

Annual Report for 2001 of the IAC Executive Director*

Preliminary observation

This is the first-ever Annual Report of an IAC Executive Director and it is an honour to be the person to write it. The year 2001 was the first full year of operation for the IAC. Much has been done – much more needs to be done. What has been accomplished so far is the result of the efforts of members of the IAC Board and, most emphatically, of the IAC's two Co-Chairmen, Bruce Alberts, USA, and Goverdhan Mehta, India. If I or any other member of the IAC staff – Dilip Ahuja, India; John Campbell, USA; and Margreet Haverkamp, the Netherlands – made a contribution last year, it is because of the inspiration, commitment and drive demonstrated throughout the year by these two gentlemen.

Program development

1. *Promoting Worldwide Science and Technology Capacities*

At its first meeting in Davos, 23-25 January 2001, the IAC Board took the decision to devote its first study to the issue of "Promoting Worldwide Science and Technology Capacities for the 21st Century". The Board also decided to allocate to that study funding for a self-initiated study made available to the IAC by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, New York. The Board approved the final prospectus of the study on 20 April 2001. As agreed between IAC and IAP, the IAP then informed all participating academies of science of the IAC initiative, requesting these academies to support the IAC and to nominate candidates for the study panel to be established. By the end of May approximately 30 national academies had responded, resulting in a list of about 60 nominees. After extensive consultations the IAC Co-Chairs presented a first slate of 9 candidates to the Board for approval. On 10 September the Board approved the appointment of: Jacob Palis, Brazil, and Ismael Serageldin, Egypt, as Co-Chairs of the Study Panel, as well as the appointment as members of the panel of: Ledivina V. Cariño, Phillipines; Thomas Egwang, Uganda; Julia Marton-Lefèvre, France/USA; Mamphela Ramphele, South Africa; Neil Rudenstine, USA; P.N. Tandon, India; and Zhao Shidong, China. The Co-Chairs appointed John Campbell, USA, as Study Director. Under his guidance a briefing book with background materials and a workplan was developed in August and September. From 31 October to 1 November 2001 a meeting was held in Amsterdam (participants: Bruce Alberts, Jacob Palis, Ismael Serageldin, John Campbell and Albert Koers; Goverdhan Mehta was consulted in a conference call) to further define the outline, to identify special topics, to approve a timeline and workplan and to identify additional members of the Study Panel. On 21 December the Board approved the appointment of four new members: Jorge Allende, Chile; Catherine Bréchnignac, France; Mohammad Iqbal Choudhary, Pakistan; and Wim van Vierssen, the Netherlands. The first meeting of the Study Panel is to take place in Amsterdam from 26-28 January, additional meetings are scheduled for May (Paris) and Alexandria (September). Under the approved timeline a draft report will be available in late fall 2002 and the final report will be submitted to the IAC Board at its meeting in early 2003.

2. *UN-IAC Partnership Arrangement*

In a meeting on 19 October 2000 Bruce Alberts, in his capacity as IAC Co-Chairman, met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, to discuss how the IAC might address critical issues for the United Nations, including advisory projects on agricultural productivity in

* In accordance with article 3, paragraph 16, sub e of the Bylaws

Africa and the growing digital divide between nations and regions. As a follow-up to this meeting discussions took place between UN staff and IAC Co-Chairs and staff regarding a special UN-IAC Partnership arrangement. Under the terms of the proposed arrangement the IAC would provide scientific consultation to the UN Secretariat; organize and implement expert advisory panels to produce reports and recommendations on scientific and technological issues; sponsor special briefings and seminars for the UN General Assembly, UN Secretariat and UN agency leadership; and provide expert review of relevant UN reports. It is expected that, subject to legal review, the partnership arrangement will be formalized in the near future. In anticipation of this decision the IAC was requested to organize a meeting for UN ambassadors on the benefits and risks associated with human genome research. This meeting took place on 19 October 2001 and was attended by approximately 90 ambassadors and staff. Presentations were made, *inter alia*, by Arturo Felaschi, Italy; Erik Lander, USA; and, on behalf of Unesco, Ryuichi Ida, Japan. After the meeting the IAC was requested to develop proposals for similar meetings in the future, also on topics or themes associated with societal implications of major scientific and technological developments.

