

# CHAPTER IV

## THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### CLOSING CEREMONY

Thursday, 11 August 2022

Busan Convention Center, Busan, South Korea

#### 1. Introduction

This General Assembly (GA) has come to an end. We had a great two weeks pondering the Universe and the International Astronomical Union. These two weeks will be unforgettable, and we must acknowledge the works of so many colleagues.. Prof. Hyesung Kang led the National organising Committee (NOC) with such savvy. The NOC itself did an outstanding job and deserves congratulations. The sponsors, the exhibitors, those who brought stands, all of them deserve congratulations for having come to Busan and making the GA a tremendous success.

#### 2. Busan Closing Ceremony Remarks from the NOC Chair

**Prof. Hyesung Kang (Pusan National University)**

As the chair of the National Organising Committee (NOC) for the 31st IAU General Assembly, I would like to say a few words before we close this ceremony.

The 8-year long journey began in 2014 when I agreed to lead the bidding committee for the 31st General Assembly. After Busan was selected as the host city 7 years ago in 2015, the GA2021 NOC was established in 2016. As you all know, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GA had been postponed for one year. And the GA2022 NOC began the preparation for a hybrid meeting.

First of all, I would like to thank all 1,800 participants of the GA2022, especially about 800 in-person attendees from abroad who have gone through many complicated steps to come to Busan, despite the high cost and high risk of international travel these days.

Then, my deepest gratitude goes to the IAU Executive Committee and Scientific organizing Committees of symposia, focus meetings, division meetings, and institutional meetings. Thanks to their support and hard work, we have reached our goal TOGETHER: “Astronomy for All.”

During the last two weeks, we have experienced a General Assembly in a new hybrid format for the first time in the IAU’s history. While preparing for the GA2022, I found that there are four key essential elements in hosting a successful large-scale international meeting: (1) local sponsors and support, (2) National Organising Committee, (3)



**Figure 1.** Group photo of participants at the XXXI IAU General Assembly. credit: IAU/GA2022 NOC

Professional Conference Organiser (PCO), and (4) volunteers.

So let me acknowledge the contributions from all colleagues in these four components.

(1) First of all, we have received generous financial support from the host institutions: the IAU, Korean astronomical society, and Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute (KASI). In addition, significant contributions from local sponsors, such as the Ministry of Science and ICT and the Busan metropolitan city as well as other local supporters. Furthermore, we are grateful to all our sponsors and exhibitors for their generous support.

(2) The National Organising Committee consists of 26 members from 11 different institutions in Korea. They have been working hard for the last several years for the preparation of the GA in many different areas. During the last four years or so, we had eight workshops with the entire NOC members and PCO managers, and 32 monthly meetings among six subcommittee chairs. I would like to express my sincere respect for their devotion and services to the Korean Astronomy community.

(3) Next, I would like to thank our PCO team. MECI international played crucial roles as the GA secretariat, and you have communicated with them through GA email addresses. Behind these email addresses, there are about 15 or so hardworking professionals. Without their passion, perseverance, and professionalism, we would not have made it this far.

(4) Finally, I would like to thank our young volunteers who worked tirelessly at the registration desk, session rooms, the childcare room, and all around the venue. Please give them a big round of applause.

Once again, thank you all so much for coming to Busan and attending the 31st General Assembly. Have a safe trip back home, and we hope to see you again in 2024 in Cape Town.

### **3. Closing Remarks from the IAU President**

**Prof. Debra Elmegreen**

What a remarkable two weeks we have shared in Busan! This General Assembly was an affirmation that we can carry on the IAU's 100+ year history of gathering together to share astronomy. The engaging lectures, lively discussions, and interactions have forged new friendships and new collaborations. This assembly has underscored the value of being able to meet face-to-face again. My deep thanks go to Hyesung Kang and her National Organising Committee for pulling off the first hybrid IAU General Assembly, with the help of the IAU Secretariat and many, many volunteers. I am so grateful to all of the participants, both in person and remote, as well as the sponsorship of KAS and KASI, for contributing to its success.

For our one item of business at this GA, the National Members voted to accept Georgia as a new National Member. We welcome Georgia to our IAU family.

One of the duties and privileges of the Executive Committee is to select the location of future General Assemblies. I thank all of the bidders for their outstanding presentations and proposals to host GA2027. It was an extremely difficult decision. I now have the pleasure to announce the location of the XXXIII General Assembly: it will be in Rome, Italy! They hosted the 1st GA in 1922, and the 8th in 1952.

The flag handover to South Africa will happen at the close of this ceremony to launch the countdown to the XXXII GA, and I look forward to seeing you in Cape Town in 2024. Meanwhile, we'll continue working on the goals of our Strategic Plan, bringing astronomy to all. As we return home, we'll carry fond memories of beautiful Busan - boats, beaches, bulgogi, bridges, buildings, and especially building bridges, which is the essence of our General Assemblies.

