

17 February 2008

MEETING OF OFFICERS OF ICSU

13 January 2008
Paris

DECISIONS

Present: Catherine Bréchignac, Ana María Cetto, Hernan Chaimovich, Roger Elliott, Goverdhan Mehta, Khotso Mokhele and Thomas Rosswall (*ex officio*)

By conference call: Francis Gudyanga and Bryan Henry (Agenda item 12)

Secretariat: Tish Bahmani Fard, Leah Goldfarb (Agenda item 10), Jacinta Legg, Patricia Ocampo-Thomason (Agenda items 1-10), and Carthage Smith (Agenda items 5-17)

1. Welcome and Opening of the Meeting

All the Officers attended the meeting.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

<p>Decision To adopt the Agenda.</p>

3. Decisions of 96th Meeting of Executive Board, October 2007

Other than the following item, there were no matters requiring the attention of the Officers which were not found elsewhere on the Agenda.

3.1 New building

As the Officers saw, despite the architect's best intentions, the building was still a long way from being finished, although it had been promised that all work would be finished by the end of 2007.

The Rectorat had asked ICSU (and the Officers had agreed by e.mail) to finance some more of the work up to a total of €20 000 (this was in addition to the €150 000 already allocated by ICSU for the move and building refurbishment). The Rectorat had also put in a request to the Minister of Higher Education and Research for additional funding in 2008 of €200 000 in order to clean and restore the street façade. This money was in complement to the € 1 320 000 granted in March 2006 and the €300 000 accorded in April 2007.

Decisions

To note the Decisions of the 96th Meeting of the Executive Board;
to also note the state of renovation work on the new building;
to confirm the allocation of an additional €20 000 to finance some of the work on the building; and
to thank the staff for endeavouring to ensure that ICSU's work continued despite the difficult working conditions.

4. Executive Director Search

The Search Committee (President, President-Elect, Secretary-General and Treasurer) had met just prior to the meeting of the Officers. A little over 50 applications had been received and a short list of 6 persons who would be invited for interview and for whom references would be sought was established. It was hoped that the interviews could be held over a two-day period in April. Staff would meet with the candidates after their interviews and their feedback would be given to the Search Committee.

Decision

To note progress in the search for a replacement for Thomas Rosswall.

5. Regional Activities

5.1 Regional Office for Africa

The ICSU Regional Committee for Africa would hold its 7th meeting in Maputo, Mozambique starting on 30 January 2008. The Committee members had also been requested to extend their stay in Maputo for an additional day to allow for interaction between ICSU RCA members and the Mozambican authorities responsible for the local organization of the GA. A one-day meeting with the ICSU National Members in sub-Saharan Africa with the purpose of developing an African strategy for the 29th ICSU General Assembly had had to be cancelled due to lack of funding.

The Regional Office was finalizing editorial work on the Health and Human Wellbeing science plan; a soft copy should be available by the end of January 2008. It was hoped that the printed plan would be disseminated in February 2008.

The decisions approved by the RCA6 for the finishing and approval of the merged Global Environmental Change Science Plan had not yet been implemented. This process had been further delayed by the departure of the staff member responsible for the plan. The Regional Director had now taken over the coordination of this activity and

it was hoped that the RCA decisions would be implemented soon and the plan finished and approved.

The contract of the Director of ROA finished at the end of June 2008 and the Human Resources office of the NRF would initiate an evaluation process of the Director's performance over the last three years. The evaluation would be finished by the end of February 2008. There were three possible outcomes of the evaluation: renew the contract for a further three years; extend the contract by one or two years; non-renewal.

The President-Elect would be travelling to Africa at the end of February and could go to South Africa for discussions with the NRF and the Regional Office in order to collect further information that could help inform the Secretary-General in developing a recommendation to the EB.

Decision

To agree that a group composed of the Secretary-General, the Chair of the Regional Committee, and a high-level representative of the NRF should consider the evaluation report in March. Based on this consultation, and other input as appropriate, the Secretary-General will then make a recommendation to the Executive Board for decision also in March.

