

# Inter Academy Council

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE IAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 2003 \*

### **Preliminary observation**

On 19 December 2003 Bruce Alberts, IAC Co-Chair, met with Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to discuss the activities and plans of the IAC. At the end of that meeting the Secretary-General agreed to chair a special U.N. Ambassadors Symposium on the IAC S&T report in February 2004; to be briefed on the recommendations of the IAC study on African agriculture in March 2004; and to personally submit the final report of that study to African Heads of State in June 2004. Secretary-General Annan also pledged his support for the IAC plan to undertake a study on transitions to sustainable energy systems. The fact that the U.N. Secretary-General is willing to use his status and influence to promote the work of the IAC demonstrates that in 2003 the IAC took yet another important step: from preparation (2001), via implementation (2002) to impact (2003).

### **Programmatic developments**

#### **1. *Promoting Worldwide Science and Technology Capacities***

The Study Panel had a final meeting from 19-20 January 2003, just ahead of the IAC Board. At that meeting the Board heard a progress report from the Panel Co-Chairs, Jacob Palis and Ismail Serageldin, and it considered the overall recommendations likely to emerge from the study.

During spring 2003, the Study Panel continued its efforts at fine-tuning, revising and editing the draft report. At a meeting of the IAP Executive Committee in May 2003, IAC Co-Chair Goverdhan Mehta committed the IAC to present the final recommendations of the study to the IAP General Conference scheduled for December 2003. From then on, that commitment set the pace for completion of the study.

The Study Panel signed off on the draft report at the end of July 2003 and that draft was sent to reviewers in early August with a 6 September deadline. On the deadline a total of 18 reviewers had responded, while 7 Board members also sent comments. Taken together all review comments amounted to about 100 pages of text. Although there were critical observations, most review comments were quite positive. The Executive Director then sent all comments - in chronological order and with identifiers removed - to the Panel's Co-Chairs and Study Director, who succeeded in revising the draft report within the relatively short period of three weeks. The Panel approved the revised draft in October 2003. Lastly, on 6 November 2003 the two review monitors, Professor Hubert Markl, Germany, and M.G. K. Menon, India, issued a formal statement to the IAC Co-Chairs that they were satisfied that the Study Panel had dealt most adequately with the various review comments.

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

On 3 December the IAC Co-Chairs, Bruce Alberts and Goverdhan Mehta, and the Study Panel Co-Chairs, Jacob Palis and Ismail Serageldin, presented an Executive Summary of the final report to the IAP General Conference in Mexico City. This presentation was well received and copies of the Executive Summary were widely distributed among participants of the Conference. The next day all science academies present at the IAP General Conference expressed their overall support for the recommendations of the study and authorized the IAP Co-Chairs to send a formal letter to the IAC with that message.

With a print run of about 5500 copies, the full report will be ready in mid-January. It will be presented to the IAC Board by the Panel Co-Chairs on 26 January 2004. On 5 February 2004 the report will be made public by presenting it to the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, at a special U.N.-organized "Presentation Launch" to be attended by U.N. ambassadors, their senior staff and the U.N. press corps.

## 2. *Improving Agricultural Productivity in Africa*

At its first meeting in Entebbe, Uganda, in September 2002, the Study Panel decided to organize a series of consultative workshops in four regions of Africa in cooperation with regional or sub-regional agricultural research organizations. As a result of this decision the following workshops were organized.

- 31 January to 2 February 2003; Nairobi, Kenya; in cooperation with the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA); about 45 participants.
- February 3 to February 5, 2003; Hassan II Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine at Rabat, Morocco; in cooperation with the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA); about 30 participants.
- February 7 to February 9, 2003; Magaliesberg, South Africa; in cooperation with Dr. Bongive Njobe in her capacity as member of the Study Panel; about 30 participants.
- February 10 to 2, 2003; Dakar, Senegal; in cooperation with the Conseil Ouest et Centre Africain pour la Recherche et le Développement Agricoles / West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD); about 45 participants.

At a meeting from 10 to 12 March 2003 at the Bibliotheca Alexandria, Alexandria, Egypt, the Study Panel reviewed the outcomes of these workshops. In addition to the regional workshops in Africa the Panel also commissioned resource papers for the purpose of reviewing the state of the art in specific areas. In May 2003 the emerging highlights of the report were presented at a meeting of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa. At its last full meeting from 23 to 25 June 2003, Stellenbosch, South Africa, the Panel reviewed these resource papers and all other materials placed before it and, on that basis, formulated the main conclusions and recommendations to emerge from the study.

