



Report on the Sixth Meeting of the IANAS Executive Committee

**12-13 July, 2008
San José, Costa Rica**

Participants:

EC Members: Hernan Chaimovich (Brazilian Academy of Sciences); Juan Pedro Laclette (Mexican Academy of Sciences); Alejandro Arvia (National Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Argentina); Claudio Bifano (Academy of Physical, Mathematical and Natural Sciences of Venezuela); Gabriel Macaya (National Academy of Sciences, Costa Rica); Howard Alper (The Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada); Juan Asenjo (Chilean Academy of Sciences); Maria del Carmen Samayoa (Academy of Medical, Physical and Natural Sciences of Guatemala); Michael Clegg (National Academy of Sciences, USA).

Invited Guest: Ana Cecilia Osorio (CLARA – Latin American Cooperation of Advanced Networks); John Boright (US National Academy of Sciences).

Executive Secretary: Marcos Cortesão Barnsley Scheuenstuhl (Brazilian Academy of Sciences).

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was opened at 9:00 a.m. by Gabriel Macaya, President of the National Academy of Sciences of Costa Rica. He welcomed participants to San José, stating that it was a big honor for the Academy to host the VI Meeting of the IANAS Executive Committee (EC) and the V Meeting of the IANAS Science Education Program, held just two days prior to the EC meeting. Being the Costa Rican Academy a relatively young organization, the opportunity to host meetings such as these are important to help increase the visibility of the Academy. He reported that his Academy has been interacting closely with the IANAS Science Education Program and he was proud to inform that the government of Costa Rica has decided to establish a national science education program inspired in the IANAS program, having the Academy of Sciences been invited to coordinate this program. He wished the members of the EC a fruitful discussion and an enjoyable stay in Costa Rica.

The co-chairs congratulated the Costa Rican Academy for organizing the meetings of the IANAS EC and of the Science Education Program, thanking participants for coming to San José. They acknowledged the success of the recent meeting of the Science Education

Program, highlighting the leadership of Jorge Allende and José Lozano, who have been dedicating a lot of time and effort to successfully implement this IANAS program. The support of OAS to the Science Education Program was also noted. Co-chairs also congratulated the host Academy for sensitizing the Costa Rican government on the importance of establishing a national science education program. In sequence, they stressed the importance of the EC meeting for the discussion and approval of the Strategic Plan, which would establish priorities and set the floor for the future steps of the network.

A final consideration was made on the increasing challenges of IANAS. With the growth of the network, experience was demonstrating that future meetings, especially of the programs, would demand simultaneous translations to make discussion more effective. At the last meetings of both the Science Education and Water programs, debate constantly shifted to Spanish, excluding English speaking participants from the discussion. Although the cost of simultaneous translation is high, the EC agreed that the network should assist, when necessary, to help pay for this service. It was reaffirmed that the official language for IANAS meetings was English, being allowed the use of other languages if simultaneous translation was provided.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The second item on the agenda was the discussion and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting of the EC held in Antigua, Guatemala, on December 2007. These had been previously circulated to the members of the EC and the corrections suggested by the members of the EC had been incorporated.

The Co-chairs asked if all had read the final version of the minutes and if there were any corrections or addendums to be made. With no additional comments, the minutes were unanimously approved.

3. REPORT OF THE CO-CHAIRS

The co-chairs presented a brief report on the recent activities of the network. Resuming its collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS), IANAS was invited by the Department of Science and Technology of OAS, which serves as the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology (COMCYT), to chair a virtual forum on “Science, Technology, Engineering and Innovation as Instruments for Prosperity”, organized within the preparatory framework of the Second Meeting of Ministers of Science and Technology of the Hemisphere, to be held in Mexico City on 27-28 of October of 2008. The forum is being chaired by H. Chaimovich, who invited the members of the IANAS EC to visit the forum’s website and provide their views and contributions. In the ministerial meeting in Mexico, IANAS will be represented by J.P. Laclette.

