

1st Meeting of ICSU Committee on Freedom and Responsibility in the conduct of Science (CFRS)

ICSU Secretariat, Paris
6-7 November 2006

Meeting Report

Present: Peter Anyang’Nyong’O , Ruth Arnon, Carol Corillon, Alice Gast, Bengt Gustafsson (Chair), Peter Mahaffy, Sylvia Rumball, Peter Schindler, John Sulston, Ovid Tzeng, David Vaux, Moises Wasserman, Kan Zhang

ICSU Secretariat: Thomas Rosswall (items 1-4), Carthage Smith (*ex officio*)

Apologies for absence: Najia Kbir Ariguib, Ana Maria Cetto (*ex officio*)

1. Welcome and introduction of members

The chair welcomed members to the meeting. As this was the first meeting of the new committee all members were invited to briefly introduce themselves.

Committee members had been selected from nominations from ICSU Member organisations but it was emphasised that they were being asked to serve on the committee in their individual capacities and not as formal representatives of their nominating organisation.

2. Adoption of Agenda

It was noted that this meeting included a mixture of general background and information items as well as open brainstorming and specific action items. Future meetings would have less general background.

<p>Decision To adopt the agenda</p>
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3. An introduction to ICSU

CS made a short presentation of the ICSU Strategic Plan, 2006-2011. This provided the context in which CFRS was being asked to operate. The majority of committee members were relatively new to ICSU and so this was also an opportunity to clarify overall strategic, policy and operational issues.

There followed a general discussion on the scope of ICSU’s scientific remit. Several members noted the importance of linking with social sciences both in relation to achieving ICSU’s overall mission and also with regards to the specific remit of the CFRS.

4. A brief history of SCFCS

Peter Schindler had served as the Executive Secretary of the predecessor to CFRS – the Standing Committee on Freedom in the Conduct of Science (SCFCS) – for many years. He presented a brief paper on the evolution of this committee and its links to other international bodies dealing with similar issues.

Members noted that the monitoring and reporting of individual cases was an important part of the remit of CFRS. Much could be learned from the past and yet this information was not widely available. Moreover, in terms of communicating the importance of the Principle of Universality, it was important to have some measure of the problems (including successful interventions). If the ICSU Membership was to be more involved in the future, then there would need to be effective mechanisms for communication outcomes as well as problems.

SCFCS had worked in a somewhat *ad hoc* and pragmatic manner, focussing mainly on individual cases, e.g. denials of visas to scientists. Such cases would also need to be addressed in the future but they would often be an indication of underlying longer-term issues that CFRS should also address. These were the issues where a more public approach and active communication with ICSU Members would be required.

Decisions:

To request PS and CC to compile a summary of SCFCS experiences year by year, including quantitative data as far as possible; and, to re-consider the history and experiences of SCFCS at the next meeting with a view to producing a publication (see also item 13).

5. Terms of Reference of the Committee

The recommendation to disband SCFCS and establish CFRS was initially made during a strategic review of Science and Society: Rights and Responsibilities (ICSU, 2005). Immediately prior to this review SCFCS had carried out its own analysis of the Universality of Science in a Changing World, which also hinted that ICSU's existing structures needed to be revised in the light of new challenges. The recommendation from the strategic review was subsequently strongly endorsed by the General Assembly of all ICSU Members in 2006.

The terms of reference of the CFRS were different to those of its predecessor in one very substantive way. The committee was now charged with considering the broader issues affecting the Principle of Universality and in particular with considering responsibilities as well as rights. It was noted that there were several other ICSU interdisciplinary bodies that deal with issues that impinge on the Principle of Universality, including capacity building and access to data and information. However, CFRS was clearly distinct in that its primary focus was freedom and responsibilities.

Members were informed that, whilst many individual cases and issues that CFRS will be asked to consider will be referred via ICSU Members or the Executive Board, the committee is also expected to identify issues itself that merit attention. In order to prioritise these issues it was important to define at least some broad criteria. It would also be important to have a

shared understanding of the potential mechanisms that are available to CFRS and ICSU in order to have an impact in any selected area.