5.2 Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

The ICSU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific held its 4th Regional Committee meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand on 20 and 23 November. The 2nd ICSU Regional Consultation was also held in Chiang Mai on 21 and 22 November 2007. A total of 60 participants from 17 countries participated. Financial support was provided to Bhutan, Laos and Myanmar making it possible for the first time for them to send representatives to an ICSU regional activity. As a result, the Council for RNR Research of Bhutan had now officially expressed interest in joining ICSU; the Regional Office was exploring possibilities of obtaining membership funds for Bhutan and the other Less Developed Countries in the region.

The Regional Director represented the Science and Technology Community group at the Asia and the Pacific CSD-16 Regional Implementation Meeting. The meeting was organized by UNESCAP in Jakarta on 26- 27 November. The Regional Office would also participate in the InterAcademy Panel (IAP) Asia-Pacific Planning Meeting on Promoting Access to and Use of Digital Knowledge Resources in Countries with Developing and Transitional Economies: Focus on the Role of Science Academies in the Asia-Pacific Region in early December.

Decision

To agree that Regional Offices in Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean should recontact TWAS concerning possible funding to pay dues of least developed countries in ICSU.

5.3 Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

The first instalment from the Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology had been paid to the Regional Office. The agreement was signed on 30 October 2007 and lasted until 29 October 2010.

The Scientific Planning Group in Mathematics Education held its first meeting at the *Academia Mexicana de Ciencias*, on 1-2 October and a second meeting was scheduled for 24-25 January 2008 in Santiago, Chile.

The First Meeting of the Scientific Planning Group on Natural Disasters took place in Manizales, Colombia, on 5-6 December 2007.

The final lists for members of the Scientific Planning Groups for Sustainable Energy and Biodiversity had been approved and it was hoped that the first meetings would take place very early in 2008.

The Regional Director had discussed future collaboration between the Regional Office and the ICSU Spanish Commission during the Third Meeting of the Spanish Commission for ICSU held at the Ministry of Education and Science of Spain in Madrid on 26 November 2007.

At the Third Meeting of the Regional Committee, members were very keen on having a more substantive participation in the 29th GA and asked the Regional Director to explore the possibility of having a session where scientist from Africa and Latin America could engage in a scientific dialogue about their regional priorities. A draft proposal has been circulated and the Asia and Pacific Office had also expressed interest in participating in the activity.

5.4 Regional Office for the Arab Region

Efforts to organize the First Regional Consultation for the Arab Region continued. UNESCO Plenipotentiary Ambassadors and permanent delegates from countries in the region with no ICSU National Members had been contacted and asked to suggest names of Science and Technology institutions that could represent their countries at the meeting. The Jordan Royal Scientific Society had offered to host this meeting on 16-17 March 2008 in Amman.

Decision

To agree that the President would represent the Executive Board at the First Regional Consultation.

5.5 Review of Regional Offices governance and Regional Committees membership

In the light of experiences gained during the past years, the Secretariat had revised the ICSU document on the functions and governance of the Regional Offices and a proposal for amendments and alternatives was presented to the Officers for review. In addition,

concerns had been expressed by some of the Regional Directors and Chairs of the Regional Committees in relation to decisions taken by the Executive Board at its last meeting on the membership of the Regional Committees.

Decision

To ask the Secretariat to prepare a revised draft of the document describing the functions of Regional Offices and Regional Committees for consideration by the EB at its May meeting; this revised draft to be accompanied by a document giving the reasons for the proposed changes; and to agreed that the Chair of the Regional Committees should be appointed for one term, non-renewable.

6. MA Follow-Up

The ICSU-UNESCO-UNU *Ad hoc* Group held its last meeting in Paris on 11-12 December. The draft report would be sent for review to the ICSU family and a final draft would be presented to the CSPR in April and to the EB in May.

In addition to the process to define a science agenda, the key sponsors of the MA (including ICSU) met in Stockholm in October. The report from that meeting outlined follow-up activities in relation to (i) The Knowledge Base, including the definition of research needs (led by ICSU), development of analytical tools (led by UNEP with ICSU involvement), the stimulation of sub-global assessments (UNU), and capacity building activities (Stockholm Resilience Centre); (ii) Implementation; (iii) Outreach; and (iv) Development of a process leading up to a possible MA2 in 2015. ICSU was a very important partner in these activities to ensure that the scientific community was fully involved and that the new science programme proposed by the *Ad hoc* group was fully linked to other implementation activities.

