

International Committee

Minutes of the Meetings held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria 19 - 23 March, 2009

Present:

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|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Arturo Cepeda | President | acepeda@auronix.com | Mexico | 2008-2011 |
| Mohamed Youssef | Host 2008 | myousef@aast.edu | Egypt | 2007-2009 |
| Krassimir Manev | Host 2009 | manev@fmi.uni-sofia.bg | Bulgaria | 2005-2010 |
| Troy Vasiga | Host 2010 | tmjvasiga@cs.uwaterloo.ca | Canada | 2006-2011 |
| Kanchit Malaivongs | Host 2011 | sphon@ipst.ac.th | Thailand | 2007-2012 |
| Benedetto di Rienzo | Host 2012 | benedetto.dirienzo@itctosi.va.it | Italy | 2008-2013 |
| Valentina Dagiene | Elected | dagiene@ktl.mii.lt | Lithuania | 2006-2009 |
| Eljakim Schrijvers | Elected | eschrijvers@eljakim.nl | Netherlands | 2006-2009 |
| Metodija Janceski | Elected | meto@ii.edu.mk | Macedonia | 2007-2010 |
| Rogelio Garcia Llano | Elected | rgllano@unsam.edu.ar | Argentina | 2007-2010 |
| Richard Forster | Executive Director | forster@olympiad.org.uk | Great Britain | 2008-2011 |

Benedetto di Rienzo and Metodija Janceski were only present for items 7-8, 14, 17-21 and 23-29.

1. Welcome

Arturo Cepeda welcomed the committee to the meeting. Krassimir Manev welcomed the committee to Bulgaria and gave some brief history about the first IOI, held in Pravetz in 1989.

2. Apologies

No communication had been received recently from Fredrik Niemelä (niemela@kth.se). The ED will ensure new attempts are made to contact him by phone.

3. Confirmation of IC Minutes

- The minutes were confirmed after minor corrections.
- A request was made for more detailed future minutes, specifically with regards to the internal discussions.

4. Matters arising

Item 47 (Communication with UNESCO, IFIP and other organisations) was discussed:

- The ED reminded the committee that Michael Cotter (Ireland) had previously been asked to help liaise with other olympiads.
- Valentina Dagiene indicated that she was to be vice-chair of IFIP's TC3 committee on education. The chair of this committee (Bernard Cornu) was involved with UNESCO, and Valentina was tasked with talking with this chair to help find an appropriate contact person in UNESCO.
- The ultimate invitations to IFIP, UNESCO will come from the Host Country.

5. Report by President

- Arturo Cepeda reported that there had been limited activity between his election and this IC meeting.
- Arturo Cepeda and Richard Forster had met Georgi Parvanov (President of Bulgaria) on 19 March. He was very supportive of the IOI. He was invited to the opening ceremony.
- Other activities (for both AC+RF) which had occurred on 18/19 March included meeting with Kircho Atanasov (Deputy Minister of Education and Science) and a live TV interview.
- Between now and the IOI there would be a weekly 1/2 hour national TV program on computing, of which 10 minutes would be committed to the IOI.

6. Report by Executive Director

- Costs were currently well within budget. Around £250 for travel (including airfare) and £50 for running costs of the OED.
- The work commitment was currently around 1 day / month.

7. Olympiads in Informatics Report

Valentina Dagiene gave a report on the conference (attached). In addition:

