

UIAA Mountaineering Commission meets in New Delhi

The UIAA Mountaineering Commission met in **New Delhi**, India, in November 2009. The meeting was hosted by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) and it was attended by delegates and guests from 3 different continents, highlighting the strength and value of the Commission's work on a global scale – significantly, one member was unable to attend as he was assisting at a mountaineering training camp in India. The Commission was pleased to welcome a new delegate from Catalonia.

During the series of meetings the delegates met the outgoing IMF president, Major Ahluwalia and attended the IMF AGM which included a fascinating address from Dr.S.Gill, the Indian Minister for Sport and Youth, as well as the presentation of lifetime achievement awards for eminent male and female mountaineers.



Pierre Humblet receives a ceremonial ice axe from Major Ahluwalia



Dr. S. Gill at the AGM

AVM P.C.S. Rautela, Col H.S. Chauhan and S.M.Chamoli presented the group with an overview of the history of the IMF since its formation 51 years ago, shortly after the first ascent of Everest. In addition to a long history of traditional mountaineering activities the IMF has also been involved in recent years with the development of climbing walls throughout the country, with an ambitious future programme and increasing participation and success on the international competition climbing scene.

The Mountaineering Commission has recently undertaken collaborative work with the Petzl Foundation in order to assist developing countries to establish their own autonomous national leader training programmes. Jean-Jacques Elouet, General Secretary of the Petzl Foundation, described recent work carried out in Nepal, as well as the imminent completion of a training manual to assist those countries that are currently unable to produce their own training material. During the week the IMF and Petzl Foundation, under the Mountaineering Commission umbrella, negotiated a pilot scheme to be run at two centres in India commencing in 2010.

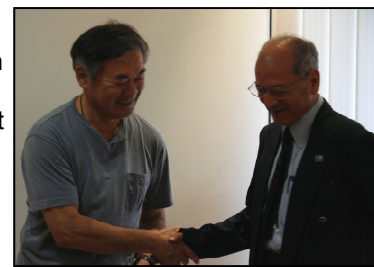


Petzl Foundation meet the IMF

The Training Standard Working Group (TSWG) agreed upon streamlined administrative procedures that should reduce the workload, whilst improving communication through use of templates and action triggers – this is possible thanks to the marketing background of Ron Whitehead, the representative from ENEQ, Quebec. The report from a recent moderation visit to Bezengi Mountaineering Camp in Russia was approved by the TSWG and every assistance will be offered to help this highly respected establishment reach the UIAA standard for High Alpine instructor training schemes.

Steve Long outlined the remit and scope of the Union of International Mountain Leaders Associations (UIMLA) and proposed working collaboratively with this organisation to encourage world-wide awareness of the International Mountain Leader qualification. The International Federation of Mountain Guides (IFMGA, also known as UIAGM) has also expressed a desire to meet the Mountaineering Commission, to investigate the relationship between voluntary and professional qualifications - an important area of debate: the M.C. President Pierre Humblet will meet the IFMGA president Bruno Pellicier to this effect.

The Mountaineering Commission is investigating the comparison of climbing-related accidents between different countries; this project is being coordinated by Chiaki Aoyama from Japan who gave a presentation to follow his initial introduction (given at the MC meeting at Le Tour in March 2009). A recent tragic accident in Japan involving risk management misunderstandings leading to hypothermia and numerous deaths was discussed: this is a disturbingly common underlying factor in large-scale accidents and underlines the importance of developing and marketing high-quality training programmes for leaders.



Chiaki Aoyama meets AVM Rautela

Further work on the project collating comparative technical gradings has been requested by Silvio Calvi of the UIAA Management Committee, since it constitutes a frequently asked question at the UIAA office. Ersan Basar volunteered to manage this project and Pierre Humblet offered to forward the links already collected.