18th Meeting of the ICSU Committee on Scientific Planning and Review (CSPR)

14-15 September, 2009
5 rue Auguste Vacquerie
75116 Paris, France

Meeting Report

Present: I. Alcantara-Ayala, J. Asenjo, R. Balstad, L. Brito, D. Chen (ex officio), C. de la Rey, H. Gupta, C. Leaver, Yuan Tseh Lee (ex officio), Y. Lu, K. Raivio (Chair), J. Rockström, B. Salem, M. Tchuente (ex officio), H. Vessuri, A. Whyte.


By Invitation: M. Keenan (Item 7), I. Nath (Item 12), P. Ritchie (Item 16).

Apologies: C. Cesarsky, N. Nakicenovic.

1. Opening of the Meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair. ICSU welcomed eight new members to CSPR: I. Alcantara-Ayala, J. Asenjo, B. Salem, L. Brito, C. de la Rey, Y. Lu, N. Nakicenovic, and J. Rockström. The terms of all members would run from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2012.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

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<th>Decision</th>
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<td>To adopt the agenda, with the modification of switching the timing of Item 15 and Item 8.</td>
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3. Orientation

New members of CSPR\(^1\) were provided with an introduction and background on ICSU, including its purpose and history, its current structure, the role and functioning of CSPR, and key challenges for the future.

A wide-ranging discussion ensued, covering such topics as the impact of the Strategic Plan 2006-2011 on ICSU Members, the remaining work under this current Plan and related challenges, the profile of ICSU and its impact on policy, the complementarity of disciplinary and interdisciplinary research among ICSU Members, and the challenges facing CSPR and ICSU in general.

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\(^1\) Annex 1 contains a list of acronyms used in this document.
4. **Decisions of the 17th CSPR Meeting and 100th Executive Board Meeting**  
(not treated elsewhere)

The draft decisions of the 17th CSPR meeting (CSPR17) had been circulated and a few corrections incorporated. The agreed decisions had been posted on the ICSU website, as had those of the 100th Executive Board (EB100), which met in May 2009.

4.1 General Assembly Resolutions

*(See CSPR17 Item 3, EB100 Item 5)* In relation to Resolution 1 from the General Assembly, it was noted that the new Mozambican Academy of Sciences was a good focal point for further inquiries. The Executive Board had agreed with CSPR’s recommendations on Resolutions 2, concerning data and information, and had acted accordingly.

4.2 Programme on Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR)

*(CSPR17 Item 4 and EB100 Item 17)* EB100 had endorsed CSPR recommendations (made electronically after CSPR17) concerning three final members of the Scientific Committee (SC) for IRDR. The SC had subsequently held its first meeting on 12-13 May 2009 in Bergen, Norway, on the occasion of the first World Social Science Forum. At this meeting, it had been confirmed that the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) would join ICSU and the ISSC as co-sponsors of IRDR. The SC would hold its second meeting in Paris on 21-23 October 2009. EB100 had also decided to instruct the Secretariat to organize site visits to two potential host institutions for the International Programme Office (IPO) for IRDR, following offers from national members China: CAST and China: the Academy of Sciences located in Taipei. These visits had been carried out on 3-5 August 2009 in Beijing, and 5-7 August 2009 in Taipei. The Report on the site visits, and recommendations on the location of the IRDR IPO, would be examined by the Executive Board at its 101st meeting.

4.3 Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (PECS)

*(CSPR17 Item 8 and EB100 Item 16)* On the advice of CSPR, the EB had considered additional nominations and agreed to a revised slate for the Scientific Committee. In addition, the EB had agreed to change the name of this programme from Ecosystem Change and Human Wellbeing (ECHW) to PECS.

4.4 International Science Panel on Renewable Energies (ISPRE)

*(CSPR17 Item 9 and EB100 Item 9)* The EB had agreed with CSPR’s recommendation to terminate ISPRE. The EB had also charged CSPR with considering a potential future role for ICSU in relation to energy as part of the development of the next Strategic Plan. In this context, CSPR noted that many organizations are working on aspects of energy. The question was whether ICSU could add value to these activities. N. Nakicenovic directs the Global Energy Assessment and was willing to contribute to a discussion on this topic at the next CSPR meeting. In addition, the three ICSU Regional Offices were planning to complete their science plans on regional sustainable energy by the time of the next CSPR meeting and this regional perspective was important.
4.5 International Polar Year (IPY)

(CSPR17 Item 18.1 and EB100 Item 13) The EB had extended the terms of the ICSU-World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Joint Committee for IPY until June 2010 when a major IPY results conference would be held in Oslo, Norway. In July, one of the co-chairs of the Joint Committee—I. Allison—had resigned his position. ICSU and WMO had sent a joint letter of regret and appreciation, and thanked him for his service and willingness to remain a regular member of the committee during the important remaining months of its existence. The EB had approved the nomination of Joint Committee member J. Lopez-Martinez as co-chair for the remainder of the term.

Though the observance period of IPY ended in March 2009, many key activities were continuing apace to ensure its legacy. For example, the Secretariat had been involved in assuring the extension of the IPY International Programme Office in Cambridge, UK until mid-2010. Funding was now secure or in process from a number of sources and the crucial role of this office would continue as planned. In addition, IPY had achieved attention at the highest political levels, culminating in statements by the Arctic Council and the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in April 2009 on ensuring the IPY legacy. To build on gains made during IPY, ICSU was developing a statement and article on the importance of Universality in the polar regions. In addition, ICSU was involved with the planning of the Oslo 2010 conference and would capture lessons learned during planning and implementation of IPY during 2010. A full report on IPY would be provided at CSPR’s next meeting.