- Rogelio Llano, as president of the CIIC, commented that it would be interesting to correlate regional olympiad performance to that in the IOI. He was encourage to write such a paper.
- It was indicated that, while some papers were still expected, reviewing was well underway and intended to be completed this month.
- It was indicated that the advantages to having no sub-title were that we are a small community (and sub-titles limit content) and that it would make it easier to be listed in formal journal databases.
- Certificates would be produced (by the Host Country) for all the authors of papers (i.e. for papers with multiple authors, multiple certificates would be produced).
- The committee discussed whether an invited speaker was a necessity. It was agreed that, for the conference, such a speaker should be able to give a suitable conference talk. Speakers who have been invited to entertain (or similar) the students are a normal Host Country issue, rather than a conference issue.
- It was agreed that members of the committee would suggest names to Valentina Dagiene (especially where they had a potential avenue of communication) by 7 April (2 weeks).
- The conference would finish with a discussion on IOI development, done as a panel discussion with 6 (or so) panelists each talking for 5 minutes, with another half hour for discussion. Short (1 page) written items would be required to avoid rambling discussions. A call to determine interest was to go out as soon as possible.
- It was agreed that we should be trying to produce a 'journal' rather than 'conference proceedings', and aim to get registered in the scientific databases. Olympiads are not otherwise covered by journals. The editorial board will need to be expanded, since there is a need for proper peer reviews if we are to be listed. Valentina Dagiene was given authority to ask people from outside the direct IOI community.
- It was agreed to informally (specifically not formally) find out whether people were in favour of a printed journal.

8. ISC Report

Michal Forisek delivered a report (attached), in addition:

- There had been fewer tasks received from the call for tasks than expected. It was suggested that it would be good to reward those authors whose tasks reached the shortlist, e.g. by inviting (and paying for) them to attend the IOI.
- The ISC would like to see S6.11 relaxed, e.g. to have the flexibility to show some scores during the contest. This would change the nature of the contest. There was some discussion on the advantages of keeping them secret until the closing ceremony (e.g. not having students know they've got a medal but still have to wait two days until the awards ceremony) and advantages of revealing them (e.g. in visualising the contest for outsiders). This would be a good issue to discuss the future developments panel, before detailed IC discussion.
- The HSC has done an excellent job this year with the problem set.
- The network setup is the largest outstanding issues currently.
- Beta-testers have been used on the problems, including former IOI gold to bronze medalists.
- The ISC would like to have the whole contest period for questions, but appreciates that there are other demands on delegation leaders. 2.5 hours is seen as a reasonable compromise.

9. ITWG Report

Martin Mares delivered a report (attached).

10. IOI'2008 Final Report (inc. registration receipts)

- No report was given. Mohamed Youssef would prepare a report for the next IC meeting (during IOI'2009)
- It was agreed that an outline as to what was required for this report (in general) should be produced.

11. IOI'2009

A presentation was given by the Novotel hotel management. In particular:

- There will be free internet access in all the rooms.
- There are sports facilities, and negotiations are underway regarding access / cost for contestants.
- The issue of leaders wishing to dine (or at least sit with) their contestants was brought up. There are some complications since dining will be in hotels, and the hotels used by the leaders and the contestants are separate. The organising committee will look into the situation.

A presentation was given by the organising committee:

- The Deputy Minister for Education welcomed the committee.
- A guideline document will be distributed. Krassimir Manev commented that he was 'providing answers' and that a more general checklist would be useful for future hosts.
- The excursion day after the second competition day is a trip to the Black Sea. Some concern was expressed regarding the distance to the venue (250km) and the corresponding amount of time that would be spent on buses (4 hours in each direction). The outlined timetable would have an early breakfast, arrival around 11am and a return to the hotels by 9-10pm. There was some concern that this timetable was optimistic.
- There is a proposal for a 'fun' side-contest that would take place on the day of the closing ceremony. Some preparation material would be presented to the students during the excursion.
- The distances between the hotel and the competition site are walkable.
- The fair (where the contest hall is located) has been booked for 18 days leading up to the event for setup.
- The organising committee wishes to receive the names of all delegation members (including students) by mid-July. These will be passed to the Ministry. The possession of names should assist countries in their visa applications, although it was stressed that countries should apply for visas as soon as possible.
- There was some general discussion, relating to the previous point, on the necessity of having to specify names at this date (as opposed to just a list of numbers / genders) since some countries selected their teams late in the year.
- Transport from Sofia will only be provided from Sofia airport. Delegations arriving by Bus or Train will be expected to extend their journeys to Plovdiv.
- The budget is guaranteed for key items (accommodation, meals, transport and computers) and negotiations are ongoing for some other costs.
- There will be 120 guides. A training program is planned, but not yet underway.

