16th Meeting of the ICSU Committee on Scientific Planning and Review (CSPR)

25 October, 2008

Meeting room
Southern Sun Hotel
Maputo
Mozambique

Decisions

Present: B. Abegaz, R. Balstad, C. Cesarsky, M. Clegg, H. Gupta, M. Hoshi, C. Leaver, K. Mokhele (Chair), K. Raivio (ex officio), R. Ramasamy, T. Rosswall (ex officio), M. Tchuente (ex officio), H. Vessuri, A. Whyte

Secretariat: P. Cutler, L. Goldfarb, P. Ocampo-Thomason, C. Smith

By Invitation: A. Abreu, M. N. Hasan, S. Muhongo, G. Ogunmola, A. Varma

Apologies: J. A. De la Peña, L. Mytelka, P. Ritchie, H. J. Schellnhuber

1. Opening of the Meeting

The Chair opened the meeting, noting the presence of Chairs of the Regional Committees from Africa and Asia & Pacific and Directors of the Regional Offices. The Chair congratulated K. Raivio on becoming the ICSU Vice President for Scientific Planning and Review. K. Mokhele chairs CSPR for the final time at its 5-7 February 2009 meeting and will present his final report on the CSPR at the meeting of the Executive Board (EB) in April 2009. The term of the current CSPR ends on 30 June 2009.

The value of CSPR members attending the General Assembly (GA) was noted, and the Chair proposed that this attendance should become standard practice. The Chair observed that CSPR played a strong role in ensuring the success of the GA through its work over the previous three years during implementation of the first half of ICSU’s Strategic Plan 2006-2011.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Committee was invited to adopt the agenda. It was suggested that CSPR take Item 4 prior to Item 7.

Decision
To adopt the agenda, with Item 4 to be taken immediately prior to Item 7.
3. Assessment of the General Assembly and Identification of Immediate and/or New Priorities

This was a general brainstorming session. From their participation in the GA, CSPR members and guests were invited to reflect on the GA discussion to guide CSPR’s work in the last three years of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2006-2011. Any issues that required particular attention from CSPR over the next three years were to be identified.

With respect to the GA itself, and in particular how to improve the GA as an important organ of governance of ICSU, CSPR discussed:

- the need for greater participation by younger scientists;
- the merits of including more science in the GA (such as through science talks) and options for streamlining the agenda to free up more time for new content;
- the extent to which GA participants experienced African science;
- the need for a summary of the Science in Africa day in the GA plenary session;
- better communication of (i) the purpose of fora connected with the GA and (ii) the relationship between satellite events and the main GA plenary sessions;
- the merits of including a meeting of regional National Members as part of the GA;
- better integration of Interdisciplinary Bodies into the meeting;
- the wide range in preparedness of GA delegates with respect to background documentation;
- the need for clarification on the role of Regional Offices in planning and implementing the GA;
- the need for a clear understanding of what contributions a GA potentially “leaves behind” in the host country; and
- the merits of seeking feedback from delegates after the GA.

Topics also raised in the discussion included:

- the merits of a forum for players in the global environmental change (GEC) assessment field to identify areas of need;
- the need for careful deliberation on the rationalization of GEC research-related activities sponsored by ICSU—including those of Interdisciplinary Bodies;
- the merits of ICSU being able to respond to needs on timescales shorter than the six-year planning cycle; and
- ICSU’s impact, particularly at high levels within national structures.

With respect to the functioning of CSPR, the Committee explored the idea of including Regional Committee Chairs and/or Regional Office Directors in CSPR meetings when appropriate.

In closing remarks, the Chair commented on the importance of resolutions adopted by the ICSU GA. The meeting was informed that the few resolutions adopted by the GA provide firm instructions, which the EB and the Secretariat must carry out. It has also become customary for the EB to be requested to report to the next GA on the progress regarding the implementation of the adopted resolution. In this regard, the Chair noted the impact of the Resolution on Social Science involvement in ICSU from the 28th GA and the inclusion on the agenda of the present GA of the report on the progress in the implementation thereof. He consequently expressed his optimism that Resolution 1 on science in Mozambique that was adopted by the present GA would lead to tangible outcomes that will impact positively on Mozambique.
Decision
To ask the Vice President for Scientific Planning and Review to communicate issues regarding the General Assembly to the Executive Board.

4. ICSU Global-regional Coordination and Integration

The establishment of Regional Offices as a core aspect of ICSU’s first Strategic Plan had changed the way ICSU plans and coordinates research. As intended, the Regional Offices had set regional priorities that paralleled the ICSU global priorities. They had developed and were, in general, implementing Science Plans for these priorities.

The meeting reflected on the lessons of strategically integrating and coordinating regional and global priorities and discussed strategies for global-regional operation in the future.

A central issue was substantive integration of regional programmes into the global programmes and the need to ensure that the Regional Offices remained on a trajectory that keeps them firmly embedded within the ICSU Strategic Plan. Integration of regional priorities into ICSU’s global planning matrix would be essential in this regard. The existence of the ICSU Regional Offices creates a unique opportunity for input from the Regional Offices and Regional Committees in the development of the second Strategic Plan.

In 2009, CSPR would be commissioning a review of ICSU’s role in advancing science and technology in developing countries. Consideration of global-regional coordination and integration would be important in this context. CSPR, at its February 2009 meeting, would need to agree on the Terms of Reference and process for this review and contribute to the nominations for the Review Panel.

