Membership of the Technical Co-ordination Committee (TCC)

Commissioners for Agronomy, Dr. C. Soopramanien, Biology, Dr. F. Martin and Factory, Dr. B. Purchase undertook their duties competently and efficiently. Unfortunately, the Co-Products Commissioner, Dr. J. Lois, had to be removed from office as it was impossible to communicate with him. This step was taken following consultation with the ISSCT Chairman and the Councillor from Cuba Dr. O. Almazan volunteered to step in and take over the duties in 1998.

The quality of the technical affairs of ISSCT is largely dependent on the calibre of people on the Technical Panels, and their commitment to ISSCT. With this in mind, guidelines for the nomination and selection of members of the TCC and Technical Panel were formulated and a copy is attached. All Technical panelists have been encouraged to give due consideration to suitable candidates, and to bring nominations to the first meeting of the Technical Panel at the ISSCT Congress.

2. Standard of papers submitted to Indian ISSCT Congress

Separation of the Technical Panel and the Congress Organisation has proved successful in the last few Congress in improving the standard of papers submitted. However, it was realised that the process of elevating the standard of papers at ISSCT still needed further effort. At the mid-term meeting in India, themes or topics for particular emphasis within each Commission were established, and promoted in ISSCT Newsletters. This did not achieve any particular required response, and was not strongly followed through in that no special topic symposia feature in the technical program.

The response to the call for papers was good in some of the sections, and poor in others. As a result, ISSCT has not really been in the situation where they are able to select only papers of the highest calibre. In certain sections, namely Entomology, Factory Engineering and Co-products, there are fewer papers than the number of slots allocated to them. This is particularly noticeable in Co-products, where only 10 papers, some of dubious quality, were received, compared to an allowance for 18 papers.

Consideration, therefore, needs to be given to the on-going viability of Co-products as a Commission. Unless it can be given renewed focus and stronger promotion, it should disappear as a separate Commission.

Response to the call for posters was also patchy. The commitment to posters by ISSCT needs to be strengthened. More attention needs to be given to communicating the call for papers and posters, in sugar journals, and via the website and by any other means.

In summary, high technical standards need to be pursued more strongly if ISSCT is to achieve its rightful position as the premier international technical forum.


This was further revised and updated, and now constitutes a useful set of procedures for the Technical Committee’s activities, both with respect to handling of papers and the Workshops. This should continue to be updated by the TCC on an on-going basis.
4. Technical Newsletters

No Technical Newsletters were issued. Their value has been questionable, and over the last few Congress periods it has always been a struggle to produce copy. A budget of $2000 was allowed for them.

The ISSCT website now fulfills the function of these newsletters. In particular, reports on Workshops were available on the website instead of being circulated in newsletters. It is recommended that technical newsletters be discontinued.

The Technical Panel should consider how the website should be more gainfully used as a vehicle for disseminating technical information as an alternative to newsletters.

5. Workshops

These continue to be well-supported and very successful. In some quarters, they are now regarded as more useful than the ISSCT Congress itself. Slots have been allocated in the Congress program of papers for reportbacks to the sections on the usefulness and content of the last round of workshops.

It was most unfortunate that the Co-products Workshop never came to fruition. It was planned for Taiwan, changed to Brazil, and was finally called off when communications between the Co-products Commissioner and Brazilian sponsors broke down. The final nail in the coffin was notice from Cuba announcing a By-products Conference to be held just a month or so before the planned Co-products Workshop.

Otherwise, Congress Workshops were generally very successful. Revised Guidelines for holding workshops were issued (copy attached), and a formalised application for hosting workshops in future was introduced. It is hoped that this will overcome the problems experienced and enable final decisions on hosting workshops to be taken at the ISSCT Congress.

It is considered that Workshops form a very important part of ISSCT in providing a unique and effective vehicle for exchange of information. They should continue as routine activity of ISSCT and be supported and encouraged.

Dr. Peter Rein
Details of the Workshops are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commission x Secom.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sponsor, location</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Countries present</th>
<th>Secom Members Present</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>3-7 Feb. 1997</td>
<td>Zucarmex, Mexico</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entomology</td>
<td>12-16 May 1997</td>
<td>Sasex, South Africa</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Efficiency of Sugar Cane Breeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology/Molec. Biology</td>
<td>18-22 May 1998</td>
<td>MSIRI, Mauritius</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breeding &amp; Gerplasm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agronomy</td>
<td>15-19 Sept. 1997</td>
<td>BSES, Australia</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Irrigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agric. Eng./ Factory Processing</td>
<td>24-28 Nov. 1999</td>
<td>Geplaca, Mexico</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>Field mechanisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory Co-Products</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>455</td>
<td>35/40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our thanks are due to those organisations who hosted Workshops and attendant functions.
The Permanent Secretariat started operating immediately after the XXIInd Congress, in September 1995.

