

# THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

*Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine*

Policy and Global Affairs Division  
Board on International Scientific Organizations

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To: Kathie Bailey Mathae  
From: Mike Sissenwine  
Cc: Nancy Davis Lewis, Roland Fuchs, Peter Brewer, Michael Ogden, Steve McNutt  
Date: July 6, 2007  
Subject: Report on the 21<sup>st</sup> Pacific Science Congress, 12-19 June 2007, Okinawa, Japan

## **Background**

The Pacific Science Association (PSA), founded in 1920, is “a regional, non-governmental, scholarly organization that seeks to advance science and technology in support of sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific. The organization serves as a catalyst for scientific and scholarly collaboration; develops scientific capacity within the region; fosters effective communication between scientists, policy makers and the public; actively involves the Pacific Island states in regional and international scientific activities; and promotes the Science of the Pacific” (<http://www.pacificscience.org>). The PSA Congress meets every 4 years.

The theme of this Congress was “Diversity and Change: Challenges and Opportunities for Managing Natural and Social Systems in Asia-Pacific”. Subthemes were as follows:

1. Maintaining Natural Diversity: Biodiversity, Natural Resource Management
2. Technology for Sustainable Societies: Biotechnology, Energy, Assessing Natural Hazards, and Telecommunications
3. Human Diversity: Origins of Pacific Peoples, Indigenous Knowledge, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity
4. Threats, Challenges and Hazards: Climate Change, Natural Hazards, Chronic and Infectious Diseases and Public Health, and Hazardous Waste
5. Science and Society: Science, Education, Policy and the Media, Women in Science
6. Islands in Development: Globalization, Economics, Demographics, Health, Agriculture, Tourism

Over 700 people attended the Congress in Okinawa. This was up considerably over the 450-500 attendees at the last two Congresses. In general, it was a good Congress with signs of renewed energy in PSA.

## **Delegation**

The U.S. delegation consisted of Mike Sissenwine (Chair), Nancy Davis Lewis, Roland Fuchs, Peter Brewer, Michael Ogden, and Steve McNutt. Mike, Nancy, and Roland served as the three U.S. voting members in Council meetings, although Michael and Steve attended the meetings as well. Members of the U.S. delegation gave five papers during the Congress.

## **Council Action and Discussion**

The PSA Council met 3 times: June 12 (the primary business session), June 16 (votes on minutes, officers, and honorary life memberships), and June 17 (to approve draft resolutions before they were presented to delegates). The agenda can be found at Attachment 1.

Several by-law changes were approved. The first allows approval of Board action by email instead of in person meetings. This will be limited to pro forma matters, and results will have to be unanimous and

shared at the next Council meeting. The second change provides for the replacement of Executive Board members. Currently, only officers can be replaced. The change will allow the replacement of ordinary members as well as officers. The third change will allow proxy voting if a written request is made to the Secretary-General one week before the meeting.

Another important structural change is that the former position of Secretary-General/Treasurer has been split into two separate positions.

The Strategic Plan, last done in 1999, needs to be updated. PSA leadership would like to change it from a description of activities and organization to a statement of vision. This led to an extended conversation about membership, customers, and visibility. All adhering members will be contacted for comment.

Task Forces are dissolved at the end of each Congress and then created or reestablished as needed. Several Task Forces are recommended in the approved resolutions. The Executive Committee was empowered intersessionally to establish Task Forces based on these resolutions and other proposals emerging during the Congress. A Task Force on Ocean Acidification is of particular interest to the USA. A member of the US Delegation, Peter Brewer, was instrumental in convening a session on this topic and sphere heading an effort to focus PSA's attention on this important environmental issue.

PSA activity is likely to improve in the next few years due to three factors. First, an Inter-Congress will be held in Tahiti in March 2009. A 4-year lapse between meetings is too long, and this should help keep attention focused. Second, the Vice President normally provides the oversight to the Task Forces; however, PSA hasn't had a Vice President for the last 4 years so attention to the Committees and Task Forces has not been at an optimal level. Now that a committed individual (Nancy Davis Lewis) will be serving as Vice President, improvement should be seen. Thirdly, this was the first PSA Congress for the new Executive Secretary of PSA, Burke Burnett. He performed very well, and now that he has a little experience we expect that he will be a force for change and modernization of PSA.

A new, cleaner logo has been prepared. It can be used in either blue or black. The Council asked that the PSA name be added to it somewhere.

### **Dues and Finances**

No changes were made to the PSA dues structure or levels. As suggested by BISO staff, a quiet offer was made for the United States to increase its contribution, but PSA officers and staff wanted to pursue this conversation separately and at a later date.

The PSA's overall balance has decreased because there was no Inter-Congress in 2005 and because a number of countries were in arrears. Current countries in arrears include Australia, China (Hong Kong and Macau), Singapore, and Vietnam. New Zealand withdrew 15 years ago, but may rejoin. Peru is still listed as a member even though the country has not paid dues since 1994. A number of questions were raised about South America and Canada's lack of participation.

