

CHRONICLE

2nd IASC Council Meeting,
Reykjavík, Iceland, April 1992

The 2nd Meeting of IASC (International Arctic Science Committee) took place in Reykjavík (Iceland) from 25 to 30 April, 1992. The participants were the Council members from Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, United Kingdom and USA, the Regional Board members from eight Arctic countries (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and USA), as well as eleven observers from the above mentioned countries.

The agenda for the meeting included, *i.a.*: report of the IASC President; scope of the IASC activities; new scientific incentives; report of the IASC Regional Board Chairman; organizational and financial matters.

Dr Fred Roots (Canada), the President of IASC, outlined the IASC activities and participation of the IASC representatives in international Arctic meetings since the 1991 IASC Council Meeting in Oslo. At Rovaniemi (Finland), the inter-governmental meeting in 1991 passed a declaration on Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy; the Circum-Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) had its meeting in Oslo in 1991.

The first IASC-sponsored workshop on the IGBP (International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme) „Global Change in the Arctic” was convened in Reykjavik just before the 2nd IASC Meeting by Prof. G. Weller (Fairbanks, Alaska). The abstracts from this very successful meeting will be published soon.

There were also reports on activities of the inter-governmental Arctic Council (Dr E. Roots), oceanographic research in the Arctic, the „Polynia” Project (Dr E. Buttle, UK), and on a new organisation of Arctic research in France (Dr C. Lorius).

The scope of IASC was discussed at length and amendments were proposed to it. The question of possible affiliation of IASC to ICSU was raised by Prof. K. Birkenmajer; this question will be further analysed by the Executive.

There was also a lengthy discussion on the IASC structure, particularly on possible new working groups, such as „Man in the Arctic” (Dr M. Stenbaek, Canada and Dr L. Hacquebord, The Netherlands) and „Medical and Health Sciences in the Arctic” (Dr H. Hansen, Denmark), but no decision was taken at this meeting. There were several proposals for the W.G. on „Arctic Geology and Geophysics”, whether permanent or short-term and project-oriented, outlined by Acad. I.S. Gramberg (Russia), but the IASC Council did not feel the projects were ripe for formalizing as the IASC working groups.

Information on newly opened possibilities of sending scientific expeditions to Franz-Josef Land was presented by I.S. Gramberg, and by several other participants on international expeditions to Franz-Josef Land and Novaya Semlja which already took place in 1991.

A report on oceanographic research in the Arctic by Prof. G. Hempel (Germany) presented the results of the European Science Foundation (ESF) and the European Committee on Ocean Polar Sciences (ECOPS) projects, such as PONAM (Polar North Atlantic Margins) and the German scientific vessel *Polarstern* legs (in North Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean). It was decided that an IASC W.G. on „Oceanologic Studies in the Arctic” will be organized by Prof. G. Hempel.

Paleoclimatic studies, based on chemistry and isotopic composition of ice and air bubbles contained in it, from ice-cores obtained by the Greenland Ice Drilling Project (GRIP) were presented by Dr C. Lorius. Outline of a Polish-Russian-Norwegian joint project on Spitsbergen glaciers, and the agenda of an international glaciological workshop held in April, 1992, at the Polish Scientific Station at Hornsund (Spitsbergen), were presented by K. Birkenmajer. As a conclusion of the discussion that followed, the need for joining the efforts of different international glaciological groups working in the Arctic into a single IASC-sponsored W.G. on „Arctic Glaciers and Global Change” became apparent.

A Catalogue of Arctic Scientific Data was another item for the discussion. It was felt that the scope of such a project was enormous, and for practical reasons it should be restricted to the most important entries only. An *ad hoc* group (O. Rogne, Norway; Dr S.B. Abbott, USA; Dr P. Mälkki, Finland) was formed to further study the problem.

The question of the Ozone Hole in the Arctic (E. Buttle, and others) was discussed in connection with that of Antarctica. There is still not enough scientific data on possible negative effects of increased UVB radiation, resulting from depletion of the ozone layer over the Arctic, on the health of the Arctic people, particularly the indigenous ones. The problem should be studied jointly by the future IASC working groups on „Medical and Health Sciences” and „Man in the Arctic”, in cooperation with the IASC W.G. on „Global Change in the Arctic”.

A „Code of conduct” of scientific expeditions in the Arctic, particularly with respect to indigenous people, and to protection of the environment, was another important item discussed in the report of the IASC Regional Board by its Chairman, Prof. A. Karlqvist (Sweden). An IASC working group modelled upon SCAR’s W.G. on Logistics (replaced since 1988 by the Standing Committee on Antarctic Logistics and Operations, SCALOP, and the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programmes, COMNAP) could be a useful addition to the structure of IASC (suggestion by K. Birkenmajer).

The 3rd IASC Council Meeting was scheduled for April, 1993 at Abisko, Sweden. The first Arctic Conference will probably be organized in 1994 under the title „Arctic in the Earth System”. The IASC Executive will continue publications of „IASC Progress” and „IASC Digest”, both being issued at the Executive Secretary’s Office in Oslo, with Odd Rogne serving as Executive Secretary and Maryanne Rygg as Administrative Secretary.

Financial matters were also discussed, with membership voluntary contributions established in three categories: (A) 9000 USD, (B) 7000 USD, and (C) 4000 USD per year. For some countries (e.g., Poland), there may be problems in supporting the IASC budget as long as the IASC does not have an affiliation with ICSU.

The organization of the meeting was in able hands of Prof. Magnús Magnússon from the University of Reykjavik, who not only provided the Meeting with very good working conditions but also led an instructive excursion to Thingvellir — the site of the oldest parliament of the world, and to a geothermal power station, both located in active rift valley of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

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