



The International Subcommission on Stratigraphic Classification of the International Commission on Stratigraphy: The Knowledge

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The International Subcommission on Stratigraphic Classification (ISSC) was born in 1955 as an effort to promote awareness of stratigraphic principles and encourage worldwide standardization of stratigraphic approaches and terminology. The first major achievement of ISSC was the 1976 publication of the International Stratigraphic Guide. It was revised in 1994, with an abridged version appearing in 1999. These documents achieved their goals magnificently: cited innumerable times and forming the core of many national stratigraphic codes. As the discipline has evolved, particularly from technological advances and ocean drilling, new tools and methodologies have been developed and these have led to ever finer resolution of geological time and ever more exact correlation of stratigraphic units and events, thereby enhancing the understanding of the genesis of the geological record. Under the leadership of M. B. Cita, ISSC embarked in 2002 on a renewed initiative to disseminate to the global geological community these newer developments, and ultimately incorporate them into a third edition of the Guide. To this aim, traditional and new branches of stratigraphy are being treated: chemostratigraphy, cyclostratigraphy, magnetostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, sequence stratigraphy, biostratigraphy, and chronostratigraphy. An open-access review paper is dedicated to each and published in Newsletters on Stratigraphy. The next edition of the Guide will be inclusive of all branches of stratigraphy and also embrace igneous and metamorphic rocks. It is envisaged that a textbook on stratigraphy based on these papers and the revised Guide could prove a timely contribution, especially to younger generations of practitioners, and aid global communication and understanding of stratigraphic principles and methods.