In parallel, the Government of France had initiated a process for assessment of biodiversity; the International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB). The International Steering Committee for the consultation process had its last meeting in November. It had requested UNEP to convene an intergovernmental meeting, including other partners such as ICSU, to consider how such a mechanism should be established.

Both the MA follow-up meeting and the IMoSEB consultation concluded that there could not be both an MA2 and an IMoSEB. Thus, the challenge was now to merge the two processes. ICSU would continue to play an important role in safeguarding the scientific quality of the two processes.

Decisions

To request the Secretariat to continue its engagement in the process; and to keep the Executive Board informed of developments.

7. Global Observing Systems

ICSU was a sponsor of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS; secretariat function at WMO), the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS; secretariat function at

IOC) and the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS; secretariat function at FAO) together with FAO, UNEP, UNESCO and WMO. The Executive Director had recently had discussions with the Chairs of the three systems (John Zillman, John Field and Berrien Moore, respectively). They had all stressed the vital role of ICSU as a co-sponsor of the Observing Systems to ensure their scientific quality and integrity. There was special concern that GTOS was not developing into the central node for terrestrial Earth observations in part due to weak political support at FAO. Informal discussions had indicated that UNEP might be willing to take a greater responsibility for the development of GTOS.

The UN bodies had established an Interagency Coordination and Planning Committee (ICPC) to which ICSU was invited as co-sponsor of the Systems. At a recent meeting in November, it had been agreed that ICPC must take a more active responsibility for planning and coordinating continued efforts to develop these three Systems, which were crucial for the success of the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS).

The Executive Director briefed the Officers on the outcomes of discussions during the Plenary of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the GEO 4th Ministerial Summit in Cape Town in November. ICSU had participated in an exhibition at the GEO Summit, which was visited by the South African and Zimbabwean Ministers for Science and Technology. The exhibition, prepared by Jacinta Legg, stressed the importance of the links between scientific research – monitoring – scientific assessments – policy making.

Decisions

To note developments;
to reiterate ICSU's full commitment to the three Global Observing Systems that it sponsors and to the GEO process for GEOSS; and
to request the Executive Director to continue consultation regarding the future of GTOS.

8. International Polar Year (IPY)

The International Polar Year (IPY) Joint Committee of ICSU and WMO met in Quebec City on 24-26 October. Three topics dominated the discussions: an assessment of the current status of IPY, ensuring and nurturing the IPY legacy, and IPY data availability.

On the first topic, the Joint Committee aimed to complete a two-page assessment of the state of all aspects of IPY activities by the end of 2007. This would be distributed widely, and the Committee planned to update this product at each subsequent meeting.

With regard to the IPY legacy, the discussion focused on the next generation of scientists, observing systems, data management, policy impacts, handoff of core functions of the IPY International Programme Office when it was disbanded in 2009-10, and steering of international polar science collaboration when the Joint Committee was disbanded at the end of 2009, including the role of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) and the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC).

On the final theme of IPY data, there was concern that there were insufficient resources to ensure that data would be identified, made available, and archived. The Joint Committee had developed a detailed needs statement that would be central in seeking resources to address these challenges.

The next meeting of the Joint Committee would be in St Petersburg in July 2008 in tandem with the first IPY Open Science Conference, hosted by SCAR and IASC. Khotso Mokhele would attend the Joint Committee's Open Consultative Forum on 7 July, speak at the opening ceremony of the Open Science Conference on 8 July, and would meet with SCAR and IASC Executives.

In a related activity, the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation was considering an "Arctic Initiative 2008" that Monaco might submit. It was noted that Prince Albert II, who inaugurated the IPY in Paris in March 2007, might submit a draft resolution to the UNEP Governing Council in Monaco in February 2008. Paul Cutler attended the second meeting of the Foundation's Task Force on this Initiative on 22 November. The draft resolution would likely propose protections for the Arctic Ocean while learning more about it through international scientific programmes.

