

## International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology

### IXth International (IUMS) Congress of Bacteriology and Applied Microbiology

Minutes of the meetings, 14 and 17 August 1999, Sydney, Australia

#### Session 1

**Minute 1. Call to order.** Chairman E. Stackebrandt called the meeting to order at 18:00 on 14 August 1999 in the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Sydney, Australia.

**Minute 2. Record of attendance.** Present were V. Bondarenko (Russia), J. Bowman (Australia), P. De Vos (Belgium), T. Ezaki (Japan), D. Jones (New Zealand), R. M. Kroppenstedt (Germany), D. P. Labeda (USA), F. G. Priest (UK), G. Saddler (UK), L. Sly (Australia), E. Stackebrandt (Germany), H. G. Trüper (Germany), R. Watling (UK), S.-S. Yang (Taiwan) and J. Young (New Zealand). Apologies for the absence were received from M. Aragno (Switzerland), V. Canhos (Brazil), L. Dicks (South Africa), J. Euzéby (France), G. Garrity (USA), D. Gross (USA), B. K. Gudmundsdóttir (Iceland), T. Hasegawa (Japan), M. Jackson (USA), R. Knowles (Canada), K. Lindström (Finland), Y. Ruifu (China), Y. Takikawa (Japan), E. Talpsep (Estonia), B. J. Tindall (Germany), T. Tonjum (Norway), N. Weiss (Germany) and G. A. Zavarzin (Russia).

**Minute 3. Agenda.** The circulated agenda was adopted.

**Minute 4. Jerusalem meetings.** The minutes of the meetings held in Jerusalem, Israel, were approved as published [*Int J Syst Bacteriol* 47 (1997), 597–600].

**Minute 5. Matters arising.** None was noted.

**Minute 6. Report of the Chairman.** Chairman E. Stackebrandt related to the Committee that the major challenge faced by ICSB since it last met in Jerusalem was the change in the publisher for its journal, the *International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology*. The tenuous situation with the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), the past publisher, was discussed in Jerusalem. At that time ASM had insisted that either a page charge must be instituted or an unreasonable page number limit must be set for them to continue as the publisher, and IUMS and ICSB had rejected both options. In June 1997, the Editor of IJSB was notified that ASM was cancelling its contract with IUMS effective from January 1998. Within 4 weeks of the cancellation notification, a contract was signed with a new publisher, the Society for General Microbiology (SGM). The transition from the ASM to the SGM occurred very smoothly. The Chairman introduced Aidan Parte, the new Managing Editor for IJSB, to the committee.

**Minute 7. Nominating Committee.** The following individuals were appointed members of a nominating committee for Executive Board and Judicial Commission vacancies: D. P. Labeda, E. Stackebrandt and H. G. Trüper.

**Minute 8. Report of the Secretary-Treasurer.** The impact of molecular techniques on the field of bacterial systematics has

resulted in continuation of the trend of record numbers of new taxa named (or renamed) which was observed when ICSB last met in Jerusalem, 1996. This continued increase in the description and rearrangement of taxa has generated several issues with respect to the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria which will be discussed and voted on during these meetings.

Letters soliciting appointment of a representative to ICSB were sent to the 122 member societies of IUMS shortly after the Congress in Jerusalem. Responses were received from 115 member societies with regard to the request for designation of representatives for this meeting. As with the Jerusalem Congress, however, some individuals were surprised that they had been designated as a representative when subsequently contacted. The full 3-year cycle between IUMS Congress did permit a follow-up request to the officers of non-responding societies, especially where the original correspondence was lost or misdirected during a change of member society officers.

Nominations for the Van Niel Prize were once again solicited for this Congress because the rules for the Prize were altered by the University of Queensland's Legal Office to accommodate the change of the scheduling of IUMS Congress to a 3-year cycle. We had several outstanding candidates nominated and are pleased to have the Selection Committee recognize Professor K. Komagata's contributions to bacterial systematics with the award of this year's Prize.

