

Press Release

Opening Ceremony „International Year of Global Understanding“ February 2, 2016

Everyday Life in Global Context

The increasingly noticeable global consequences of local action call attention to the fact, that changing the world is everyone's business. Taking action on global issues locally involves an understanding of the manifold ways in which the local and the global are intertwined. This is the central idea of the 2016 "International Year of Global Understanding" (IYGU). The international year is supported by the international scientific umbrella organizations ICSU (International Council for Science), ISSC (International Social Science Council), and CIPSH (International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences). It originates from the Friedrich-Schiller-University of Jena in Germany. In cooperation with the International Geographical Union, professor Benno Werlen, social Geographer at Jena University, initiated and developed the IYGU.

The International Year will be officially inaugurated in Jena on February 2, 2016. A public opening ceremony will be held at the Thuringian city's "Volkshaus" at 2 p.m. Professor Klaus Töpfer, the former German Federal Minister for the Environment and the former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will deliver the keynote address. A great number of high-level guests from all over the world will also participate. Several representatives of the participating scientific bodies, as well as Jena University's president, professor Walter Rosenthal, and the Federal State's Minister of Economy and Science, Wolfgang Tiefensee, will welcome those present.

Beside the ceremonial speeches, a range of IYGU's central topics and projects will be presented. The initiative not only aims at enriching the debate on fundamental scientific questions, but at supporting concrete, everyday projects that help foster Global Understanding. Benno Werlen emphasizes: "We wish to build bridges between global thinking and local action. IYGU will encourage people to make their everyday choices in the light of global challenges."

The opening ceremony is a public event (entrance is free). It will be primarily held in English. More information on the IYGU can be found at: www.global-understanding.info/de/