

Informe anual:

COUNTRY ANNUAL REPORT TO INHIGEO, COSTA RICA 2010

INFORME ANUAL DE INHIGEO, COSTA RICA 2010

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ABOUT INHIGEO

The International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences (INHIGEO) was established by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) in 1967, and is also affiliated with the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Sciences (IUHPS). It has over 200 members worldwide, from which 21 members are representing 7 Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Venezuela).

INHIGEO promotes ongoing research into the history of the earth sciences, and achieves its objective by sponsoring a major annual symposium with associated field activities. It also promotes publication of individual and collective works on the history of geology and issues a

substantial annual newsletter that details historical research into earth sciences worldwide, publicizes other pertinent historical activities and provides scholarly reviews of recent literature on the subject (see details in <http://www.inhigeo.org>).

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There are two national members in INHIGEO (Guillermo E. Alvarado and Gerardo J. Soto). One of them, Gerardo J. Soto, has served as Vice-President for Latin America since 2004. His duties have included a frequent communication with regional members of INHIGEO. Cooperation with the Board in its business has been active throughout 2010.

Early in 2010, the *Colegio de Geólogos de Costa Rica* [CGCR, Guild of Geologists of

Costa Rica] accepted “History of Geology” as one professional area of Geology in Costa Rica, where members can request to be recognized as “specialists”. Gerardo J. Soto was elected as the first specialist of this area into CGCR and Costa Rican geological community.

In March, the Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE, acronym in Spanish) published a book entitled “*Miravalles. Historia del Primer Complejo de Energía Geotérmica en Costa Rica*” [Miravalles. History of the First Complex of Geothermal Energy in Costa Rica] that dedicates several pages to the history of geothermics in Costa Rica, covering since the first approach by ICE in 1959, the development of geological studies during the 1970s and 1980s, the inauguration of the first geothermal plant in 1994 in the outskirts of Miravalles volcano (northwestern Costa Rica), its growth, and up to the future developments in the neighbor volcano Rincón de la Vieja. This book on geothermal development is remarkable, since 15% of the total electrical energy in Costa Rica is produced by this renewable source (and in fact, 95% of total electricity is produced by renewable sources, mainly hydroelectric).

On May 4th, two activities were held on commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the Cartago Earthquake. That temblor has been by far, the most destructive seismic disaster in the history of Costa Rica. In despite that the affected area was relatively small (a local fault and a shallow hypocenter), the city of Cartago was practically destroyed, and the death toll reached the hundreds (figures are between 200 and 1000, although it will never be clear). One symposium took place at the *Escuela Centroamericana de Geología* [Central American School of Geology] of the University of Costa Rica, and the other at the *Colegio Federado de Ingenieros y Arquitectos de Costa Rica* [Federative Guild of Engineers and Architects of Costa Rica], both covering wide spectra of the catastrophe. Lectures from the activity at the University of Costa Rica were later edited by Giovanni Peraldo and Benjamín Acevedo in a book from which four papers are

related to history of geosciences (see references below). On the other hand, most of the lectures presented in the Colegio, can be seen and downloaded from the site <http://www.civiles.org/publicaciones.html>.

Soto could not attend the INHIGEO meeting in Madrid-Almadén (Spain) in July (“History of Research in Mineral Resources”) because last minute funding problems, but presented a poster on “Metal mining in Central America (early 1500s – late 1800s)”, and sent a paper to be published in the proceedings, that will appear in 2011.

Soto attended the “*Simposio Geonaturalia Geografía e Historia Natural hacia una Historia Comparada, Cuarto Encuentro Internacional*” [Symposium Geonaturalia Geography and Natural History to a Comparative History, Fourth International Meeting], held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, into the *III Congreso Internacional Europa-América “Museos, Archivos y Bibliotecas para la Historia de la Ciencia”* [3rd International Congress Europe-America “Museums, Archives and Libraries for History of Science”], in July 19-23, where he delivered a lecture on the history of mining in Central America (1500-1900). During this meeting, the third book in the Geonaturalia series was presented, including two papers related to the history of geosciences in Central America, authored by Costa Rican geologists Soto and Giovanni Peraldo.

Soto was invited to the *Primer Simposio de Historia de la Geología* [First Symposium on the History of Geology], organized by the Geological Society of Chile on August 17 in Santiago, but could not attend neither. A short contribution of his, entitled “*INHIGEO y América Latina*” [INHIGEO and Latin America], was read by Prof. Francisco Hervé at the beginning of the meeting.

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