**Minutes of the 13th AsCA Council Meeting**

**Ghiberti Hall, Florence**

**Thursday, 25th August 13:00**

Present in Attendance:

President: M. Vijayan, India
Vice-president: J. M. Guss, Australia
Secretary-Treasurer:  I. D. Williams, Hong Kong

Y-J. Park, Korea; S. R. Hall, Australia; J. Simpson, New Zealand;
J. K. Dattagupta, India; Nguyen Van Tri, Vietnam; S-L. Chang, Taiwan,
Yu Wang, Taiwan; C. J. Howard, Australia; C-D. Hsiao, Taiwan;
K.Y. Haller, Thailand; M. Takata, Japan; T. Kamiyama, Japan;
Y. Ohashi, IUCr rep, Japan;

**1.  Welcome**

The meeting began with a warm welcome by Prof. Vijayan and thanks to those present attending the council meeting.

**2. AsCA06 Japan**

The first agenda item was a presentation by the conference Chairperson Prof. Kasumasa Ohsumi on the preparations and arrangements for the joint AsCA06/CrSJ meeting to be held 20-23 November 2006 in the EPOCHAL conference venue Tsukuba, Japan, which were met with general assent by those present.

The conference venue is close to the city center 10mins by foot. Internal rail links to Tsukuba have recently been upgraded with a new connection from Akihabara Station in Tokyo, which takes just 45 mins.  It was anticipated that most international delegates would fly into Narita airport Tokyo and take a bus directly to the venue.

The EPOCHAL center provides state of art conferencing facilities with overall capacity for 900 people. The meeting plans to use the Main Convention Hall for plenary talks and additional rooms 101/ 102 (with capacity of 288) for additional parallel sessions.

The academic program will be on 21-23 November with three parallel sessions.  Posters/ exhibition will be in the extensive Lounge area with 300 capacity. A further Multi-purpose hall within the center will be used for lunch.  The number of attendees was anticipated in the region of 500, since CrSJ were normally up to 400 and a further 100 international delegates were expected.

Accommodation of delegates has been anticipated on-site at The Okura Frontier Hotel Tsukuba Epochal with 188 rooms at Y9500 (about US85) and a further 172 rooms at the sister hotel downtown (10 mins walk).  Budget accommodations will also be made available at the KEK dormitory .  These student accommodations at the High energy accelerator research facility are ca 20 mins away by bus. There will be in 30 shared rooms there and the rate varies between Y510-1010 depending on sharing arrangement.

The fee structure for the conference had been finalized as Full US$270, Student US$180, Accompanying person US$90 before 31August 2006, after that date rates of Full US$320, Student US$220 would apply.  The abstract deadline was set at 15 June 2006.  Prof. Hall noted this was rather early, with the consequence that a flood of abstracts would arrive at the deadline itself.

The International Program Committee had been set up, with Prof. Soichi Wakatsuki, Japan as the Chairperson.  The topics for Micro-symposia had been established and have been listed in flyer and at the website http://pfwww.kek.jp/AsCA06/  (moved to http://www.realize-at.jp/AsCA2006/AsCA2006-CrSJ.htm) along with other conference details.

Finally it was mentioned that satellite meetings were being set up including one on Inorganic and Mineral Structure, and that the Asian Synchrotron Radiation Science meeting would be held on the following day 24 November at the nearby KEK venue.  Prof. Guss noted that international Structural Genomics meeting in Beijing was being discussed for Oct 22-26 and wondered whether the organizers could be contacted and persuaded to schedule it nearer to AsCA06 so that researchers from States / Europe could combine the two meetings in a single trip.

**3. AsCA07 Taipei**

The next item was a presentation by Prof. S-L. Chang of the preparations for AsCA07 meeting in Taipei.  The dates were suggested as 8-10 November 2007. Prof Guss noted this commenced on Thursday and finished on Saturday, unlike majority of previous meetings. The proposed venue is the Grand Hotel Taipei, which is accessible by bus from airport US10, taxi US30 and can also be reached from downtown by subway.  The hotel has extensive conferencing facilities.  Lectures would be held on the 10F; opening/closing ceremonies would in an auditorium with 400 capacity and 3 parallel scientific sessions were to be held in 3 rooms each with capacity of 80-100.

