

Minutes of the December 2008 International Chemistry Olympiad Steering Committee  
Meeting  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008

**1. Committee Members Present:**

**Europe:**

Wesley Browne (Ireland, 2007)

Vadim Eremin (Russia, 2008)

Wolfgang Hampe (Germany, 2008)

**Americas:**

John Kiappes (USA, 2008)

**Pacific Rim:**

Mark Ellison (Australia, 2007)

**Asia:**

Duckhwan Lee (Korea, 2007, Chair)

**Organizers:**

Gabor Magyarfalvi (Hungary, 2008)

Peter Wothers (United Kingdom, 2009)

Ito Masato – in place of Tadashi Watanabe (Japan, 2010)

Jale Hacaloglu (Turkey, 2011)

**Co-opted Members:**

Juan-Antonio R. Renuncio (Spain)

Manfred Kerschbaumer (Austria)

Anton Sirota (Slovakia)

The Chair welcomed the Committee members and in particular Ito Masato who had replaced Tadashi Watanabe at very short notice.

**2. 2008 and 2009 Host Presentations**

Peter Wothers presented the provisional student and mentor timetable for the 41<sup>st</sup> IChO.

It was agreed to circulate the Theory Exam to mentors at 12.30 pm on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July.

It was suggested that a single session for the Practical Exam is preferred unless it is absolutely impossible to provide an equal experimental environment.

- The use of the Zoology laboratories will be decided by the Organizer depending on the necessity of fume cupboards and other conditions. If it is necessary to split the Practical Exam, the first session is 08:00~13:00 and the second session is 14:30~19:30.

It was agreed that the 20 minute safety talk for students would be held immediately before the Practical Exam on Tuesday morning at each location. If it is necessary to hold split sessions there will be one safety talk on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July during the afternoon.

A cut-off time of 12.00 midnight will be given for the completion of the exam translations on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

Countries will be asked in advance which countries they would like to work with for the translation and the room set up accordingly.

The Mentors will return to Cambridge on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July via London where the Re-union Dinner will be held. Arrangements will be made to transfer luggage directly from Oxford to Cambridge (including secure transport of laptops) to await the mentors arrival.

Arbitration and marking will take place at Robinson College.

The Committee agreed that it was reasonable to expect teams to reach Cambridge bus or rail station where there would be taxis/buses to transport them to their accommodation. Detailed information on travel between the airport and Cambridge will be given to each team in advance. The student guides will be able to meet the teams and travel with them to Cambridge. Separate arrangements will be made for teams arriving very late at night.

A helpdesk will be available at each airport in case of problems.

The translated exam papers from each country will be scanned and posted on the web.

### **Report on the 40<sup>th</sup> IChO in Budapest**

One hard copy of the 40<sup>th</sup> IChO Official Report will be sent to all participating countries and is available on-line on the 40<sup>th</sup> IChO webpage.

The Hungarian Organizers were disappointed with the (Hungarian) press response to the Olympiad which was not widely reported.

Surplus practical exam equipment will be distributed among local secondary schools.

The Steering Committee examined methods of presenting the exam data which would ensure the reasonable allocation of medals according to the Regulations.

### **3. IUPAC Support**

It was agreed that the IUPAC logo would appear on the IChO host's webpage with a statement specifying the type of support in accordance with the memorandum of understanding between the IChO and IUPAC.

Applications received:

Uruguay requested exemption from the participation fee and a contribution towards one student air ticket. Cuba requested exemption from the participation fee and a contribution towards one student air ticket.

Support Approved:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Participation Fee (USD)</b>	<b>Student Travel (USD)</b>
Uruguay	1,100	Up to 1,800
Cuba	1,700	Up to 1,300
*Peru	600	

\* The request for participation fee exemption from Peru was received after the meeting and agreed following email discussion by the Steering Committee. [Peter will send the notices to the countries.]

The remaining funds will be allocated if later requests are received or carried over to assist with the higher costs associated with travel to Japan in 2010.

Discussion regarding further co-operation between IUPAC and IChO suggested in a letter received from Professor Jung-Il Jin reached no conclusion.

- The IChO will participate in the UN “International Year of Chemistry” in 2011.
- The “IUPAC Award” may be presented to a few students.
- A personal meeting with Professor Jin will be requested during the 41<sup>st</sup> IChO for further discussion.

#### **4. Applications from New Countries**

Bolivia – no reply has been received to the request to complete and return the application questionnaire.

Georgia – has been unable to gain the necessary Government support and requested an extended deadline of April 2009. This was refused and Georgia will be requested to apply again in 2010.

Liechtenstein – a letter from Helmut Konrad on behalf of the Ministry of Education supporting the Liechtenstein application was received. It was agreed that the Organizers would invite Liechtenstein to send two observers to the 41<sup>st</sup> IChO in 2009.

Nigeria – no official observers had attended the 40<sup>th</sup> IChO in Hungary and it was therefore agreed that Nigeria could only attend the 41<sup>st</sup> IChO as observers. They would also need to attend the 42<sup>nd</sup> IChO as observers before they would be allowed to participate in the 2011 IChO in Turkey.

A request was made to reinstate presentations to the International Jury from countries participating in the IChO for the first time.

