

International Union of History and Philosophy of Science
Division of History of Science
related to UNESCO by the International Council for Science (ICSU)
and Conseil International de la Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines (CIPSH)

The Secretary General

Report of activities 2002
DHS Council meeting, Pavia, 18 January 2003

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1. Balance of the year 2002 and perspectives for the immediate and mediate future.

For the DHS, 2002 has been a year of encounter with realities whose existence was up to a point not suspected by its members. I am referring mainly to the very important structural changes that began to generate within ICSU, our main partner, since the World Conference of Science in Budapest 1999 (Annex 1). These changes include the establishment of new framework agreements of UNESCO with the councils of science, philosophy and humanities, and social sciences, that reflect the changes in the world today and which have created a new international scientific scenario (Annex 2).

To be able to advance in this scenario, to achieve the development of our professional and organizational goals, it was crucial this year for our organization that we had been preparing ourselves in the preceding years, if only mentally, for the post Cold War age. Such preparations were evident by actions that assumed an opening of our practice and a reinforcement of our internationalism, such as the organization of an international congress in a peripheral country like Mexico; the selection of the theme "Science and Cultural Diversity" in said congress; having accepted China's invitation to host the next congress; having elected a Board whose members are of a geographical, cultural and linguistic background that up to now had not participated in similar responsibilities and the adoption of the wise recommendations of the Ad hoc Committee. It was also particularly important to have a DHS Strategic Plan, if only on a provisional basis, because it allowed us to have an extraordinarily useful tool to guide our actions based on definite objectives. All of this has allowed us to give the first steps toward what should constitute a full reform for our organization that will allow us to actively and efficiently participate in the new international scenario.

Thus, despite the DHS's lack of preparation for the challenges that arose, this year we were able to send out signals of our flexibility and organizational dynamism that are being well received by DHS members and by other international scientific organizations which we are partnered with. In other words, this year we have achieved to put forth an active policy in the promotion of history of science, technology and medicine in a worldwide basis of which the first results can already be seen. This, on its own, has become an undeniable change in the DHS by converting it into a truly international organization not only because of its membership, but because it has placed the execution of our common work in a greater number of hands.

It is natural that some colleagues might have viewed as rather worrisome that some inertia from the past was abandoned, given that views on the required change can vary between different regions and circumstances. However, an international agreement is emerging throughout the different consultations I have done directly with DHS members, and that is fundamental for the transition phase in which we are situated. In the proposals and suggestions that have been voiced, as in all innovation processes, there are and will always be pros and cons, but what is most decisive is that we are able to build with these the pillars of our organization in order to obtain disciplinary and social sustainability. I trust that the experience we are obtaining from our actions these past months gives assurance on the correctness of this new path that we have begun, and that will allow us to institutionalize the basic agreements on the goals of this change.

There are of course many things that we will have to do from now on. We have to assure a gender, geographical and cultural balance in DHS officer positions; make transparent and foreseeable our procedures and decision-making mechanisms; stimulate the professional development of young researchers that will eventually substitute this generation; preserve and disseminate the world scientific documentation and other research tools; disseminate and apply in teaching, for example, the results of our research, among others. In a fast paced world it is fundamental to have clear objectives that can guide us, and the Strategic Plan has received an initial welcoming by DHS members as a reference framework for the activities we will pursue in the following years. It will be up to the next General Assembly to pronounce itself in favor of said Plan and to institutionalize it.

However it is quite stimulating that even before a year has passed since the Strategic Plan was launched, and with its guide, we are already immersed in actions that had never been tried before in our organization, and whose main virtue is its mobilizing nature of all DHS structure. I am referring to the "Online Dictionary of National Bibliographies and Archival Sources" project of which its first results can already be seen and which is involving DHS member countries as well as commissions and scientific sections. I will make reference to this project later on.

The Changing Milieu in which DHS operates

At the same time that the DHS has been making some changes needed to operate more efficiently and to serve better its large constituency, the "external" environment in which it operates has also been evolving. One major shift has been the increasing degree of partnership among international organizations in order to meet the challenges of ever more

complex problems. As one example, the DHS adhered to CIPSH and proposed a project that will be the basis for consolidated and expanded collaboration with CIPSH and other organizations in the national and international levels.