12. IOI'2010

Troy Vasiga gave a presentation on IOI'2010:

- The website, ioi2010.org, is up and running.
- The dates of the olympiad will be 14-21 August. Spring term will have finished and no students will be around.
- The proposed dates conflict with Ramadan (11 August - 10 September). It will not be possible to move the dates (due to the periods when students are using the campus) but every effort will be made to accommodate Muslim students.
- RIM will be the 'title' sponsor and providing ~1/4 of the budget. The university will be providing ~1/2 in kind (i.e. through the supply of computers). 1/4 of the budget is still being sought. All this funding has come through in the last few months, i.e. in the 18-21 month period prior to the IOI.
- The competition hall will be the gymnasium that is usually used for exams.
- The logo comes from the Inuit culture and is an inukshuk (trail marker).
- Delegations are recommended to use Toronto International Airport. Traveling through Waterloo airport will make transit through the USA very likely, with its associated visa problems.

13. IOI'2011

Kanchit Malaivongs gave a presentation on IOI'2011:

- The new government (from January) is still committed to the IOI. The Prime Minister has agreed to the budget.
- In February a committee, chaired by the Deputy Minister for Education, and including representatives from immigration, police & transport met to discuss the IOI. A second meeting had just taken place to form various committees (6 major committees) and justify the IPST's (Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology) chosen venue.
- Embassies have already been informed of the event.
- The Ministry of Education is intending to use the IOI to promote science and technology competency amongst students and teachers.
- An evaluation system has been tested, and online contests have already been run.
- It was confirmed that the IOI could be held outside of August and, given that Ramadan starts on 1 August in 2011, the last week of July is being considered.

14. IOI'2012

Benedetto di Rienzo gave a presentation on IOI'2012:

- Approximately half the budget (€1m) has been found.
- Negotiations are ongoing to venue. Milan is currently being considered, but will be expensive.
- Dates were discussed, and it was again confirmed that the IOI could be held outside August. It was highlighted that, if the IOI were to be held in September, it would be better to hold it towards the end of the month, since the initial weeks of term are difficult times for leaders who work in academia to leave university.
- A formal poll of the GA for dates was not recommended since the dates available to a Host are not necessarily those that the GA would select, and that polls can be interpreted as votes.

15. Procedure for GA Chairman nomination

It was agreed that the IC would endeavour, in general, to meet any proposed GA Chairman at the March IC meeting and, if possible, agree on the chairman at this meeting. This is compatible with S3.3.

16. Nomination of GA Chairman for IOI'2009

- Krassimir Manev proposed Prof. Dr. Petar Kenderov for GA Chairman for IOI'2009. He is a famous topologist who has chaired many conference, is currently the chair of the Bulgarian commission for academic titles, is a past director of the Institute of Mathematical Sciences and was chair of the original IOI in 1989.
- Arturo Cepeda and Richard Forster had met Prof. Kenderov earlier in the week, and felt he was a suitable candidate.
- The IC confirmed Prof. Kenderov as GA Chairman for IOI'2009.

17. Awards and Trophies

- It was agreed to give Rob Kolstad the Distinguished Service Award for his work on the USACO training gateway, internet contest, and assistance to several Host Countries running their evaluation systems.
- It was suggested that Zide Du was an appropriate recipient of the award at a future date. It was not appropriate for a past President to automatically receive an award in the period immediately after his office.
- Mohamed Youssef will produce two trophies — one for the DSA and another for the top student.
- It has been a tradition for many years to present the IFIP trophy to the youngest medal scoring student. The ED will contact Jari Koivisto, who usually presents the award, to see if he wishes to present the trophy again this year.
- Additional certificates of appreciation can be given as appropriate.
- Krassimir Manev outlines several potential ideas for recognising, at the opening ceremony, people who have been involved over the last 20 years. Suggested scenarios included the leaders who were present at the first IOI, early gold medalists, the presidents of past olympiads etc... It was agreed that this would be left to the organising committee.
- Mohamed Youssef agreed to help Krassimir Manev in producing any A/V presentation.
- The ED will send out a call to the community for historical material, such as photographs and anecdotes.

