

Report of President of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) about the meeting of Presidents of International Unions belonging to the International Council for Science (ICSU) held in Paris on February 9 and 10, 2004.

ICSU has multiple strength due to the membership of all the International Unions related to Science and the National Academies of Science, plus the Third World Academy of Sciences and other scientific associations.

Among the many possible aspects that need scientific support, ICSU has identified the following six key areas in regards to emerging issues for science and society:

- Life sciences and biotechnology, including genetic modification of food/crops
- Human health, particularly in relation to human genetics and functional genomics; production of antibiotics, enzymes and "gene machines"; biopharming
- Environment and sustainable use of natural resources, encompassing areas such as biodiversity, water recycling, water efficiency technologies and pest control techniques
- Energy, emphasizing the need for new/renewable clean energy sources
- Information and communications technologies
- Materials science, including nanotechnology

Clearly here are some areas in which several of IUAES Commissions are interested, and we ask you to notify our Secretary General of the concrete aspects in which you may collaborate.

Although not included yet in all official documents, other areas, which ICSU considers of great importance, are:

- Capacity building of new and established scientist in all of the World, but with special emphasis in Africa, and the transfer of technology
- Disaster management
- Human security, in particular that of refugees
- The strengthening of Social Sciences and their link with the Natural Sciences
- Ethics in science
- Traditional knowledge, defined as "a cumulative body of knowledge, know-how, practices and representations maintained and developed by peoples with extended histories of interaction with the natural environment. These

sophisticated sets of understandings, interpretations and meanings are part and parcel of a cultural complex that encompasses language, naming and classification systems, resource use practices, ritual, spirituality and worldview."

ICSU has begun to establish centers in areas of the World where they are needed: Latin America, Africa, the Arab countries and Asia, which should play a major role in capacity building and the transfer of technology.

IUAES Commissions are encouraged to take advantage of this new situation and let our Secretary General know of your initiatives, in special in the domain of capacity building, in connection with other Unions.

ICSU encourages all its Unions to look for specific areas in which they can work together and have better opportunities to find financial support.

One of the agreements reached in Paris is to join the interests of IUAES, the International Geographic Union (IGU) and the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) in a project related to migration. We foresee that several of our Commissions could participate in a project that will be defined according to the general interests of the group, and encourage those interested to get in touch as soon as possible with our Secretary General and name a person who will act as a liaison for your Commission. At the end of this letter we will include the names of all the other Unions with whom similar projects may be proposed.

On February 11, 2004 a small group of Unions met at the French Academy of Medicine to discuss activities in the area of Science for health and well being, invited by the International Union of Biological Sciences.

It was found that several Unions have a great potential to make an impact on international organizations in regards to providing a more comprehensive view of the needs of humanity to achieve health and well being. In order to empower the science community, the public and policy-makers in all countries with the knowledge base to affect their health and well being, the goals of this initiative are to:

- Demonstrate the extent to which a range of science and technology is important for human health and well being
- Educate (at multiple levels) about science and technology using modern means of communication
- Collaborate to identify areas unmet and produce new ideas, science partnerships to look to the future
- Develop an inventory of ongoing programs and activities in order to identify unmet needs.

Some of the immediate areas that were identified were: living environments, connections between water and health, the impacts of technology on health and well-being and food and nutrition.

The group worked on the draft of a new model to support this interdisciplinary health initiative, which will be distributed soon.

Unions were encouraged to propose interdisciplinary short courses of a day or two, for capacity building. For instance, the International Union of Geological Sciences has been successful in offering a short course on Medical Geology during the last years.

We invite IUAES Commissions to let us know of their interest in particular activities concerning this initiative.

In order to allow IUAES Commissions to better plan their participation in ICSU, we include the names of our sister International Unions: International Astronomical Union (IAU), International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB), International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), International Union of Pure and Applied Biophysics (IUPAB), International Brain Research Organization (IBRO), International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), International Union of Crystallography (IUCr), International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST), International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), International Geographical Union (IGU), International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS), International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS), International Mathematical Union (IMU), International Union of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (IUTAM), International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS), International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS), International Union of Pharmacology (IUPHAR), International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine (IUPESM), International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP), International Union of Physiological Sciences (IUPS), International Union of Psychological Sciences (IUPsyS), Union Radio-Scientifique International (URSI), International Union of Soil Science (IUSS), and International Union of Toxicology (IUTOX).