#### **5. Distribution of Preparatory Problems**

Preparatory Problems will be posted on the 41<sup>st</sup> IChO website during January and emailed to the Mentors along with the solutions. The corrected questions and solutions will be posted on the website at the start of the Olympiad in July. Printed copies of the Problems will be available in July only for those who request them.

#### **6. Participation Fee**

The Steering Committee considered the participation fee in the light of the proposal to abolish it by Uruguay. As Uruguay had withdrawn its proposal and the International Jury had not agreed the increased rate presented in Budapest it was decided no further changes should be considered at present.

If necessary, the Chair will present to the International Jury the reasons sufficient for retaining the participation fee:

- Important part of the budget of the Organizer (~100,000.-US\$, 5~10% of the total budget)
- Not all hosts are able to find good sponsors
- Help the Organizer to raise the funds
- Help the Organizer to secure the operational flexibility
- Maintain the solidarity among participating countries
- The IChO understands the situation of the countries with financial difficulties and tries to help them by seeking support from the international organizations including the IUPAC.

## **7. Decision making procedure by the International Jury**

The Chair of the Jury Meeting should take responsibility to propose a postponement of voting after consideration by the International Steering Committee on any radical proposal suggested during the International Jury meetings. This would allow time for Jury members to consider the possibilities and long-term influence that the proposal may incur.

## **8. Eligibility of Participating Students**

Attention was called to the different criteria for student eligibility under IChO regulations and individual country Olympiad regulations. The Steering Committee noted that the International Jury had agreed the IChO regulation as offering participation for as many students as possible according to different circumstance, but recognised that individual countries sometimes have more strict Regulations for their own National Olympiad.

## **9. Academic Honesty**

Further methods of ensuring academic honesty were discussed but it was recognised that any further implementation would result in all participants being penalised. The Steering Committee expressed the hope that the penalty awarded to the Tajikistan Team by the International Jury would encourage all participants to maintain the highest level of academic honesty.

It was a matter of note that Tajikistan would be invited to participate in the 42<sup>nd</sup> IChO in Japan, although no student or mentor from the 2008 team could be included in any future IChO.

## **10. IChO Regulations and Competitions**

Appendix B: Hazard Warning Symbols will be linked to the EC Hazard Warning Directive to simplify the amendment process.

It is a legal requirement in the UK that a written Risk Assessment for the Practical Exam be read and signed by each student taking part. This separate sheet will be translated by the mentors at the same time as the practical paper and extra time will be allowed in the exam for the students to read and sign the document. This requirement will be announced during the first Jury Meeting of the 41<sup>st</sup> IChO.

Attention was drawn to the discrepancies and grammatical errors present in the current version of the IChO Regulations. It was proposed that both native and non-English speakers correct the grammatical errors as necessary and the corrected Regulations be presented to the International Jury in July for approval. [Gabor Magyarfalvi, Wesley Browne, and Peter Wothers agreed to take the responsibilities.]

The 'Guidelines for Host's' would be updated and this document would be used to track any problems encountered in the Regulations. Persistent problems could then be identified and revision considered.

The Chair requested that Anton Sirota select a few major issues in the Regulations he considered most important and submit these for consideration by the Steering Committee. If considered appropriate they would be presented to the International Jury for revision.

The Chair also requested Anton Sirota to prepare a document summarising the history of the Regulations if he considers it necessary.

## **11. Reports from Future IChO Organizers**

Reports were received from Japan (July 19-28, 2010), Turkey (2011) and the USA (2012) on their preparations.

The International Steering Committee accepted the official proposal for hosting the IChO 2012 from the American Chemical Society.

It is agreed to emphasize the importance of maintaining the identity of the IChO to the ACS although the difficulty of raising fund is fully recognized.

In addition to the proposals for hosting the future IChO by Singapore (2013), Vietnam (2014) and Thailand (2015), there have been request for hosting by Russia (Moscow, 2015) and Australia (Sydney, 2016).

## **12. Communications in July 2009**

1<sup>st</sup> Jury Meeting:

Distribution of minutes from the December Steering Committee meeting.

Introduction of the role of the International Steering Committee and its members.

Agenda for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Jury meetings.

3<sup>rd</sup> Jury Meeting:

Election of new International Steering Committee members.

4<sup>th</sup> Jury Meeting:

Report on the IUPAC support.

## **13. Any other business**

Steering Committee meetings during the 41<sup>st</sup> IChO have been scheduled as follows. These may be cancelled if not required:

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009 – 12:00

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009 – 18:00

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2009 – 18:00 (First meeting of the new Steering Committee)

There was a request for more flexibility in the date of the December Steering Committee meeting, but it was decided that December allowed enough time for hosts to make initial arrangements and implement any changes arising from the meeting.

### **Information which should be available on IChO host website:**

Regulations with Syllabus (one document)

Information for Mentors

Questionnaire for new countries (including detailed instructions on how to apply)

Guidelines for Hosts (with the list of difficulties experienced by the Organizers and the list of mentors and students not allowed to attend the future IChO)

The members of the SC thanked Peter Wothers and his team, Emma Powney and Zoltán Ritter, for their hospitality and the good organisation of the meeting.