5. Global Environmental Change Programmes: CSPR’s Next Steps

Following on the GA decisions on global environmental change (GEC):

“11.1 To note the progress in reviewing the global environmental change programmes; 11.2 to note that CSPR is planning to organize a consultation, including a high-level meeting, with relevant partners to outline options for an overall framework for global environmental change research and its policy relevance, once the reviews of IGBP and WCRP are completed; 11.3 in light of this consultation, to delegate to the Executive Board the decision on whether to recognize the ESSP as an Interdisciplinary Body; and 11.4 to request the EB to ensure strengthened involvement of scientists from developing countries in the global environmental change programmes sponsored by ICSU,”

the CSPR agreed that a process, rather than a one-off meeting, was needed to arrive at an overall GEC research strategy. There was a clear need to act quickly on the recommendations of the reviews, in concert with the relevant sponsors, the International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA), and the programmes/partnership. CSPR and the relevant GEC co-sponsors should immediately begin work to organize a consultative process centred on a visioning meeting. Consultation with the programmes/partnership on the participants and agenda would be essential. This visioning process would 1) explore options for a GEC research strategy and 2) propose a way forward.

The following draft timeline for the GEC Visioning process was discussed:
• October 08 – April 09: Consulting with sponsors and programmes/partnership; inviting key participants to a Visioning Meeting; drafting a white paper on potential options
• May – June: Visioning Meeting [1.5 days]
• June - September: Sponsors and funders meeting
• Late September: CSPR to consider the meeting outcomes and develop a draft proposal on ICSU’s next steps; CSPR sends the draft proposal to the ICSU Family and other key stakeholders for consultation
• April 2010: Proposal by CSPR to the Executive Board.

To ensure that ICSU can respond quickly to events, it was agreed that a small task team would advise the Secretariat on planning and implementation.

Decisions:
To note the emerging recommendations from the IGBP and WCRP reviews and the related decisions at the 29th General Assembly;
to launch a process to explore options and implementation steps for a GEC research strategy; and
to establish a small task team consisting of K. Mokhele, K. Raivio, H. J. Schellnhuber, and A. Whyte to oversee this process.

6. Key Messages from the GA for Planning the Next Strategic Plan

CSPR members and guests distilled the key messages from the GA that will need to be considered in the process for developing the next Strategic Plan 2012-2017.

The Committee noted that most GA participants seemed comfortable with the starting points (e.g., ICSU Mission and Vision) and that less “new” information will be needed this time (in terms of the conducting in-depth Priority Area Assessments, for example). The planning process should have more buy-in from Members this time and will need to include a more extensive consultation with ICSU partners.

The potential elements of a process for planning the next Strategic Plan had already been expressed in a GA presentation by K. Mokhele. All ICSU Members were to be asked to contribute input prior to the current CSPR’s February 2009 meeting. The outcome of deliberations at this meeting would be passed on to the new CSPR, which would come into existence in July 2009 and will be responsible for the process of developing the second ICSU Strategic Plan. A transition document would be needed for the new CSPR that captures the thinking of the current CSPR after its February 2009 meeting with respect to Strategic Planning.

Participants discussed key elements of the next Strategic Plan. It was suggested that the next review of ICSU itself would take place within the window from 2011 to 2014. The last review was in 1996.

Following a brief discussion on the International Science Panel on Renewable Energy (ISPRE) and ICSU’s potential role in energy issues in general, it was decided that ISPRE would be discussed in detail at the February 2009 meeting of CSPR.

Decision
To ask the Secretariat to distribute a letter to all ICSU Members asking each to submit by the end of January 2009 their three most important issues to be addressed in the next Strategic Plan; to summarize these submissions as part of a handover document on strategic planning that will be prepared as follow-up to the February 2009 final meeting of the current CSPR; and to discuss ISPRE in detail at the February 2009 meeting of CSPR.
7. **Reviews of ICSU Regional Offices**

The African Regional Office was inaugurated in 2005, Asia and Pacific in 2006, and Latin America and the Caribbean in 2007. Each of the ICSU Regional Office-Host Institution Agreements had called for a joint review by ICSU and the host institution on the performance of the Regional Office.

For the ICSU Regional Office for Africa, the agreement was for ten years from 1 April 2005, with a mid-term review to be conducted by ICSU and the NRF “at the end of a five (5) year period from the agreement Commencement Date.” NRF would need to know the outcome of this review by October 2009 in order to form a view on the second five-year period and plan for its 2010 budget.

For the ICSU Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, the three-year agreement with the Brazilian Academy of Sciences was renewable in March 2010. CSPR was informed that this date had been extended to October 2010.

For the ICSU Regional Office of Asia and Pacific, the five-year agreement with the Academy of Sciences Malaysia is renewable in September 2011.

The timetable and process for these reviews were considered, including the need for setting a common approach for all reviews. All these reviews would be carried out in 2009-2011 and would, inter alia, focus on the functioning (performance) of the Office and the extent to which the Office had mobilized scientists in the region. A small evaluation team for each review (~three people) was considered appropriate. Discussions were already underway with NRF, and another meeting between the Executive Director and the Acting President of NRF was planned for November 2008.

It would be important to conclude all three reviews before the completion of CSPR’s review of ICSU’s role in advancing science and technology in developing countries.

**Decision**

To develop draft Terms of Reference for the review of ICSU Regional Offices and distribute these to Regional Committees for comment prior to CSPR’s February 2009 meeting.

8. **Updating the Matrix/Workplan 2009-2011.**

The preceding discussions necessitated an update of the ICSU planning matrix.

**Decision**

To ask the Secretariat to prepare an updated version of the planning matrix for consideration by CSPR at its 5-7 February 2009 meeting.

Khotso Mokhele
Chair, CSPR

Thomas Rosswall
Executive Director