

ICSU Panel on WDCs

Montreal, Canada

October 1, 2002

Meeting Summary

Attendees: Ferris Webster, Michael Chinnery, Sun Honglie, Liu Chuang, Alexei Gvishinai, Herbert Kroehl, David Clark, Alex Sterin, Bob Chen

See Agenda, Attachment 1

1. Report on the ICSU General Assembly – Ferris Webster, WDC Panel Chairmen, attended the ICSU General Assembly, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, September 28 – October 1, 2002. Webster made a plenary session presentation on current status of international data policies affecting the scientific community. ICSU reported that it wants to begin a systematic process of reviewing all some crosscutting activities of ICSU and will start with “Data and Information.” This review will include the WDCs, CODATA and FAGS. It was also noted that one area of emphasis for ICSU in the near future would be the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). WSIS will meet twice, once in Geneva in 2003 and once in Tunis in 2005. The WSIS hopes to draw world leaders much as did the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The WSIS will be sponsored by the International Telecommunication Union and thus may have heavy corporate sponsorship. ICSU wants “Data Access” included as a theme for the Summit. ICSU has invited the WDC system to participate. There was a data access forum at the ICSU General Assembly, which is notable in that ICSU scheduled such a forum.

2. WDC Modernization Task Team – Chen, Clark, Liu, Sterin, Webster. Webster reports that the ICSU Deputy Executive Director has not briefed, as yet, the new Executive Director on the Modernization study effort of the Task Team. It was agreed that the WDC Panel must try to brief Dr. Roswall as soon as possible. However, this briefing probably will take place as a “meeting of opportunity” when a WDC Panel member(s) is in Paris on other business. It also seems that the Panel’s hope that ICSU could help us raise funding for the WDC Partnering Program may not come to fruition. We will probably be left to our own methods for this. Chen reported that the Modernization report would be redrafted using the input from the last Panel meeting as well as comments received afterwards. It was agreed that after this final review by the Panel, it would be sent out to the WDC Directors, endorsed by the Panel (as opposed to the WDC Modernization Task Team only). Clark reports there has been some activity by the Technical Task Team. When the Modernization report is finalized the activity should increase.

Action: Bob Chen and Dave Clark prepare a final draft of the Report.

3. WDC Annual Reports – Brief discussion of the value and utility of annual reports. It was decided that a brief WDC Annual report would be required from each WDC by October 1 of each year. This will help in the preparation of the Panel report to ICSU as well as providing additional input to the new WDC Newsletter (see below).

Action: Draft letter for sending to WDCs requesting a WDC Annual Report.

4. New World Data Centers – Webster. The New WDC for Land Cover Data in Sioux Falls at the USGS in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, USA has been approved. The proposed new WDCs for Climate in Hamburg Germany and WDC for Remote Sensing Atmospheric Data at Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany are waiting for a letter from Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), the German National Member of ICSU endorsing the data centers. This will finalize the application process. The proposed WDC for Biodiversity and Terrestrial Ecosystems at the USGS in Denver, Colorado, USA, is waiting for WDC panel endorsement. The Panel also has received a letter from the Scientific Information Center for Resources and Environment of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Lanzhou, China requesting the establishment of WDC for World Data Center for Ecosystems of Mountains and Plateau. No action has been taken on this request as yet.

Action: Clark to verify and/or solicit information from the WDC for Land Cover for the WDC Guide.

Action: Status of the proposed new WDC in China should be determined.

5. Membership in the Panel – Webster noted that his term would be coming to an end within the next two years. It is time to think about a new chair for the Panel. Webster has some possible candidates in mind, but additional candidates' names should be also be submitted if appropriate. It was also noted that the terms of the elected Panel members ("members at large") should be checked. It was additionally noted that a listing of the WDC Panel members is not readily obvious on the WDC WWW site.

Action: Clark to check on the terms of the elected, at large, members. Clark to investigate how to make the WDC membership more obvious on the WWW site.

6. 50th Anniversary for the WDC System – Clark noted that the 50th anniversary of the WDC system will be in 2005, 2006 or 2007. It was suggested that it is never too early to plan a celebration commemorating this event. Clark was appointed to lead a preliminary planning effort. It was also noted that in 1999, SCOSTEP adopted a proposal for an international scientific program "IGY+50", and shared it with IAGA and IAMAS at the IUGG General Meeting. In 2000, ICSU approved the commemoration of IGY on its 50th Anniversary and asked the Secretary General of IUGG to be the lead coordinator of the activity. SCOSTEP wishes to be involved with activities honoring IGY and its products, including the WDC System. Also, the new SCOSTEP program "CAWSES (2004-2008)" includes the IGY anniversary years.

Action: Clark to check dates for the most appropriate date to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the WDC system. Clark to lead a preliminary planning effort for this celebration.

7. Treasurer's Report – Chinnery. There is \$56,000 available for Panel use. While this seems like a good amount, Chinnery noted that there is no source of continuing revenue for the WDC Panel to operate. Therefore, these funds will be quickly depleted, especially if the Panel funds one or two partnering projects related to the modernization effort. It was recommended and approved that a yearly fee would be assessed to each of the WDCs. The fee would be \$1000US per WDC. The WDC Panel could reduce the fee based on the ability to pay, which would require an application and approval. In-kind payment could also be considered and would need Panel approval.

Action – Draft letter should be sent out for WDC panel approval.

8. Newsletter – The usefulness and utility of a WDC newsletter was discussed. Creation of a newsletter was approved at the last WDC panel meeting. Discussion centered on the mechanism for implementation.

Action – Chinnery will draft up the first edition of the newsletter. An email will be sent to all WDCs announcing the newsletter and soliciting input.

9. Revision of the WDC Guide. A small team (Chinnery, Lead, Araki, Ruttenberg and Clark) has been working on a revision of the guide. A new version of the most significant sections has been recently drafted.

Action – Chinnery to circulate the draft to Panel members before sending out to the WDC Directors.

10. CODATA – There was a discussion regarding the similarities and differences between the missions of the WDCs and CODATA. It was noted that CODATA has a much more formal infrastructure due to its funding structure (yearly funding by national committees). It was noted that CODATA has a permanent Secretariat, an Executive Director and bi-yearly scientific conferences. Possible alignment with CODATA was discussed. All agreed that further discussion was needed on this topic.

11. The Panel was informed by Alexander Sterin that there will be a World Climate Change Conference to be held in Moscow, Russia, September 29-October 3, 2003. He encouraged all members of the WDC Panel and representatives from the WDCs to attend. He suggested that the WDCs might want to organize a session on climate data. Please contact Dr. Sterin for details or if there is interest in organizing a session.

12. ICSU Proposals - ICSU proposals are due in March 2003 for the year 2004. As is done every year, WDC members are encouraged to submit proposals. Details on formats and other guidelines are available.

Action - Proposals should be solicited from all WDCs

13. Next meetings – The Panel will try to meet once per year. It is not expected to meet next year at the IUGG, mostly due to the high cost of travel to Sapporo. Suggestions for other venues, possibly with other meetings, are welcomed. Also discussed was the scheduling of the next all WDC meeting. It is likely to be held in 2004 rather than in 2003. It was also suggested that an all WDC/open science meeting be held in conjunction with the 50th anniversary celebration.

David Clark, Assistant Secretary, WDC Panel