4.6 Data and Information Committees

(CSPR17 Item 7, EB100 Item 16) The membership and Terms of Reference of the World Data System Scientific Committee (WDS-SC) and the Ad Hoc Strategic Coordination Committee on Information and Data (SCCID) had been approved by the Executive Board as recommended by CSPR. The first meetings were scheduled for 13-14 October 2009 (WDS-SC) and 15-16 October 2009 (SCCID).

A World Data System Transition Team had been established to facilitate action during the transition period before the first meeting of the WDS-SC. This group had met on 9-11 March 2009 and was composed of members of the former World Date Centre panel and the council of the Federation of Astronomical and Geophysical Data Analysis Services. The transition team was finalizing a White Paper of Recommendations to the WDS Scientific Committee and had launched a web survey (http://wds.geolinks.org/) that solicits expressions of interest to participate in the new World Data System.

4.7 ICSU Vice President for External Relations

(EB100 Item 4) The EB had decided that the Vice President for External Relations should attend CSPR meetings in a non-voting capacity. In the present instance, this was not feasible and R. Kuroda sent regrets. The EB was now represented on CSPR by the President-elect, both Vice Presidents, and the Secretary-General, thus the CSPR-EB connection was now strong. It was noted that the role within ICSU of the Vice President for External Relations would be examined at the upcoming Executive Board meeting.

**Decisions**

To note that the decisions of the 17th meeting of CSPR have been posted on the ICSU website; to note the decisions of the Executive Board at its 100th meeting; and to include a discussion of ICSU’s potential role in energy at the next CSPR meeting and to invite N. Nakicenovic to contribute to this discussion.
5. **Update on implementation of the first ICSU Strategic Plan 2006-2011**

The Executive Director briefed CSPR on the implementation of the **ICSU Strategic Plan 2006-2011**. The ensuing discussion covered ICSU staff resources and the role of secondments, using ICSU’s convening power especially in the science policy arena, international science reaching national policymakers through national science advisors and other channels, capacity to help scientists and scientific bodies reach policymakers in their national context, the role of policy to help science (as well as science informing policy), the need for global approaches to solve global challenges, and ICSU visibility and engagement in the Arab Region.

**Decision**

To note report on progress in implementation of the ICSU Strategic Plan 2006-2011.

6. **Developing the Next ICSU Strategic Plan, 2012-2017**

Following a strategic brainstorming session at the 15th CSPR meeting in April 2008, a briefing paper had been prepared and presented to the 29th General Assembly. On the basis of this paper, ICSU Members had been invited to submit, in writing, their initial views on strategic priorities for consideration by CSPR at its 17th meeting in February. Eighteen Members and Interdisciplinary Bodies had responded. In considering these inputs, CSPR had extracted a number of key messages, which emphasised the need to:

- develop a clear understanding and expectations of ICSU as an organization
- examine structure-function relationships within ICSU
- take a holistic view of how the broad system of science will evolve and ICSU’s role therein
- engage and stimulate members, including Associates
- consider ICSU’s role as a spokesperson for all of science
- consider how ICSU explores new horizons
- consider how ICSU engages in capacity building
- adopt a strategic approach to fundraising.

As at the General Assembly, there had been an overall consensus in the written submissions that many of the existing priorities should continue into the future and the next strategic plan should therefore be an evolution of the current plan.

In preparation for the current strategic plan, a number of specific priority area assessment exercises and strategic reviews had been conducted and many of the recommendations in these documents remained pertinent. Comparing 2006 and 2011, several new science programmes – hazards, ecosystem change, urban health – would complement the previous programmes. In addition, a number of activities were now being initiated by CSPR with the specific aim of informing future strategy in key areas, including earth system science, science education, and the regional offices. A foresight exercise (see next item) was also planned, and other areas to be covered included ICSU’s role in energy and in observing systems. The strategic plans of the Regional Offices were also now available.

Piecing together these various solicited and commissioned inputs into a coherent strategic plan for 2012-2017 would be a major preoccupation of CSPR over the next two years. Structured and possibly iterative inputs would need to be sought from ICSU members and stakeholders, including
policymakers and funders. The plan would have to be ready by April 2011 for approval by the 30th General Assembly in October 2011. Consequently, the process would need to be efficient.

CSPR discussed ICSU’s present roles in science for society and promoting excellence in science and its potential role as an ambassador of transformation in science. Challenges for ICSU to address in the new plan included raising its visibility and the general understanding of its role, increasing its responsiveness, refinement of its approach to Regional Offices and regions without such offices, exploring the ways in which it can assist its membership, what it can visibly lead on in addition to its strategic partnerships, clear definition of the roles and goals in these strategic partnerships, and ICSU’s next steps with respect to social science and trans-disciplinary science.

In addition, CSPR discussed the general approach to developing the new plan and the merits of different options for the end-product (a 10-page supplement that would accompany the existing plan, or a reworking of the current version, which is 65 pages). It was suggested to build on and sharpen the first plan, examining the elements that still are not strong, and recognizing that this is more than an update because of the fast pace of change. A self-standing supplement to the current plan was preferred, with the current plan as an annex. This new document would need to focus on a relatively short list of key actions.

### Decisions

That the Strategic Plan 2012-2017 should be a self-standing supplement to the current plan, with the current plan as an annex; and to request that the Secretariat inform all ICSU Members of the process and the timetable.

