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The 6th International Conference of Palaeogeography held in Nanjing, China

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The 6th International Conference on Palaeogeography (ICP6), which took place in China's Nanjing from the 17th to the 20th of May, 2024, was a great success. This prestigious conference was jointly sponsored by the International Society of Palaeogeography, the Palaeontological Society of China, and China University of Petroleum (Beijing), and the periodical *Journal of Palaeogeography* (English version) and was organised by Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The conference, with “Life Evolution, Palaeogeography, and Resources” as its major theme, was one of the serial, biennial international conferences proposed by the International Society of Palaeogeography, and aims to foster international academic exchanges in palaeogeography and related disciplines, and to advance the exploration and development of energy and mineral resources globally. Prior to this 2024 conference in Nanjing, five conferences had been held in some cities in China, and had developed into a periodical, widely influential international conference on palaeogeography with a particular focus on various palaeogeographical aspects related to the exploration and development of petroleum and gas.

As part of the opening ceremony, Prof. Sheng-He Wu (President of the International Society of Palaeogeography), Prof. Jun Wang (Director of Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences), Prof. Yan Jin (President of China University of Petroleum, Beijing), Prof. Su-Ping Peng (famous Chinese Academician in petroleum geology), Prof. David Harper (Chairman of the International Commission on Stratigraphy), and Prof. Ian Somerville (founding member of the International Society of Palaeogeography) delivered speeches addressing the founding missions, brief history and aspects of the International Society of Palaeogeography, along with their great expectations for the Nanjing 2024 conference. Six world-renowned experts

in palaeogeography and its related disciplines were invited to deliver plenary talks and speeches, including Prof. Long-De Sun (PetroChina and Chinese Academy of Engineering), Prof. David Harper (Durham University, UK and the International Commission on Stratigraphy), Prof. Markus Aretz (Université Toulouse III—Paul Sabatier, France), Prof. Carlos Zavala (Universidad Nacional del Sur, Argentina), Prof. Jun Wang (Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences), and Prof. Santanu Banerjee (Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, India).

Remarkably, the conference drew 796 participants from 22 countries in Asia, Europe, North and South America, Africa, and Oceania, including China, Thailand, India, Korea, Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, Bangladesh, UK, Russia, France, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Ireland, Romania, USA, Canada, Argentina, South Africa, Senegal, and Australia. The participants came from over 200 academic and industrial institutions, including colleges or universities, research institutes, energy companies, equipment and device companies, and publishing houses (Fig. 1).

The conference encompassed all areas and branches of palaeogeography and its related disciplines, and focused on the theme “Life Evolution, Palaeogeography, and Resources”. Topics including biogeography, lithofacies palaeogeography, tectonic palaeogeography, global palaeogeographical reconstruction, resource palaeogeography, and Quaternary palaeogeography were addressed in 42 scientific sessions and two workshops. The conference aimed to promote collaborations and exchanges of ideas across different research directions within the international palaeogeographical community.

Six invited plenary keynote speakers presented their latest research, covering topics such as the exploration and production practices of continental shale oil in China, the role of biogeography in global palaeogeographical studies, the key surfaces for



FIGURE 1. Group photo of the 6th International Conference on Palaeogeography.



FIGURE 2. Six invited plenary speakers. **A**, Long-De Sun from the National Key Laboratory of Continental Shale Oil (PetroChina), China. **B**, David Harper from Durham University, UK and ICS. **C**, Carlos Zavala from Universidad Nacional del Sur, Argentina. **D**, Markus Aretz from Université Toulouse III—Paul Sabatier, France. **E**, Jun Wang from Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China. **F**, Santanu Banerjee from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, India.



FIGURE 3. Pre-conference field trip (F1): Neoproterozoic—Palaeozoic marine deposits and geological events in Anhui, Jiangxi and Zhejiang provinces, South China. **A**, On Liantian Biota site, southern Anhui Province. **B**, At the Huangnitang Section (GSSP for the Darriwilian Stage, Ordovician), Changshan, western Zhejiang Province. **C**, Participants in front of the Changshan Golden Spike Geological Museum. **D**, At the Meishan Section (GSSPs for both the base of the Changhsingian Stage of the Permian, and the Permian-Triassic boundary).



FIGURE 4. Post-conference field trip (F2): Neoproterozoic—Palaeozoic successions and fossil records in the Middle-Upper Yangtze Region, South China. **A**, Participants investigating the Shibantan Biota (Ediacaran), Yichang, Hubei Province. **B**, At the Luoyixi Section (GSSP for the base of the Guzhangian Stage, Cambrian), Guzhang, Hunan Province. **C**, At the Wangjiawan North Section (GSSP for the base of the Hirnantian Stage of Ordovician, and the Ordovician-Silurian boundary), Yichang, Hubei Province. **D**, Participants examining Liexi Fauna (Ordovician), Yongshun, Hunan Province.



FIGURE 5. Post-conference field trip (F3): Mesozoic terrestrial deposits and biotas in the Yanliao area, North China. **A**, At the Yixian Formation Section (Early Cretaceous). **B**, The Jiufotang Formation Section inside the Liaoning Chaoyang Bird Fossil National Geopark (Early Cretaceous). **C**, At Daohugou fossil site (Middle Jurassic). **D**, Jehol Biota Memorial Square.

understanding underfilled lakes and their hydrocarbon potential, the impact of palaeogeography and climate on late Devonian to Mississippian ecosystems and reef builders, palaeogeographical significance of Chinese “vegetational Pompeii”—Permian Wuda Tuff Flora, and a review on silicate weathering and reverse weathering over geological time (Fig. 2).

In addition to the plenary talks, a total of 794 presentations were delivered, including 566 oral presentations (91 of which were keynotes) and 228 posters. Notably, over 50% of the session talks were presented by graduate students, including 295 oral presentations and 117 posters, highlighting the enthusiasm, energy, vitality and innovation of a new wave of palaeogeographical researchers.

To enhance academic exchanges further, three pre- and post-conference field trips were organised for participants to visit classic stratigraphic sections and unique fossil biotas of Neoproterozoic to Mesozoic ages in Anhui, Zhejiang, Hunan, Hubei, Inner Mongolia and Liaoning (Figs 3–5).

Attended by delegates from over twenty countries, the ICP6 has proven itself a great success in facilitating international academic exchanges in the aftermath of COVID-19. It has highlighted the significance of world energy and mineral resources exploration and development through studies of life evolution and palaeogeography. The 7th International Conference of Palaeogeography will take place in Mendoza, Argentina in 2026.