18. IOI further developments

- Valentina Dagiene had met with Wolfgang Pohl and discussed further developments.
- It was agreed that next spring would be a suitable time for a workshop, after the panel discussion at the end of this year's conference.
- There should be around €8000 in the budget for this workshop; spread over this year's budget and next year's budget.
- It was agreed that reflections on the workshop should be published.

19. Regulations (inc. Voting)

- S3.13 / S5.5 will be updated to reflect the fact that it is sometimes desirable to hold the ISC meeting earlier than currently specified. The period will become 2-6 months prior to an IOI.
- S6.8 will be updated to reflect the fact that other responses have been used in the last year when answering student questions. The important point is that these must be fixed strings that are specified in the Competition Procedures.
- S6.8 will be updated to reflect the fact that leaders should be available for the first half of the contest period and not just the first hour.
- S6.12 will be updated (by removing the first half of the sentence) so that, should the medal allocation algorithm wish to be used, the GA can vote on using the rule at the start of the IOI and not require an additional vote at the end of the IOI.
- The voting system needs updating for those cases when there are multiple positions available in an election; e.g. when there are 2 IC positions available in a year. Committee members were requested to send information to Richard Forster by 7 April (2 weeks) who will then suggest a new voting system.

20. Legal status of IOI

- The IOI does not currently exist as a legal entity, although it does exist as a financial entity through an account held by the treasurer.
- The treasurer has looked into the status of our account and does not see a problem.
- Current enquiries indicate that the other olympiads have a similar existence.
- It was suggested that the IOI has been 'lucky' in the past but it was questioned whether being a legal organisation would help us in the cases where we are unlucky, such as insufficient funding for an IOI.

There was debate over the advantages and disadvantages of seeking legal status.

- Negative points included:
 - We have been advised that it is likely to cost a lot of money, both initially and on a yearly basis, which will go to lawyers, accountants and insurance.
 - We will require 'officers' who will then become liable. Currently, only the current Host is liable, and then only for their own olympiad.
 - Those 'officers' may be required to meet in the country of registration.
 - Since the current Host runs the olympiad (unlike, say the ACM where the body itself comes in to run the contest and pays) the situation would be very unbalanced. The IOI (and its officers) would become responsible while being relatively powerless.
- Positive points included:
 - It may be easier to talk to organisations such as UNESCO. It was pointed out that we do already talk to some organisations, such as IFIP.
 - We might be able to approach bodies, such as the World Bank for funding. [This discussion was stopped, due to vote at the last IC meeting to stop discussions on sponsorship.]
 - We could hold intellectual property. (NB: It was not the consensus of the meeting that this was a direction we should be following.)
- It was agreed that, since many of the discussed pros were hypothetical, that we should put together a risk assessment which discusses advantages and disadvantages.
- Members of the committee are to send Eljakim Schrijvers their contributions to the report by 22 June (3 months). Contributions should contain analysis and not just be hypothetical statements.
- Eljakim Schrijvers will collate received information for discussion at the next IC meeting.

21. IOI Logo

- No suggested logos have been received from the GA.
- It was agreed that the logo did not have to be similar to the trophy.
- A call will go out to the GA, giving them until 22 June (3 months) to make a contribution.
- It was discussed whether a 'prize' should be offered. It was pointed out that we would then be obliged to formally define the contest and pick a winner.
- Mohamed Youssef will produce another suggested logo.
- If a suitable logo is received and approved by the IC, the GA will be given an opportunity to see the proposed logo before the IOI and vote on it at an early GA meeting. If approved the new logo will be publicly unveiled at the closing ceremony.

22. CoLib

Krassimir Manev updated the committee on CoLib:

- Of the 82 regular countries at the IOI (i.e. those who had participated within the last three years) 63 had registered completely, 5 had supplied half the required data and the remaining 14 had not yet supplied details.
- It was suggested that the registration details for IOI'2009 (i.e. login & password) should only be made available through CoLib. This would ensure that countries wishing to participate would be motivated to put the necessary details on CoLib.
- It was agreed that even though there was a "formal invitation letter required" field in CoLib it made sense to send a formal invitation to the CoLib contact for every country.
- Ideas for future features of CoLib, such as historical data on teams and medalists, were briefly mentioned.
- Krassimir Manev will send an updated email to the IC indicating which countries still need to register.