### **Resolutions**

Upon the recommendation of session leaders and participants, the Pacific Science Council has endorsed the following official resolutions of the 21<sup>st</sup> Pacific Science Congress:

***Communicating Science:*** The 21<sup>st</sup> Pacific Science Congress endorses the establishment of a new PSA Working Group on Science Communication to develop new communications tools such as Web-accessible information systems and "Best Practice" white papers, to more effectively address the need to stimulate broader and more inclusive science communication throughout the Pacific region.

**Biodiversity:** The 21<sup>st</sup> Pacific Science Congress endorses the following:

1. A comprehensive biological survey to document the distributions of species and their ecological requirements, and that the PSA Biodiversity Task Force play a leading role in this endeavor; and
2. Development of new communications tools, especially Web-accessible information systems, to facilitate the dissemination of important information on the biodiversity of the Pacific region; and
3. Strenuous efforts to develop the local institutional capacity in Pacific regional institutions, particularly in the areas of biological sciences, taxonomy, parataxonomy, and bioinformatics, which are essential to understanding and supporting sustainable resource utilization; and
4. Prioritization of research on large-scale environmental processes in the region; and
5. More intensive and sustained field-level conservation efforts working in authentic partnership with local communities and other stakeholders; and
6. The greater use of social science tools and community-driven approaches to address on-the-ground conservation efforts; and
7. Prioritizing efforts by scientists, conservation practitioners, and other stakeholders to document and to support traditional systems that effectively promote the sustainable use and management of natural resources in the Pacific.

**Coral Reef Fisheries and Ecosystems:** The 21<sup>st</sup> Pacific Science Congress endorses the following actions in order to enhance the effectiveness of Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management in the Pacific region:

1. More inclusive resource management approaches that ensure that all stakeholders and users of reef resources are actively engaged in the sustainable management of these critical ecosystems;
2. Greater collaboration between scientists and resource managers develop easy-to-use data processing tools that will facilitate more effective monitoring and managing reef fisheries, and the development of appropriate research programs and management and policy plans;
3. Enhanced cooperation between scientists, local fishers, and local stakeholders to increase data collection on coral reef fisheries and ecosystems, which will facilitate more effective implementation of Ecosystems-Based Fisheries Management;
4. More intensive efforts to increase international and inter-regional institutional collaboration, particularly between those with advanced marine science expertise and regional Pacific institutions;
5. Enhanced information sharing and collaboration between projects and programmes in the Pacific region to ensure more efficient Ecosystems-Based Fisheries Management;
6. Strengthening the PSA Coral Reef Task Force in order to more effectively address these issues.

**Ocean Acidification:** Recognizing that available scientific evidence indicates that the phenomenon of ocean acidification is likely to have significant negative effects on marine species and habitats that are vital to ecological processes and the natural services they provide to human societies locally, regionally, and globally, the 21<sup>st</sup> Pacific Science Congress endorses the immediate prioritization of research on the species-, ecosystem-, and societal-level implications of ocean acidification, and the establishment of a PSA Task Force on Ocean Acidification to facilitate this research.

**Education For Sustainable Development In The Pacific Islands:** Recognizing that the fact that current development models in the Pacific region are inherently unsustainable; and the fact that education is a fundamental force driving attitudes that shapes social, economic and environmental change, therefore enhancing educational contexts is essential to promoting sustainability and the attainment of Millennium Development Goals. The 21<sup>st</sup> Pacific Science Congress endorses the establishment of a PSA Task Force on Education for Sustainable Development in Pacific Islands Region. This Task Force will facilitate communication and collaboration between regional and international universities and research

organizations in order to promote the implementation of the objectives of the U.N. Decade for Education on Sustainable Development; it will promote integration of modern scientific methodologies with traditional knowledge systems in order to establish new and more appropriate and effective educational approaches; and it will organize a major session on “Education for a Sustainable Island Pacific: A Synthesis between Local and Globally Emerging Values and Issues” for the 11<sup>th</sup> Pacific Science Inter-Congress that will be held in Tahiti, French Polynesia in March 2009.

***Strengthening Linkages Between Science and Policy:*** Recognizing that scientific knowledge and evidence is essential in informing society and policymakers on important and emerging issues and the courses of action required to effectively address them, the 21<sup>st</sup> Pacific Science Congress endorses using the PSA network to identify key opportunities for collaboration between various institutions that will strengthen linkages between scientists and policymakers.

### **Honors and Awards**

The Herbert E. Gregory Medal for Distinguished Service to Science in the Pacific Region was established by the Board of Trustees of The Bishop Museum in 1961 to honor the memory of the Museum's second Director (1919-1936) and his role as founder of the Pacific Science Association. The medal is awarded at each Pacific Science Congresses to outstanding and distinguished leaders in Pacific science. The 2007 Gregory Medal was awarded to Professor Dieter Mueller-Dombois, Ph.D. (Professor Emeritus, University of Hawaii).

The Shinkishi Hatai Medal, established to honor distinguished leaders in Pacific marine biology, was awarded to Dr. Tsuyoshi Kawasaki (Professor Emeritus, Tohoku University, Japan) and Dr. Shirley Winifred Jeffrey (CSIRO Marine Research, Australia).

