



PRESS RELEASE

The IAP General Assembly and Elections in Alexandria

The InterAcademy Panel held its General Assembly from 4-5 December in Bibliotheca Alexandrina. The IAP General Assembly covered broad-ranging presentations and reports on activities of the years 2004- 2006. The assembly approved the financial report as well as four membership-applications from the Islamic World Academy of Sciences, the Serbian Academy of Sciences, Tanzania Academy of Science and Zimbabwe Academy of Sciences. By this approval, IAP now includes 94 members. It also reviewed IAP programmes related to capacity building of academies, science education of children, health education of women, water research and management. The previous reports were followed by "evaluation group" presentation in which the speakers assessed the programmes success and recommended some measures to be done in the near future. Subsequently, reviews of IAP initiatives were presented and evaluated; the initiatives were related to the announcement of a code of conduct on biosecurity, access to scientific information, natural disaster mitigation and GMOs.

On 5 December, the General Assembly reviewed several reports presented by observers and regional networks. Afterwards, the provisional statutes and rules of procedure were discussed and approved. Also, the first IAP strategic plan was approved by the assembly for the following three years. It was imperative for the IAP to adopt a strategic plan for the future since membership has grown significantly since its inception in 1993. This plan is expected to mark the transition of IAP from a rather informal approach to a more organized system. In fact, the strategic plan focuses on different action-issues expected to be taken up by IAP and of which the most important is the empowerment of IAP member academies and the strengthening of its internal organization. The general goal remains to decentralize IAP programmes and promote the values of enquiry-based science in all world countries.

The election of IAP co-chairs marked the final sessions of the General Assembly. Chen Zhu and Howard Alper were elected as co-chairs and won by acclamation. The election of IAP executive committee was also conducted and, from the group of industrialized countries, the Australian Academy of Sciences, the Union of German Academies of Sciences and Humanities, the Science Council of Japan, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Royal Society in the UK were elected. As regards the group of developing countries, the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences, the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, the Académie des Sciences et Techniques du Sénégal

and the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology in Egypt as well as other three academies were elected.

In a press communiqué, the co-chairs of the IAP asserted their appreciation" for the endeavour of the IPSO (Israel- Palestine Science Organization) initiative which favours and stimulates in a very concrete way, the co-operation between Israelis and Palestinian scientists on fundamental, as well as applied, themes. They stated that "IPSO illustrates most remarkably how Science is a language of peace and development, how it can unite people, and how it lends itself well to respectful listening to one another and to the development of relationship of trust." They also wished that the example of IPSO would be" followed in other parts of the world where sources of conflict do exist."