23. Website

- It is desirable to integrate the new logo / colour scheme into the website, but this cannot be done until we have designed and chosen such a logo.
- Troy Vasiga requested that members of the committee let him know of any errors on the website and make general suggestions.
- It was suggested that the country contacts should be kept up to date using CoLib, and that country contacts could add appropriate URL information to that system.

24. Newsletter

- Richard Forster will collate a newsletter for distribution to the GA.
- Any member of the committee wishing to contribute to the newsletter should send their suggested material to Richard Forster by 7 April (2 weeks).
- The Host and President will produce a half page of information for inclusion into the newsletter.

25. Budget

Eljakim Schrijvers reported:

- Very little money has been spent so far.
- Interest rates have dropped significantly due to the financial crisis.
- The current balance is around €81,000.

26. Chile

Since the IC meeting during IOI'2008:

- It does not appear that any of the parties involved in the dispute have reached a consensus or spoken with each other.
 - The Ministry of Education has written that they have '*decided to withdraw our role in all aspects of this year's competition.*' although they would '*make every possible effort to promote the IOI next year.*'
 - A request had been received from the Department of Informatics of UTFSM to represent, who appeared to have been contacted by last year's newly formed national olympiad (ONI) to take that project forward.
 - Alexander Velkov wrote to the IC, reiterating the information that he had given the committee at its previous meeting.
- The committee agreed that it was disappointed that there had been no attempt to follow its request to the relevant parties to discuss the situation themselves and reach a consensus. It also felt that it would be an unfortunate situation if Chile were unable to reach a decision and attend the IOI.
- There was debate over whether it was appropriate to discuss this further with the Ministry at this stage. Opinions (from different members) included the opinion that their prior communication explicitly said that they did not want to be involved this year, and the opinion that this was cultural and they did wish further communication. General consensus seemed to be that the Ministry would be pleased if we could come to them with a solution which they could then endorse.
- It was agreed that Arturo Cepeda would phone (not write to) Alexander Velkov, the UTFSM contact and the prior ONI contact, to encourage them to speak with each other and come to a consensus. He will *not* speak to the Ministry.
- Several members of the committee felt that, should the parties not reach an agreement, Chile should not be allowed to participate at IOI'2009.
- The IC will seek feedback from Chile, by 27 April (1 month); this deadline to be given to the parties by Arturo Cepeda. The IC will discuss the outcome of the internal Chilean discussions and reach a decision on Chile's participation at IOI'2009 at this time.

27. New Countries

Requests have been received from Madagascar, Belgium and Algeria. All of these countries were approved as observers for this year's IOI.

28. Potential Hosts

- There are currently no letters of intent for 2013 or latter.
- It was agreed that it was not appropriate, for the time being, to make a formal invitation to a country to host. This might be usefully kept in reserve, but doing it immediately just moves back the issue of no current requests to host by another year.
- Arturo Cepeda will send out a message to members of the GA encouraging them to think about hosting and pointing out that we do not yet have letters of intent for 2013 and beyond. It is hoped that this will make the community think serious about the problem of future host countries.

29. Other business

- The streaming of opening / closing ceremonies (and similar IOI events) to the internet was briefly discussed. It was highlighted that it was important that someone would be constantly ready to pull the plug (e.g. so a problem was not then on youtube) and it was suggested that a non-live edited item might be preferable.
- The issue of translating some of the books that have been produced by the community was briefly discussed. Krassimir Manev noted that the recent Russian book containing all the past IOI problems had a distinctive old-style and that more than translation would be required. More detailed discussion was deferred for a future IC meeting.
- The IOI brochure was discussed. It does not make sense to produce one immediately, since we may have a new logo in 6 months. Mohamed Youssef is happy to help design it (at no cost). The ED will circulate to the committee a copy of the current brochure.
- A request had been received from a PhD student to carry out a survey of IOI participants. It was agreed that such requests should come through the official delegation. The ED will put this student (from the USA) in touch with Rob Kolstad.