The current financial status of ICSB was given.

**Minute 9. Report of the Editor of IJSB.** E. Stackebrandt reported that the UK-based SGM has taken over as publisher of the IJSB since the end of 1997. The transition between publishers went well and the first issue of the new journal format produced by the SGM was published with only a short delay of two months, and subsequent issues were published on schedule. The new format of the Journal has been received with enthusiasm by the reader community. The number of papers published for 1998, 223, was down 16% from the previous year, but the number of submissions increased by 12% in 1998 and this increase is expected to continue in 1999. Contributions were received from scientists from 36 different nations. Enumerating these contributions according to the corresponding authors, US and Japanese scientists had the lead (14% each), followed by French, German (12% each) and Australian (7%) researchers. As in previous years, Europe contributed the majority of accepted papers (53%), followed by East Asia (Japan, China, Korea and Malaysia) with 20% and North America with 16%. The polyphasic approach to taxonomic studies has resulted in high numbers of national (23%) and international (46%) collaborations. Scientists who were predominantly involved in these collaborations were from the USA, UK and Germany (each 18%), France (13%) and Belgium (8%).

Most contributions had at least four authors, which clearly reflected the complexity of modern microbial systematics. It is interesting to note that more than one-third of papers contained contributions from the staff of biological reference centres, reference laboratories and public health centres. About 70% of all newly described bacterial species in 1998 were reported by contributions in the IJSB. In total, 178 new bacterial species names were validly published, including those on the Validation Lists. This was *status quo* as compared to 1997. The change in publisher had the unfortunate effect of the loss of 700 subscribers because of the delay in transfer of the subscriber list from the ASM to SGM and the fact that ASM did not indicate to its membership that it no longer published IJSB. Aggressive publicity efforts should be able to reclaim a portion of these subscribers. The journal had an impact factor of 3.724 for 1997, which is very high among non-review microbiology journals.

In 2000, the journal will be published bimonthly. Three new Associate Editors have been added to the Editorial Board: Hans-Jürgen Busse, Miklós Müller and Lindsay Sly.

**Minute 10. Report of the Secretary for Subcommittees.** A total of 14 Minutes from various Subcommittee have been published since the Congress in Jerusalem, three more are awaiting publication, and a number of Minutes are currently in preparation. It is clear that some Subcommittees are very well organized with impressive plans for future developments.

A total of eight Subcommittees planned for meetings during the IUMS Congress, while nine Subcommittees have plans for meetings elsewhere. It is becoming increasingly clear that it is easier for Subcommittees to get good attendance if meetings are associated with specialist symposia rather than with IUMS Congresses. A number of the officers overseeing effective Subcommittees have made this point.

Minimal standards papers continue to trickle in, although a number are in fairly advanced stages of preparation. Two have been published since the 1996 Congress, one for taxa in the order *Halobacteriales* and one on staphylococcal species. The minimal standards for *Arthrobacter* and *Microbacterium* are to be updated. At least six other standards papers are in the draft stage. Several officers of successful Subcommittees have pointed out the difficulty of motivating colleagues to participate in drafting minimal standards papers. Several reasons have been offered for this apparent malaise, including the fact that new taxa described in several journals are not based on published minimal standards, colleagues at times dodge minimal standards issues, and some minimal standards manuscripts run into difficulties with referees. Nevertheless it was agreed that the concept of minimal standards is a valuable one.

The merger of the Subcommittee of *Arthrobacter* and related organisms and the Subcommittee on the taxonomy of *Microbacterium* and related organisms was suggested by the Subcommittees' secretaries following a joint meeting of the Subcommittees in Prague. H. Prauser has written that this proposal should now be accepted. A. Ventosa provided a strong case for considering a Subcommittee on the taxonomy of the *Halomonadaceae*. These two proposals were accepted.

