The IAP Conference on Biodiversity and General Assembly took place from 12-15 January 2010 at The Royal Society in London. The events marked the start of the International Year of Biodiversity and the launch of the Royal Society’s 350th Anniversary. IAP extends its thanks to The Royal Society for its generous support and hospitality. Highlights of the General Assembly include:

- Election of a new IAP executive committee for 2010-2012. The 11-member committee will consist of the science academies of Chile, China, Egypt, India, Malaysia and Mexico in the developing world, and Australia, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States in the developed world.
- Selection of the co-chairs for the executive committee, each of whom will serve for three years. Mohamed Hassan, president of the African Academy of Sciences and executive director of TWAS, was elected co-chair representing academies from the developing world. He replaces Chen Zhu, Minister of Health, who had served in that capacity for the past six years. Howard Alper, chair of Canada’s Science, Technology and Innovation Council and visiting executive at the International Development Research Centre, was re-elected to serve an additional three-year term as co-chair, representing academies from the developed world.
- Official acceptance of 10 new member academies. That brings IAP’s total membership to 104. See the members directory at: www.interacademies.net/CMS/2950/4016.aspx.
- Approval of IAP’s revised statutes and second strategic plan. The plan sets out three broad objectives: to position IAP as a widely recognized provider of high quality, independent global science advice to governments and international organizations; to support major programmes on scientific capacity building, science education and science communication; and to assume a lead role in efforts to improve the effectiveness and impact of international cooperation in science. (The texts have been posted on the IAP website.)
- Approval of a communiqué on biodiversity, which examined science and policy knowledge gaps and presented recommendations for strengthening the society-science policy interface. Plans call for the communiqué to be revised and presented as an IAP statement to the Convention of Biological Diversity at one of its international meetings this autumn. IAP members will hear more on this in due course.

A two-day international conference on biodiversity, subtitled "Integrating Ecosystem Services into Biodiversity Management", was held prior to the IAP General Assembly. The conference marked one of the first international events to take place during the UN-designated International Year of Biodiversity. Speakers examined a broad range of issues related to the protection and sustainable use of the world's natural resources. More than 200 scientists were in attendance. Conference highlights included a keynote address by David Miliband, UK foreign secretary, who spoke about the need for the scientific and policy communities to work more closely together to meet the daunting challenges of the 21st century. A feature article on the IAP assembly and international conference, to be published in the spring edition of the TWAS Newsletter, can be read at: www.interacademies.net/CMS/4017/generalassembly2010.aspx. Copies of the conference abstracts and presentations, and a selection of photographs, are available at the same url.

We look forward to working with our members during this international year of biodiversity.

Howard Alper and Mohamed Hassan
IAP Co-Chairs

Calendar 2010

- 3-4 November 2010: EC Meeting, Santiago, Chile.
- IAP/ World Economic Forum’s 3rd Young Scientists Conference, 13-15 September 2010, Tianjin, China.

IAP Programmes: news and updates …

- Digital Knowledge Resources and Infrastructure in Developing Countries - US National Academy of Sciences (US NAS) is lead academy.

The second meeting of the Steering Committee for this IAP programme took place in Pretoria, South Africa, on 11-12 May 2009, and was hosted by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). The goal of the programme is to promote greater access to and use of digital scientific data and information resources and of digital infrastructure for research and education. The full report of the meeting can be read at: www.interacademies.net/CMS/Programmes/4704.aspx

- A regional workshop examining clean water issues, organized by the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences and hosted by the Institute for Water and Environmental Problems

- The Académie des Sciences, France, in collaboration with the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, is organizing its first international seminar on science and technology education from 17-22 May 2010. The seminar will take place at the International Centre for Educational Studies (CIEP) in Sèvres, France. For additional information, see: www.lamap.fr/seminaire

News from the Secretariat...

- IAP members are invited to submit up to four nominations for the 3rd IAP Young Scientists Conference, held in conjunction with the World Economic Forum’s Annual Meeting of the New Champions in Tianjin, China, 13-15 September 2010. The deadline is 31 March 2010. For additional information, see: www.interacademies.net/CMS/9582.aspx.

- Call for proposals for new projects: IAP members and regional networks are invited to submit proposals for funding in 2011. Criteria and online application forms are available at: www.interacademies.net/CMS/10257.aspx. The deadline is 25 June 2010.

Appointments

Peter Suter has been elected president of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences. He succeeds René Dändliker.

Svante Lindqvist has been elected president of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (RSAS). He succeeds Sundqvist Bo.

Jörg Hacker has been elected president of the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina. He succeeds Volker ter Meulen.

Jean Salençon has been elected president of the Académie des Sciences, France. He succeeds Jules Hoffmann.

Juan Asenjo has been elected president of the Academia Chilena de Ciencias. He succeeds Servet Martínez Aguilera.

Roderick Macdonald has been elected president of the RSC: The Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada. He succeeds Yvan Guindon.

Olavi Nevanlinna has been elected president of the Delegation of the Finnish Academies of Science and Letters, succeeding Kari Raivio.

Contacts

Co-chairs:
  • Howard Alper, Canada
tel: +1 613 991 9005; fax: +1 613 991 6996
email: Howard.alper@uottawa.ca

Mohamed H.A. Hassan, Sudan
tel: +39-040-2240 327
eemail: mhammad@twas.org

Secretariat:
  • J.C.R. Lacey (IAP Senior Project Assistant)
tel: +39 040 2240-680/681; fax: +39 040 2240-688
eemail: iap@twas.org.
  • M. Kareithi (IAP Project Assistant) - email: kareithi@twas.org
  • D. Schaffer (media) - email: schaffer@twas.org

Deadline for contributions to the next issue of the bulletin is 1 June 2010.