Four individuals were nominated as Honorary Life Fellows of PSA. These included Nancy Davis Lewis (nominated by the United States), Congbin Fu (China), Keeichi Omoto (Japan), and Eiki Senaha (Okinawa). Because Congbin Fu and Nancy Davis Lewis were elected as officers for 2007-2011, neither felt that it was appropriate to be considered at this time. Both asked that their names be withdrawn. As a result, only Keeichi Omoto and Eiki Senaha were put forward for consideration as Honorary Life Fellows, and both were approved.

### **Special Guests**

His Imperial Highness (H.I.H.) Prince Akishino and H.I.H. Princess Takamado both spoke in plenary sessions. H.I.H. Prince Akishino has a PhD and continues to pursue on the domestication of chickens from their wild ancestors and how humans and chickens currently live together.

### **Leadership**

The Executive Board is the governing body of PSA, and sets policy, defines strategic plans, and is responsible for overseeing the overall activities of PSA. The Board meets formally on an annual basis, and consists of a President, Vice-President, Secretary-General, Treasurer, four Ordinary Members (all elected by the Pacific Science Council), the past PSA President (ex officio), and Secretary-General of upcoming Pacific Science Congresses/Inter-Congresses (ex officio).

The United States had nominated Nancy Davis Lewis for president or vice president if she did not wish to serve as president.

The following officers were elected by the PSA Council in June 2007 and will serve until the 22<sup>nd</sup> Pacific Science Congress in 2011.

| <b>Office</b>      | <b>Name</b>              | <b>Institution &amp; Country</b>                             |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| President          | <u>Congbin Fu</u>        | Chinese Academy of Sciences, China                           |
| Vice President     | <u>Nancy Davis Lewis</u> | East-West Center, USA  |
| Secretary-General  | <u>Makoto Tsuchiya</u>   | University of the Ryukyus, Japan                             |
| Treasurer          | Azizan Abu Samah         | University of Malaya, Malaysia                               |
| Past President     | <u>Kiyoshi Kurokawa</u>  | Science Advisor to the Prime Minister, Japan                 |
| Ordinary Members   | <u>Chang-Hung Chou</u>   | China Medical University, China-Taipei                       |
|                    | Mazlan Othman            | National Space Agency, Malaysia                              |
|                    | Valentin Sergienko       | Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia                          |
|                    | Ana Taufe'ulungaki       | University of the South Pacific, Fiji                        |
| Ex Officio Members | TBA                      | Chair of 22nd Pacific Science Congress in 2011               |
|                    | TBA                      | Chair of 11th Pacific Science Inter-Congress in Tahiti, 2009 |

### **Future Congress**

The 11th Pacific Science Inter-Congress will be held in Tahiti, French Polynesia in March 2009. The theme will be “Pacific Countries and the Ocean Facing Local and Global Changes.” Topics will include ecosystems, climate change, economies, public health, education and training, culture and politics.

The location of the 22<sup>nd</sup> PSA Congress has not yet been determined. Some expressions of interests have been received, but no bids. PSA leadership will solicit bids soon. They hope to have locations ready for an email vote by February 2008.

PSA Council Meeting  
12-14 June 2007  
Okinawa, Japan  
*Agenda*

1. Convocation of Quorum and Call to Order
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Confirmation of the Minutes from the 2003 Congress Executive Board and Council Meeting
4. Confirmation of the Minutes from the Extraordinary Exec. Board Meeting in Hanoi (2005)
5. Matters Arising from the Previous Board Meetings
  - a. Discussion of Proposed Revisions of PSA Statutes and By-Laws
  - b. Other items
6. President's Report
7. Financial Report and Budget
8. Election of Officers and Ordinary Members
9. Proposed Revisions to 1999 PSA Strategic Plan
10. Report on Scientific Activities
  - a. Scientific Task Forces and Committees
  - b. Pacific Science Journal
  - c. Discussion of Continued Revitalization of Task Forces and Committees
  - d. Adoption of New Task Forces
11. Other Current and Future PSA Activities
  - a. Proposed Updated PSA Logo
  - b. Ocean Acidification
  - c. Melanesia Climate Change Assessment
  - d. Best Practices in International North-South Scientific Collaboration
  - e. Re-emphasis on "Science of the Pacific"
12. Nominations for 2009 Pacific Science Inter-Congress
  - a. Presentation by French Polynesia on proposed venue in Tahiti, 2009
13. Nominations for 2011 Pacific Science Congress
14. Other future PSA-sponsored meetings
15. Member and External Relations
  - a. Adhering Organizations
  - b. National Committees
  - c. SCA
  - d. ICSU
  - e. UN Millennium Development Goals
  - f. UNESCO
  - g. ASEAN / APEC
  - h. IAC
  - i. Bishop Museum
16. Report on 21st Pacific Science Congress
  - a. Adoption of draft resolutions
17. Date of Next Executive Board Meeting
18. Other Business
19. Adjournment of Meeting