The officers of the Subcommittees have raised several additional issues, including the problems of delineating some genera. Some officers considered that an increasing number of papers published in IJSB show a poor grasp of the Bacteriological Code.

It was suggested by some Subcommittee officers that there might be a need to revamp existing Subcommittees or set up new ones in light of developments in prokaryotic systematics. This view was shared by the meeting.

**Minute 11. Report of the Judicial Commission.** H. G. Trüper, the Chairman of the Judicial Commission, stated that the Bacteriological Code is the concern of the Judicial Commission, both with development of the Code, and rendering Opinions where there is conflict with the Code.

(1) During this triennial the Commission has voted on two Requests for an Opinion, and has issued Opinion 69 on rejection of *Clostridium putrificum* and conservation of *Clostridium botulinum* and *Clostridium sporogenes*, and Opinion 70 accepting the proposal for a neotype strain for *Proteus vulgaris*. Five other Requests are pending, they will be voted on not before 1 year has passed after they have appeared in print in IJSB.

(2) A number of items relating to the development of the Bacteriological Code which were recommended by the Judicial Commission were presented by H. G. Trüper for a vote by the ICSB:

(i) The proposal to rename the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria to International Code of Nomenclature of Prokaryotes was unanimously accepted.

(ii) As a consequence of this change, the list of necessary changes of the word 'bacteria' to 'prokaryotes' throughout the Code and the Statutes of the ICSB, including the name of the ICSB itself to 'International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes', was unanimously accepted.

(iii) In order to update the Bacteriological Code and to adjust it to modern requirements, the Judicial Commission proposes a number of changes and amendments as to be seen in Minutes 7 (1–18) and 11 (4a–4c) of the Judicial Commission Meetings in Sydney, 1999. The Chairman of the Judicial Commission explained every one of these proposals and asked the ICSB for a vote on every single proposal. The ICSB voted unanimously in favour of every single proposal.

**Minute 12. Proposed name change of the *International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology*.** The change of name of the *International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology* to *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* to be effective January 2000 was proposed to expand the scope of the journal to include papers relating to the evolution of unicellular eukaryotes. This change was approved by the ICSB Executive Board and IUMS Executive Council, but required the approval of the ICSB. The vote to approve the change of journal name was unanimous.

**Minute 13. Stability and harmonization of bionomenclature and the Bacteriological Code.** Brian J. Tindall and Peter H. A. Sneath represent the ICSB in discussions on the universal BioCode, but neither were present. It seems that the BioCode may not appear soon because of disagreements between the zoologists and the botanists, but will come eventually. The Species 2000 and Global Biodiversity Forum databases serve as databases for valid names.

**Minute 15. Policy on deposition and availability of strains.** A concern had been raised that type strains cited in valid publications of taxa are not always available. A suggestion was made to require that type strains be deposited in three different culture collections.

**Minute 16. Adjournment.** The session was adjourned at 20:15 on 14 August 1999.

## Session 2

**Minute 17. Call to order.** The meeting was called to order by E. Stackebrandt at 18:00 on 17 August 1999.

**Minute 18. Record of attendance.** Present were V. Bondarenko (Russia), P. De Vos (Belgium), T. Ezaki (Japan), S. Feresu (Zimbabwe), M. Goodfellow (UK), P. A. D. Grimont (France), A. Hiraishi (Japan), R. M. Kroppenstedt (Germany), D. P. Labeda (USA), G. Saddler (UK), L. Sly (Australia), E. Stackebrandt (Germany), K. Suzuki (Japan), H. G. Trüper (Germany), A. Ventosa (Spain), S.-S. Yang (Taiwan) and J. Young (New Zealand).

**Minute 19. Lists of medically important taxa.** W. Fredericksen and J. Ursing have taken the responsibility of publishing lists of names of new medically important taxa annually in three clinical microbiology journals: *APMIS*, *Folia Microbiol*, *J Med Microbiol* and *Zentbl Bakteriol*. They were assisted by J. Magee (Cardiff, UK) on the compilation and publication of the last list. They have indicated that they will retire from this activity but Dr Magee will continue the work.

