

Resolution Statement

We truly commend the continuing evolution of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), but feel this should not be to the exclusion of the Society's own expeditions, more commonly known today as field research projects. Although the Society assists with grants of money towards research projects, it has not mounted any of its own expeditions since 1998. We believe, at such a critical time in our relationship with the planet, the RGS should reactivate its own multidisciplinary projects 'to greatly extend geographical knowledge' in the spirit of its founding charter.

The Resolution has been co-signed by some of the most distinguished figures in exploration, science and literature, and a full list of the eighty signatories can be viewed at www.thebeaglecampaign.com. We are not seeking to constrain any of the Society's current activities and programs, and the Resolution at no time asks, or suggests, that the proposed expeditions replace them. Our goal is simple: to see high-profile, self-funded projects organized by the Society alongside its existing range of endeavours.

The Society has an outstanding history of mounting its own field research expeditions - as envisioned by its charter. There are many new discoveries to be made within the numerous departments of geographical science, and the RGS should rightly be at the forefront of making future important discoveries - sourced from its own sponsored expeditions - to further our understanding of the world.

These projects would be in the vein of the Maraca Rainforest Project, the Karakoram Expedition and the Jordan Badia Programme, which contributed valuable scientific research, yielded many refereed publications and collections, attracted top scientists from the UK and host country, enhanced participants' careers, established cordial relationships with the host countries, brought media coverage to the Society and, because they attracted grants and sponsorship, cost the Society nothing, or made a profit.

It is no longer mountain summits or poles we seek (although countless areas still remain virgin territory), so much as a greater knowledge about climate change, forest destruction and degradation, and a host of other unknowns; our knowledge of species on the planet still has a long way to go. For example, marine biologists estimate there are up to fifty million new species within the largely unexplored oceans, and there may be as many as ten million species of undiscovered insects, and hundreds of thousands of vascular plants, fungi and algae waiting to be discovered.

The RGS is in the wonderful position of bringing the geographical sciences together to extend our knowledge of Earth and, therefore, our interaction with it. This is a rare opportunity for you to have a voice on this vitally important issue. If you are unable to attend, or cannot vote by post, you can give your proxy to another Fellow attending the SGM. You can appoint Robin Hanbury-Tenison, a veteran explorer, or Professor Peter Furley, a distinguished geographer, as your proxy holder by getting in touch with us through our website.

Please vote in favour of the Resolution.