In discussion, it was noted that that, whilst responsibility was implicit in the current wording of the Principle of Universality, it could perhaps be made more explicit. An additional sentence on ‘doing no harm’ could be included. Scientific responsibility was a very broad area and CFRS could not hope to deal with it all; for example codes of conduct or ethics were normally best dealt with at the national or disciplinary level. There could be an important role for CFRS in linking up various interests and activities across the ICSU community. In this context, it was important that CFRS was transparent and visible to this community. Maintaining good links with other international networks with similar interests, in particular the International Human Rights Network of Academies, would also be important.

Decisions

To agree the Terms of Reference;
 to agree on criteria for defining issues that CFRS should be considering (annex 1);
 to develop and propose to the Executive Board a revised text for statute 5 that would emphasise responsibility;
 to invite the Executive Board to meet jointly with CFRS possibly in conjunction with the next General Assembly;
 to request the Secretariat to consult ICSU Members on their activities relating to the responsibilities of science and scientists;
 to affirm the importance of a continuing strong partnership with the International Human Rights Network of Academies; and,
 to make the minutes of CFRS meetings publicly available on the ICSU web-site.

6. Preliminary identification of potential future issues (re. items 12 and 13)

In preparation for the brainstorming session on day 2, (item 12), all committee members were invited to make suggestions of topics, which CFRS should address over the next 18 months as part of its ‘core’ work-plan.

The following issues were identified and are considered in detail under item 12:

- Academic Freedom and Responsibility in African Universities
- Public meetings
- Openness of data and information
- Freedom of exchange and brain drain
- The past, present and future landscape for Universality
- Whistle blowing and the private sector, e.g. the pharmaceutical industry

7. The Middle East

7.1 Israel and calls for boycotts

There had been several recent calls for academic boycotts of Israel. In July, 2006, the ICSU Officers has considered the case of the UK academic trade union NATFHE, which called on individuals to boycott Israel. More recently a similar appeal had been made by a network of

Irish academics. In the former case, ICSU was approached for support by its National Member in Israel and reiterated its previously declared opposition to such boycotts, including a statement issued in 2002, but did not make a new public statement. At their meeting, the Officers agreed on a procedure for dealing with such approaches in the future. This included a critical role for CFRS in advising on whether action is necessary and, if so, what that action should be.

The Officers also specifically requested that CFRS consider whether further action was merited in relation to such calls for boycotts and, as this was an ongoing issue, whether there was merit in preparing a policy document on Universality and the Middle East.

CFRS members considered that the focus for ICSU in this instance should be the general issue of calls for academic boycotts rather than specific target groups. It was important that ICSU stood up publicly for the Principle of Universality but this did not entail an obligation to make a public statement on every individual case of infringement. The broader longer-term issue that might merit attention from CFRS was how to uphold the Universality of Science in wartime/armed conflict.

7.2 Iraq

The Officers meeting in July coincided with the publication in *Science and Nature* of reports that scientists in Iraq were being specifically targeted for violence. ICSU rapidly issued a press statement, expressing its solidarity with the scientific community in Iraq.

CC informed other CFRS members of emerging reports that Professor Isam Kadhem al Rawi, from the University of Baghdad, had been assassinated. This was particularly distressing as he had been responsible for monitoring and publicising the plight of Iraqi academics. It was very important that ICSU continued to publicly demonstrate its solidarity with scientists in Iraq.

Decisions

To advise the Executive Board to take no more action for the time-being on the Israeli boycott situation;

BG to take the lead in preparing a scoping paper on “the Universality of Science in Situations of Armed Conflict” for discussion at the next meeting. [All members to submit comments to BG]; and,

to urgently collect further information on the reported assassination of Professor al Rawi and make a public statement from CFRS if appropriate. *{Subsequent to the meeting the report was verified and BG authored a letter, on behalf of CFRS, that was published in Nature (Nature, 444, p422)}*

8. USA

8.1 Visas, deemed exports and other threats to free scientific exchange.

In 2002 new visa regulations and controls on the exchange of information and materials were introduced in the USA, in response to national security concerns. It became rapidly apparent that these tightened controls were having a negative impact on scientific exchange and many organisations protested. ICSU sent several letters to US Government Officials, all of which

were sympathetically acknowledged. The US-National Academy of Sciences had established a dedicated visa service to assist scientists and also actively lobbied for a responsible relaxation of controls and changes to procedures. Overall, the situation now, in comparison to 2002, appeared to be improved.