The Panel Co-Chairs and Study Director met from 14 to 18 August in Chennai, India, to finalize the conclusions and recommendations of the report. A draft report was sent to Panel members in September; Panel Co-Chairs and Study Director met from 18 to

19 October in Washington, D.C., to consider the comments received from Panel members; and a revised draft report was sent to Panel members in November. On 3 December one of the Panel Co-Chairs, Rudy Rabbinge, the Netherlands, presented the highlights of the study to the IAP General Conference in Mexico City. Lastly, on 8 December 2003 the Panel Co-Chairs, Ms Speciosa Kazibwe, Uganda, Rudy Rabbinge, the Netherlands, and M.S. Swaminathan, India, formally informed the IAC Co-Chairs that the Panel had approved the draft report and requested the IAC Co-Chairs to initiate review.

At this moment review is underway with a 2 February 2004 deadline for sending in comments. It is anticipated that the report will be published at the end of April or early May 2004.

### **3. *Study on transitions to sustainable energy systems***

At its meeting in January 2003 the Board discussed a proposal for a study in the field of energy and it requested the Co-Chairs to develop a revised proposal for such a study, reflecting the comments made by Board members. A new proposal was placed before the Board in May 2003 and approved on 16 June 2003. In accordance with agreed procedures the IAP was then requested to launch the study with IAP member academies, also requesting them to submit nominations for panel membership. A total of about 50 nominations had been received by the end of October, once again proving the value and vitality of this mechanism.

The IAC Co-Chairs have not yet developed a proposal for the IAC Board on the composition of the Study Panel as it has not yet been possible to secure the funding for the study. However, this may change as in a letter of 5 January 2004 the Chinese Minister of Science and Technology has formally requested the IAC to undertake the study. Also, several new funding sources were approached in December 2003 by the IAC Executive Director, while a new project proposal has been prepared to better reflect the political context of the study.

### **4. *Study on women in science***

In its January 2003 meeting the IAC Board approved the idea of undertaking a study on gender issues in science and it requested the IAC Co-Chairs to develop a proposal. The Board also indicated that, being a first step in a longer process, the study should be in the form of a “short-term advisory project”, that is: a study that can be initiated more quickly; that takes less time (and budget) than normal IAC studies; and that is action-oriented.

In implementing this decision the IAC Co-Chairs and Executive Director had informal consultations on how a gender study could generate value above and beyond all studies already done on gender issues in science. On 5 September 2003 the Executive Director organized a one-day workshop with the following participants.

- Prof. Dr. Ayse Erzan, Professor of physics at the Istanbul Technical University and recipient of a 2003 L’Oréal-UNESCO for Women In Science Award;
- Dr. Johanna Levelt Sengers, Scientist emeritus at the National Institute of Standards & Technology, USA, also recipient of a 2003 L’Oréal-UNESCO for Women In Science Award;

- Prof. Dr. Willem Levelt, President of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences; and
- Prof. Dr. Albert Koers, IAC Executive Director.

The workshop led to a study proposal that – after several iterations – will be placed before the January 2004 meeting of the IAC Board for approval.

#### 5. *Study on Unesco World Heritage Sites*

After informal preparatory discussions, Francesco Bandarin, Director Unesco World Heritage Center, requested, in a letter of 16 September 2003, the IAC to undertake a study to evaluate the current utilization of world heritage natural and mixed sites for scientific research; to recommend new mechanisms for increased scientific participation in identifying new sites; to recommend ways to increase scientific rigour in monitoring sites; and to develop recommendations on engaging policy-makers to use scientific data in decision-making.

In a letter of 8 December 2003, the IAC Co-Chairs responded positively to this request and suggested that a prospectus for the study be developed by the IAC Secretariat in consultation with Unesco staff. That prospectus is now ready and will be placed before the January 2004 Board meeting for approval.

#### 6. *Symposia UN ambassadors*

In 2003 no UN Ambassadors Symposia were organized. Presently, discussions are underway with U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, on organizing a fourth Symposium in the Spring of 2004.

### **Institutional issues**

#### 7. *Relations with IAP*

The IAC participated with observer status in the meetings of the Executive Committee of the IAP in 2003. As was noted above, the IAC was given the opportunity to present an Executive Summary of its study on S&T capacities to the IAP General Conference in Mexico City, while the response of IAP member academies to the request for nominations for the energy study led to a slate of highly qualified persons.

Consultations took place between the IAP and IAC Co-Chairs on two election procedures.

- The IAC Bylaws require that at the end of the January 2005 meeting one-third of the present members of the IAC Board be replaced. The Bylaws also stipulate a procedure under which, as a first step, the IAP must seek nominations from its member academies at least one year ahead of time; the IAP Executive Committee and the IAC Board may then appoint sub-groups to recommend 5 new members of the IAC Board with 10 members to stay; and, lastly, the present IAC Board must decide on the new Board before 1 July 2004. On 19 December 2003 the IAP Co-Chairs initiated this procedure by sending an email to all IAP member academies requesting them to submit nominations for membership of the IAC Board.
- Even earlier comes the election of the IAC Host Academy as its term expires on 31 December 2004. The IAC Bylaws state that for this election as well nominations must be sought from IAP member academies. In preparation for this step the IAC

Co-Chairs asked the present Host Academy, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, whether it wished to continue and in October 2003 the Royal Netherlands Academy answered this question in the positive for at least another term. With that information in hand the IAP and IAC Co-Chairs agreed to seek nominations from all IAP member academies as required by the IAC Bylaws, also informing them of the candidature of the Royal Netherlands Academy. An email to that effect was sent by the IAP Co-Chairs to IAP member academies on 19 December 2003.