The initial period was devoted to its establishment: development of communication with office bearers, setting up the infrastructure and acquisition of necessary equipment.

During this initial phase, secretarial assistance was hired piecemeal but after the office was fully established at the end of 1996, a Secretary/Assistant was appointed and started work in January 1997. Since then the activities grew up rapidly.

The primary object of the Secretariat is to co-ordinate the activities of the Society, establish communication among office bearers and with members, to hold in custody the Society’s assets, to process membership applications and renewal, and to manage the Society’s funds.

Yet the achievements have been beyond our expectations and have proved great value in relation to the input. This is greatly due to the support received from the MSIRI, in particular the Director, and the staff put at the Secretariat’s disposal, the assistance from some MSIRI staff, mainly for accounting and finance, and for information technology. The good facilities available in Mauritius for Communications and, Information Technology are also contributory factors.

What follows is an account of the various activities accomplished and forecasts for the future.

Staffing and office establishment

The Secretariat’s staff is as follows:

Permanent Secretary (part-time)
One Confidential Assistant/Secretary (part-time)
One Junior Trainee Secretary (full time)

Assistance is also obtained from the Secretary-Accountant MSIRI for the Accounts and for managing the Society’s funds. One Junior Officer of MSIRI helps with the Web page, on a contractual basis outside working hours. Advice is also benevolently received from MSIRI specialists for matters involving computer hardware and software.

A small and well-maintained office is leased by MSIRI to host the Secretariat in Quatre-Bornes, my home town, which is 6 km from MSIRI head office. The basic office and equipment facilities are available.

Membership processing

Permanent Secretariat has processed about 30 % of the membership applications and has liaised with the Congress Secretariat in New Delhi to issue membership certificates and to establish a computer database of all members with their co-ordinates. This is regularly kept up-to-date. In the light of experience, the Executive has decided that in future all membership applications will be processed by the Secretariat.
Audited statements of the Interim Accounts for the period 1 July 1995 to 30 November 1998 have been approved by Council and Executive. The decision to present Interim Audited Statements of Account to Council and Executive at Congress follows recommendations from the auditors. These accounts will now be up-dated to include the full proceeds of the XXIIIrd Congress and expenses up to the end of the Calendar month of Congress. The Constitution has been amended so that from now on, the Accounts will span over the period from the end of one Congress to the end of the next. These will be finalized within 3 months and submitted to Executive at the next mid-term meeting and for eventual ratification by Council at the future Congress.

It should be pointed out that the MSIRI provides a grant which serves mainly for infrastructure and basic equipment, and the supporting staff. ISSCT’s funds are for the fees of the Permanent Secretary, part of the Accounting and Audit fees, the running expenses of the Secretariat and those of the Society’s Technical activities, including travel expenses.

**Communication**

The Permanent Secretariat has established strong communication links with the Executive and other office bearers of the Society, especially ra and continues to be in the forefront for its services to its members. An Internet interactive scheme was attempted during the Plant Breeding Workshop in Mauritius in May 1998. This was meant to give greater opportunity to technologists around the world to participate in the debate. Abstracts of communications were posted on the web and questions were invited. Although the response was shy, it is thought that such interactive discussion groups could become an important activity within the Society.

**Constitution, Policy and Procedures**

At the request of Executive, considerable effort has been given to defining the Policy of the Society and the Procedures for the implementation of this Policy and the organization of administrative and technical activities. At the same time, the need became obvious to improve the Society’s Constitution, to strengthen certain Articles and amend some anomalies.

Two documents on Policy and Procedures have been submitted to Executive and Council. These will be an asset to ensure the Society’s continuity and especially to avoid any set back as its officers change. Such was the case in the past when too much relied on the experience of a few dedicated long serving officers.

**Miscellaneous activities**

Permanent Secretariat has been involved in a number of other activities. Two worth mentioning are given below.

Archives. The Archives were transferred from Hawaii to Mauritius in mid-1996. They consist of 109 volumes of past proceedings and 19 files on past activities. To avoid concentrating the archives of the Society at Permanent Secretariat, three official depositories of past proceedings have been selected:

- **STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND**
  Collection Development Librarian
  P.O. Box 3488
  South Brisbane, Qld 4101
  AUSTRALIA

- **THE BRITISH LIBRARY**
Applications to host activities. Application forms for this purpose have been amended for greater efficiency.

Conclusions

The Permanent Secretariat has been off to a good start. The permanence and continuity of the Society is thereby strengthened, with more engagement in and better co-ordination of inter-congress activities. The support given to the office bearers appears to be well appreciated. Thus, scientists responsible for the Society’s activities can be relieved from a good deal of administrative burden, leaving them more time to look at the science, and decreasing encroachment on their occupation in their own organization.

However, we have only been through the establishment phase. Although the initial lag phase has been limited and progress has been beyond expectations, there is still a good deal to be done to increase the society’s membership services. The work started should be pursued with greater attention to this second objective. Continuity is most important if we want to avoid any set back or risk of having to start everything anew. For this, the continued support of MSIRI is vital.

