

Cape Town site visit report

In May 2016, we visited Cape Town and attended a meeting with representatives of IAMAS, IAPSO and the local organizers of the 2017 joint Assembly. In this short report we would like to share with you some of our experiences and findings. The meeting focused on the initial steps in the scientific program preparation, visiting the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) and getting the first impression of the city and of the CTICC surroundings.

Let us start with some few words related to the program preparation. After some initial concerns, we managed to proceed in a constructive way, in particular with the schedule of invited talks and joint inter-association symposia. A first draft of the time allocation was completed and a first list of joint symposia was compiled. IAGA is leading 4 joint symposia and contributes to 3 others. The IAGA-specific program was well prepared in advance, mostly thanks to the efforts of the Secretary General, division leaders and proposed symposia conveners.

The venue, CTICC, is a modern facility, spacy and full of light. Moreover, a new part will be completed in spring next year, offering more new lecture rooms. Thus, we should not suffer from a lack of rooms or other space. The center is centrally located, only some 15-minute walk from one of the main Cape Town's attractions – Waterfront. This former harbor has been turned into tourist area full of cafes, souvenir shops and accommodation facilities. The local organizers suggested three main hotels for accommodating the participants. These hotels are very close to the CTICC, actually, the Westin hotel is directly attached to the CTICC. Other hotels, e.g. namely Southern Sun, The Cullinan and Southern Sun Waterfront, are just a very short walk from the CTICC (across the street). We stayed in the last one, which was modern, comfortable enough, with spacy rooms and a rich breakfast. And we appreciated very much how helpful the staff were. The local organizers have promised to offer budget-like (cheaper) accommodation options. However, we have already checked Booking.com and AirBnB servers, which offer nearby accommodation at very reasonable prices, especially if shared by two or more people.

Regarding travel to Cape Town, the security situation is usually one of the main concerns. We have to say that the situation seems similar to that in any large city worldwide. The city center is rather safe, in particular during the day. In the evening/night, it is recommended not to walk alone, especially in some areas of the city (even some areas in the downtown). Instead, use taxis, which are safe, cheap and available everywhere. Last but not least, one has to mention the tourist attractions of South Africa. Table Mountain is right on your doorstep. There is a big choice of tours, either one-day short tours in the close neighborhood, or longer safari tours, which are always available. And during the IAGA dinner (all three associations will have a joint dinner, but the restaurant offers enough space to have IAGA participants in one part of it), we may expect to be entertained by very charming folk song and dance.

To conclude, we are confident that the interesting scientific program together with the tourist appeal of Cape Town and South Africa in general, will attract a high number of participants and the assembly will be a memorable event in 2017. Therefore, do not hesitate to register, make your travel plans, and follow the exchange rate of the South-African rand to pay the registration fee at the best time.

Eduard Petrovsky
IAGA President

and

Mioara Manda
IAGA Secretary General



Table Mountain from the Waterfront area.



Inside the CTICC



The main lecture room, planned to be used for opening ceremony



The hall suggested as poster and coffee-breaks area



From the restaurant suggested for the Associations dinner