang announced that the 9th International Training Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks Management and Development would be held in Yunyang Geopark, China in October 2025.



9. Let's Do It—APGN ZOOM Mini-Exchange

Coordinated by Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark, the “Let’s Do It” online exchange meeting continued quarterly in 2024, with 20-30 participating UGGps and aspiring UGGps each time, to provide an alternative opportunity for more in-depth exchange. A topic was selected for each meeting, which are challenges some geoparks are facing, based on an online survey conducted.

Each online exchange started with a short presentation on the designated topic, followed by small group sharing, utilising the “breakout rooms” function of Zoom. The participants found that the experience and good practices shared provided practical ideas which they may adopt to tackle similar challenges in their geopark. The APGN Let’s Do It will continue in 2025 in order to strengthen the bond and sharing of experience in the Network.

“Let’s do it” —APGN ZOOM Mini-Exchanges held in 2024

Date	Topic	Speaker
29 Feb 2024	How to create a sister-geopark relationship?	DeVonna Lauritzen (Mt. Apoi UGGp)
09 May 2024	The challenge to maintain sustainable financial support	Mohamad Farid Zaini (Rinjani-Lombok UGGp)
22 Aug 2024	The challenge to tackle climate change and manage natural disaster in geopark	Oka Agastya (Batur UGGp), Hikari Shiba (Sakurajima-Kinkowan Geopark)
21 Nov 2024	The challenge to showcase the importance and contribution of geopark to the public and local authorities	CHAN Yu Nam (Hong Kong UGGp)

A Screenshot of “Let’s do it” —APGN ZOOM Mini-Exchange