The exhibitors and poster sessions would be held on 1st floor and registration/ secretariat would be on the Ground floor reception area.  Accommodations could be supplied at the hotel itself a number of rooms had been reserved at the following rates: Budget room was US$120, De-luxe US$163 and Superior US$181 per night.  Budget accommodations for students were available locally at the C.Tan Overseas Youth Activity Centre here a double room would be US50, four person US75 or 8-person room US100 per night.

Prof. Chang gave a proposed budget with estimated costs of US$83,000 and revenues of US$75,000. It was felt that US$30,000 fixed cost of the venue was too high given the number of delegates who would stay on-site.  Prof. Guss suggested that risk could be reduced by renegotiating the costs so that if fewer delegates attended the large fixed venue cost would not cause a revenue shortfall.  Details of the conference would be set up on the web-site http://asca2007@asca.science.nthu.edu.tw.

Prof. Chang gave list of International Organizing Committee members and indicated that the International Program Committee was yet to be determined.  The running of the conference would be supported by a dedicated unit of National Taiwan University, which should ensure a professional level of organization to the event.

Several council members expressed some reservations about the proposed set-up for AsCA07.  Of uppermost concern was that the large auditorium was prohibitively expensive for use with the consequence that it was only intended for opening/closing ceremonies.  The scope for plenary talks would be severely affected.

Furthermore the three rooms planned for the three parallel sessions were of limited capacity of 80-100. The likely disparity of attendance for different sessions (with up to 200 bio-crystallographers) meant that these capacities could prove inadequate for particularly popular talks or micro-symposia.  Another concern was the physical separation of the lecture and exhibit venues. Several members emphasized the importance that exhibitors attached to being integrated with the main activities of the conference and that closer proximity to the lecture areas would be desirable. The continued financial support of exhibitor companies should be seen as of major importance to the AsCA meetings and not jeopardized.

Prof. Vijayan wondered why there had been a trend to move away from academic venues as used at Bangalore and in Hong Kong. These offered the advantage of lower costs and often better facilities for lectures and display.  A major reason offered was that the timing of AsCA in November was in general during semester for most academic institutions, thus booking of major lecture facilities and on-site accommodations were compromised.

Prof. Vijayan nominated Prof. Jim Simpson, as an experienced AsCA official, to be Chairperson of the International Program Committee for AsCA07.  Prof. Simpson graciously accepted with assent of those present.

**4. Financial Report**

Prof. Williams gave a brief report on the financial situation of AsCA.  He summarized the attendance, revenues and budget for the past AsCA04 meeting in Hong Kong.  A total of 286 scientists had attended with 5 accompanying persons and 33 company personnel/exhibitors.  The revenues amounted to US$84,500 and expenses US$71,000 with a net profit of ca. US$13,500.  In principal it was explained that all profits were to be retained by the host institution, which had supplied venue/support free of charge. Some profit sharing had effectively occurred, since certain companies had given sponsorship to AsCA directly, with the result that slightly greater than US$5,000 profit to the society had accrued.  Prof. Hall supplied an update of the financial status of the account which had A$90,465 on short term deposit (earning ca. 6%) with a further A$925 on call savings as at 11th August. Prof. Williams noted that the cheques for annual subscriptions from member countries had almost all been collected and would be forwarded together to Prof. Hall for deposition shortly after the IUCr congress. Prof Vijayan requested that invoicing for such subscriptions in future be sent in January.

**5.  Web-site**

Next item discussed was the website development.  Prof. Vijayan had the assistance of Dr. Shekar and Prof. Hall had set the web-site up with a modest fee of US$220 (Defy Networks, Bangalore).  Prof. Hall and Guss would initially maintain the site, but all were reminded/encouraged to assist in the supply of material for its development.

**6.  Other Business**

Prof. Vijayan called attention to difficulties in the loose structure of AsCA, specifically difficulties in finding reliable contact personnel for each country.  He envisioned a membership roster for each country, as maintained by the major adherents such as India and Australia.  Prof. Williams undertook to attempt to get a list of contacts for some of the minor countries in the Asian region through both the World Directory of Crystallographers and the scientific literature.  The issue was highlighted by the non-presence at the council meeting of a delegate from China, despite advances made in Hong Kong, and further effort would need to be made to better integrate Chinese scientists within the AsCA. It was hoped that the possible hosting of a future AsCA conference, for example in Beijing 2009 might help to further this desirable goal.