### 7. Planning for the ICSU Foresight Analysis

Acting on the CSPR decision from its last meeting that a foresight analysis should be a component of the upcoming strategic planning process, the Secretariat had investigated options for methodology and process. CSPR was briefed on foresight methodologies and on the practical considerations that influence the scope of the new analysis. ICSU had gained experience with foresight analysis when developing its first strategic plan. The resultant outputs from that process retained their relevance for the new Plan and allowed for consideration of different approaches to the new analysis that would complement and add to the rich existing content. The process would be as important as the product, and engagement of the ICSU membership and other ICSU stakeholders would be vital. ICSU Members would be the primary audience, but the product could also raise general awareness of ICSU and its role.

With respect to the scope of the foresight, CSPR discussed making the focal question more appealing, finding an ICSU-specific niche for the Foresight, and the merits of picking 2031 as the focal year. With respect to methodology, CSPR discussed how to convert information in scenarios into action, and whether a normative approach would help in this regard. It was suggested to consider a dynamic vision that could be revisited, perhaps on the same six-yearly cycle as the Strategic Plan.

With respect to implementation, CSPR emphasized broad consultation, perhaps enabled through the web. Members also considered the available resources and timeline, noting that a consultation at the General Assembly would strengthen the process and increase ownership by ICSU Members. The Earth system visioning process (Item 9.1) had given CSPR and the Secretariat a first and positive experience of implementing a complex and fast-moving CSPR-led project. The “Visioning Task Team” for Step 1 consisted of four CSPR members (K. Raivio, K. Mokhele, A. Whyte, J. Schellnhuber) and W. Reid who was chosen to chair the first step of this process. This team had met by teleconference on a monthly basis and had advised the Secretariat on project
implementation during the months between CSPR meetings. Based on the positive experience with this Task Team model, CSPR considered a “Foresight Task Team” to implement the foresight analysis. A team of approximately four CSPR members had worked well in the visioning process, as did the additional contributions from one or two “external” subject matter experts. Michael Keenan of Manchester University, UK had provided advice to the Secretariat during the initial Foresight scoping process and was willing to continue as a contributor to the task team if asked. John Marks (formerly of CSPR) had also indicated willingness to contribute if asked.

| Decision $\quad$ To form a Foresight Task Team composed of K. Raivio, N. Nakicenovic, R. Balstad, L. Brito, M. Keenan, and J. Marks (Chair), with H. Vessuri as backup, to advise the Secretariat on the design and implementation of the Foresight, and that the Foresight process should include a consultation at the 2011 General Assembly. |

8. **Grants Programme**

ICSU had received a number of invalid applications for the 2009 programme, as it had in preceding years. It had also received few applications in general. There were opportunities in at least two areas to increase the participation by ICSU Members and reduce the number of invalid applications: the wording of the guidance documents and the process for announcing the Programme. CSPR discussed these improvements and agreed that the 2010 programme be launched following the meeting.

The reports from 2008 awardees were due on 1 September 2009 and offered a means for CSPR to assess the quality of the work conducted under the auspices of the Programme and calibrate its judgements of proposal quality. CSPR members who were involved in the original proposal assessment made brief presentations on the outcomes and CSPR agreed to feedback on each activity.

| Decisions $\quad$ To note the updates to the application materials; to agree that the priorities for the 2010 programme are the same as in 2009; to announce the 2010 programme; and to provide feedback to grantees on the final reports from the 2008 programme. |

9. **Environmental Programmes**

9.1 **Earth System Visioning Process**

The goal of this process was to engage the scientific community to explore options and propose steps to implement a holistic strategy for Earth system research. This process had been outlined on the ICSU [website](#), and laid out more explicitly in the Earth system visioning process paper. This strategy would both encourage scientific innovation and address policy needs.

In October 2008 the ICSU General Assembly (GA) had agreed on a set of decisions related to this process. The key decision was “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.”

CSPR had developed a three-step process. Briefly,
- **Step 1** focuses on scientific visioning: what are the high-priority Earth system research questions?
- **Step 2** examines the institutional framework: what institutional structure is needed to support the Earth system research strategy identified in Step 1?
- **Step 3** explores transitioning from existing structures to new ones.

As part of step one, a [web consultation](#) had asked users to respond to “What is the most important research question in Earth system research that needs answering in the next decade?” The consultation had been active from 15 July until 1 September 2009 and had attracted over 1000 registered users. As far as could be determined, this was the first time such an international consultation on scientific research questions had occurred and a large amount of information had been collected.

This information was to go forward to a small meeting (~50 people) at the end of September entitled “Visioning Earth system research.” The participants were to be charged with agreeing on a draft set of research questions, which if answered, will ultimately benefit society and form the basis of an Earth system research strategy.

The overall balance of meeting participants was to be: meeting chair (W. Reid), a representative of each of the global environmental change programmes\(^2\) plus ESSP (5 people), representatives from the reviews (4), funders (4), experienced global environmental change scientists (5), science policy experts (4), early career Earth system scientists (16), the ICSU task team (5—see below for more info on the task team), and representatives from ICSU and ISSC. The early career scientists were to convene one day prior to the main meeting. The results (i.e., a draft Earth system research strategy) from the main meeting would be made public on the consultation website. Comments from the wider community on the draft strategy would be fed into Step 2.

Step 2 is the “high-level” meeting referred to in the GA decisions and is planned for May 2010. Step 3 is to decide on how to implement the transition from the existing structures to the new institutional framework.

An Earth system visioning task team (K. Mokhele, K. Raivio, W. Reid, J. Schellnhuber, and A. Whyte) had overseen the process between CSPR meetings. The term of this task team expired on 15 September 2009 and it was suggested that the membership be updated.

