

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL RADIATION PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

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An ad hoc long-range planning committee was formed by the "new" Executive Council meeting during the VIth International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association in Berlin. Professor Nishiwaki, Dr. T. Schlesinger, and Charles Meinhold (Chairman) were appointed to the Committee at that time. They were instructed to review and evaluate current programs and activities of the IRPA and to consider additional programs and activities which should be given careful consideration by the Executive Council. At the Executive Council Meeting at Ispra in 1985, Dr. John Johnson, who had chaired the Associated Societies Panel Committee, was appointed to the Committee.

A letter containing a list of potential topics was prepared for distribution to the Associated Societies with the intention of stimulating their thoughts and ideas and requesting comments and suggestions. This letter was printed in the IRPA Newsletter (Vol. 7, No. 1) and was sent to all Associated Society Presidents in 1986. During the Salzburg meeting in December 1986, the Committee reviewed the responses from the Associated Societies and although it noted that the response from the Associated Societies was disappointing in number, there was a general consensus of many of the points raised in the letter.

During discussions at the Tokyo meeting of the Executive Council, it was decided that the final committee report contain a review of the responses together with a recommendation for further actions by the Executive Council on each of the topics presented in the original letter. The Associated Societies which provided comments and suggestions are:

1. Australian Radiation Protection Society
2. Association Belge de Radioprotection
3. British Radiation Protection Association
4. Canadian Radiation Protection Association
5. Fachverband für Strahlenschutz
6. Societe Francaise de Radioprotection
7. Health Physics Society
8. Associazione Italiano de Protezione Contro
le Radiazioni
9. Radiation Research & Protection Society of Ireland
10. Japan Health Physics Society
11. Nordic Society for Radiation Protection
12. South African Association of Physicists in Medicine
and Biology.

In this presentation, each of the main topics from the original letter to the Associated Society Presidents will be presented, followed by a review of the Associated Society responses, and summarized by a recommendation to the Executive Council for further action.

MEETING FREQUENCIES

The IRPA Congress meets every three to four years - this seems adequate for the scientific exchange but may be inadequate for the exchange between the Associated Societies.

Regional congresses might be made a more formal part of the IRPA program, i.e., the Executive Council might be required to meet at such congresses and the presidents or other representatives of the Associated Societies might be invited to report on their activities and to discuss the IRPA needs as part of a formal Associated Societies forum chaired by the IRPA President. Each Associated Society would be asked to designate a representative and a well-defined agenda of up to four topics would be circulated prior to the meeting with a specific society asked to provide the leadership for each topic.

Associated Society Comments

The present frequency of IRPA congresses is fully accepted. There is general acceptance of increasing the role of the IRPA Executive Council in regional congresses in order to promote interaction between IRPA and the Associated Societies and between the Associated Societies themselves.

Many of the Associated Societies mentioned that financial consideration might inhibit their attendance at regional congresses.

Recommendations

1. The Regional Congress Committee be requested to explore the development of Associated Society forums as a requirement for the Regional Congress program.
2. The Executive Council should hold its meetings during the Regional Congresses.

INIRC

As the International Non-Ionizing Radiation Committee (INIRC) becomes the internationally recognized body for making recommendations on non-ionizing radiation, its relationship to IRPA should be more permanent, more rigorous, and more distant. Perhaps we should look at the relationship between ICRP and the International Society of Radiology as a model, i.e., the Committee would report to the IRPA Congress but in essence run its own affairs. There is a suggestion that

perhaps such independence should take place when INIRC has more clearly become the internationally recognized authority in this area.

Associated Society Comments

There was general agreement that eventually INIRC should be similar to the ICRP in its relationship with IRPA although the societies want to ensure the availability of feedback on recommendations.

Recommendations

The Executive Council should establish an ad hoc committee to develop a new relationship with INIRC based to some extent on that between ICRP and the International Society for Radiology. The target date should be no sooner than the time of the VIII International Congress of IRPA in 1992.

CERTIFICATION

This is one of our more important topics, particularly if there is a desire that we be perceived as a professional rather than a scientific organization. There is a feeling that certification ought to be the function of the individual societies since, if it is not, it must, almost of necessity, be driven to the lowest common denominator. For example, let us assume that Society A wants to identify the top 1% of its radiation protection personnel since they will become inspectorate cadre, whereas Society B wants to identify the top 50% of its radiation protection personnel since they want all their supervising health physicists to meet an existing standard. Although Society A has legal meaning to its certification program, Society B does it only for professional edification. Under these two extremes, a common certification program would be almost impossible. It would seem, however, that the IRPA ought to be involved in helping the Associated Societies develop their own certification program through workshops, training sessions, and via information exchange.

Perhaps the IRPA should also assist in the development of minimum requirements for professional health physicists. In addition to stimulating individual professional development, the Associated Societies or competent authorities could use this material as a basis for their certification.

Associated Society Comments

General agreement that IRPA should only coordinate workshops and the development of data bases although some suggested that the IRPA meet "minimum" standards. Some societies stressed the importance of IRPA being primarily a "scientific" organization.

