**Minutes of AsCA Council Meeting:**

**11:40am 22 November 2006**

**Room 304**

**Epochal Conference Center**

**Tsukuba, Japan**

**In Attendance:**

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1.          President Vijayan welcomed all council members to the meeting and especially IUCr president Prof. Ohashi and IUCr representative Prof. Desiraju.  He also was pleased to announce that the organization now has a functioning web-site thanks to the efforts of Dr. Sekar, and Profs. Guss and Hall.

2.          Prof Williams made a brief statement of the financial status of the society, based on the accounts kindly provided by Prof. Hall the AsCA trustee. There had been little financial activity since the past meeting.  Some profits from AsCA04 Hong Kong had been transferred to the AsCA account and member countries dues were almost completely paid for 2005 and 2006. Outgoings were limited in the past two years, so that the total funds had just exceeded A$100,000 for the first time. These were in a high interest bearing account in Australia currently giving 6.33% effective yield. This was equivalent to an accrual of a further A$500 per month in interest. Whilst equities had been doing well it was the view that the funds should remain in this short term deposit account for the foreseeable future, since in addition to the high return the Australian dollar had appreciated about 34% against many currencies over the past couple of years and this trend was likely to remain intact. Discussion followed with general agreement that the society was now in a strong enough fiscal position to provide some financial support to young scientists for future AsCA conferences whilst maintaining the existing capital of the account.

3.          The next item was detailed power-point presentation of preparations for AsCA07 conference in Taipei. This was given by Prof S.L. Chang, Chairman of the Intl. Organizing Committee. A number of changes had been made in light of comments from the last council meeting held in Florence at IUCr2005.  The venue had been moved to the Howard International House in order to keep costs reasonable and for better logistics for room size.  The venue would have a large convention hall capable of seating 733 and a second conference room for 220. A third room had capacity of 85, though this could be increased to 100 if necessary through additional chairs.  The exhibits and posters would be displayed in corridors between these locations, with the plan being floors F1 and F2 for exhibits and F3 and F4 for posters. Several comments were made that every effort should be made to ensure that the exhibits from sponsor companies were well integrated.

4.          The change of location had necessitated a change of dates.  The new schedule was 4-7 November 2007. This had changed from November 10-13 as presented last year. The planned schedule follows recent model of several AsCA events. 4 November 2007 will be Sunday and this will be for registration and welcome reception/ opening ceremony. Mon-Wed would then have a full 3 day program with 4 plenary sessions and six rounds (am and pm) of three parallel sessions, fitting to 18 session topics planned by the program committee headed by Prof Suh.

5.          Prof Chang next discussed details of accommodations and fees: 270 rooms had been reserved for conference attendees in the Howard Intl House itself  these were priced at US$60 for single and US$110 for either double or twin rooms.  Further budget accommodation for students had been reserved in Youth Activity Center 5km north of the venue these rooms were US$50 for double or US$75 for room of four. Conference fees which include food, would be US$250 for full registrants, US$150 for students. Cost of exhibitor booths would be set at US$1500. Discussion included the possibility of a slightly modified scheme which had an early/late fee structure that could be implemented by Prof Chang.

6.          Several possibilities for important dates were then presented, with deadlines for abstract submission and registration. After brief discussion deadlines of 30 June for abstract submission and 31 July for early registration were agreed upon. Prof Vijayan stressed the need to compromise on dates and not set them too early so that new science would be included. Prof Chang indicated that time for publication of the abstract book would not be too lengthy. The abstract deadline could be extended if deemed necessary.

7.          Prof Chang indicated that a conference web-site had been constructed and that much information would be now be included following the finalization and agreement of details at AsCA06. Prof Guss requested a link to the AsCA web-site and indicated he would reciprocate and set up a similar one to the conference site.