However, in February, the ICSU President Goverdhan Mehta was refused a visa to attend a scientific meeting in the USA. This incident was extensively covered in the media – it coincided with a visit by President Bush to India to discuss technology transfer – and ICSU issued a press release. In the wave of media interest, it became clear that Professor Mehta's case was not an isolated incident but that many eminent scientists had been refused or discouraged from applying for US visas and had thus decided not to visit the USA in the future. This was particularly the case for scientists from several countries that had been identified as a high security risk by the USA. Scientists originating from these same countries had also been targeted in proposed legislation on deemed exports, which would limit access to identified scientific materials and equipment in research institutions based in the USA.

In considering the case of Professor Mehta, the Executive Board agreed that what was happening to many scientists when applying for visas to the USA was clearly in breach of the Principle of Universality. It decided that the ICSU Secretariat should not organize any meetings in the USA but that Member organisations should not be asked to follow the same course of action. The Board also requested that CFRS consider the situation with regards to visas to the USA, at its first meeting.

CC reported that as of July 31, 2006, the dedicated US Visa service at the US-NAS had been informed of over 3,500 cases and resolved over 3000 of these. However, it was also undoubtedly true that many scientists were no longer applying to visit the USA. The importance of having quantitative data was emphasised. It was also important that scientists were made aware of the dedicated US-NAS assistance service. Committee members noted that, whilst quantitative data was readily available from the USA, this was not the case for many other countries. For scientists from some Latin American countries it was apparently much more difficult to obtain a visitors visa for Europe than for the USA. However, there was very little reliable data on this. Whilst the situation in the USA was open to criticism, it was important that ICSU monitor the visa situation more broadly and make sure that the situation was fair for all scientists no matter where they were going from or to.

On the issue of deemed exports, AG informed members that this had largely arisen in the USA out a re-interpretation of regulations that were designed to apply to proprietary information and materials. There had been extensive negotiations between various government departments and agencies and the academic community and perspectives varied enormously on issues such as openness and access. It could be difficult to get consensus even amongst different individuals in the same department. However, progress had been positive and, for the timebeing at least, deemed exports were unlikely to be a major obstacle to scientific exchange with the USA. It might be important that other regions, in particular Europe, learnt from the discussions that had taken place on this in the USA.

8.2 Florida and Cuba

In early June, the State of Florida passed a law prohibiting the use of public funds for any collaboration between academics and research institutions based in Florida and academics in

Cuba. The Officers were informed of this situation at their meeting in July and they asked that CFRS consider it further. There had been no formal approach to ICSU from the National Member in Cuba, although several Board members were asked in a personal capacity to sign a letter of protest from Cuban academics. The US-National Academy of Sciences was consulted by ICSU and responded that they were monitoring the situation but had not taken any public position.

AG and CC explained that the Florida legislation was largely politically motivated and was being challenged in Law. It clearly was a breach of the Principle of Universality and was being monitored by the US-NAS. However, it was also part of a bigger picture of national regulations and controls on cooperation in education that effectively made scientific exchange between the USA and Cuba extremely difficult.

Decisions:

To note that whilst the visa situation for scientists visiting the USA was serious, this was a more widespread issue that also affected other countries;
 to request the Secretariat to consult ICSU Members as to their experiences with regards to visa refusals and to ask all National Members to play a more proactive role in monitoring the situation and ensuring that data are publicly available;
 to write to the responsible State Authorities in Florida and the Cuban Academy of Sciences, expressing concern at the legislation that prohibits scientific exchange.

9. Potential Dual use of Life Sciences

In response to public concern, many countries were in the process of introducing new regulations and mechanisms or re-interpreting existing regulations to ensure against the misuse of life sciences research and protect populations against the potential for deliberately induced epidemics. In some areas such as bio-safety or public health surveillance, these developments mainly involved the strengthening of existing systems and were largely welcomed by the scientific community. However, in other areas such as access to scientific data and information, personnel screening and additional oversight of fundamental scientific research, there were major implications for the practice of science as a whole. Maintaining the universality of science, whilst responding responsibly and visibly to legitimate public concern about the potential mis-use of life sciences research was a major challenge for the international scientific community.