Recommendation

The International Congress Program Committee should be tasked with programming workshops on certification methods and requirements. Alternatively, an interested Associated Society could be asked to assemble pertinent information on legal qualifications, examinations, etc. for distribution to the Associated Societies.

COMMUNICATIONS

In the IRPA Constitution we find, "Its primary purpose is to provide a medium whereby those engaged in radiation protection activities in all countries may communicate more readily with each other and through this process advance radiation protection in many parts of the world." Clearly the Congress provides much of its required communication. The suggestion of an Associated Societies Forum given above would improve communications both between the Associated Societies but also between the Executive Council and the Associated Societies.

Perhaps another important "communication" service the IRPA could perform is to be the distributor and collator of the comments received on documents such as ICRP and ICRU draft reports. Much of the ICRP's inability to allow comments on their drafts has to do with their inability to handle this paperwork. This is a function which the IRPA might consider. There has also been a suggestion that the IRPA establish a library of regulations in radiation protection for access by the IRPA members. If this proves too difficult, perhaps the publication of an annual bibliography might be sufficient.

Associated Society Comments

There is a widespread desire to have IRPA act as a clearinghouse for ICRP and other international draft reports. There was a general acceptance of the Associated Society panel focusing on communication between both the IRPA Executive Council and the Associated Societies and between the Associated Societies themselves.

Recommendations

The President of IRPA should communicate with the Chairman of the ICRP to develop the liaison suggested here. The IRPA Executive Council should, at the time of each international congress, appoint one Associated Society as the focal point for synthesizing comments and suggestions on ICRP matters for transmittal to the chairman of ICRP's Committee 4. This method of providing IRPA's input to other organizations should be considered.

SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEMBERS

Perhaps we should consider formalized tutorial sessions at both the IRPA Congress and at the regional meetings. These might take the form of early morning or late evening sessions or even weekend or full-week programs before or after such meetings. Conversely, perhaps this is best left to the Associated Societies - language difficulties alone might make this option more effective.

Associated Society Comments

Wide range of Associated Societies reactions from formal tutorial sessions at the international congress to an ICRP-developed training module to simply provide data bases and workshops on technique for use in national meetings. General note that we don't want to detract from the general scientific exchange.

Recommendations

The Executive Council should request that the next International Congress Program Committee develop a workshop on this topic in conjunction with the International Congress meeting in 1992.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

This is another area with some dangerous pitfalls in terms of the differences between countries. As with certification, the development of workshops and dissemination of Associated Societies materials might be our function here.

Associated Society Comments

General acceptance of workshops and data bases by IRPA. Implementation should be left to the Associated Societies.

Recommendations

The Executive Council should request the next International Congress Program Committee to develop a workshop on this topic in conjunction with the International Congress meeting in 1992.

FULL-TIME SECRETARIAT

Much of the above could not be accomplished without present administrative structure. This may well be the topic that we should begin with, since much of the additional communication discussed above could only be possible with a

full-time paid secretariat. This, however, would be very hard on the Associated Societies who can't afford this luxury.

Associated Society Comments

Nearly all agree it is desirable but too expensive. Some suggested that the Executive Council be selected from among the full-time secretaries in the Associated Societies.

Recommendations

The IRPA Executive Council should form an ad hoc committee to review this matter in detail.

FINANCES AND FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS

Perhaps some specifically identified IRPA programs should be supported by grants from either the Associated Societies or by outside organizations. Perhaps we need to develop special arrangements for dues, meeting registration, journal subscriptions, etc., for members from societies with severely limited financial resources. Perhaps the more affluent societies could assist the less affluent societies by grants in aid.

Associated Society Comments

Many Associated Societies felt the more affluent societies could assist the less affluent societies although there was no support for an alternate dues schedule. The Fachverband made a suggestion for IRPA 7 which demonstrates in an excellent manner what can be done.

Recommendations

The IRPA Treasurer should communicate with the less affluent societies to determine ways that affluent societies could help. He should then communicate these needs to the more affluent societies.

IRPA RESPONSE TO SCIENTIFIC ISSUES

An additional topic has been suggested by the Societe Francaise de Radioprotection. They suggest that IRPA could play an important role in providing an international consensus on specific scientific issues. This suggestion has been favorably received by several other Associated Societies.

Recommendations

The Executive Council should form an ad hoc committee to develop guidance and procedures for dealing with IRPA's

response to important scientific issues including addressing concerns to the international organizations where appropriate.

FURTHER SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

At the Tokyo meeting of the Executive Council, President Carter suggested that we might select scientific areas in addition to non-ionizing radiation for IRPA activities.

Recommendation

The Executive Council should include this topic in the charge to the ad hoc committee recommended in response to the suggestion of the Societe Francaise de Radioprotection given above.

In summary then, it should be apparent that the work of the ad hoc committee on Long-Range Planning is complete, the IRPA effort is only beginning. The Committee was encouraged by the thoughtful and helpful suggestions made by the Associated Societies during this process. More important, however, is the concept that the Associated Societies become aware of their responsibilities to actively participate in developing the course of IRPA's role.