One force driving change has been that more integrated approaches are needed to address societal issues. History of Science and Technology can provide vital knowledge but it must be evaluated and utilized within a social context. In order to do this there is a much closer relationship between the inner workings of natural and social sciences, civil society and policy makers than there has been in the past. This brings challenges and opportunities for DHS. The opportunity is that the voice of international history of science and technology is having more venues for input. However, we have to find better ways to interact with the scientific, technological and policy communities. We need to be aware that our involvement in the more complex issues that we are facing will be difficult to execute, since the DHS does not encompass all the necessary competencies to address these complex issues. How to accomplish these goals will be the focus of intense discussion during the next few years, particularly, and hopefully, if we take on the challenge leading in development of the history of science and technology for essential purposes in the agenda of our social responsibility like scientific culture dissemination and science education among others.

History of Science and Technology: Toward a "New Contract"?

Under a similar heading in its Budapest's World Congress of Science ICSU put forward the relevance of S&T to sustainable development noting that a large gap persists between what the S&T community thinks it has to offer, and what society has demanded and supported. In similar terms, in recognition of this gap, the History of Science and Technology community is increasingly calling also for a "new contract" between history of science and technology and society for sustainable development. Under the new contract, our community would devote an increasing fraction of its overall efforts to research and social function of research agendas reflecting socially determined goals of sustainable development. In return, society would undertake to invest adequately to enable that contribution from History of Science and Technology, from which it would benefit through the improvement of social, educational and cultural conditions.

Capacity building

ICSU reviewed its strategies in capacity building in education and something similar must be done by the DHS. In addition History of Science and Technology cannot effectively contribute to sustainable development without bibliographical and archival capacity on scientific and technological matters in all countries. It is necessary to build capacity in interdisciplinary and comparative research, to integrate across fields of knowledge, as well as harness and build capacity for educational innovation and diffusion in both the private and public sectors. There is in particular a shortage of history of science and technology resources in developing countries and a decline of the existing in some countries. Science and technology teaching with historical ingredients at all levels must be enhanced, including efforts to "train the trainers". Efforts are required to support the mobility of historians of science and technology, to provide incentives for the development of diverse science and technology studies communities, to facilitate the participation of more women. Exchanges of historians of science and technology are a proven method of capacity

enhancement. Since in matters of sustainable development it seems that historians of science and technology in all regions of the world have something to teach one another, such exchanges must include South-to-North, as well as North-to-South and South-to-South dimensions. This will require building and maintaining the quality of key institutions of learning, provision of adequate infrastructure, and responding to the challenge of "brain drain".

These requirements can only be met, as it can be deduced from the Johannesburg Summit conclusions, if appropriate strategies and policies are fully integrated to contribute from the history of science and technology in national development goals. These goals include the enhancement of life-long learning, support in the production, innovation and consumption areas for personal, social and cultural wellbeing, support for creative use of information technologies and maintaining history of science and technology as a part of S&T knowledge for sustainable development in the public domain. In addition, young historians of science and technology should be empowered to participate in developing the history of science and technology studies agenda, and there should be an increase in their number drawing in particular from traditionally under-represented groups. A large proportion of the current generation of historians of science and technology are approaching retirement. The demand on this kind of professionals pull them in two opposite directions; more specialized to be competitive in cutting edge disciplinary research and broader approaches to deal with problems relevant for society. What can the DHS do to strengthen and co-ordinate its efforts? How should it work with other partners? How can we ensure that there is a minimum of history of science and technology capacity in all countries?

The Changing Structure of DHS

Such as I mentioned in the preamble of this report, introducing changes is always difficult, mostly because we have to go back to first principles in examining the DHS goals and mission statement and putting in place an analysis of DHS activities as a totality before looking at the nature of the individual efforts. Many of the changes we need to introduce will have a very large impact. But this will have to be done or else we must ask ourselves about the reasons of existence of the DHS and if its continuation is worth the effort.

I will now refer to the activities undertaken by the new General Secretariat in the past twelve months inspired as far as possible by the previously mentioned premises.

2. Report of the activities undertaken regarding the agreements of the Executive Committee meeting, Istanbul 22-23 December 2001.

