

**International Chemistry Olympiad Steering Committee Meeting**

**Washington D.C., December 8 – 11, 2011**

**Minutes**

**Steering Committee Members and Attendees**

**Elected Members:** Peter Wothers, Chair (United Kingdom), Wolfgang Hampe (Germany), John Kiappes (USA), I-Jy Chang (Chinese Taipei), Carlos Castro-Acuna (Mexico), Alexander Gladilin (Russia, *absent*)

**Organizers:**

Jale Hacaloglu (Turkey), G.Bryan Balazs (USA), Nguyen Van Noi (Vietnam), Vadim Eremin (Russia, *absent*)

**Coopted Members:**

Manfred Kerschbaumer (Austria), Gabor Magyarfalvi (Hungary), Savita Ladage (India, *absent*)

**Past Chair:**

Duckwan Lee (Korea)

**Observer Guests:**

Tran Van Nghia (Vietnam), Mary Kirchhoff (USA), Cecilia Hernandez (USA), Kirsten Dobson (USA)

**December 9th Friday**

**Reports from Present and Past Organizers**

1. Turkish Report: Jale Hacaloglu
   1. Problem areas discussed: data management post arbitration (need to test spread sheet with full-sized dummy run of data in advance of the competition)
   2. Recommend arbitration has one arbitrator (and possibly one helper) per question
   3. SC recommend Chair of Scientific Committee/Chair of Planning Committee should not mark and act as question arbitrators
2. Report from present organizer: Bryan Balazs, Chair of 44th IChO 2012
   1. Preparations underway overviewed
   2. Announcement of sole corporate sponsor Dow Chemical ($2.5 million donation)
   3. The publication of the preparatory problems ahead of schedule was reported and that the solutions would be available by Feb. 1. The committee welcomed this, but noted that the advanced topics were rather broad and probably included more than six in practice
   4. All theoretical and one of two practical exam problems have been completed
   5. Tentative Schedule of IChO activities overviewed
   6. The committee noted the issues concerning the split practical examination and recommended additional time might be needed between the “switch” of students in order to ensure appropriate cleanup/setup
   7. The committee pointed out that it was the responsibility of the IChO organizers for confiscating and storing student phones, tablets, laptops etc. not mentors – and that it must be made clear to students that any discovered electronics may result in disqualification from the competition
3. Dr. Bradley Miller, Director, ACS Office of International Activities reported on the Visa situation. The organizers are doing everything possible to ensure things will run smoothly, but it cannot be emphasized enough that it is the responsibility of the competing teams to ensure their applications are submitted as early as possible, preferably 90 days in advance of the competition.

**Applications of new participating countries introduced and discussed:**

1. Georgia: The committee recommended that they be allowed to observe for the first time in 2012 and this was accepted by the future hosts.
2. Montenegro: The committee recommended that they be allowed to observe for the first time in 2012 and this was accepted by the future hosts.
3. Oman: The committee welcomes Oman’s application but wanted to see their national competition take place before recommending their full participation. Should this go ahead as planned this year, Oman will be invited to resubmit their application again in 2012 in order to participate as an observer in 2013.
4. South Africa: The committee recommended that they be allowed to observe for the first time in 2012 and this was accepted by the future hosts. However, no exception should be made for South Africa to observe for only one year; they must follow the regulations as other countries have.
5. Other Inquiries: Hong Kong: The committee noted that students from Hong Kong are currently able to participate on the Chinese team and that Hong Kong is not a separate country. The committee recommended that they should not be given the status of a new country.

Whilst sympathetic to the naming issues, the organizers would follow the recommendation of the UN resolution of 1993 and use the name “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

**Applications for 2012 IUPAC Funding**

In addition to the 10,000 USD to be received from IUPAC for 2012 and the 2000 USD from Japan, the remaining funds from the 2011 IChO (6000 USD) will be transferred from Turkey to the 2012 organizers.

A total of USD 14,800 was allocated to 7 countries.

**Inspection of Venues**

Venues for the opening and closing ceremonies were inspected. It was noted that it would not be possible to sit the whole team together in the closing ceremonies and that the mentors and students would need to be separate from the guides and observers.

The student dormitories and dining facilities were inspected. The configurations of the rooms vary considerably and the organizers reported that they would work to allocate the students in an appropriate manner.