### **4. Closing Remarks from the IAU General Secretary**

**Prof. José Miguel R. Espinosa**

Dear colleagues and friends, distinguished guests:

The General Assembly 2022 is coming to an end. It has been hard work, on top of the pandemic. But it has been a great success from which our Korean colleagues must be happy and full of pride. Most of all Prof. Hyesung Kang whose leadership and guidance brought us from one year to the next, albeit the extra work involved. Many thanks to all the members in her team, for your hard and enthusiastic work. The General Assembly has been a well-deserved success, after all the work you have invested in it. The IAU has provided many grants to allow people to come to Busan and meet their colleagues. One of the IAU main missions is to gather people together. And Busan has offered all its warmth to facilitate getting together to discuss astronomy and learn from each other.

Busan, with its inviting beaches, renowned universities, and thriving high-tech industry, has been an ideal location for the General Assembly. This General Assembly will be etched in our memories for years to come. It has raised the standard with its meticulous planning and impressive outcomes.

We have seen many talks, from well established professors, from postdocs, and students. All of them great, all of them have enlarged our knowledge of the Universe. A Universe that still has many surprises to thrill us. Gaia and the JWST have particularly impressed me with the data they have collected.

The General Assembly is now over. In two years time we will move to Cape Town where a new edition will take place. Congratulations to South Africa whose astronomy is at the forefront of research. It will also be the first time a General Assembly is held in Africa. Cape Town deserves a GA. The expectations are high. We all look forward to the GA in South Africa.

To wrap things up, I'd like to extend my deepest appreciation to the many individuals who have played a crucial role in the success of this General Assembly. This includes our respected Chair of the National Organising Committee, Prof. Hyesung Kang, and the entire committee. I also want to express my sincere gratitude to all the sponsors and exhibitors who have taken part in this event.

Thank you to all the participants!

## **5. Address by the Assistant General Secretary**

**Prof. Diana M. Worrall**

Dear Colleagues and distinguished guests,

It's a privilege to have been able to participate in this General Assembly already one year into my term of office as Assistant General Secretary. It has given me insight into the hard work which makes such an event a reality, and there are many deserving of our thanks, particularly those who have given freely of their time.

This GA will remain particularly memorable, not just for all the uncertainties involved in its planning, but the experience itself: the welcome we have received, our scientific exchanges, and the opportunity for a taste of the culture of a country that some of us have not visited previously. For me it was the first scientific conference attended in person since the onset of the covid pandemic, but I hope not the last!

Thank you to our hosts here in Busan, and I hope many of you will participate in IAU symposia and General Assemblies in the future.

## **6. Address by the President-Elect**

**Prof. Willy Benz**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends

General Assemblies are the life of the IAU.

Every three years, the astronomical world gathers together to discuss the state of the art, to report on and to assess the progress made towards achieving the IAU's mission objectives.



**Figure 2.** The IAU flag ceremony handover from Busan to Cape Town for GA2024. Credit: IAU/GA2022 NOC

Reaching professional astronomers worldwide has always been at the core of the IAU mission. The use of astronomy to reach people and advance education and development is a more recent addition to the IAU strategy.

Individually, astronomers are searching for habitable planets. Collectively, the IAU is using astronomy to make planet Earth a better place to live for all.

“Astronomy for all” was the motto of this GA. And it certainly was for us all here in Busan and those joining virtually thanks to the wonderful work of the National Organisation Committee chaired by Professor Hyesung Kang.

I would like to associate myself to the warm thank you already expressed by our president and general secretary. Nothing would have been possible without you, the generosity of the institutional and private sponsors, and the help of the many volunteers who guided us these last two weeks. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

While we are closing here in Busan, work has already started in Cape Town for GA 32 in 2024. After Asia, we move to Africa for the very first time. Cultural diversity under one sky pushing for scientific progress and working for peace and prosperity for all.

Thank you so much to all.



**Figure 3.** Farewell Korean dance at the closing ceremony. credit: IAU/GA2022 NOC

## 7. Flag Handover Ceremony and Invitation to the XXXII<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in 2024

President Debra Elmegreen and NOC Chair Hyesung Kang handed over the ceremonial IAU flag to Vanessa McBride and Takalani Nemaungani, members of the National Organizing Committee for the XXXII General Assembly. The IAU flag ceremony symbolises the handover from Busan, where the XXXI IAU GA was held, to Cape Town, where the XXXII IAU GA will be held in 2024. Participants, exhibitors, sponsors and the public were invited to join the General Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa, from August 6–15, 2024.

## 8. Farewell Dance

A traditional Korean dance was performed at the closing ceremony of the XXXI IAU General Assembly.

## 9. Image Archive

Images taken during the General Assembly can be viewed and downloaded from the IAU web site: [https://www.iau.org/public/images/archive/category/general\\_assembly\\_2022/](https://www.iau.org/public/images/archive/category/general_assembly_2022/)