Communication had been an important component of the process. In addition to the information on the web, two high-profile articles had been published (a *Science* editorial and a *SciDev.Net* news article), presentations had been made to the programmes and the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP), and mailings had gone out to the ICSU family, co-sponsoring organizations, and partners. ICSU had received several replies that would inform the planning for Step 2. Consultation and input from the wider community was being sought at each step in the process, and there was a dedicated email (visioning@icsu.org) advertised for comments at any time.

While there had been some voicing concerns, the visioning process, and in particular the web consultation, had engaged the scientific community. This went beyond the ICSU Members to ‘scientists at the bench’ and even stakeholders at the community level. It was hoped that the momentum gathered in Step 1, as well as the views of the funding community, would help provide an impetus for subsequent steps.

\(^2\) DIVERSITAS (an international programme of biodiversity science), International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP), and World Climate Research Programme (WCRP).
Preparations for Step 1 required significant resources. Expectations within the community had been raised in terms of substance, transparency, and consultation. The importance of the engagement of high-level funding community representatives was stressed.

**Decisions**

To endorse the agenda and plans for the “Visioning Earth system research meeting” (Step 1);

to appoint Johan Rockström as a new member to the revised task team, which includes K. Raivio, W. Reid, J. Schellnhuber, and A. Whyte and has a term from 16 September 2009 until 30 June 2012;

to agree that the decision on the Chair(s) of the Step 2 meeting/revised task team will be made after the Step 1 meeting;

to note the importance of the role of the funders (existing and new candidates) in the development of Step 2 (the institutional meeting) and the need for a streamlined and prioritized approach; and

to agree that the high-level meeting referred to in the GA decisions (Step 2 in the process) be scheduled for May/June 2010 and that the final step will occur before the end of 2010.

**9.2 Review of DIVERSITAS**

In its Strategic Plan 2006-2011, ICSU had stated the Council “will conduct individual reviews of its global environmental change research programmes.” Since 2006, ICSU had completed reviews of IHDP, ESSP, IGBP and WCRP. The findings from these reviews had prompted the ICSU General Assembly to initiate the Earth system visioning process, which aimed to engage the scientific community to explore options and propose steps to implement a holistic strategy for Earth system research (see previous item).

If the DIVERSITAS review were conducted in the style of the ESSP, IGBP, and WCRP reviews, the primary question to answer would have been “What do scientists, sponsors and the end-users get out of participating in and supporting this programme that they would not have gained if this international programme did not exist?” However, opting for this approach would not have taken into account several recent developments, including the Earth system visioning process, the establishment of the Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (PECS) (which had some programmatic elements that are close to those of DIVERSITAS), and the proposed international biodiversity assessment (Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services [IPBES]).

CSPR considered two options.

**Option A**

To review DIVERSITAS in parallel with the Earth system visioning process and carry it out following the originally proposed timeframe. This option would need to be assessed in terms of the ultimate benefit (and even the feasibility of doing so with current resources).

**Option B**

To review ICSU’s activities in the area of biodiversity and ecosystem services research (i.e., DIVERSITAS and PECS) and assessments (e.g., IPBES) as part of ICSU’s next strategic plan. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of such a review would need to be formulated after Step 3 in the visioning process (i.e., at the end of 2010).
Decisions
To review ICSU’s activities in the area of biodiversity and ecosystem services research (i.e., DIVERSITAS and PECS) and assessments (e.g., IPBES) as part of ICSU’s next strategic plan; and to inform DIVERSITAS and PECS of this decision.

9.3 Nominations for Environmental Programme Committees

ICSU had requested that organizations for which the Council appoints members (i.e., DIVERSITAS, Earth System Science Partnership [ESSP], Global Climate Observing System [GCOS], Global Ocean Observing System [GOOS], Global Terrestrial Observing System [GTOS], International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme [IGBP], International Human Dimensions Programme [IHDP], and World Climate Research Programme [WCRP]) submit nominations by 1 September. This year, ICSU had received nominations from DIVERSITAS, ESSP, IGBP and IHDP; next year ICSU should receive nominations from the remaining organizations.

Each organization was asked to submit more nominations than slots available so that ICSU’s role goes beyond rubberstamping. In addition to considering the submitted nominations, CSPR could recommend the consideration of additional individuals. Applications were to be vetted by CSPR and then sent to the Executive Board for approval. For the organizations that have co-sponsors (DIVERSITAS, GCOS, GOOS, GTOS, IHDP, and WCRP), the relevant co-sponsoring institutions would also be involved in the final decision of appointments.

9.3.1 DIVERSITAS

DIVERSITAS was seeking renewal for one member and appointment of three new members to replace three people rotating off its Scientific Committee.

Decisions
To recommend that the Executive Board renew M. Lonsdale’s term for the period 1 January 2010 - 31 December 2012; to recommend that the Executive Board appoint H. Matsuda, N. Muthiga, and B. Turner, and to the DIVERSITAS SC for the period 1 January 2010 - 31 December 2012; and to note that consultations with UNESCO, IUBS, and SCOPE are necessary.

9.3.2 Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP)

ICSU appoints four members of the ESSP SC, as stipulated in the ESSP Constitution. The other ~20 SC positions are ex officio and are filled primarily by representatives of the Global Environmental Change programmes and ESSP joint projects. ESSP was seeking renewal for two members and appointment of two new members to fill the two empty slots on its SC.

It was noted that ICSU does not formally sponsor ESSP. A decision on whether ESSP should become an ICSU Interdisciplinary Body had been postponed by the ICSU GA until after the outcomes of the Earth system visioning process were known.