8.          Next item was a discussion of the plans for the academic program at AsCA07 led by Prof Se Won Suh, Chairman of the Program Committee. He had prepared a final list of the program committee members, which had been arrived at to provide breadth of expertise in different disciplines and also have geographic balance. Some discussions followed on the need to quickly identify plenary speakers. Prof Vijayan mentioned that it would be 20th anniversary of AsCA in 2007 and perhaps a special effort to obtain prominent speakers such as Nobel Laureates Rod MacKinnon or Harmut Michel could be made.  Prof Suh would work closely with committee members to finalize the plenary lecturers in the near future, so that Prof Chang could announce this on web-site as soon as possible.

9.          A list of session topics for AsCA07 was also provided by Prof Suh. Some debate about the titles and content followed. Prof Desiraju indicated that session 06. 'Crystallography in Chemistry' was too broad in scope whilst Prof Hall commented that session 17.  Computational crystallography of proteins  did not need to be limited to proteins. One difficulty was that the topics might lead to exclusion of other work. Thus 'requests for abstracts' should make clear that any work in structural biology, materials science and chemistry could also be submitted and was not limited to the advertised session topics. Some modifications/ rearrangement of final program could be made by the program committee after all abstracts had been received and the popularity of topics assessed.

10.      At this point Prof Ohashi discussed some of the IUCr policies as affecting AsCA and the region. One goal was to increase the number of adhering countries. In AsCA only seven countries were affiliated with IUCr as Category I and paid membership fees. Since the current fee of US$800 per year might be too high for small developing nations it was decided that several such countires could apply jointly and pay a single shared fee. This might be done through AsCA and decision was made that this be formalized at the next council meeting in AsCA07. The smaller nations would pay subscriptions to AsCA and then AsCA would pay one fee to IUCr on behalf of the group of nations. In return the block of countries would be allowed to have one representative with voting rights at the IUCr general assembly meeting.

11.      Prof Desiraju mentioned that as part of his role on IUCr council he needed to report briefly on the activities in the region. Prof Williams agreed to prepare a few paragraphs covering the period to end 2006 for inclusion in next Summer's report at ECM.

12.      Next agenda items were the discussion of possible venues for AsCA09 and AsCA10.The AsCA09 was intended to be a joint meeting of AsCA with a national society, as held in Broome in 2003 and Japan in 2006. In principle this could only be held in a country with an existing active national society. Both China and Korea were considered. Prof Suh and Park indicated that Korea held national meeting with about 100 crystallographers.  It was the consensus that China be allowed to prepare plans for the AsCA09 conference. Prof Rao indicated that he would be willing to assist in preparation of a bid from China which would be presented next year in Taipei. He praised the organizational plans for next year's meeting there, but commented that there were still sensitivities about nomenclature for Taiwan and that AsCA should be mindful of this. He was assured that AsCA is non-political as required by IUCr policy.

13.      Prof Haller then briefly presented a bid for AsCA10 on behalf of Suranaree University of Technology in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. The intention would be to hold the event on the university campus.  Three large conference rooms would be available. There was also sufficient local hotel capacity to provide accommodation.  Costs were relatively low. The weather in November would be quite comfortable ca 25oC. One noteworthy point was that the university was the site of Thailand synchrotron. Prof Guss noted that Thailand had infact hosted AsCA in 1995 at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok and that perhaps other nations should be given a chance to host the meeting first.  Profs Suh and Park were encouraged to promote a bid from Korea to host AsCA10.

14.      Prof. Guss raised the issues about revision of country fee structures which should probably be formally reviewed and updated at AsCA07 and also support for young scientists to attend AsCA meetings. Prof Hall intimated that some support (several thousand A$) for this could be supplied from the AsCA financial account as long as the principal remained intact. Prof. S.L. Chang requested information on the appropriate amount to request from IUCr for young scientist support for AsCA07. It was stated that recent meetings that US$12,000 had been awarded and that this was the appropriate amount.

15. Meeting was adjourned with thanks from Prof Vijayan for the attendance and contribution of those present at 1.15pm.