2.1 International Program Committee members

The Secretary General contacted the persons proposed by the Executive Committee that will compose a third part of the total International Program Committee members and collected their favorable responses. This was informed to the President of the Organizing Committee of the 22nd ICBS and to the Chairperson of the IPC for the inclusion of these names into the definite lists. Prof. Liu Dun made this list public through a letter to all DHS members signed on 23 September 2002.

2.2 Commission reports.

The Secretary General reminded all Commissions to send their annual reports on various occasions, the last of which was 11 November 2002. Eight commissions sent reports (See annex 3).

2.3 . Actions taken with ICSU on the new Grants policy.

Given ICSU's new peer reviewed and competitive grants policy, of which neither Prof. Dag Westerstahl, Secretary General of the Union, nor myself were timely informed, some measurements were needed to be taken.

a) On the termination to finance international congresses through a block grant for both divisions of our Union, I thought necessary to request ICSU's Executive Director, Prof. Rosswall, on 20 May, as well as in a personal interview last July in ICSU headquarters, a reconsideration of our situation. This was done under the argumentation that the decision of the Chinese Organizing Committee to hold the congress had been made assuming that traditional support from ICSU would be available. But due to the fact that this was a policy established by ICSU's 2000 General Assembly that accepts no exceptions, it was not possible to obtain said reconsideration.

b) With a few days notice and with no familiarity with the new criteria established I had to present ICSU with a grant request for 2003 and obtain endorsement from other supporting applicants. Since a considerable amount of DHS members do not count with the minimum technological capacity necessary that would enable them to disseminate the results of their activities and projects, I presented a request for the creation of a Web site infrastructure for all commissions and national committees. This request was not accepted by ICSU because it did not fully correspond to a priority area (and neither was the DLMPS's request to finance their Oviedo congress). However, activities such as this or others like congresses and symposia can receive financial aid as long as they are part of a broader project that corresponds with ICSU's priorities. So that DHS members can be informed on the new procedure I present the document entitled "Report of the CSPR on the Grants Programme" (Annex 4) where the criteria and procedures of the Grants program are described.

2.4 Agreements on the 22nd ICHS and visit to the Organizing Committee.

In my role as Secretary General of the DHS and Organizer of the past ICHS, in May 2002 I made a working visit to the organizers of the Chinese Organizing Committee for the 22nd ICHS. I was able to pass on to Prof. Liu Dun the opinions of the Executive Committee regarding the reduction of registration fees in order to encourage attendance to the congresses, and the percentage from the registration fees to establish a solidarity fund to assist different activities of the Division. The purpose of this visit was also to convey information on the organization of the past congress as well as my experience obtained during four years of dedication to this event. Likewise, together with the Local Organizing Committee we analyzed ways in which the DHS can contribute to the success of the congress in 2005. Also, I visited and evaluated with Prof. Liu Dun buildings, hotels and other facilities for the congress. A detailed report of this visit was sent to all DHS members.

2.5 Information on DHS prizes.

In order to have decision elements and information for the creation of several DHS prizes that the Executive Committee decided, I made a survey of different criteria and mechanisms of existing prizes in the history of science area. In accordance with Prof. Ihsanoglu's proposal, the analysis and decisions regarding this prize were postponed until the Pavia Council meeting (see Agenda Item 8).

3 Activities undertaken regarding DHS ordinary matters.

3.1 Inclusion of Technology in the DHS name.

From 24 to 30 June 2002 ICOHTEC's annual meeting took place in Granada, Spain. In this meeting and in several interviews that I had with the board of this dynamic and well organized Scientific Section (website: www.icohtec.org) of the DHS, they expressed their aspiration to obtain more weight in DHS activities. The purpose is recognizing the importance of history of technology, following to this end ICSU's recommendations to obtain an enlargement of our social impact on important matters such as policy making, education, technological transfer, support in the production, innovation and consumption areas for personal, social and cultural wellbeing and others of strategic nature. This aspiration has been formalized by means of a petition from Prof. A. Herlea, President of ICOHTEC, to include the word "Technology" into the DHS's name and eventually in the Union's (See Agenda item 7). Given the evident importance of this request and its full correspondence with our own development plans I have considered appropriate to consult the Council on this matter including it as an Agenda item before submitting it to the General Assembly.