Decisions
To recommend that the Executive Board renew R. Leemans and J Melillo’s terms for the period 1 January 2010 - 31 December 2012; and to recommend that the Executive Board appoint M. Leach and X. Peng to the ESSP SC for the period 1 January 2010 - 31 December 2012.
9.3.3 International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP)

IGBP was seeking renewal for two members and the appointment of two new members to replace two people rotating off its SC.

**Decisions**

To recommend that the Executive Board renew M. Bustamante and D. Qui’s terms for the period 1 January 2010 - 31 December 2012; and
to recommend that the Executive Board appoint R. Bradley and J. Palutikof to the IGBP SC for the period 1 January 2010 - 31 December 2012.

9.3.4 International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP)

IHDP was seeking replacement of five members who were either rotating off or stepping down.

**Decisions**

to recommend that the Executive Board appoint X. Bai, C. Carraro, J. Dryzek, H. Gutscher, and S. Moser to the IHDP SC for the period 1 January 2010 - 31 December 2012; and
to note that consultations with UNU and ISSC are necessary.

9.4 Future Plans for the International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA)

Established in 1991, IGFA is a consortium of 30-40 agencies from 22 countries that helps to promote, facilitate, and mobilize funding support for research and monitoring on global change, principally global environmental change. IGFA collaborates with ICSU and considers it essential that ICSU’s needs be taken into account in discussions on future directions.

The ICSU Executive Director had been invited to attend IGFA’s Steering Group meeting in London on 14-15 May that focused on possible future structures and activities of IGFA. In addition, the Executive Director had been invited to a workshop on Global Challenges for Environmental Research Funders on 10-12 June in Belmont, Maryland, USA. High-level representatives from USA, UK, Japan, Germany, France, Canada, and Australia had presented the current strategies from their countries and discussed future funding strategy at the international level and the new IGFA structure.

Participants at the Belmont meeting had agreed on the need for an improved forum for dialogue between research funding agencies and ICSU, and for a coordinated process for early phase engagement on Global Change Research strategies and priorities. They had noted that IGFA was currently refocusing its activities and that one element of this refocus was to establish a high-level consultative and policy group (IGFA Council of Principals) to which the ICSU Executive Director was to be invited as a member.

A follow-up meeting to the Belmont meeting was planned during 6-8 January 2010 in London, and an IGFA meeting was planned for 20-23 October 2009 in Paris. ICSU had been invited to both meetings.
Decision
To note the engagement of ICSU in the International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA) Council of Principals.

10. ICSU and a Possible Rio +20 (2012)

In 1992, the UN had convened the first “Earth Summit,” officially entitled “UN Conference on Environment and Development” (UNCED), and held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. ICSU had been invited to act as principal scientific adviser to the dedicated secretariat tasked with the preparations of the Rio conference. In addition, in November 1991, ICSU had organized a large conference to define the Agenda of Science for Environment and Development into the 21st century (ASCEND 21). Moreover, Agenda 21, the formal action plan agreed at the Rio conference, had included several chapters to which ICSU had provided substantive input.

Hence, it had come without surprise that in 2001 the UN again formally invited ICSU to play a major role in ensuring a strong science input in both the preparatory process of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and at the Summit itself (Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August to 4 September 2002). ICSU and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) had accepted to act as “co-organizing partners” of the Scientific and Technological Community (STC) in the WSSD process. In fact, the STC represented one of nine so-called Major Groups (non-state stakeholder groups) identified in Agenda 21 (Rio 1992).

During the Johannesburg Summit, ICSU led an official parallel forum on science, technology, and innovation for sustainable development, at the behest of the South African Government and in collaboration with the UN. Ever since the WSSD, ICSU and WFEO had continued their role as “co-organizing partners” of the STC in the work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) which is the global intergovernmental body in charge of reviewing progress in and recommending policies and measures to accelerate the implementation of the Rio 1992 and Johannesburg 2002 outcomes.

In November 2008, following consultations with countries around the world, Brazil had submitted a proposal to the UN to convene, in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, another high level United Nations conference on sustainable development. This conference would mark the 20th anniversary of Rio 1992 and the 10th anniversary of the Johannesburg Summit. The 2009 UN General Assembly, which was starting its work in September 2009, would have to take a decision on holding this proposed new summit, currently referred to as Rio+20. At the last session of the CSD (New York, May 2009), it had become obvious that support by governments and groups of countries for organizing a Rio+20 had become quite strong. It now seemed very likely that the UN General Assembly would give its green light to organizing such an event.

The purpose for having this item on the CSPR agenda now was to give an advanced “warning” and be briefed about ICSU’s input and side projects for the WSSD in 2002 in Johannesburg. In 2002, ICSU had been able to draw on a project grant (US$ 250 000) by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation (USA) and other external funding from other Foundations. The project involved considerable extra work for the Secretariat staff. Using external funds, a full-time senior project coordinator and a full-time young scientist had been temporarily contracted.

Any comparable ICSU input into Rio+20 would again require substantive additional financial and/or in-kind support. No definite recommendation by CSPR was required at this 18th session. However, CSPR was requested to give some preliminary advice on the worthiness and feasibility
of ICSU playing a major role in this planned event, as part of the organization’s mission to pursue science for policy at the global level.

CSPR was supportive of a strong ICSU role as the voice of science again in 2012. Members considered a two-pronged approach that included (1) encouraging national delegations to involve strong, well prepared scientists, and (2) having a focused international approach. This focus could be tied to the outcome of the Earth system visioning process, and should have no more than two or three key points that ICSU wishes to advance. In general, ICSU would need to make use of its convening power and consider the most effective ways—such as side events—to deliver its message.