<p>Decision</p>

<p>To note ongoing IPY activities.</p>
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9. Joint ICSU-ESF-NASAC –European Academies Basic Health Science Conference

The ICSU Strategic Plan (p. 33) included the following commitment "*ICSU will further explore the development of a series of international ESF-ICSU conferences on key areas of interest to science and society. ICSU Members and Regional Offices should have an important role to play in such events*"

In October 2006 the Executive Board approved a proposal for an African-European conference on basic science to be organized jointly with the European Science Foundation and €20k was allocated for this event in 2007. A partnership of European Academies also agreed to provide financial support for the event and the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) was invited as an additional partner.

There had been a delay in organizing the conference, as the initially identified African co-chair withdrew. However, new co-chairs – Iqbal Parker (ICGEB, Cape Town) and Monique Capron (Institut Pasteur, France) – had been identified and the specific topic agreed – 'Genomics and bioinformatics approaches to vaccine and drug target identification'. The ICSU Regional Committee for Africa had been actively involved in this selection. The conference was now rescheduled for Spring 2009. At its last meeting the Executive Board had approved the reallocation of €20k to the 2008 budget to support this.

This conference was envisaged as the first in a series of such meetings that would alternate between Europe and Africa, focussing on basic/frontier science. All sponsors had been invited to make a commitment for the first two meetings, which implied a future allocation of €20k in the 2010 budget but a decision on this would depend on the evaluation of the first conference.

Decision

To note the delay in the organization of the first Europe-Africa Frontier Research Conference, which was now scheduled for Spring 2009.

10. International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management

Formally launched by UNEP at the World Science Forum in Budapest in November 2007, the “International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management,” hereafter referred to as the “Resource Panel”, aimed to provide scientific assessments and advice on the use intensity, the security of supplies and the environmental impacts of selected products and services on a global level. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsaecker and Ismail Serageldin co-chaired the Panel, which was supported by a Secretariat, hosted by the Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch of UNEP’s Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) based in Paris. This initiative came out of the DTIE office, which was fairly new to assessment work, and until recently the initiative had been relatively unknown to the rest of UNEP and the wider community.

The work of the Panel was overseen by a Steering Committee, which was composed of representatives from ~15 governments with several non-governmental organizations currently acting as informal observers. ICSU had participated in the Steering Committee meeting, and had encouraged them to keep their focus on resource lifecycle analysis and pointed out the need to avoid overlap with other assessments, such as with the MA follow up. The DTIE office had expressed appreciation of ICSU's efforts and informally had offered the possibility of ICSU becoming a member of the Steering Committee as an observer. As ICSU’s contribution was most valuable during the formative stages and as the work of the Steering Committee would be focused on providing financial support and ensuring that the Panel adhered to their work plan, it did not seem necessary to formally have observer status on the Steering Committee.

Decisions

To welcome UNEP’s launch of the International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management; and
to agree not to become an observer of the Resource Panel Steering Committee, if formally invited.

11. Programme for General Assembly

The EB approved the draft agenda for the General Assembly at its April 2007 meeting and would decide on the final agenda for the General Assembly in May 2008. However, it was necessary to agree on speakers for the various agenda items already at the Officers meeting, so that they could be approached informally in order to secure their availability.

In discussing the GA Agenda, the question of a report from the Policy Committee on Developing Countries (PCDC) was raised or whether this should be a report on the PCDC in the light of the report which was to be submitted by the sub-group of the Board established in October 2007.

Decision

To invite the speakers with the understanding that a final decision will not be made until the next meeting of the Executive Board;
to ask the chair (Hernan Chaimovich) of the sub-group on PCDC to submit the group's report within one month which the Secretariat would then make available to the EB for discussion at its May meeting;
to agree that the PCDC should not meet in April in Paris as previously planned.

12. Dues Report

Francis Gudyanga and Bryan Henry (who, together with the Officers, formed the sub-group agreed by the Executive Board in October to consider responses received on the Dues Report) joined the Officers by conference call. It was noted that the response to request for comments on the Dues Report from the National Members had been poor (only 6 of the 113 Members had responded), whilst 17 of the 29 Unions had replied.

Decisions

To agree that the sub-group, with the addition of Cynthia Beall, needed to meet face-to-face to provide clear advice to the EB on what its recommendations to the GA should be; and
to agree that this meeting would be held in the afternoon of 22 May 2008 in Paris immediately prior to the next meeting of the Board.