3.2 Representation of the DHS before CIPSH's General Assembly.

By agreement of the General Assembly that took place in Mexico, the DHS postulated to become a member of CIPSH. I thus attended the 26th General Assembly of this organization that took place in Porto Novo, Benin, from 19-22 September 2002 representing our organization. Being this the first time that the DHS took part in a CIPSH assembly, our entry into this international organization was well received with expressive words of welcoming by the President and the Secretary General, Professors M. Caviness and M. Aymard respectively. They both coincided in pointing out that our entrance into this organization fortifies it by evidencing that in the contemporary state of humanities, research in science and technology are strategic and fundamental to build a new multicultural Humanism that CIPSH is engaged with. Mr. Jérôme Bindé, current Director of Foresight, Philosophy and Human Sciences and former Director of Philosophy of the UNESCO also participated in this meeting and informed on the new Framework Agreement that CIPSH established with this world organization. In this sense, the DHS was able to present itself as an organization prepared to actively participate within CIPSH, contributing to the success of the priorities identified in conjunction with UNESCO such as the expansion of its activities to countries of the "East" and "South". The aforementioned was made clear in my address to the plenary of the Assembly by presenting our organization, the activities and current reform plans we

are attempting. Several CIPSH members stated an interest to interact with and get to know better the DHS and some preliminary contacts have been established to this end, as well as a project to soon publish a special number of CIPSH's international journal *Diogenes* dedicated to history of science and technology.

3.3 Representation of the DHS before ICSU's General Assembly

In agreement with Prof. D. Westerstahl, Secretary General of all the Union, I attended ICSU's General Assembly from 20 to 28 September 2002 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The purpose of my participation was to regain for the DHS its place in ICSU and effectively achieve a call that had been made some years ago by the Commission of Bibliography and Documentation to preserve ICSU archives. Additionally I became familiar with ICSU's new structure and established personal contacts with its directors and other unions. Despite the limited antecedents of our participation in ICSU activities, some results were achieved that lead me to consider this as an important step that will convert us into accomplished interlocutors of our main international partner. By special authorization I had the opportunity to address the plenary of the General Assembly, that although brief due to time constraints, allowed me to alert the representatives of different unions on the necessity to preserve the modern scientific archives. I also was able to make known DHS activities through other interventions and to various members of the new and old ICSU Board of Directors as well as to other scientific union directors. They all agreed that the DHS possesses a thematic and organizational potential to become an active member capable of contributing to the development of ICSU's new goals. A consequence of this was my election by the General Assembly to form part of the Resolutions Committee and the proposal made to the DHS to become part of a soon-to-be ad hoc committee that will review ethical and social aspects of science.

3.4 Participation in the Joint DHS/DLMPS Commission.

On 3 October I attended the meeting of the Joint DHS/DLMPS Commission in Paris and participated in the inauguration of the symposium that took place in that occasion. Here, Prof. Westerstahl and I informed the members of this commission on ICSU's new grant policy on the basis that it will have a direct effect on the financing of its activities as well as in the Joint Agreement that the two divisions have on the allotment of resources given by ICSU. On another matter, in agreement with the resolution taken in Mexico's General Assembly I transmitted the decision that Prof. Erwin Neuenschwander takes over as President of this commission. The members of this commission also agreed to organize a symposium in the next international congress of the DLMPS that will take place in Oviedo, Spain from 7-13 August 2003. Anne Fagot-Largeault will be in charge of this symposium and its tentative theme will be history and philosophy of medicine.

3.5 Correspondence with members

Among the Division's ordinary matters was the maintenance of day to day correspondence with all members. Also, with the support of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, a mailing list was created for all members of the Division in order to count with a way of circulating relevant information on their

activities. This mailing list has successfully been used since its start in February and has proven to be a very useful communication tool.

3.6 ICSU Grants Policy and 23rd ICCHS

In a personal meeting with Prof. Eva Vamos, who has manifested an interest to propose Hungary for the 23rd ICCHS, I informed her on the new Grants Policy that ICSU has adopted, specifically the decision to not give resources for the organization of international congresses. I deem important that all future congress organizers take into consideration the implications of this new procedure when presenting candidatures.