#### **8. *Membership IAC Board***

Although some members resigned as President from their respective academies – with one member being appointed to that office! - there were no changes in the composition of the IAC Board in 2003. Accordingly, at the end of that year the Board was composed as follows: as Co-Chairs: Bruce Alberts, President National Academy of Sciences, USA; Goverdhan Mehta, former President Indian National Science Academy; as Members: Janne Carlsson, former President Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences; Hubert Curien, former President Académie des Sciences, France; Jose Antonio de la Peña, 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, President Science Council of Japan; Lee Yee Cheong, former 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 as Observers: Yves Quéré, Co-Chairman InterAcademy Panel on International Issues; Willem Levelt, President Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences; and Jane Lubchenko, President International Council for Science ICSU.

#### **9. *Voluntary contributions and fundraising***

In 2003 the following voluntary contributions were received.

- Brazilian Academy: USD 5.000.
- Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft: USD 20.000.
- Indian National Science Academy: USD 5.000.

As host academy, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences contributed in 2003 about USD 75.000 to the IAC. The National Academy of Sciences, USA, contributed about USD 50.000.

As reported in more detail in the *Financial Report of the IAC Executive Director for 2003 and 2004* the Executive Director took the initiative to strengthen the IAC network and financial base in Europe. Potential donor organizations were identified, information packages were sent to selected organizations, 15 organizations in 7 European countries were visited in September and October 2003 and, lastly, 10 organizations were approached with a specific funding request in December 2003.

#### **10. *Institution building***

At the January 2003 meeting the Board approved a mechanism for short-term advisory projects intended to enable the IAC to undertake studies with a relatively short throughput time. This mechanism will be used for the first time for the proposed study on women in science.

At the same meeting the Board approved an IAC Financial Protocol, also appointing a Financial Committee to oversee the management of the IAC's financial resources. The Committee is composed of three Board members: Janne Carlsson, Lee Yee Cheong and Jacob Ziv.

In anticipation of publishing the first IAC report, the IAC Executive Director decided to undertake a thorough revision of the website, not only in relation to layout and content, but also in relation to the mechanism for keeping it up to date – a mechanism that did not function well with the old website. Designed and developed by Diamax from Washington, D.C., the new website became operational at the end of June 2003. The site can now be remotely managed through the Internet without any technical expertise, be it from Amsterdam or any other place in the universe (with Internet).

In 2003 the IAC was also facing the challenge of undertaking the first review of a draft report, i.e. of the Study Panel on S&T capacities. Realizing that any review process is fraught with potential for misunderstanding and conflict, the IAC Secretariat decided to develop beforehand guidelines and procedures that would make the process as transparent as possible to all involved: Panel members, Study Director, reviewers and review monitors. The *IAC Guidelines for Report Review* are primarily intended for reviewers, while the *IAC Procedures for Report Review* describe the various steps to be taken by the IAC and the Study Panel after receiving the review comments. There can be little doubt that both documents contributed to the fact that several S&T reviewers and both S&T review monitors expressed appreciation for the professional way in which the S&T review process was managed. As review will be a standard feature of all IAC studies, this result is an important step in developing the IAC as an institution.

#### **11. IAC Secretariat**

In 2003 there were no changes in the composition of the IAC Secretariat. It presently consists of: Albert Koers, Executive Director; Dilip Ahuja, Associate Director; John Campbell, Associate Director; and Margreet Haverkamp, Office Manager. The IAC Secretariat continues to be hosted by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences at Amsterdam.

#### **Final observation**

Overall, 2003 has been a good year for the IAC, not only in view of the results that were realized, but also in view of the groundwork laid for 2004. As before, the real credit for these achievements rests with the members of the IAC Study Panels and in particular with their Co-Chairs and Study Directors.

- For the study on S&T capacity building: Jacob Palis, Brazil, and Ismail Serageldin, Egypt, as Co-Chairs; and John Campbell, USA, as Study Director.

- For the study on agriculture in Africa: Ms Speciosa Kazibwe, Uganda, Rudy Rabbinge, the Netherlands, and M.S. Swaminathan, India, as Co-Chairs; and Jim Ryan, Australia, as Study Director.

Being proud of its achievements in 2003, the IAC should pay tribute to all those who gave their wisdom, knowledge, energy and time so freely for the common cause: science for a better future.

Albert Koers  
IAC Executive Director  
14 January 2004