In March 2005, ICSU in partnership with the US National Academy of Sciences and the Inter-Academy Panel on International Issues (IAP), sponsored an International Forum on Biosecurity in Italy. More recently, in September 2006, the same partners joined with the UK Royal Society to sponsor an international workshop in London on Science and Technology Developments and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). The outcome of this was a joint statement to the Review Conference for the convention in November. ICSU had also provided input to the Meeting of Experts on the BTWC in July 2005, which focussed on codes of conduct for scientists. Several of the life science Unions participated in these various meetings during which a major aim of ICSU has been to promote dialogue and understanding of dual use issues in the international scientific community.

Committee members considered that there were two major roles for ICSU Member organisations, and in particular the life science Unions, to play in this area:

1. To provide scientific input to inform and strengthen the BTWC. It was noted that IUPAC had played an active role organising workshops to inform the Chemical Weapons Convention and although the BTWC did not have the same formal reporting system, the joint statement to the Review Conference called for more structured scientific input. Several CFRS members considered that State-funded activities and laboratories, which should be governed by the BTWC, presented the greatest threat in terms of developing biological weapons.
2. To raise awareness and promote self-regulation of the scientific community. If implemented, strict legal controls could seriously inhibit the practice and benefits of research internationally. It was crucial that research community across the world became increasingly involved in the debate on dual use issues, as well as taking active measures to limit potential risks, e.g. in relation to biosafety. Openness and exchange of best practices should be an important part of promoting responsibility.

Decision:

To express strong support for the joint statement that arose from the ICSU-IAP-RS workshop; and, to request the Secretariat to write to the life science unions inviting them to take responsibility for working with the BTWC and raising awareness of dual use issues within their international scientific communities.

10. World Conference on Research Integrity (September 2007)

ICSU was planning to join with the European Science Foundation (ESF) and the US Office of Research Integrity to sponsor a World Conference on Research Integrity in September 2007. The planning group for this event held its second meeting on 23rd November, 2006, and an oral report on developments was made to committee members. Research integrity was clearly at the heart of CFRS' extended remit that included responsibilities as well as freedom and it was emphasised that the committee's input to the conference could be very valuable.

Members stressed the potential importance of this Conference for the developing as well as the developed world. It would be important to learn from past experiences and include perspectives from social sciences. The issues needed to be positioned at the outset in the broader context of science and society. With regards to the processes of science, peer-review was a critical quality assurance/control mechanism. At the institutional level, it would be important to explore the issue of whistle-blowing and how to protect scientists who suspect or witness fraud.

Decision:

To propose several CFRS members (JV, OT, PS, SR) to participate in the Conference.

11. ICSU conference, Global Scientific Challenges: perspectives from young scientists (April, 2007)

As part of its 75th anniversary celebrations, ICSU was organising a conference for young scientists, which was scheduled to take place in Lindau (Germany) on 4-6 April, 2007. The themes for this event were drawn from the ICSU Strategic Plan and the strategic review on Science and Society: Rights and Responsibilities (ICSU, 2005) and a session was planned on Scientific Freedom and Responsibilities. The agenda was being developed by a planning group of young scientists, which was meeting again on 21-22 November. CFRS was asked to provide advice to the planning group.

Members expressed their enthusiasm for this initiative and stressed the importance of focussing on concrete examples and real experiences

Decision:

To ask the Chairman, BG, to represent CFRS at the Conference

12. Future issues and work plan (re. item 6)

With reference to the issues identified previously under item 6, the committee was asked to 'brainstorm' topics and potential actions and develop a core workplan for its activities over the next 18mths. A proportion of the committee's future work would inevitably be in response to specific requests from Members or other issues that could not currently be predicted and thus some operational flexibility was necessary. However, it was also likely that a number of issues (either *de novo* or related to previous agenda items) could be identified already and prioritised for future attention. In defining issues, members were reminded to consider the criteria that had been discussed under item 5 (annex 1). Once agreed by members, the CFRS workplan would go to the Executive Board for approval.

12.1 Academic Freedom and Responsibility in African Universities

It was suggested that in several African countries, Universities were under threat because of state interference and the erosion of academic freedom. The definition of what constitutes a reasonable academic environment and the balance between freedom, order and responsibilities in such institutions had been lost. It was proposed that CFRS could perhaps work with other partners, such as the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge, to facilitate a discourse on these issues

Decision

To re-consider this as a potential topic for a regional workshop, when CFRS convenes a meeting in Africa at some future date.