3. ***Studies on food security, food productivity and food safety***

In the meeting with Bruce Alberts on 19 October 2000 (see also point 2) the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, suggested that the IAC conduct a study on food security in Africa. At its meeting in Davos in January 2001 the Board discussed the request and, recognizing the comprehensiveness and complexity of the food security issue as a whole, considered that an IAC study should focus primarily on the scientific and technological aspects of food productivity. The Board decided that, in consultation with UN staff, a full prospectus should be developed, outlining scope, content and methodology of the study. While that prospectus was under discussion, it became known that the issue of food safety was on the agenda of the July 2002 meeting of the G-8 in Genoa. A paragraph in the final communiqué of the G-8 Genoa meeting invites the IAC to publicise “balanced professional views on the science of food safety” as part of a “process of dialogue aimed at strengthening public confidence in food safety”. In view of the interconnectedness between the issue of food security and the issue of food safety the IAC Co-Chairs then decided to invite Rudy Rabbinge, the Netherlands, to draft a conceptual document on possible purposes and scope of an IAC study or studies in the overall area of food security, food productivity and food safety. At a special advisory meeting at the United Nations held on 11 January 2002 where science for sustainability was discussed in a day-long meeting with the Secretary-General, it was publicly requested by Kofi Annan speaking to Bruce Alberts that the IAC should work with the Rockefeller Foundation to produce a list of recommendations for him within 12 months. This request gives special urgency to proposals for IAC studies on the African food problem to be placed before the IAC Board at its January 2002 meeting in Amsterdam.

4. ***Other topics and themes***

At the Davos meeting of January 2001 the Board explored a wide range of topics and themes to determine their suitability as possible IAC study projects. Although no decision was taken as a result of these discussions, some topics continued to be mentioned throughout the year in formal and informal communications within the Board and by individual members. Three items in particular were mentioned with some regularity: energy issues, in particular energy supply options for developing countries; water issues, in particular the scientific and engineering knowledge required for the production of drinking water; and the need for independent, IAC sponsored audits of scientific and/or engineering capacities of countries, regions or institutions.

5. ***Relationship with the WEF***

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has been very supportive of the creation of the IAC, in particular by hosting and facilitating IAC-related meetings. The first formal IAC Board meeting in January 2001 was held at Davos precisely for this reason and in conjunction with the Annual Conference of the WEF. In the course of 2001 WEF and IAC staff explored possibilities to enhance cooperation, also in relation to possible study-projects, without however compromising

the unique identity and *raison d'être* of each organisation. Later in the fall the WEF decided to create an Academic Council as a consultative forum for the global academic community. The WEF invited all IAC Board members to participate in that Council, also consisting of non-IAC members. Plans to organize a special IAC session at the 2002 Annual Conference of the WEF were postponed when the WEF decided to shift the venue of its annual meeting to New York. However, at New York a meeting will take place between IAC Board members participating in the New York conference and selected business leaders to generate input from a business perspective for the IAC study on promoting worldwide science and technology capacities.