13. Annual Report

The ICSU Annual Report was prepared by the Secretariat but was formally the responsibility of the Executive Board. As in previous years, the Officers were asked to consider the outline contents list for the 2007 Report.

Decision

To agree on the contents of the Annual Report 2007.

14. Implementation of Strategic Plan

The Executive Director briefed the Officers on those activities in the Strategic Plan not covered elsewhere on the agenda and on ongoing consultations with Members.

Decision

To note progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan.

15. Interaction with Key Partners

15.1 UNESCO

The Executive Director reported on discussions with UNESCO in relation to the 3rd Framework Agreement 2008-2013.

There had not yet been any approach from UNESCO in relation to the proposed task group to ensure implementation of recommendations from the Science Review.

15.2 World Science Forum

The President and Treasurer had participated in the World Science Forum – Budapest and reported briefly.

It was noted that UNESCO had decided to celebrate the World Conference on Science + 10 with an event in Budapest in 2009 and it was assumed that the event would be cosponsored by ICSU.

Decisions

To note progress in relation to the development of a new UNESCO-ICSU Framework Agreement;
to note the participation of the President and Treasurer in the World Science Forum;
to note UNESCO's plans for a WCS+10 event; and
to agree to suggest that the ISSC should also be involved.

16. Dates and Places of Next Meetings

Since the completion of the building renovation was now running so late, it was proving difficult to identify a date in the first part of 2008 when sufficient EB Members would be in Paris in order to hold the formal inauguration of the building. This needed to be a very high-level event and it was important that the maximum number of Members of the Board be present. In light of this, the Officers reconsidered the EB decision to hold its May 2008 meeting in Rio.

The Officers also expressed the need to hold a second meeting in between the May meeting of the Board and the General Assembly.

The dates of meetings in 2008 are

2008

24-25 April	Committee on Finance, Paris
28-29 April	CSPR, Paris
2 May	Nominating Committee, Paris
22 May p.m.	Dues sub-group (Officers plus Cynthia Beall, Francis Gudyanga, Bryan Henry), Paris

23-24 May	Executive Board, Paris in conjunction with the inauguration of the new building, Paris
27 July	Officers, Paris
13-25 October	ICSU General Assembly and Associated Meetings
19 October	Executive Board (2005-2008)
20 October	Scientific Forum: Science in Africa (organized by Regional Committee for Africa and local hosts)
21 October	National and Union Members' Fora and Business Meetings Evening: Opening of the General Assembly Meeting of Nominating Committee
22 October	General Assembly Meeting of Resolutions Committee Meeting (evening)
23 October	General Assembly Evening: Meeting of Resolutions Committee Meeting
24 October	General Assembly
25 October a.m.	Executive Board (2008-2011)
25 October p.m.	CSPR

Decision

To decide to hold the May 2008 EB meeting in Paris and inform the Ordinary Members of the Board accordingly; and
to hold a meeting of the Officers on 27 July.

17. Any Other Business

The Secretary-General complimented the Secretariat on the latest edition of Insight.

18. Closed Session

- With Executive Director
- Without Executive Director

There being no other business the President closed the meeting at 17:45.

Goverdhan Mehta

Thomas Rosswall

Annex 1 List of Follow-up Actions



13 February 2008

MEETING OF OFFICERS OF ICSU

13 January 2008

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

<u>Agenda Item/Action</u>	<u>Responsible</u>	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Status</u>
3. Decisions 96th EB Meeting Thank staff for working under very difficult conditions	TR		
5.1 Regional Office for Africa Recommend action on contract of ROA Director	AMC	March	
5.2 Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Contact TWAS re possible funding to pay dues of developing countries in ICSU	TR		
5.4 Regional Office for the Arab Region Represent EB at First Regional Consultation	GM/CB		
5.5 Regional Offices Governance Revise document	POT	EB May	
7. Global Observing Systems Continue consultations re GTOS	TR		Ongoing
11. Programme for General Assembly Invite speakers informing them that final decision will be made at May meeting of EB	All staff		
Submit sub-group's report PCDC	HC	EB May	
Inform PCDC April meeting cancelled	TR		
12. Dues Report Inform Cynthia Beall of addition to group and meeting	TBF		Done