The substantial support provided by OAS to the IANAS Science Education Program was noted. In 2007 the program received from FEMCIDI (Special Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development) USD 63,700.00, having the 2008 grant reached the amount of USD 144,100.00. In the meeting of the program concluded just one day ago, it was decided that the program would approach FEMCIDI to apply for a USD 160,000.00 grant for 2009. These grants have been crucial for the strengthening of science education in the Americas and IANAS recognizes and thanks the OAS for this generous support.

Another important action is the ongoing organization of IANAS workshops. Under the invitation of IAP and IAC, the network decided in the last meeting of the EC - held in Guatemala - that IANAS would organize regional workshops to address the recommendations of the IAC reports “Lighting the Way: Toward a Sustainable Energy Future” and “Women for Science”. The first will be hosted by the National Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Argentina, on October 2008, being the second hosted by the Mexican Academy of Sciences in a date to be discussed further in the meeting. The organizing committees of both workshops have been working steadily and the expected outcome is most promising. Similarly, as discussed in Antigua, IANAS will also be organizing a workshop on “Science Funding Landscape”. The organizing committee established in Guatemala has been working hard and both IAP and IDRC (International Development Research Center) have been approached to discuss joint sponsorship. Co-chairs congratulated the Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada (RSC) for the initiative of approaching IDRC, which is discussing the possibility of granting USD 25,000.00 to support this workshop.

Co-chairs also reported on the four proposals that were submitted to IAP for funding of IANAS activities in 2009. On behalf of IANAS, the following proposals were presented to IAP: (1) the Brazilian Academy of Sciences submitted a project entitled “S&T Capacity Building for the Americas: Support to the IANAS Network”, which aims the funding of the core activities of IANAS; (2) the Mexican Academy of Sciences submitted a project entitled “Bridging Water Research and Management: Enhancing Water Management Capacity in the Americas”, which aims the funding of the activities of the Water Program; (3) the Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences submitted a project entitled “Science Education Program (IANAS SEP) 2009”, for the funding of activities of this program; (4) and the RSC submitted a project entitled “IANAS Workshop on the Science Funding Landscape in Central and South America”, aiming at the co-sponsorship of IAP to this activity.

The need of the EC to further discuss the organization’s bylaws was also pointed by the co-chairs. The recent process related to the NASAC statement to the G8 on the role of science, technology and innovation in promoting global development demonstrated that IANAS still has to develop clearer procedures for the issuing of statements. A few IANAS Academies were uncomfortable with the endorsement of the NASAC statement, which led to the inclusion of a legal framework item in the agenda of the present meeting.

The report was closed with a note on the importance of IANAS to define more clearly how it relates to countries that do not have a science academy. Some times contacts are established with members of the local scientific communities; other times with government officials from the national research council. In the discussions to be held during the meeting, the organization should establish more precise rules on how to approach countries where capacity building activities are foreseen.

4. CURRENT MISSION OF IANAS

H. Chaimovich noted that the discussion of the Strategic Plan, initiated a few months ago, pointed the need for a more thorough debate on the mission and role of IANAS. If we are to set the stage for the coming years, it is important that the EC has a very clear view on how should the network be structured to efficiently implement its actions. Similarly, it is crucial that we have a clear notion of our limits and on how to relate with other organizations such as ICSU and TWAS.

The discussion indicated a common understanding on what the organization is and what it plans to do, being this clearly stated at the Strategic Plan. The core mission of the organization is networking, bringing information together and making it available for use. Another fundamental mission of IANAS is to help enhance science communities in the region, through the strengthening of Academies as effective instruments of science advisers to governments and society. There was a general agreement that IANAS is not a funding agency, but an organization that can act as a broker.

C. Bifano stressed the importance of understanding regional diversity, emphasizing that countries with less organized scientific communities should receive a stronger support from the network. Emphasis must be given to capacity building, with the local needs having to be identified through a bottom-up process. J. Asenjo reinforced this view, underlining the importance of involving as many countries as possible in a regional mobility program to be implemented by IANAS.