**Minute 20. Policy on deposition and availability of strains (continued).** The Judicial Commission has recommended a change in the Guidelines for Authors for the IJSB to require that type strains be deposited in at least two different culture collections, preferably not in the same country. This proposal was accepted.

**Minute 21. Status of minimal descriptive standards.** Two have been published since the last IUMS Congress, one needs to be updated and six are in the draft stage.

**Minute 22. Workshop topics.** The two topics presented by the Executive Committee were accepted: delineation of higher taxa, and impact of genomics on taxonomy. It was suggested that Gerry Saddler approach the SGM and George Garrity draft a proposal to NSF for funding of the latter workshop.

**Minute 23. ICSB statutes.** It was duly noted by H. G. Trüper that the changes already approved in the Code, as well as the change in the name of *International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology*, require changes in the ICSB statutes. The Publication Committee statutes need to be revised to reflect the functional reality of how this committee operates. The name of the ICSB should also be changed to International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes to reflect the other changes made in the Code during this meeting. The ICSB plenary would vote on all of these changes during the IUMS Congress in Paris in 2002.

**Minute 24. Election of the 21st Class of the Judicial Commission.** Elections were held for the four Judicial Commissioners of the 21st Class to replace the retiring 18th

Class. The four Commissioners elected unanimously to the 21st Class were J. P. Euzéby (France), T. Ezaki (Japan), G. A. Garrity (USA) and B. J. Tindall (Germany).

**Minute 25. Elections.** E. Stackebrandt, for the Nominating Committee, presented a full slate of candidates for election as follows: for Vice-Chairman (L. Sly retiring and not eligible for re-election), D. P. Labeda (elected unanimously), and for Executive Secretary-Treasurer (D. P. Labeda retiring and not eligible for re-election), G. Saddler (elected unanimously). Both of the current Members-at-Large of the Executive Board, V. Canhos and A. Ventosa, were retiring and not eligible for re-election. The Nominating Committee's candidates for the two Members-at-Large of the Executive Board were J. Chun, K. Suzuki and A. Oren. J. Chun and K. Suzuki were elected by a majority vote. The full Executive Board of ICSB for the next 3 years comprises E. Stackebrandt (Chairman), D. P. Labeda (Vice-Chairman), G. Saddler (Executive Secretary-Treasurer), M. Goodfellow (Secretary for Subcommittees), P. De Vos (Editorial Secretary), J. Chun (Member-at-Large), K. Suzuki (Member-at-Large) and H. G. Trüper (Chairman of the Judicial Commission).

**Minute 26. Co-opted members for the next triennial.** R. M. Kroppenstedt (Germany), A. Oren (Israel), L. Sly (Australia) and A. Ventosa (Spain) were co-opted as members of ICSB for the next 3 years.

**Minute 27. Any new business.** Discussion was again initiated regarding the concerns related to the availability of type strains and requirement for authors to submit type strains to two different culture collections. E. Stackebrandt responded to several of the issues, stating that processing of type strains by culture collections should not be a problem and that the authors personally should submit their type strains to culture collections in more than one country and not rely on the original collection of deposit to disseminate them to other collections.

A. Ventosa expressed his thanks for the opportunity to serve on the ICSB and suggested that the Committee should take some initiative to see that ICSB sessions are more clearly indicated as part of the programme of the IUMS/BAM Congresses so that scheduling conflicts with the scientific programme can be avoided. The schedule of meetings of the ICSB Subcommittees should also be included in the Congress programme so that interested Congress attendees could attend any open meetings. K. H. Schleifer was identified as the organizer for the IUMS/BAM Congress in 2002 and will be contacted in this regard.

**Minute 28. Final adjournment.** The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 18:48 on 17 August 1999.

**David P. Labeda**, *Executive Secretary-Treasurer, ICSB*