

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF  
THE FIRST IGBP SCIENTIFIC STEERING COMMITTEE  
on  
GLOBAL CHANGES OF THE PAST**

The condition of the global environment of the past can be observed in ice cores and tree rings, in ocean and lake sediments as well as in terrestrial deposits and pollen records. This opportunity to study global change of the past has provided compelling new evidence for linkages among the life processes and the physical and chemical conditions of the Earth system. In studying global change, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) will depend on these invaluable records in order to better understand the causes and effects of contemporary changes.

The Special Committee for the IGBP decided at its meeting in Stockholm (October 1988), following the first meeting of the IGBP Scientific Advisory Council, to give particular emphasis to research into records of the past global change by charging the first of the programme's Scientific Steering Committees with project development in this area. This project will encompass the past 150,000 years to include a full glacial-interglacial cycle. Particular studies will focus in greater detail on changes which have occurred during the Holocene (10,000 years BP), and especially during the past 1000 years, when the human perturbation to the Earth system began to take on global proportions. Terms of reference for this new committee will include:

- 1) assessing the possible contributions of planned or existing national and international efforts, including those of, for instance, the International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA), as they pertain to the underlying themes and objectives of the IGBP;
- 2) developing, within one year of appointment, plans for an initial multi-technique core IGBP project for coordinated field activities focussed on the IGBP themes and objectives; and
- 3) initiating, within two years of appointment, pilot segments of this project.

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