**Decision**

That ICSU should attach high priority to Rio+20-related activities; to note that the Rio+20 event will occur during the implementation of the next strategic plan; to establish two-way communications with Members and Regional Offices on this activity; and to discuss at the next CSPR meeting the impact of decisions from the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

11. **Science Education**

In preparation for the ICSU Strategic Plan, 2006-2011, a Priority Area Assessment on Capacity Building in Science had been completed in 2006. When this had been considered by CSPR and the Executive Board, it had been felt that a potential future role for ICSU in relation to scientific education needed further reflection. It had been agreed that *an ad hoc group should be established to define ICSU’s future role in relation to science education* (ICSU Strategic Plan, pp.36-37). This review would inform the ICSU strategy for 2012 onwards.

The Terms of Reference and process for the review had been agreed at the 17th CSPR meeting and the Secretariat had sought nominations for a Review Panel from members of the ICSU family. A total of 46 had been received by the deadline of 22 August 2009. After considering the nominations, CSPR agreed to appoint a Review Panel as follows.

**Decisions:**

To invite C. Bosch, G. Chapius, D. Cheng, C. Colberg, H. El-Mikaty, R. Johnson, S. Lakhota, E. Ogena, Y. Ogura, S. Sjoberg, and E. Sparrow to serve on the ad hoc Review Panel on ICSU’s role in Science Education;

to invite R. Johnson to chair the Review Panel; *and*

to assign C. de la Rey as CSPR liaison person.

12. **Review of the Regional Office for Africa**

The Terms of Reference approved by CSPR17 had subsequently been approved by the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF). NRF had agreed with CSPR that an extra (fifth) review panel member should be included and that this person should chair the panel. The panel had been jointly appointed by ICSU and NRF and was chaired by Indira Nath (India).

The first meeting of the review panel had taken place in Paris on 29-30 June 2009 and a site visit had been held on 20-22 August 2009 in Pretoria, South Africa. The draft final report and recommendations of the panel were presented to CSPR.
CSPR discussed all aspects of the report including the proposed separation of management and strategic advisory functions through an International Science Advisory Board and Management Board and the role of Memoranda of Understanding for communicating clear expectations and milestones to Regional Offices. The need for a clear vision and new leadership for the next phase of development of the Office was emphasised. The continuing support of the NRF was welcomed. In general, CSPR emphasized the importance to ICSU of successful implementation of the Regional Office model.

**Decisions**

To thank the Regional Office for Africa (ROA) Review Panel for its work;

to strongly endorse the recommendations put forward by the ROA Review Panel;

to recommend to the Executive Board to act swiftly on the Panel’s recommendations; and

to recommend to the Executive Board to publish the final report of the ROA Review.

13. **Review of the ICSU Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean**

As stipulated in the ICSU Agreements with the host Institutions for the Regional Office for Africa and Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, CSPR was in the process of reviewing these offices. CSPR had decided to also review the ICSU Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ICSU-LAC), which is hosted by the Brazilian Academy of Science (ABC) in Rio de Janeiro. This Review would be both reflective and forward looking and would provide ICSU and ABC with recommendations for the future developments of the office.

The ICSU-ABC Agreement had been signed for three years starting 1 March 2007. According to Clause 12, this Agreement would be automatically renewed for a further three years unless any of the parties give notice of termination not later than 12 months before expiration of the contract period. As none of the parties had given such notice (as of August 2009), the Agreement had been *de facto* renewed. The review would therefore not have legal impact on Agreement renewal, but would provide strategic guidance for the next Agreement period.

CSPR17 had decided that the process and Terms of Reference (ToR) for the ROA review would be used as a template for the reviews of the other regional offices, so draft ToRs for the ICSU-LAC review were based on those for the ROA review. ABC and the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean had been consulted and agreed upon these draft ToRs. The review process would comprise two meetings, one in Paris organised by ICSU, and one site visit in Rio de Janeiro supported by the ABC.

According to the ToRs, the review panel would be jointly appointed by ICSU and ABC and will comprise two members nominated by ICSU, two members nominated by ABC, and a Chair to be jointly nominated by ICSU and ABC. CVs of proposed members of the review panel were presented to CSPR for its consideration.

**Decisions**

To agree on Terms of Reference for the review of the ICSU Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean;

to propose to the Brazilian Academy of Science (ABC) that M. Clegg and A. Quintanilha are members of the Review Panel with M. Clegg as Chair;

to ask ABC to include women in their proposed panel members;

depending on the final choice of Chair and the gender balance, to include Teivo Teivainen as a Panel member; and

to agree that the final slate of the review panel will be approved electronically.
14. **Review of Science and Technology in Developing Countries**

In 2002, as an outcome of the review of ICSU’s former Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries (COSTED), ICSU had decided to establish Regional Offices (see previous items) and a Policy Committee on Developing Countries (PCDC). As the Regional Offices developed, PCDC had never really succeeded in identifying a niche in which it could make a substantive contribution and it had been put into abeyance at the 29th General Assembly in October, 2008. An annual meeting of the ICSU Officers with the Regional Directors and Chairs had been instigated and CSPR had been requested to “carry out a forward-looking strategic review of ICSU’s role in relation to Science and Technology (S&T) in developing countries.”

