

**SUMMARY NOTES
CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS FORUM,
AUGUST 1998, BONN**

The Chairs and Directors Forum was hosted by the IHDP in Bonn from 14 to 16 August 1998. It was held in connection with the IHDP/START International Human Dimensions Workshop (Bonn, 8-21 August 1998), which enabled the Forum participants to meet and interact with the young developing country researchers attending the Workshop. It was the first meeting with all four of the GEC programmes and START.

The participants in the Forum discussion were: Prof. Roland Fuchs (START), Prof. Larry Gates (WCRP), Prof. Hartmut Grassl (WCRP), Ms. Colleen Skule Adam (DIVERSITAS), Mr. Will Steffen (IGBP), Prof. Peter Tyson (START), Prof. Eckart Ehlers (IHDP), Dr. Larry Kohler (IHDP) and Ms. Heike Schröder (IHDP).

1. The Forum carried out an extremely useful review of recent and proposed priority activities concerning each of the four Global Environmental Change (GEC) programmes. Emphasis was given in the presentations to potential areas for collaboration between the programmes. It was apparent that there were many more opportunities for collaboration than could be efficiently pursued by the various GEC programmes. The constraints tended to be related to the time limitations of the skilled people working in the programmes and limited "glue" money to facilitate collaboration. It was recognised that additional funds alone would not enable the GEC programmes to substantially expand their collaboration and that efforts were also needed to extend and enhance the participation of researchers within the various core projects. In order to avoid establishing a series of new projects or mechanisms for collaboration between programmes, emphasis should be given to facilitating collaborative initiatives which were driven by the core projects themselves and implemented as part of their on-going activities. Given the existing large number of demands addressed to the GEC programmes, the fact that those demands are expected to expand rapidly in the future, and noting the desire for the GEC programmes to show their responsiveness to the policy and funding communities, the Forum identified a limited number of priority areas for future collaboration:

A. HEALTH:

ICSU recently made a Large Grant Award to the IHDP and IGU to carry out a special one year initiative to prepare an "Agenda for Research on Health and Environment". The IHDP agreed to represent the GEC programmes within this initiative and to facilitate collaboration from all four programmes as well as with other relevant ICSU bodies in its implementation. It was agreed that each of the GEC programmes would provide comments and new ideas and proposals before 15 September 1998 with a view to strengthening the proposed work programme. The goal of collaboration among the four programmes is to facilitate the development of a more co-ordinated and coherent approach to research on health and environment issues related to global change in future.

B. WATER:

Many initiatives regarding water are underway within the GEC programmes, within the UN system, and at the regional and national level. The IHDP offered to convene a special workshop on "Global Change Research and Water" in November 1999 to bring together a limited number of representatives from the key water-related research initiatives within the four GEC programmes to discuss priority areas for collaboration and to identify specific follow-up action for the period 1999-2002. The workshop would be held in connection with a special International Water Research Symposium currently being prepared and sponsored by the German Global Change Committee, IHDP and others. The IHDP agreed to keep the GEC programmes informed of the preparations for these meetings and requested the programmes to submit suggestions of topics for consideration at these meetings as well as the names of possible participants.

C. FOOD SECURITY:

The GEC programmes agreed that consideration should be given to convening a "Global Change Forum" which would bring together the GEC research, policy and funding communities to examine a single GEC issue. A number of very relevant activities are currently underway within the GEC programmes which would effectively contribute to such an initiative, e.g. CLIMAG, and the proposed GCTE/LUCC/GECHS Food Security meeting in Southern Africa. The IGBP had already held initial discussions with the FAO about possibly convening such a Forum on food security issues. It was agreed that IGBP should take the lead in following up the possible convening of such a Forum, in late 1999 or 2000.

D. CARBON CYCLE:

The Carbon cycle in the Post-Kyoto period is becoming a critical research priority relevant to all four GEC programmes. It was agreed that IGBP should take the lead in developing a more coordinated approach among the various GEC programmes. There was a risk that the GEC programmes could be overwhelmed by too many requests. Attention should be given now to identifying priorities taking into account the demands of current GEC programmes and human resources and financial constraints. This initiative might also provide some useful insights into how the GEC programmes might improve their capacity to assess and respond to the increasing number of requests for collaboration and contribution from such bodies as the IPCC, Convention Secretariats, UNEP, Global Observing systems, etc. It was also noted that the Government of The Netherlands had announced that there was a limited amount of resources available for "joint GEC initiatives" and the Carbon Cycle activities appeared to be an excellent target proposal for those funds.