The laboratories for the practical examinations were examined. The committee appreciated the efforts by which the organizers were trying to ensure the different spaces were as equal as possible.

The lecture theatres where the examinations will be held were inspected. It was felt desirable to increase the spacing between the students and the organizers indicated that they would look into this possibility with the inclusion of extra theatres.

**December 10th Friday**

**Reports from Future Organizers**

1. 46th IChO 2014, Hanoi Vietnam presented by Ngyuen Van Noi
   1. The dates were reported as July 20 to July 29, 2014. This period was chosen to fit around the national university exam period in early July.
   2. Funding had been secured through the Ministry of Education and Training
   3. Venues had been chosen
   4. The practical examinations will be held in two separate but nearby universities. These laboratories will be extensively refurbished before the event; this is due to be completed by end of 2012
   5. The committee recommended that, if possible, the translation should be held in the mentors' hotel rather than the more distant proposed location..
   6. Vietnamese budget – government supported ~USD 2 million
2. 45th IChO Planning, Alexander Gladilin reported by conference call

a. The dates were reported as July 14 to July 23, 2013.

b. Moscow State University were again to be the main host, but the organizers were working to ensure a different experience from the 2007 competition.

* The Steering Committee requested that Russia provide the steering committee with the list of advanced topics for the Preparatory Problem before publishing, in order to ensure questions stay within the guidelines of the syllabus

**Future of IChO, areas of concern**

1. Plans for the 2015 IChO needed to be confirmed. The chairman of the SC would make enquires as to the current state of play.

2. The increasing numbers of participants pose difficulty for future hosting countries due to limited facilities for practical testing, funds, and man-power. Possible solutions discussed:

1. Decrease number of students/mentors/observers
2. Reduce number and complexity of practical problems
3. Increase participation fees
4. Increase exclusivity when accepting new participants
5. Allow the IChO participants to continue to grow in number, but consider a model where the hosting of the IChO is limited to countries with sufficient resources to accommodate a larger group of participants
6. The IChO Steering Committee will survey countries during the Olympiad to determine exactly why there is a resistance to hosting the Olympiad, and how the steering committee can help.

The SC chairman will draw up a questionnaire which the SC members will bring to the attention of the members of the international jury during the 2012 IChO.

Designated committee members and countries to survey:

**Carlos** – Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay, Venezuela, El Salvador

**Alexander Gladilin** – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

**Manfred Kerschbaumer** – Austria, Croatia, France, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Slovakia, Switzerland

**Wolfgang Hampe** – Denmark, Estonia, Germany, India, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden

**I-Jy Chang** – China, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

**Duckhwan Lee** – Nigeria

**Jale Hacaloglu** – Iran, Indonesia, Egypt, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey

**Gabor Magyarfalvi** – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia

**John Kiappes** – Belgium, Netherlands, Iceland, Finland, Cyprus, Greece, United States

**Peter Wothers** – Australia, Canada, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, United Kingdom

(Bryan Balazs was recused from this list of assignments due to his significant responsibility load during the 2012 IChO.)

1. A recommendation will be brought to the International Jury at the 44th Olympiad that the participation fee for new countries should start at USD 1,000 as opposed to USD 100. This contribution was felt to be more appropriate; it is not intended as a means of increasing the income, but in order to ensure that the new countries have the appropriate support from their national organizations. If approved, this change will not be applied to any country currently competing or observing. It was noted that this proposal would not require any change in the regulations.

**43rd IChO survey results, IChO Regulations/Over training: Jale Hacaloglu**

1. Summarized survey results and conclusions will be presented to the Jury

2. Committee concluded that there is no way that this issue can be solved but will simply bring options to the International Jury. The options to vote on will be

a) No change in the regulations

b) A change in regulation 10.5. “Training or any other special instruction, that is carried out for a selected group of 50 or fewer students, containing the IChO team, must be no longer than two weeks.” to include the specification “Training on preparatory problems”

c) Abolish any restriction concerning training.

**Other Concerns**

* Gabor raised his displeasure that individuals outside the IChO were illegally republishing and selling preparatory problems. He would attempt to halt this, at least on the Amazon website. It was recommended that future organizers should also register their copyright of their preparatory problems.

**Thanks**

The committee wanted to formally thank the organizers of the 44th IChO for their hospitality and the tremendous efforts they are taking to ensure a successful competition in 2012.