G. Macaya highlighted networking as a major accomplishment of IANAS, recognizing that the Costa Rican Academy had enhanced its relevance in society through the implementation of actions such as the Science Education Programme. He stressed that the opportunities provided by the IANAS can be very important for the strengthening of new and young Academies. J.P. Laclette cited the examples of Costa Rica and Guatemala as two successful cases on how IANAS contributed to enhance the role of Academies. A. Arvia also accentuated this aspect, stressing that each country has to be analyzed independently. He mentioned the experience of the Argentinean Academy in its contacts with Uruguay, which he expects will be able to build its Academy in the near future.

Referring to the last EC meeting in Guatemala, M. Cortesão emphasized the importance of stimulating a more active collaboration between IANAS, ICSU and TWAS in the Americas. Important steps have already been given on this direction and a good example is the joint organization of the “Women for Science” Workshop. For the successful building of this collaboration, a key aspect is the understanding of the mission and limit of each organization so that they can work together and avoid overlaps. On what is related to the mobility program, IANAS should implement what it had already decided: approach TWAS, which has a mobility program in operation, to discuss how can it contribute to strengthen the existing program. H. Alper reinforced this view, emphasizing that differently from IANAS, TWAS is a funding organization. To contribute to the TWAS mobility program, IANAS should produce an inventory to identify what is already being done in the Americas on this area. IANAS has to identify creative tools where it can contribute to this process, making a difference. He also congratulated IANAS for its Strategic Plan, which he considered excellent.

To help structure the mobility program, the EC agreed that IANAS needs to develop an information system to collect the information and make it available. There are many opportunities in Canada, the US, Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Argentina. The network has to build tools to identify these opportunities and make it reach those who might benefit from them. The network’s function in this process is to serve as a broker and not as a fund raiser or agency that decides who benefits from the opportunities.

5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Michael Clegg recalled that at the last meeting of the EC, held in Guatemala, a committee was constituted to prepare a second version of the Strategic Plan based on the discussion held in Antigua. This version was drafted and circulated to member Academies for review. After hearing the Academies, the committee consolidated a new version that was now being presented to the EC (Annex 1). Clegg stressed that this new version should be seen as an extensive list of proposals that should be looked at as a working plan, where priorities had to be established.

After reading and discussing the document, the EC suggested rephrasing the part related to the organization's vision. More than providing science advice to governments and society, Academies should develop efforts to engage society. As for the strategies that should be adopted to implement this vision, S,T&I networking should be emphasized as an essential component for economic development, poverty reduction and the improvement of the quality of life. Later in the document, when listing the accomplishments of IANAS, the reference to the differences between natural sciences, technology and the social sciences should be removed. Additionally, rather than listing the IANAS accomplishments, this part of the text should be summarized, indicating additional information can be obtained at the website.

On the section dedicated to the goals for the 2007-2010 triennium, a global renumbering of the items was suggested. As for the specific goals: (a) on "Work with IAP and IAC to develop regional workshops" two adjustments were proposed: the date of the "Women for Science" workshop, which was postponed to February 2009, and the inclusion of an item proposing the organization of subsequent workshops to implement the outcomes of the "Energy" and "Women for Science" workshops; (b) On "Capacity Building for Academies", rather than stating that IANAS will create new Academies, it should be stated that IANAS will support the creation of new Academies and Science Associations in Countries where this appears to be an appropriate first step; (c) As for "Scientific Mobility", the EC considered that the mobility program should be better defined, making it clear that IANAS itself will not establish a program, but assemble and make available information on existing opportunities. The idea is that IANAS produces an inventory with the existing opportunities, as well as the needs of specific countries, acting basically as a broker; (d) When of the detailing of the goal "Continue to foster partnerships with OAS, IDB, TWAS, ICSU and other organizations with an interest in strengthening science in the hemisphere", on item c the phrasing should be "Work with IDB and OAS to develop inputs to the development of national STI strategies"; (e) As for the "Development of additional resources", item b should be deleted. When of the development of the fund raising strategy, as stated on item a, specific actions will be discussed and decided.