2. The Forum reviewed the very significant contributions being made by the START programme to all four GEC programmes. They examined ways in which the IGBP/WCRP and IHDP might enhance their already close collaboration in the management and development of START, especially in the support of START regional research activities which were providing major contributions to their core projects and programmes. It was agreed that the CLIMAG project warranted special priority. IHDP and WCRP indicated that they would make additional efforts to mobilise support from their communities for CLIMAG in advance of the meeting in early 1999, particularly as regards climate predictions, improved linkages to crop models, scaling issues, and integration of decision-making and resource management issues. START was invited to consider the preparation of regional reviews of GEC research activities as these would provide a most useful source of information for the

consideration should be given in future as to how the GEC programmes might usefully work together to help rationalise the selection and use of field sites in order to promote more integrated approaches and analyses of GEC research results.

3. There was an extensive discussion of the role of IGFA and the GEC programmes. It was agreed that the GEC programmes should continue to collaborate closely with IGFA with a view to trying to rationalise and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of IGFA's coordinating and catalytic role. It was agreed that special emphasis was needed to ensure that stable and sufficient "glue" money was available to the GEC programmes so that they could continue to provide critical international and regional added value to the GEC research funding process. Similarly, however, it was recognised that the GEC programmes were also contributing to the national research funding process by providing coherent and coordinated GEC research frameworks. They agreed to undertake a coordinated approach at the next IGFA session (ISPRA, October 1998) in support of a more visible and proactive role by IGFA representatives to facilitate the mobilisation of stable and sufficient funding for the GEC programmes (international programmes and project offices). The programmes agreed that they should give especially high priority to support for the START programme and for regional research projects. They also discussed the draft IGFA review of the IHDP. The IHDP was encouraged to make every effort to ensure that the review process gave appropriate recognition to the very significant progress which had been made by the IHDP during the past 18 months. The IGFA review should serve as a catalyst for the mobilisation of new and additional financial support for human dimensions research (e.g. IHDP Secretariat, IPOs, and for national researchers, particularly those in developing countries). It was agreed that IGBP would take the lead in preparing a brief draft statement drawing attention to several critical issues which might be discussed with IGFA at its session in October (e.g. changing role of national contributions to GEC programmes, potential funding competition between global and regional programmes, significant benefits resulting from enhanced glue money).

4. The Forum also made the following recommendations: (i) a special collaborative effort should be encouraged by relevant core projects (e.g. BAHC, LUCC, PAGES) to prepare a joint GEC programme contribution to the Year of Mountains (2002); (ii) the GEC programmes should informally circulate lists of meetings, workshops, etc. quarterly for the information of other GEC programmes; (iii) the GEC programmes should provide a coordinated contribution to the UNESCO World Science Conference in June 1999 (IGBP will take the lead in facilitating this initiative) which would draw special attention to, inter alia, data access, commercialisation and the state of the observing systems; (iv) WCRP will take the initiative to review data related issues with a view to possibly submitting a note to ICSU and for use at the World Science Conference; (v) the GEC programmes will continue to monitor opportunities for improving the visibility and availability of their research results through a more coordinated approach to publications and information dissemination strategies; (vi) new efforts should be made to facilitate the joint representation of GEC programmes at major meetings in order to decrease the costs (time and money) of representation (IHDP will take the lead in facilitating the preparation of a set of transparencies using a standard GEC format and possibly other briefing materials) and the GEC programmes were urged to explicitly indicate to their projects that the absence of participation of GEC programmes DID NOT reflect a lack of interest and support--but rather an attempt to rationalise the use of limited staff and financial resources.

5. The Forum also had a free and frank exchange regarding the following issues: (i) opportunities and constraints concerning collaboration with the Convention Secretariats, UN

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streamline and harmonise administrative procedures among the different GEC programmes; (iii) common problems encountered in the administration of international programmes and project offices (e.g. international staffing, employment status and practices, and contracts); (iv) importance of enhancing the participation of young, developing country researchers within the GEC programmes and projects; and (v) the need to enhance the role and contribution of national committees to the scientific work of the GEC programmes.

6. It was agreed that the Forum would continue to follow the practice of preparing a brief summary report for internal use reflecting decisions taken and issues requiring action. In addition, IHDP was requested to submit a brief article to ICSU's Science International concerning the meeting of the Forum. Finally, the Forum welcomed the invitation by DIVERSITAS to host the next session of the Chairs and Directors Forum, most likely in the summer of 1999. START indicated its willingness to host the session in 2000.

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10.9.1998