The Terms of Reference for such a review, to be conducted by an expert review panel in the standard ICSU manner, had been agreed at CSPR17 and the Secretariat had been asked to seek nominations from ICSU Members. The importance of completing the reviews of all three Regional Offices to feed into the strategic review had been emphasised by CSPR and changes to the proposed timetable were proposed. However, it subsequently became clear that the Regional Office reviews would be more complex and require more resources than originally envisaged. These reviews were an urgent priority for ICSU and its partners that host the Offices. The reviews also included a significant strategic, forward looking element, and it was always understood that there would be some overlap with the broader strategic review. However, it had now become clear that the extent of overlap could be extensive and potentially confusing.

CSPR had directions from the General Assembly and had agreed on the main issues that need to be addressed in a forward-looking strategic review. Rather than commissioning a standard review using a panel of ‘external experts,’ CSPR was now asked to consider whether an alternative, more streamlined mechanism might be adopted. Specifically, it was proposed that a sub-group of roughly six CSPR members, possibly with the three review chairs, be charged with conducting an integrated analysis of the outcomes of the reviews of the three Regional Offices and making strategic recommendations to CSPR as a whole and to the Executive Board. This sub-group might need to meet for a day prior to the scheduled CSPR meeting in April 2011 to finalise its recommendations, although much of its analysis could probably be done through email and teleconferencing.

CSPR was now asked to reconsider the agreed Terms of Reference for the strategic review and the proposed revision to the process and agree a way forward. Members were supportive of the proposal to postpone the review and reformulate the next steps. In general, CSPR noted the need for regular strategic discussion and direction for the Regional Offices and how they exercise their responsibilities. This would need to be considered in the context of ICSU’s overall engagement with developing countries, as not all are covered by the current Offices. CSPR noted the potential role of the newly organized annual strategic coordination meeting of ICSU Officers, Chairs of Regional Committees, Directors of Regional Offices, and Executive Board liaisons.

**Decision**

To postpone the strategic review until after the Regional Offices have been reviewed and then decide on the need and Terms of Reference, as required, for a strategic review.

15. **Urban Health and Wellbeing**

Following an earlier scoping exercise that reported to CSPR in 2007, the planning was now underway for a new interdisciplinary programme – A Systems Analysis Approach to Health and
Wellbeing in the Changing Urban Environment. This is a joint activity overseen by CSPR and involving several of ICSU’s Unions and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA, Austria).

A brief oral report on the progress towards a science plan had been made at the 17th CSPR meeting in February. At that stage, the Planning Committee had held two full meetings and its third meeting was convened in May. A further meeting had been scheduled to take place in China in November 2009 and a final meeting in 2010 (a subsequent open consultation might also be held, depending on resources). Following the oral report, CSPR had requested that a full report on the planning for a science programme be provided at CSPR’s 18th meeting.

Pierre Ritchie, a former CSPR member and continuing CSPR liaison person for this planning exercise, joined by telephone to present this item. The draft science plan was provided for information with the understanding that this was ‘a work in progress.’ As such, CSPR made suggestions for improvement of the report, including more specificity about criteria for selecting projects and in the description of the example case studies. Milestones and criteria for success of the programme as a whole also needed to be developed.

**Decision**

To approve continuation of the planning process.

16. **Key Partners**

ICSU is responsible, often in partnership with UN organizations and other strategic partners, for a number of major international research programmes. In addition, ICSU sponsors the major global observing systems and is often an institutional partner in international assessments such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. ICSU relies on such partnerships due to its limited organizational, financial, and human resources.

To achieve all the goals in the current and future ICSU strategic plans, cooperation with the strategic partner organizations will remain important. Who have been the major strategic partners? Who could be ICSU’s future strategic partners? What were the major modes of cooperation and what else should be considered in the future?

So far, ICSU works mainly with international organisations and networks such as:

- InterAcademy Panel/InterAcademy Council (IAP/IAC)
- International Council of Academies of Engineering and Technological Sciences (CAETS)
- International Social Science Council (ISSC)
- The Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Are there additional potential partner organisations and networks at the national and regional levels? Since policy making and implementation are often operated at the national and regional levels, ICSU may need to examine the potential benefits of working with partners operating at these levels.
CSPR’s discussion covered the potential role of the Vice President for External Relations and the Regional Offices in this context, the need for a policy on engagement with partners that is linked to the strategic plan, and suggestions for additional organizations to consider.

Decisions
To note activities with key partners; and
for the Secretariat to prepare a document describing the types of partnerships and potential roles within the ICSU structure.

17. Enhancing ICSU Responsiveness

During the Belmont meeting of the International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA) mentioned in Item 9.4, a strategic focus for future funding had been agreed among the funders, namely “Regional Environmental Change: Human Action and Adaptation.” It had been named "The Belmont Challenge" and required regional and decadal prediction, advanced observing systems, and inclusion of social sciences.

ICSU had been asked if it could be charged by the funders to conduct analysis at the international level related to the Belmont Challenge. Specifically, an analysis of international research capability to respond to the Belmont Challenge, with a focus on solvability of problems and infrastructure and personnel needed.

A decision on ICSU’s engagement had been needed in August 2009. Due to these time constraints, the Secretariat had contacted the ICSU Officers, including the President and CSPR Chair, for their opinions. In general, it was felt that ICSU needed to explore new opportunities in a “quick response” mode in some circumstances. In the instance of the Belmont Challenge, a consensus had been reached that ICSU should take on this funder-initiated project, with financial resources provided by the funders through the U.S. National Science Foundation.

A second example concerns nanotechnology. ICSU had been approached in June 2009 by the French Ministry of Industry with a preliminary proposal to develop a project for ontologies for nanotechnology and nanoscience. A more detailed proposal was being developed by the Ministry and was likely to need rapid consideration once it was available.