After amending the proposed draft, the EC approved the Strategic Plan. A Fund Raising Committee was also established, being constituted by J.P. Laclette (chair), J. Asenjo, Y. Guindon and J. Boright. This committee will prepare a fund raising strategy to the network and a maximum two pages document (brochure) providing a background on the organization. Potential participants from the private sector in IANAS countries will also be identified and invited to join this committee. The EC also decided to establish a Governance Committee, constituted by J.P. Laclette, H. Alper, M. Clegg and M. Cortesão. Based on the IANAS experience, this committee will look into the Statutes approved at the last General Assembly and draft a Rule of Procedures for the organization. This set of documents should provide a general guideline for the network's governance, detailing procedures in issues not foreseen in the Statutes. This committee will work inspired in the IAP Bylaws and shall meet to close a proposal that will be presented to debate at the next meeting of the EC. Specific attention will

be given in the definition of procedures for the issuing of IANAS Statements, to avoid situations as the one recently experienced with the NASAC Statement.

6. CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

Under the invitation of IANAS, Ana Cecilia Osorio, project coordinator of the CLARA network (Latin-American Cooperation of Advanced Networks) delivered a presentation on the mission of CLARA and their interest to collaborate with IANAS. After the presentation, the two networks agreed to develop further contacts to identify opportunities for joint action.

In sequence, H. Chaimovich raised a discussion on the IANAS Secretariat, pointing the need for the future General Assembly to decide where should the secretariat be hosted and how should it operate. The Brazilian Academy of Sciences has been hosting the secretariat since the inauguration of the network, but once Brazil will leave co-chairmanship in 2010, this would be an opportunity to consider whether a Permanent Secretariat should be established or not. The members of the EC considered that the secretariat has been working effectively in Brazil and this should be taken into account. On the other hand, J.P. Laclette pondered that once he would probably continue as a co-chair, Mexico should also be considered as a possibility. All agreed that this was an important issue that should be addressed at a future meeting of the EC.

Another issue that was raised for discussion was the functioning of the IANAS website. H. Chaimovich recalled that at the last meeting of the EC, the US NAS presented the possibility of collaborating with IANAS on the design, hosting and maintenance of a web portal. J. Boright stated that a web portal demands a lot of work and he agrees that it is important to consider possibilities. He also stressed that the EC should also look for funding possibilities for the web portal, once funds are not available for this purpose at the moment. It was decided that the co-chairs would look deeper into this problem and bring alternatives to the next meeting of the EC. Similarly, a letter will be sent to the US NAS asking for the possibility of having the Academy support more effectively the web portal.

H. Alper then informed that the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) had been approached by the RSC to explore the possible interest of that organization to support a IANAS Workshop on Science Funding Landscape. IDRC had replied to RSC expressing its interest and asking for further details on the objectives and scope of the workshop. RSC had already replied to IDRC and in the near future an official answer would be sent to IANAS. Alper stated that he was quiet optimistic about the possibility of obtaining support. In a parallel manner, IANAS has also submitted a funding proposal for IAP. In September, when of the IAP EC meet in Canada, IAP will announce the projects that will be receiving funds for 2009.

The next issue on this agenda item was the discussion on the exchange of expertise. At the EC meeting in Antigua, a committee constituted by C. Bifano and J. Asenjo was constituted, with the responsibility to prepare a template that will be sent to the IANAS Academies, to identify local needs and available opportunities. Asenjo informed that the committee had already prepared a first version of the template and that in the near future he will be presenting to the co-chairs a template proposal. Once this proposal is available, the co-chairs will consult the EC electronically to decide action.

It was decided that C. Bifano will coordinate the IANAS Capacity Building Programme. To assist in the structuring of capacity building activities in Central America, G. Macaya and

MdC. Samayoa will assist Bifano. In the implementation of capacity building actions, the EC stressed that IANAS needs to be cautious to avoid interventions. The programme shall identify the different actors that shall be approached, identifying the capacities existing within each country (to be identified in the ISI databank). At the next meeting of the EC, Bifano will present a plan of action for the programme.

