

## **ICSU General Assembly Report: Colin Orton and Dov Jaron**

The ICSU General Assembly was held 18 – 21 October, 2005, in Suzhou, China, about a two hour drive from Shanghai. It was preceded on 17 October by a half-day meeting in Shanghai, during which time representatives from the China Academy of Science and Technology (CAST) made presentations on Science and Human Well-being and on Science for Sustainable Development. This was followed by a late afternoon meeting of the working group on the Science for Health and Well Being initiative in Suzhou. President Colin Orton and Vice-President Dov Jaron represented the IUPESM at these meetings. Following is a brief review of some of the activities of special interest to the IUPESM followed by a fuller synopsis of the proceedings.

### **Significant events of interest to the IUPESM**

- The Science for Health and Well Being initiative, initially proposed by the IUPESM, was approved for grant funding by ICSU, starting January, 2006.
- Dov Jaron made it to the final two candidates for election to fill the one opening for an at-large representative of the biological unions on the ICSU Executive Board, only to lose out to the incumbent candidate seeking reelection for a second term. Candidates from four other biological sciences unions failed to make it this far.
- [The ICSU Strategic Plan for 2006 – 2011](#) was approved (the full draft of the Strategic Plan is attached in pdf format). Note that the topic of Health is one of the major elements of the strategic plan. This is a highly significant addition to ICSU's focus areas and reflects the growing influence of IUPESM and its constituent organizations on ICSU's activities.
- Approval was given to organize Unions into science-related clusters, in part to balance Union representation on the ICSU Executive Board between the sciences.
- Because of withdrawal of UNESCO and US State Department funding from 2007 and devaluation of the US dollar (all ICSU dues have been in US dollars), dues increases were approved: in 2007 dues will be in euros at parity with US dollars, an effective increase of about 20 - 30% since they were fixed in 2002, and this will be followed by 5% increases in 2008 and 2009.
- A Regional Office for Africa has been established in 2005 in Pretoria, South Africa, with funding at the rate of 700,000 euros/year.
- A Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific was approved to open in 2006 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- A Scientific Data and Information Forum was established
- The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) was approved as an Interdisciplinary Body of ICSU.

### **Detailed Report**

*The SHWB meeting, October 17*

Many Union representatives participated in this meeting that had been convened by Dov. Dov and Mark Wahlqvist presented a review of the program. A discussion ensued as to how the initiative might be implemented and, if possible, made into a full-fledged ICSU program. It was noted that the SHWB initiative was singled out in the ICSU Strategic Plan as a demonstration of how Unions could work together to develop important programs.

### ***Union's Forum, Tuesday, October 18***

Union representatives met to review recent developments in ICSU and to discuss how to improve the way Unions interact within ICSU. Topics discussed included:

- International research collaboration—leadership, organization, financial support
- The value of ICSU to the Unions—portal for world science, influence policy, financial leverage, recognition
- The ICSU Strategic Plan
- Loss of some funding (UNESCO and US State Department) and proposed dues increases
- New Regional Offices and how Unions can best interact with them
- Interactions between Unions, National members and Interdisciplinary Bodies (these are the three types of ICSU members)
- The role of Unions and ICSU in development of national and international science policies—links to national and international multidisciplinary groups, targeted statements, conferences, etc.
- The Science for Health and Well Being (SHWB) initiative — Dov and Mark Wahlqvist gave presentations on the status of the initiative to the Union's Forum
- The clustering of Unions was presented and discussed
- A ballot was held to select two candidates from each of the four clusters of Unions for submission to the General Assembly for election as Executive Board Members at Large. For our Biological Sciences cluster, Unions had submitted the names of six candidates and, from these, Dov and the Board member seeking reelection were chosen.

### ***General Assembly, October 19 - 21***

The Agenda for this four-day meeting is attached (Appendix A). Following is a review of some of the important reports/actions (not in chronological order):

- The grant to continue the SHWB initiative was announced and plans to form a “Scoping Group” were presented. This Scoping Group would be responsible for further development of the initiative in order to make it into a full ICSU program.
- Unfortunately Dov lost out to the incumbent candidate seeking reelection in the ballot for selection of the Executive Board Member at Large to represent the Biological Sciences. This did not surprise us, of course, since the incumbent Board member was far better known than was Dov, having been elected at the last General Assembly and having served on the Board for the past three years. We