12.2 Public meetings

Several possibilities were discussed for ensuring transparency and outreach for CFRS meetings – many of the issues under discussion were likely to be of interest to a broad audience. However, it was noted that public meetings *per se* were difficult to envisage for a global organisation such as ICSU. Meetings in Paris could only reasonably be expected to

attract a French audience. An alternative approach would be to organise special public sessions on specific topics. These could be held alongside the CFRS business meetings and could be pertinent to a particular target audience, e.g. high school science pupils, and a particular host country.

Video or sound recording of CFRS sessions and broadcasting over the web were also considered to be potentially mechanisms for reaching an international audience.

Decision

To agree that targeted public sessions should be incorporated into future meetings, where appropriate; and to request the Secretariat to explore the feasibility of sound-recording the next meeting as a pilot experiment.

12.3 Openness of data and information

It was noted that both ICSU's vision statement and Statute 5 make specific reference to universal and equitable access to scientific data and information. This has major implications for both the rights and responsibilities of scientists and was thus an area of keen interest for CFRS.

CS informed members that ICSU was about to establish an *ad hoc* Strategic Committee on Information and Data (SCID) that was charged with overseeing the development of existing ICSU activities in this area. These include the Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA), which had recently launched a new initiative to promote open access to scientific data and information globally.

Decision

To request the Secretariat to provide information to members on the CODATA – Global Information Commons for Science Initiative and to keep CFRS abreast of other ICSU activities relating to access to data and Information.

12.4 Freedom of exchange and brain drain

Committee members noted that there is a potential contradiction in the Principle of the Universality of Science in that it promotes the free and unhindered flow of scientists and also equity in science. Yet one of the major obstacles to building scientific capacity in developing countries is 'brain drain', i.e. a net out-flow of scientists from poor to rich countries. Special visa dispensations for scientists encouraged this process, although incentives to encourage scientists to return to their country of origin could also be developed.

International cooperation was one mechanism for helping to correct some of the inequities of the current international science marketplace but the economics of this required further investigation.

Decision

MW to develop a preliminary scoping document on this issue for discussion at the next CFRS meeting.

12.5 The past, present and future landscape for Universality

It was noted that SCFCS had produced a briefing document, *Universality of Science in a Changing World*, which included an analysis of the new challenges to Universality largely as a result of security concerns. However, there were other issues such as the use of Information and Communication Technologies and the increasing ‘commoditisation’ of science that also had very significant implications for the application of the Principle of Universality. In the first instance, a systematic foresight study might help to shed light on these issues. An important ongoing role for CFRS was to monitor the challenges to Universality on behalf of the ICSU Membership and promote debate and discussion on relevant issues. In order to achieve this it would be important to develop good communication mechanisms with Members.

Decision

BG to explore with the Swedish Institute of Future Studies, the feasibility of a foresight study on the likely future challenges to the Principle of Universality; and, for the Secretariat to request information from ICSU Members on trends that they observe so that these can be analysed by CFRS for presentation at the General Assembly in 2008.

12.6 Whistle blowing and the private sector, e.g. the pharmaceutical industry

An important issue, with regards to research integrity, was how to develop an environment in which individuals were willing to come forward and speak out about misdemeanours, without fear of compromising their own future careers. There had been a number of highly publicised recent cases, both in academia and industry, where whistle-blowers had been ostracised for their honest actions and there was an important role for professional bodies, including ICSU Members, in developing mechanisms to prevent this. It was noted that whistle-blowing would be discussed at the World Conference on Research Integrity (item 10).

The interface between science in academia and the private sector was another area that had recently attracted considerable attention in the media and raised important issues about the rights and responsibilities of scientists. The pharmaceutical industry was the focus of particular concerns, ranging from the 90:10 gap through to the conduct and publication of clinical trial results. It was noted that many science organisations, including some ICSU Members, were exploring these issues and developing new regulations and guidelines and it would be important to have some analysis of these activities before deciding on any potential role for CFRS. It was also recognised that frank and productive discussions with industry, would depend on attracting the right people and, in this regard, a small focused workshop might be the best way to proceed. The Pugwash organisation was experienced in organising such events and might be a potential future partner.

Decision

To revisit the issue of ‘whistle-blowers’ after the World Conference on Research Integrity; RA to develop a brief scoping paper on science in academia and the pharmaceutical industry for discussion at the next CFRS meeting; and, CS to explore with Pugwash, the potential for a joint exploratory workshop on a specific topic related to academia-industry interactions.