7. ENERGY WORKSHOP

The state of the art of the workshop was presented by A. Arvia. He presented the brochure that was prepared by the Argentinean Academy, where the objectives and outline of the workshop were detailed. (ANNEX 2). The workshop will consist of two main parts. On the first, Academies of Sciences and Engineering will organize a discussion on the scientific and technical aspects of energy sustainability, involving private sector technical experts. On the second part, sustainable energy options of IANAS countries will be addressed. Government officials and private sector decision makers will be invited to participate extensively in this part of the workshop. Arvia noted that IANAS Academies would also be invited to provide inputs and potential participants to the workshop. He also informed that the Minister of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation of Argentina would also be attending the workshop.

EC members congratulated and thanked the National Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Argentina for organizing the workshop. A general discussion on the design of the workshop was held and it was decided that the workshop's organizing committee urgently needed to identify potential speakers for each of the four proposed roundtables. It was a common understanding that several experts would have to be invited and the definition of the final program would only be possible after many contacts. Considering that time is short, EC members should send ASAP their suggestions on names to be contacted as potential speakers, taking into account geographical and gender balance. It was agreed that once the speakers were decided, the organizing committee should ask them to present, previous to the workshop, a short concept paper on their presentation, which will be made available to participants. The organizing committee will be sending shortly to the IANAS Academies a PDF version of the workshop's brochure.

8. WOMEN FOR SCIENCE WORKSHOP

J.P. Lalette informed that the organizing committee of the Women for Science Workshop has been discussing the design and the framework of the workshop. A rich debate has been held, but a common view has not yet been reached. H. Chaimovich informed that he had discussed this issue with the regional offices of ICSU and TWAS, which are co-sponsors of this workshop, and both offices proposed postponing the workshop to the beginning of 2009. He stressed that although he himself had initially defended holding the workshop as a satellite event to the TWAS General Meeting, his feeling was that, due to the heavy agenda of the TWAS meeting, the IANAS workshop would be totally diluted if the proposed date was maintained. Lalette complemented that he had discussed this issue with the new president of the Mexican Academy of Sciences and she had agreed to move the workshop to the first trimester of 2009, in order to assure a stronger impact to the activity. The EC agreed with the arguments presented by the co-chairs and approved the postponing of this workshop. In the near future the workshop's organizing committee will be presenting to the co-chairs an agenda proposal based on a two-days workshop, to be held in Mexico City.

9. SCIENCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Just prior to the IANAS EC meeting, the Science Education Programme held the annual meeting of its national focal points. Under the invitation of the co-chairs, C. Bifano, who had attended the science education meeting, provided a general overview on the meeting. Bifano stated that the Academies that were present at the meeting reported their science education activities over the last year. He noted that a central theme of the meeting was the discussion of the OAS/FECIDI project. As the EC members were aware, thanks to the leadership of Jorge Allende the OAS had approved a substantial grant to the IANAS Science Education Programme, which had allowed the implementation of activities in several countries. During the meeting of the focal points, a report on the developed activities was presented and the activities to be implemented with the 2008 budget were discussed and decided. Maria del Carmen Samayoa (Guatemala) was elected vice-coordinator of the programme and José Lozano (Colombia) was re-elected coordinator. Jorge Allende (Chile) completes the coordination of the programme, as past-coordinator.

The members of the EC expressed their recognition to the achievements of the programme, congratulating J. Allende and J. Lozano for their efforts and achievements. The wide implementation and impact of the program in Latin America was also acknowledged. H. Chaimovich noted that IANAS' effort to incorporate the evaluation component to the global IAP Science Education Programme had been successful, being this a concern that has been present at the IANAS program since its initial steps. In closing, A. Arvia informed that coming November the Argentinean Academy will be hosting in Cordoba, with the support of IANAS, a workshop on science education at the primary school level, in a partnership with the Ministry of Education.

10. WATER PROGRAMME

M. Cortesão reported on the current status of the water programme. He briefed the EC on the last meeting of the focal points of the programme held at the Dominican Republic, detailing the approved plan of action. In the coming months, the programme will stimulate IANAS members to establish National Water Committees that will help Academies provide advice to local governments and society. These committees will be encouraged to prepare white papers providing a strategic view on the national water resources. Additionally, these committees shall try to implement capacity building activities aiming the enhancement of local water management capacities. Under the leadership of the Mexican Academy of Sciences, the programme will organize a regional workshop and capacity building training course focused on "Integrated Water Resources Management in Metropolitan Regions", to be held in Mexico City on September 2009.

The members of the EC recognized that the programme was evolving quite successfully, having involved a good number of Science Academies. Chaimovich stated that a very positive aspect of the program was the concern on getting top-level water researchers and not only representatives from the Academies to act as national focal points. In conclusion, the members of the EC agreed that José Tundisi and Blanca Jimenez, co-chairs of the programme, should be congratulated for their accomplishments.

11. REPORT ON NEW INITIATIVES

J. P. Laclette noted that the Mexican Academy of Sciences had signed agreements with the Academies of Bolivia, Costa Rica, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama and Peru to support these countries in the implementation of Science Education Programmes. The Mexican Ministry of Education will allocate 35,000 USD to each of the Academies of these countries, to support the development of science education efforts. H. Chaimovich stated that IANAS should officially thank the Mexican government for this generous support. He also recognized the important contribution of J.P. Laclette in making this action effective.

As for the Amazonian initiative, proposed by the Brazilian Academy of Sciences in the Guatemala meeting, H. Chaimovich stated that the Amazonia Working Group of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences had recently concluded the report “Amazonia: a 21st Century Brazilian Challenge. The Need for a Scientific and Technological Revolution”. This report was presented to the Brazilian government, with a very positive acceptance. The report had a strong repercussion at the most important vehicles of the Brazilian press. Chaimovich stated that several newspapers and television programs mentioned the proposals presented by the Academy’s Amazonia working group, referring to it as an important and innovative contribution to discuss present and future challenges of the Amazon region.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

M. Clegg stated that for a few years the NAS has been organizing annual symposia on “Frontiers of Science”. These symposia bring together some the very best young scientists to discuss exciting advances and opportunities in their fields in a format that encourages informal collective as well as one-on-one discussions among participants. At each symposium, a small number of young scientists report on current research within their disciplines to an academically trained and scientifically diverse audience. They highlight major research challenges, methodologies, and limitations to progress at the frontiers of their respective fields. All attendees participate actively in a general discussion period, during which they learn from and form collaborative relationships with other young scientists in different fields. According to Clegg, the “Frontiers of Science” symposia have become a major instrument in bringing together the best young researchers--the next generation of leaders--in the natural sciences and engineering fields, in the United States and around the world. Taking this experience into account, IANAS could approach the NAS to discuss the possible organization of joint NAS – IANAS “Frontiers of Science” symposia. These would have to be focused and involve a limited number of countries at a time, but could be an interesting initiative to be developed. The members of the EC agreed to further discuss this proposing, discussing with the NAS how could this be developed.

Having covered the meeting’s agenda and having no other business to discuss, the co-chairs thanked G. Macaya and the National Academy of Sciences of Costa Rica for the excellent job in organizing the Sixth Meeting of the IANAS Executive Committee. The co-chairs highlighted the quality of the discussion and thanked the members of the EC for coming to Costa Rica. A special thanks was made to the team from the Costa Rican Academy, coordinated by Erika Pérez, for the efficient support provided in the organization of the meeting.

NEXT MEETING

It was decided that the next meeting of the IANAS Executive Committee will be in Mexico City at the end of February of 2009, right before or after the IANAS Women for Science Workshop. Co-chairs will be contacting the Mexican Academy of Sciences to discuss the organization of this meeting and in the near future the members of the Executive Committee will be receiving further details.