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The IAUC is happy to announce that Prof. Arieh Bitan of the Department of Geography and the Human Environment of Tel Aviv University (TAU) has been selected by its Awards Committee for the third (2006) Luke Howard Award. His influence over the field is significant, covering various aspects of regional climatology of Israel and its arid regions, topo-climatology and in particular urban climatology.

Prof. Bitan is one of the leaders of urban and settlement climatology in Israel and in its arid regions. His works have focused on settlements in arid regions and cities in Israel, and in the early 1990s has co-authored the Climatic Atlas of Israel for Physical and Environmental Planning and Design. This atlas, the only one of its kind in Israel, won the “Quality of Life” Knesset Speaker Award in 1992. His long-standing interest in climate-relevant planning and the use of planning principles to mitigate the adverse climatic effects of cities on human health and performance in the different climates of Israel including the arid regions is probably his most important legacy. He has published a great number of journal papers and edited a series of four books on urban climatology and planning. Prof. Bitan has been one of the first climatologists to recognize the important role of city and building design that can play in improving the local climate of cities not only in extreme climate conditions, and his papers attest to his keen interest in the applied aspects of urban climatology.

Due to the applied nature of his work, Prof. Bitan has been a consultant and advisor on various national-level urban climate projects. For example he was a consultant to the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency, advisor to the Ministry of Housing and Construction, Ministry of National Infrastructure, the climatology advisor for the “Israel 2020” Planning Team and a member of numerous city planning teams.

Prof. Bitan is active in many international agencies that deal with urban climate, especially in the area of climate related urban planning. He was a founder of the International Association of Urban Climatology (IAUC), and has been on its Board since its inception. From 1982 until 1995 he was the head of the Expert Committee for Urban Climatology and Building Climatology of the International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP), and since 2003 has been a member of the Commission on Climatology of the International Geographical Union (IGU). In 2005 he was invited to join the international research group of the World Health Organization (WHO) for improving public health responses to extreme weather (EuroHEAT). In a 1991 paper, he introduced the term “Climatic Rehabilitation of the Urban Environment,” now used worldwide to express methods of improving urban climate. In 1980 and 1983, he initiated international conferences in Israel on urban climatology and climatic related planning. These became the foundation for similar triennial congresses organized today by IAUC, held in different global venues; he has been on the Scientific Committee for all these conferences. He also organized two international summer schools in 1992 and 1993 at TAU on climatic related urban planning.



Based on his leading research into the climate of cities, the applied aspects of climate-sensitive urban and housing design, his service contributions to the Israel urban climate community and his involvement in a number of high-level international urban climate organizations and committees, Prof. Bitan was selected as the winner of the IAUC Luke Howard Award 2006.

Manabu Kanda
IAUC Awards Committee Chair

The IAUC Awards Committee