One of the main objectives of the Society, as defined by its Constitution and enshrined in its Mission Statement, is to promote interchange of information on sugar cane technology. This is essential for the competitiveness of the sugar cane industry, through increased productivity and better exploitation of value-added co-products. The Permanent Secretariat should endeavour to improve the networking among the society’s members for this purpose. It should become the hub for access to information on sugar cane technology, and for this, the use of modern tools of communication and information technology is vital.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and members of the ISSCT Executive, to the Commissioners and the Chairmen of Sections, to the General Secretary-Treasurer of the XXIIIrd Congress and his assistants, for their support and collaboration.

The collaboration of the Director MSIRI and the generous financial support of the MSIRI Board and of the Mauritius Sugar Producers’ Association are gratefully acknowledged.

I wish to record the dedication of the staff put at our disposal, in particular Mr. Mahen SEERUTTUN, Secretary-Accountant MSIRI and my Secretary/Assistant, Mrs. Annick GAUTHIER. My thanks also to some of my former colleagues at the MSIRI, for their help.

Claude Ricaud
16 February, 1999
MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the ISSCT at the end of the XXIII Congress was 1195 from 59 countries classified as follows:

- Individual Members: 1110
- Affiliated Members: 15
- Institutional Members: 33
- Corporate Members: 19
- Honorary Life Members: 18

ATTENDANCE AT THE XXIII CONGRESS

A total of 610 members (349 Foreign and 261 Indians) attended the XXIII Congress with 210 members also participating in the complete programme which included the pre-congress tours. 55 accompanying persons (42 Foreign and 13 Indians) enjoyed the varied spouse programme which was a feast for the senses.

CONGRESS INFORMATION

The Congress Organising Committee introduced a number of firsts such as significant discounts for authors, simultaneous interpretations in all technical sessions and release of proceedings on CD-ROM. In keeping with tradition, the Head of State, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee (Hon’ble Prime Minister of India) inaugurated the XXIII Congress.

Eight international newsletters were published at quarterly intervals during 1997-98 to keep members abreast of the latest developments in the Indian Sugar Industry and provide comprehensive information about the congress and pre-congress tours.

Effective use was also made of the Internet as a means of disseminating comprehensive information through the STAI Website at http://members.tripod.com/~staicurrentscene. Online Registration was also introduced to enable easy worldwide access to the registration process. Numerous delegates used this service from countries as far apart as Guatemala, Taiwan and Sweden, amongst others.

PRE-CONGRESS TOUR

The pre-congress tours were organised to important manufacturing and research facilities in Daurala (UP), Pune and Coimbatore in a manner to cater to each participant in their specific area of interest through various groups. Nearly 60% of the foreign delegates opted for these tours. The factories visited were Daurala Sugar Works (U.P.), Ajinkyatara & Bhima Patas (Maharashtra), Sakthi Sugars & TNPL (Coimbatore). Vasantdada Sugar Institute in Pune, Sugarcane Breeding Institute in Coimbatore & Germplasm Centre (Kunnar) were the research centres visited. The delegates reported that they were “very well received” at these locations.
TECHNICAL PAPERS

A total of 110 papers were presented.

Plenary sessions - 15
Agriculture - 24
Biology - 31
Co-products - 10
Factory - 30

A total of 46 Posters were presented.

Agronomy - 6
Breeding - 10
Molecular Biology - 8
Pathology - 8
Factory - 14

EXPO SUGATEK - ISSCT TRADE FAIR

The latest technological innovations were highlighted at the international trade fair “Expo Sugatek ‘99” held concurrently at Vigyan Bhavan. Major companies from six countries participated in the Exhibition. Heavy machinery (harvesters, tractors etc) was also displayed on the lawns.

CONGRESS BIDDING

Only one affiliated member, The Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists made their presentation to host the XXIV Congress, and I am happy to announce that the same has been awarded to Australia. The XXIV Congress will be held at Brisbane in September 2001.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The XXIII ISSCT Congress owes its success in large measure to the active support and cooperation of the Chairman & Members of the Congress Organising Committee (COC), Shri RP Sinha (Secretary, Sugar & Edible Oils, Ministry of Food & Consumer Affairs, Govt of India), Shri Indubhai C Patel (Chairman, Coordination Committee - ISMA & NFCSF), Shri MS Marathe (Managing Director, National Federation of Co-operative Sugar Factories), Shri SL Jain (Director General, Indian Sugar Mills Association) and Dhampur Sugar Mills.). I would like to acknowledge the support received from International Travel House. My grateful thanks are specially due to Ms. Neena Roy (Conference Co-ordinator) for her relentless efforts in ironing out the numerous hurdles we faced and her continued assistance in the publication of the Proceedings.

Vinay Kumar