

CTC IN THE 1997-1999 BIENNIUM

Report to IUPAC Council

13-14 August 1999, Berlin, Germany

The terms of reference and modus operandi of CTC have continued unchanged during this biennium.

1. Advise the President and the Executive Committee on Educational Matters

Following the CTC meeting in Geneva, at which the future prospects for CTC were discussed, a paper "CTC and the Scientific Policy of the Union - a View to the Future" was submitted to the Executive. Subsequently we responded to the request to relate the current activities of CTC to the Strategic Plan. Finally, in support of the preparation of the Vice-President's Critical Assessment, we gave further input on the role of CTC within IUPAC. We await the outcomes from these inputs with interest.

CTC has played an active part in selected international IUPAC initiatives. Thus we participated for the first time in the last meeting (early 1998) of the Executive Committee of the International Council for Chemistry, held in Paris, and will do so again shortly. We also participated in the IUPAC-AAPAC Joint Meeting on Chemistry in the Development of Africa, held in Durban, mid-1998. In such cases, CTC may be said to advise on educational matters, adding a dimension to the IUPAC input that would not otherwise be properly represented.

2. Coordinate the Educational Interests and Activities of all IUPAC Bodies

During the biennium, we continued to have little success with this task, despite a meeting with a number of Division Presidents in Geneva in 1997 and a subsequent letter to them and to Division Representatives on CTC. We continue to learn of educational initiatives within Divisions by accident, and CTC participation, with one exception, is never sought. The one exception continues to be our very fruitful, continuing cooperation with the Commission on Toxicology. Following a constructive joint meeting in Geneva, Drs Duffus and Worth undertook the drafting of a manuscript (Introduction to Toxicology) aimed at secondary school teachers and teacher educators. The first draft has been completed and circulated to CTC for review. It holds great promise to fill a serious gap in the knowledge of chemistry teachers worldwide. The challenge will be to manage its publication in such a way that it is made accessible to the majority of such teachers.

3. Act as an Informational and Coordinating Body for Chemical Education Activities Throughout the World and Establish a System of National Representatives as a Channel of Communication. Develop Liaison with International Organisations such as UNESCO and with National Chemical Societies or Chemical Education Committees

We continue to have some success in the undertaking of these tasks. The biennial International Conference on Chemical Education continues to be an important vehicle by which CTC plays its part in information dissemination and coordination. The 15th ICCE was held in Cairo in mid-1998, the first such conference in Africa and in the Arabic world. This is also the first ICCE from which the plenary lectures will be published in Pure and Applied Chemistry. We are grateful to our Egyptian colleagues for organising a very good programme and providing CTC and IUPAC with the opportunity to introduce our work to so many new chemistry educators. We hope to maintain the lines of communication thereby established in the future, by means of support for regional events. We also hope that the 16th ICCE to be held in Budapest in mid-2000, will attract substantial participation from Eastern Europe particularly, and open wider the CTC window on

this part of the world community of chemistry educators.

Following this same philosophy, CTC supported the 1st International Conference of University Chemistry Teachers, held in Santa Fe, Argentina in April, 1999. This attracted more than 200 delegates from Latin American countries and from Spain, and again provided an opportunity to demonstrate the role of CTC to many new chemistry educators. The well-organised event was characterised by impressive enthusiasm and commitment of delegates. Once again, these new lines of communication need to be nurtured in the future, to give real meaning to the international coordination role of CTC.

Information dissemination through publications is an obvious imperative for CTC. However, publishing must be followed by distribution or else the whole effort is frustrated. The previous achievement of low-cost publishing in India has been frustrated by exactly this problem. Worthy manuscripts can be published by traditional publishers, but the selling price is too high for most teachers of chemistry. We have yet to resolve this general problem, which at this moment is specifically faced by a manuscript on research in chemical education.

Liaison with UNESCO has strengthened during the biennium. A UNESCO representative attended much of the CTC meeting in Geneva; CTC participates in meetings of the Executive Committee of the UNESCO-IUPAC International Council for Chemistry; the cooperation agreement on the promotion of low-cost equipment for chemistry has led to workshops being conducted in Belarus, Bulgaria, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Moldova, Namibia, Russia, and South Africa. Further workshops are anticipated in West Africa later this year.

Liaison with ICSU is in course of development, particularly through the ICSU Programme on Capacity Building in Science. A conference under the auspices of this programme, which is being held in Budapest, mid-1999, will provide an opportunity for CTC to link up with similar committees and commissions of other scientific unions.

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