4 Activities undertaken regarding the Strategic Plan.

4.1 Online project

Given that at the beginning of this year the Commission on Bibliography and Documentation responded to the Draft of the Strategic Plan circulated among all members of the DHS, its President Prof. Harper and I identified the prospect of developing together a proactive project. Then, I found that an opportunity was taking place where we could involve all of our organization in this project if we were able to obtain seed money. As new members of CIPSH we were requested to present an initiative to be considered for financial aid for 2004 and due to the nature of the proposition presented by the Commission on Bibliography and Documentation we found that it was the type of project this organization requested and that the DHS needed. The result of this is the project entitled "Online Dictionary of National History of Sciences Bibliographies and Archival Sources" (See Agenda Item 3). I am pleased to say that in its General Assembly in Porto Novo, Benin, this project has been readily approved with an initial funding of US\$ 3500. This is a long-term project that involves all members of the DHS, will allow the establishing of a cooperative spirit among various UNESCO members and thus can be viewed within ICSU's priority areas of capacity building and dissemination of science. Therefore it can be eligible for substantial funding by the ICSU Grant Program 2004.

The technical details that will have to be dealt with will be considered and solved by a committee of experts (See Agenda Item 3), which will meet for the first time in April this year. This meeting is being promoted by CIPSH and the Commission on Bibliography and Documentation, and will count with the aid from the Maison de Sciences de l'Homme (Paris) as a result of negotiations that I have done to this respect.

By suggestion of Prof. Harper I turned to the National University of Mexico (UNAM) to request the necessary technological infrastructure and to become the sponsor of this project. UNAM officials have agreed to contribute to this important scientific and cultural international project and up to now the necessary resource platform has been created that will be put to consideration of the meeting of experts.

4.2 Consultation to DHS members for other project proposals

Stirred by the example set by the Commission on Bibliography and Documentation and with the convenience of having a Strategic Plan in the DHS, I am sure that many other similar activities can be commenced within our organization. We are now presented with the opportunity to develop mobilizing projects in the framework of ICSU's new policy as well as in the framework of other public and private organizations. This means that we are capable of achieving the long sought change in the DHS and convert our organization into a more active one which will not be limited only by organizing quadrennial congresses, such as was expressed repeatedly in the last congress in Mexico. Therefore I posed a couple of questions to all DHS members to survey the level of involvement of our members to participate in the conception and development of other mobilizing projects. The responses we have received are enthusiastically positive so far and can be consulted in the attached document (See Agenda Item 3) which was timely made public through the DHS mailing list.

4.3 Relations with DLMPS

As can be implied from the aforementioned some aspects of our agreements with our sister division, the DLMPS, will have to be reviewed as I have already pointed out to its Secretary General and the members of the Joint Commission. Specifically what concerns to the partition of funds that ICSU normally allotted both divisions. Also, due to the fact that the DLMPS lacks a structure that allows it to propose research topics in the framework of ICSU's new policies, Prof. Westerstahl has stated that if the DLMPS does not receive funds as in the past they might question their permanence in ICSU. In its Oviedo Congress this year, the DLMPS will take a decision regarding this situation. In this sense, the relations with our sister division shall have to be redefined, always taking into consideration the interests that exist between history and philosophy of science. This issue should be considered and decided on in a next DHS Council meeting.

Finally I would like to mention that during my first year as Secretary General, in addition to the DHS website, the creation of the operative infrastructure and setup of minimum communication tools has taken place, such as the office of the Secretary General and the DHS mailing list that together have allowed a prompt and efficient response to the matters that concern us, and which its volume, on the other hand, has not ceased to increase. This has led us to consider the need to increase the infrastructure and to obtain the necessary funding for an adequate performance as well as for the transportation expenses to attend DHS matters. Here I would like to mention the great assistance provided by the University of Pavia and Professor Bevilacqua for improving our Web site, and the University, the National Council for Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education of Mexico for the operative and communications infrastructure and for the support received in travel expenses to attend DHS matters in several parts of the world.

Thank you very much.

Juan José Saldaña