13. Communication and outreach plan

The expectation was that CFRS would be much more visible than its predecessor SCFCS and play an active role in publicising and communicating issues both within and beyond the ICSU community. This was reflected in the Terms of Reference for the committee, and in particular ToR 6 and 7:

6. To establish dialogue and shared understanding with the international scientific community beyond the immediate ICSU family, including the private and government sectors;
7. To prepare and disseminate information and educational materials that raise awareness of the Principle of Universality, for scientists, policy makers and the broader public;

SCFCS had two long-established communication tools, the ‘blue book’ and a statement on Freedom in the Conduct of Science, which were distributed mainly to ICSU Members. More recently, the ICSU web-site (and associated quarterly newsletter) have been used to disseminate information relating to the Principle of Universality and, various letters, press releases and journal articles had also been written (annex 1).

The ‘blue book’ and a ‘History of SCFCS’

The ‘blue book’ was an important reference document for the ICSU community but the current version was out-dated and did not reflect the new challenges to the Principle of Universality nor the broader remit of CFRS versus SCFCS. The committee was asked to give careful consideration to how this might be revised - both content and process.

Committee members agreed that a future version of the ‘blue book’ should be of interest not only to ICSU Members but also to the broader community of those with an interest in science. It should be both a publicity document and a practical handbook. Much of the current content, particularly that which becomes rapidly out-dated, could be made available via the web. It was also important that the full remit of CFRS be reflected in the blue book and new content on responsibilities would have to be developed.

In addition to the ‘blue book’ and with reference to the previous discussion under item 4, members considered that it could be extremely useful to have a brief history of SCFCS (20-30 pp). The aim would be to highlight different issues, how they were addressed and what the outcomes were. This should be a useable and inspiring document that would complement the blue book. It was noted that the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science had expressed a keen interest in working with CFRS and this might be a good project on which to solicit their expertise.

The web

The ICSU web-site was designed as a corporate communication tool that provides information for ICSU members and other interested parties. There was a dedicated section on the Universality of Science, which included information such as guidelines for the organization of international meetings. It was noted that one of the advantages of the web was its flexibility, meaning that information could be rapidly up-dated and/or made available. Committee members identified the potential of the web as an interactive forum for, 2-way communication with the ICSU Membership. It was an important tool which should be developed further, within the limitation of existing resources.

Meetings and outreach

Under item 5, a number of communication and outreach mechanisms were introduced (annex 1) and it was noted that the deployment of these would often depend on the specific issue being addressed. One particular issue that the committee was asked to consider was how its own regular meetings could themselves be used to increase outreach.

Given the Global remit of ICSU, committee members strongly supported the idea that their meetings should rotate around the world. This would, in itself, convey an important message and would allow the committee to interact with the scientific community (and public, re item 12.2) in different countries and address regionally important issues.

Partners

A number of potential partners for ICSU activities in relation to the Principle of Universality had been identified in the Strategic Review – Science and Society: Rights and Responsibilities (ICSU, 2005). CFRS had now developed an ambitious preliminary agenda for its future work, during which some partners, such as Pugwash, had been identified for specific topics.

Committee members emphasised the importance of the ICSU Member organisations – National Members, International Unions, and the Interdisciplinary Bodies – for developing and implementing all of CFRS' activities. Stimulating and maintaining the active engagement of the ICSU membership was recognised to be a major challenge for the committee. The initial letter to members (see items 3,8,9 and 12.5) was very important. The meeting of the Scientific Unions in April 2007 presented a good opportunity to solicit their inputs.

UNESCO was also recognised as potentially being a partner for CFRS in some areas. It was important that the committee be fully informed on UNESCO's activities in relation to the ethics of science to avoid duplication and help identify areas of common interest.

Decisions:

To request the Secretariat to develop a proposal for a revised version of the 'Blue Book'; all CFRS members to provide feedback on the current information on the ICSU website, re Universality, and suggestions for improvement for discussion at the next CFRS meeting; to request the Secretariat and PS to explore with IUHPS the possibility of producing a Brief History of SCFCS; to ask the Executive Board to consider including a session on Universality at the Unions meeting (23-24 April, 2007, Rome); to agree that one CFRS meeting per year should be held outside of Paris and that the ICSU Regional Offices should be invited to host these meetings; and, to invite Henk ten Have, the Director of the Ethics Division at UNESCO, to give a presentation at the next meeting of CFRS.