Organisation development

6. *Co-Chairs and membership IAC Board*

In 2001 there were no changes in the membership of the IAC Board. Accordingly, throughout the year the Board was composed as follows: Co-Chairmen: Bruce Alberts, President National Academy of Sciences, USA; Goverdhan Mehta, President Indian National Science Academy; Members: Janne Carlsson, President Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences; Hubert Curien, President Académie des Sciences, France; René Raúl Drucker Colin, President Mexican Academy of Sciences; George Ellis, Member of Council Academy of Sciences of South Africa; Eduardo Moacyr Krieger, President Brazilian Academy of Sciences; Kiyoshi Kurokawa, Vice-President Science Council of Japan; Lee Yee Cheong, Vice-President Academy of Sciences of Malaysia; Lu Yongxiang, President Chinese Academy of Sciences; Lord May of Oxford, President The Royal Society of London; Yuri S. Osipov, President Russian Academy of Sciences; C.N.R. Rao, President Third World Academy of Sciences; Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker, President Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft; Jacob Ziv, President Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities; and Observers: Yves Quéré, Co-Chairman InterAcademy Panel on International Issues; Robert S Reneman, President Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences; and Hiroyuki Yoshikawa, President International Council for Science, ICSU.

7. *Staff IAC Secretariat*

On 26 February the Board approved the Minutes of its meeting at Davos in the preceding month. Shortly thereafter Albert Koers, the Netherlands, appointed at Davos as the IAC Executive Director, took office. The IAC Secretariat is hosted by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences at Amsterdam. In March Margreet Haverkamp, the Netherlands, was appointed IAC Office Manager, to support all logistical and communication processes, and soon thereafter two Associate Directors were selected: Dilip Ahuja, India (in April) and John Campbell, USA (in May). Both support the IAC Co-Chairmen, as well as the Executive Director. In addition to this task John Campbell also serves as Director of Program Development, charged with identifying new study topics and with developing the quality of the IAC's advisory process.

8. *Legal status*

On 17 March 2001 the Board approved the final versions of the IAC's Statutes, Bylaws and Rules of Procedure. The Statutes establish the IAC as legal entity under Netherlands law and the Bylaws set forth rules, *inter alia*, on the composition of the Board, on its functions and powers and on decision-making procedures. Of particular relevance for the work of the IAC are the Rules of Procedure as these are designed to ensure the independence and neutrality of the IAC's advisory process through rules, *inter alia*, on the formation of study panels, the process to review draft reports and the mechanism to approve reports by the IAC Board.

9. *Relationship with IAP*

Immediately after the Davos meeting discussions took place between IAC Co-Chairman Goverdhan Mehta and Eduardo Krieger, Brazil, and Yves Quéré, France, in their capacity as Co-Chairmen of the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues (IAP), the IAC's parent organization. Purpose of these discussions was to elaborate a transparent mechanism to inform IAP national academies of science of an IAC decision to undertake a specific study. After

further discussions it was agreed that the IAP would introduce any new IAC study with its membership, requesting these members to support the IAC by nominating candidates for the panel to be established for that study. For reasons of efficiency subsequent communications with IAP members are to be handled directly by the IAC Secretariat.

10. *Other activities*

In 2001 the IAC was established not only as a legal entity, but also as a – rather small - organisational unit. Staff was appointed; office facilities were arranged at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in Amsterdam; funds were transferred and a bookkeeping and accounting system was developed; IAC stationery and business cards were printed; and a filing and archiving system became operational. Also, the text of the brochure was revised and a new version printed. The development of an IAC website took longer than expected, but the site is now operational, albeit still with limited content. The site also offers a mechanism for (confidential) communications between Board members and for electronic decision-making. However, so far these functionalities have not really been put to the test and the question arises if and how they are to be further developed.

Final observations

Overall, the IAC is off to a promising start. The first study is underway, relations with relevant client-organisations have been expanded and strengthened, new studies are under active consideration and the required organisational infrastructure is in place. Equally important: all members of the Board continue to give full support to the IAC and its growth from idea to reality. However, it is equally true that the real test is still to come: the successful completion of the first study - on time, within budget and, above all, of the highest quality in terms of content, independence and neutrality. To so complete that study is essential not only for the IAC, but also if the voice of science is to be heard more clearly and with greater effect in the international arena and in international decision-making. The events of 11 September 2001 serve as a stark reminder for the years to come of the importance of that mission.