- did, however, do considerable lobbying for Dov both before and during the General Assembly, and were pleased that he made it to the final two candidates.
- The ICSU Strategic Plan for 2006 – 2011 was presented, discussed and approved. Items in the plan of interest to the IUPESM include planning for natural and human-induced hazards and disasters, sustainable development, health and well being, freedom and responsibilities in the conduct of science, collection and maintenance of scientific data and information, science education in developing countries, and international research collaboration. See the attached pdf document for the full report.
  - Gabriel Ogunmola, Chairman of the Regional Committee for Africa, gave a presentation. He explained the process of selection of the site for the new Regional Office for Africa and its Director. He explained that Pretoria, South Africa had been selected and that the office opened under the direction of Sospeter Muhongo in September, 2005. Dr. Muhongo met with us later and expressed an interest in opening negotiations with the IUPESM to help him support the development of physical and engineering sciences in medicine in his region. He indicated that he was especially keen to identify expert medical physicists and biomedical engineers in Africa (and African experts working abroad), and seeking strategic partnerships.
  - The Anupam Varma, Chairman of the Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific, gave a presentation. He explained that, after meetings with representatives from the Government of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur had been selected as the site for the new Office, pending approval by the Malaysian Cabinet and signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Malaysian Academy of Sciences and ICSU. Search for a new Director of the Office is underway.
  - The new clustering of Unions was presented and approved. The clusters are shown in Table 1 in Appendix B. It was explained that these clusters are not set in stone and can be amended if any Union feels that it is wrongly placed. The clustering of Unions will make it easier to balance membership of the various sciences on the Executive Board and, maybe, make it easier for Unions with similar interests to collaborate
- The Treasurer reported that the finances of ICSU had been considerably stressed in the past three years, due primarily to the devaluation of the US dollar during the past three year period during which there had been no increase in dues (see p.39 of the attached Strategic Plan for fuller details). Essentially, since dues have been set in US dollars, the effective income from these has gradually decreased and is currently running at about 70 - 80% of their value when established in 2002. Several staff at ICSU HQ in Paris had been laid off. For 2005 and 2006 members had been asked to voluntarily submit their annual dues in euro at parity with US dollars i.e. an approximately 20 - 30% increase, but few had complied. It was suggested the main reasons for this were either that the dues paid to member organizations had already been fixed and would need to be raised to pay for these increased ICSU dues, and/or dues paid to member organization had also been fixed in US dollars, so these organizations were also suffering from the devaluation problem. The approved budget included a line item for health related activities, reflecting the presence of such activities in the strategic plan.

## APPENDIX A

### 28TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ICSU AND ASSOCIATED EVENTS

**Monday, 17 October (Shanghai)**

#### **CAST/ICSU Scientific Forum and Visits**

**09:00-13:00**

**Scientific Sessions organized by CAST** in cooperation with ICSU with focus on new scientific issues of interest to China based on the issues contained in the ICSU Strategic Plan.

Session 1: Science and Human Well-being

Session 2: Science for Sustainable Development

**16:30-19:45 Unions' meeting on Science for Health and Well-being Programme (SHWB) in Suzhou**

**Tuesday, 18 October (Suzhou)**

#### **National and Union Members Fora**

09:00-12:30

Union and National Members' separate fora for initial discussions on the ICSU Strategic Plan and other issues of major importance to Members. The sessions will be chaired by Michel Denis (IUPsyS) and Hernan Chaimovich (Brazil).

*12:30-14:00 Lunch*

14:00-16:00 (or 16:15) Union and National Members' fora continue

*16:00 (or 16:15)-16:15 (or 16:30) Coffee*

16:15 (or 16:30) -18:00 Business meetings of Unions and National Members

#### **ICSU 28<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

**Chair of the Assembly: Jane Lubchenco, ICSU President**

18:30-19:30 . Welcome and Opening of the General Assembly

**Wednesday, 19 October (Suzhou)**

*Location: Suzhou International Conference Center*

09:00-09:10. Adoption of the Agenda

09:10-09:20. Appointment of Resolutions Committee and Tellers

09:20-09:35. Report of 27<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, September 2002) and Secretary General's report

09:35-09:50 Discussion and decisions

09:50-10:10. Developing a Strategy for ICSU – Thomas Rosswall

10:10-10:30 Discussion and decisions

*10:30-11:00 Coffee/tea break*

11:00-11:45. Reports from Union and National Members' Fora, Michel Denis (IUPsyS) and Hernan Chaimovich (Brazil), including discussion and decisions