14. Review of the meeting

As this was the first meeting of the Committee, members were asked to provide feedback to the Chair and Secretariat on logistical and organisational aspects.

Committee members were satisfied with the meeting and the information provided. It was suggested by the Chair that, for those members who arrive the day before the meeting, it

might be useful to organise a joint dinner that evening. This would enable preliminary discussion of issues that were on the formal meeting agenda.

15. Date and location of next meetings

Budgetary provision had been made for 2 meetings of the Committee in 2007.

Decision

To agree on the following dates and locations for CFRS meetings:

March 5-6, 2007, in Paris;

October 15-16, 2007, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (depending on discussions with the ICSU Regional Office for Asia; and

it was also agreed that CFRS would meet in conjunction with the ICSU General Assembly, ie on 18-19 October, 2008 in Maputo, Mozambique.

16. Any Other Business

Palestine (see also item 7)

Professor Nabeel Kassis, President, Birzeit University had addressed a letter to the President of ICSU drawing attention to a problem that Palestinian universities are facing along with other institutions and sectors within the Palestinian society. Specifically, this referred to the denial of entry, re-entry and continuous residence to foreign passport-holding Palestinians and non-Palestinian family members. Mention was made of at least five cases of academics and university staff being denied entry to the West Bank, as recently as July 2006.

RA informed members that the Council of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities had released a statement on October 31, calling on “the Government of the State of Israel to refrain from instituting any policy that hinders any group of scientists, whether Palestinian or otherwise, from properly discharging their academic responsibilities.” The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies had also issued a statement on November 6, which endorsed that issued by the Israel Academy. Copies of both of these statements were tabled for information.

CFRS members noted that the letter and statements covered several related but distinct issues and individual cases. More information on the 5 cases referred to in the letter from Professor Kassis would be required to inform any appropriate response from ICSU.

Decision

To request PS and CC to do some background work on the specific issues and cases referred to in the letter from Professor Kassis and advise the Chair of any potential actions for CFRS; and,

to delegate responsibility to the CFRS Chair to advise the ICSU Executive should any urgent action need to be considered before the next CFRS meeting

Annexes

Annex 1: Criteria for deciding on whether an issue should be taken up by CFRS and potential actions.

Annex1

Criteria for deciding on whether an issue should be taken up by CFRS and potential actions to be implemented

As endorsed at the 1st Meeting of CFRS on 6-7 November, 2006

N.B. CFRS is a policy committee that advises the ICSU Executive Board

1. Criteria for deciding on whether an issue should be taken up by CFRS

All requests for assistance from Members, concerning the Principle of Universality, should automatically be considered by CFRS.

Other issues may be referred from the ICSU Executive Board.

CFRS should also determine its own longer-term 'core' workplan for approval by the Executive Board (and perhaps consideration by all ICSU Members)

Criteria

Issues to be pursued by CFRS should be:

1. International, or with major international implications;
2. of significance for many of the ICSU Members;
3. not adequately dealt with elsewhere; and

normally have a significant prospect for change.

2. Potential actions that CFRS/ICSU can take

Individual cases e.g. Visas or human right violations

SCFCS has a well-tested mechanism for dealing with individual cases that involves a step-wise mechanism of increasingly severe interventions:

Step 1 Discreet pressure and negotiations, often involving ICSU National Member(s)

Step 2 Public exposure via statements

Step 3 Call for targeted scientific embargo

Most cases are resolved at step 1 and it is very rare that step 3 is necessary or recommendable.

Punctual Issues, e.g. threats of academic boycotts

- Work with National Members to respond at National level
- Produce public statements – press releases, letters in scientific press

Longer-term issues

- Prepare policy documents/briefings addressing specific issues
- Publish editorials in scientific press
- Prepare input to relevant scientific and/or policy fora

Other mechanisms to publicise the Principle of Universality and Freedom and Responsibility of scientists

- Compile and publish empirical data
- Issue-based international workshops, e.g. whistle-blowing
- Rotate CFRS meetings and have ‘public’ sessions
- Revise the ‘blue book’
- Web presence, e.g. archive of reference material, meeting minutes etc.
- Individual members of CFRS to represent the committee and or reference it in appropriate fora