In the long term, these examples highlighted the question of whether ICSU should develop a preparedness to respond to issues that arise on a faster schedule than the CSPR and Executive Board meeting calendar. When does ICSU need to respond quickly? What would be the rapid response procedure? What needs to be done to enhance ICSU’s capability for rapid response?

CSPR noted that the solution to this challenge should be linked to ICSU’s strategic priorities and to an examination of ICSU bylaws in the context of modern means of communication.

Decisions
To note the decision by the Officers to engage ICSU in the IGFA Council of Principals’ Belmont Challenge; and
to ask the Executive Director to prepare a proposal to the Executive Board on procedures for “rapid response” decisions.
18. Meeting Evaluation

At CSPR’s previous meeting, members had conducted a thorough CSPR self assessment. Regular assessment of meetings had been recommended. Members were asked to provide verbal feedback on the conduct and organization of the present meeting.

Decisions
To post powerpoint presentations from each meeting in the Member Zone; to provide meeting documents on a memory stick at the hotel prior to each meeting; and to conduct a thorough self assessment at the mid-point and end of CSPR’s term.

19. Date of Next Meeting

Decisions
the next (19th) meeting of CSPR will be on 10-12 February 2010; and the 20th meeting will be on 27-28 October 2010.

20. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

Kari Raivio  
Chair

Deliang Chen  
Executive Director
### Annex 1: List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Brazilian Academy of Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASCEND21</td>
<td>Agenda of Science for Environment and Development into the 21st century (ICSU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAST</td>
<td>China Association for Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCB5</td>
<td>Committee on Capacity Building in Science (ICSU committee disbanded in 2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CODATA</td>
<td>Committee on Data (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSTED</td>
<td>Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries (ICSU committee disbanded in 2003)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSD</td>
<td>Commission on Sustainable Development (UN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPR</td>
<td>Committee on Scientific Planning and Review (ICSU Policy Committee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSPR17</td>
<td>17th meeting of CSPR</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIVERSITAS</td>
<td>An international programme of diversity science (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body, cosponsored with IUBS, SCOPE, UNESCO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB</td>
<td>Executive Board of ICSU</td>
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<tr>
<td>EB100</td>
<td>100th meeting of the EB</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECHW</td>
<td>Ecosystem Change and Human Wellbeing (precursor in planning stages of PECS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESSP</td>
<td>Earth System Science Partnership (a partnership of DIVERSITAS, IHDP, IGBP, WCRP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAGS</td>
<td>Federation of Astronomical and Geophysical data analysis Services (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body until 2008—replaced by WDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>General Assembly of ICSU</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCOS</td>
<td>Global Climate Observing System (Joint Initiative of ICSU, cosponsored by WMO, UNEP, IOC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEC</td>
<td>Global Environmental Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOS</td>
<td>Global Ocean Observing System (ICSU Joint Initiative with UNESCO, WMO, UNEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEW</td>
<td>Programme on Humans, Ecosystems, and Wellbeing (precursor in planning stages of PECS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IASC</td>
<td>International Arctic Science Committee (ICSU Scientific Associate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Body (of ICSU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICSU</td>
<td>International Council for Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICSU-LAC</td>
<td>ICSU Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGBP</td>
<td>International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (Interdisciplinary Body of ICSU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGFA</td>
<td>International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>IHDP</td>
<td>International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (Interdisciplinary Body of ICSU, cosponsored with ISSC, UNU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIASA</td>
<td>International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis</td>
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<td>IMU</td>
<td>International Mathematical Union (ICSU member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INASP</td>
<td>International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (of UNESCO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPBES</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPCC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPO</td>
<td>International Programme Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPY</td>
<td>International Polar Year 2007-08 (Joint Initiative cosponsored by ICSU and WMO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRDR</td>
<td>Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRENA</td>
<td>International Renewable Energy Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISDR</td>
<td>International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISPRE</td>
<td>International Science Panel on Renewable Energies</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISPRS</td>
<td>International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ICSU member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSC</td>
<td>International Social Science Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUBMB</td>
<td>International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ICSU member)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IUBS  International Union of Biological Sciences (ICSU member)
IUGG  International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (ICSU member)
IUGS  International Union of Geological Sciences (ICSU member)
IUNS  International Union of Nutritional Sciences (ICSU member)
IUPAC  International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (ICSU member)
IUPHAR  International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (ICSU member)
IUPS  International Union of Psychological Sciences (ICSU member)
IUTAM  International Union Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (ICSU member)
IUTOX  International Union of Toxicology (ICSU member)
JC  Joint Committee (for IPY)
NAS  National Academy of Sciences (USA)
NRF  National Research Foundation (South Africa)
PCDC  Policy Committee on Developing Countries (ICSU Policy Committee, currently in abeyance)
PECS  Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body)
ROA  Regional Office for Africa (ICSU Regional Office)
SC  Scientific Committee
SCAR  Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body)
SCCID  Strategic Coordinating Committee on Information and Data (ad hoc ICSU committee)
SCOPE  Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body until maximum 2010)
STC  Scientific and Technological Community (grouping for WSSD)
ToR  Terms of Reference
UNCED  UN Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP  United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO  United National Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNU  United Nations University
WCRP  World Climate Research Programme (Interdisciplinary Body of ICSU, cosponsored with WMO and IOC)
WDC  World Data Centres (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body until 2008, replaced by WDS)
WDS  ICSU World Data System (ICSU Interdisciplinary Body)
WDS-SC  World Data System Scientific Committee
WFEO  World Federation of Engineering Organizations
WMO  World Meteorological Organization
WSSD  World Summit on Sustainable Development