11:45-12:05. International Polar Year, Ian Allison (Australia)

12:05-12:30 Discussion and decisions

*12:30-14:00 Lunch*

### **Science and Sustainable Development**

14:00-14:20. Environment and its Relation to Sustainable Development, Uri Shamir (IUGG)

14:20-14:40 Discussion and decisions

14:40-15:00. Natural and Human-Induced Hazards, Gordon McBean (Canada)

15:00-15:20 Discussion and decisions

*15:20-15:50 Coffee/tea*

15:50-16:10. Science for Sustainable Development, Brian Walker (Australia)

16:10-16:30 Discussion and decisions

16:30-16:50. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, Hal Mooney (USA)

16:50-17:10 Discussion and decisions

17:10-17:45 Presentation by candidates for:

- President-Elect
- Vice President for Scientific Planning and Review
- Vice-President for External Relations

### **Thursday, 20 October (Suzhou)**

*Location: Suzhou International Conference Center*

#### **Universality of Science**

09:00-09:20. Science and Society, Bengt Gustafsson (Sweden)

09:20-09:40 Discussion and decisions

09:40-10:00. The Principle of Universality of Science, Peter Warren (UK)

10:00-10:20 Discussion and decisions

10:20-10:40. Scientific Data and Information, Roberta Balstad (USA)

10:40-11:00 Discussion and decisions

*11:00-11:30 Coffee/tea break*

#### **Capacity Building**

11:30-11:50. Capacity Building, Ranjan Ramasamy (Sri Lanka)

11:50-12:10 Discussion and decisions

12:10-12:30. Policy Committee on Developing Countries, Marian Addy (Ghana)

12:30-12:50 Discussion and decisions

*12:50-14:20 Lunch*

14:20-14:40. Election of Officers

14:40-15:40. General discussion and approval of the ICSU Strategic Plan 2006-2011

*15:40-16:10 Coffee/tea break*

16:10-17:40. Reports of the Treasurer, Roger Elliott (UK), and Chairman of the Committee on Finance, Burton Richter (IUPAP), including discussion and decisions

*19:00- Assembly dinner*

### **Friday, 21 October (Suzhou)**

*Location: Suzhou International Conference Center*

09:00-10:00. The regional dimension: Reports on Regional Offices (Africa: Gabriel Ogunmola, Nigeria; and Asia and the Pacific: Anupam

Varma, India), including discussion and decisions  
 10:00-11:00. Strengthening the ICSU Membership Base, Lucie Lapointe (Canada), including discussion and decisions  
 11:00-11:30 *Coffee/tea break*  
 11:30-12:00. Revision of Statutes and Rules of Procedure, Lucie Lapointe (Canada), including discussion and decisions  
 12:00-12:30. Elections of Ordinary Members on the Executive Board  
 12:30-14:00 *Lunch*  
 14:00-14:10 Results of elections for Ordinary Members of the Executive Board  
 14:10-14:40 Incoming Presidential address, Goverdhan Mehta (India)  
 14:40-15:10. Proposals for new ICSU Members  
 15:10-15:40 *Coffee/tea break*  
 15:40-16:10. Adoption of Resolutions of the General Assembly  
 16:10-16:40. Date and Place of 29th General Assembly  
 16:40. Any Other Authorized Business

## APPENDIX B

Clusters	Unions			
Physical, Chemical & Mathematical Sciences	IUCr IUPAC IMU	Crystallography Pure & Applied Chemistry Mathematics	IUTAM IUPAP	Theoretical & Applied Mechanics Pure & Applied Physics
Biological Sciences	IUBMB IUBS IUPAB IBRO IUFoS T IUIS	Biochem. & Molecular Biology Biological Sciences Pure & Applied Biophysics Brain Research Organization Food Science & Technology	IUMS IUNS IUPHA R IUPS IUTOX IUPES M	Microbiological Societies Nutritional Sciences Pharmacology Physiological Sciences Toxicology Physical & Eng. Sciences in Medicine
Earth & Space Sciences	IUGS IUSS IAU	Geological Sciences Soil Sciences Astronomy	IUGG URSI ISPRS	Geodesy & Geophysics Radio Scientifique Internationale Society for Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing
Social Sciences	IUPsy S IGU	Psychological Sciences Geography	IUHPS IUAES	History & Philosophy of Science Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences