

Secretary General's Column

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In this month's column I would like to comment on the 39th General Assembly, held in Geneva, Switzerland, 23–30 August 1997, and to report some of the major actions by the Bureau and Council. In my opinion, this was a very successful meeting, in which about 670 chemists participated, primarily in dozens of meetings of small groups—commissions, committees, working parties and task forces. The enormous amount of scientific work done during the long hours of each day's meetings covers a range of subjects much too diverse to be described here, but this dedicated effort on the part of many volunteers forms the core of IUPAC's accomplishments.

The venue of the General Assembly was the University of Geneva, where we found excellent facilities and superb services provided by the local organizing committee, under the chairmanship of Prof. Jacques Weber. Most of the detailed arrangements and services fell to Mme. Nathalie Girard and her staff, who not only met all our needs but anticipated virtually all of them to provide a very smoothly running meeting.

Scientific Policy and Management of Projects. Looming as background to the entire General Assembly was the issue of restructuring the Union and updating our mission and goals to face the world-wide challenges of the modern world of chemistry. In my column in the July issue of *Chemistry International*, I summarized proposals to develop specific long-range goals for IUPAC, to introduce more flexibility into the appointment and operation of commissions and working parties, and to emphasize a project-driven system. The Strategy Development and Implementation Committee (SDIC) is addressing these issues, and the General Assembly provided an ideal forum for everyone, ranging from individual Commission Members to Division Presidents, to express views and provide valuable input to the SDIC's planning process. The SDIC will meet in early 1998 to develop specific proposals, and I will keep readers of *Chemistry International* informed of the results.

Meanwhile, at Geneva a number of discussions in

both the Bureau and Council recognized the importance of the SDIC's task. While voting to extend the term of all Commissions until the end of 1999 (except for one Commission whose responsibilities have been taken over by a Technical Committee of the International Standards Organization), Council made clear its concerns about the need for sharper focus of the Commissions' activities when it approved a resolution introduced by the UK, 'Council urges Division Committees to continue to propose topics of importance for study and report by their Commissions. Commission programmes should be carefully controlled and/or reduced by at least 25% over the next two years so that high priority programmes may be completed more expeditiously and efficiently in future'. The SDIC and the Executive Committee will determine how best to implement this requirement.

Elections. Council elected Dr Alan Hayes, outgoing Chairman of the CHEMRAWN Committee, as Vice-President for the next biennium and President in 2000–2001, and it elected Prof. John Ward to complete a final two-year term as Treasurer. Six vacancies on the Bureau were filled by election of Dr E.P. Przybylowicz and Prof. G. Somsen and re-election of Profs. E.J. Grzywa, J.W. Lorimer, L.K. Sydnes and C.-H. Zhang for a second term. The Bureau elected Dr. Przybylowicz and Prof. H. Ohtaki to fill vacancies on the Executive Committee. A complete list of Bureau Members and of Officers of all IUPAC bodies for 1998-99 is included with this issue of *Chemistry International*, pages 197–212.

Individual Member Programmes. During the last two years the Affiliate Membership Programme has been analyzed by an *ad hoc* committee set up by the Bureau under the Chairmanship of Prof. Jack Lorimer. Two years ago the AMP was thought to be a financial drain on the Union, but changes in operational policies have reduced costs, and future activities centred at the new Secretariat are expected to emphasize electronic communications,

with further cost reductions. Council approved the Lorimer Committee's recommendation to continue the AMP for the next biennium, during which further efforts will be made to expand membership and revitalize the Programme.

The Lorimer Committee made a second important recommendation, also approved by Council, to establish an IUPAC Fellows Programme, which will be open to all persons who have completed service on any IUPAC body. This Programme will recognize the service to IUPAC by these individuals, will facilitate their continuing involvement with the Union, and will gradually establish a large cadre of people who can provide a source of ideas and expertise for future IUPAC projects. Policies and procedures for implementing the Fellows Programme will be developed and implemented during the coming months.

Membership of the Union. Council approved the admission of National Adhering Organizations (NAOs) from Yugoslavia, Puerto Rico and Pakistan. Yugoslavia (representing chemists in Serbia and Montenegro) constituted a readmission, while Pakistan and Puerto Rico were previously Observer Countries. There are now 42 NAOs in IUPAC.

Council established a category of Provisional Membership to permit the Bureau or Executive Committee to act provisionally on applications from potential NAOs between Council meetings. Council also agreed that individual experts from non-adhering countries may serve provisionally on IUPAC Commissions and Committees.

Names of Elements 101 to 109. As usual, Council was called on to ratify all recommendations for nomenclature and symbols approved on its behalf by the Interdivisional Committee on Nomenclature and Symbols. Because of the controversy surrounding the names of the transfermium elements, a separate vote was taken on this document and resulted in overwhelming approval of the revised recommendation by the Commission on Nomenclature of Inorganic Chemistry, which will appear in the December 1997 issue of *Pure and Applied Chemistry*. The recommended names and symbols, as announced previously (*Chemistry International* 1997, **19**, 68–69), are:

Element	Name	Symbol
101	Mendelevium	Md
102	Nobelium	No
103	Lawrencium	Lr
104	Rutherfordium	Rf
105	Dubnium	Db
106	Seaborgium	Sg
107	Bohrium	Bh
108	Hassium	Hs
109	Meitnerium	Mt

NAOs and national chemical societies are being urged to adopt these recommendations, and that has

been done in at least one large country. The Nomenclature Committee of the American Chemical Society, which met soon after the IUPAC General Assembly, endorsed all the names, which will be used henceforth in ACS publications.

Finances. Council accepted the Treasurer's recommended budget for 1998–99, along with an increase in national subscriptions of 3% each year to maintain approximately constant real income in the face of expected inflation.

Tribute to Mo Williams. Council paid tribute to Dr Mo (Maurice) Williams, who retired in April after 29 years of service as Executive Secretary to IUPAC. He has remained in an advisory capacity for the last six months. President Fischli presented Dr Williams with a silver salver inscribed with the signatures of the 15 IUPAC Presidents under whom he served (see page 179).

Future Congresses and General Assemblies. Council gave final approval to Berlin as the site of the 40th General Assembly (7–14 August 1999) and 37th Congress (14–19 August 1999). The 40th General Assembly will be held at the Freie University of Berlin, and the 37th Congress at the International Congress Center in Berlin. Council also accepted the proposal of the Australian NAO to hold the 38th Congress and 41st General Assembly in Brisbane, Australia, in 2001. The 38th Congress is provisionally scheduled for 1–6/7 July 2001 at the Brisbane Convention Centre, and the 41st General Assembly for 7–14 July 2001 at the University of Queensland, Brisbane. Final approval is expected to be given in two years, when detailed plans have been formulated.

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