REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The new Executive Committee met for the first time on September 15, 1995, at the end of the XXII Congress in Cartagena, Colombia and elected the undersigned from India as Chairman - Executive, and Dr Peter Rein from South Africa as Vice Chairman. Dr Rein automatically became the Chairman of the Technical Co-ordination Committee and Technical Panel. Annexure ‘A’ gives the list of members of Executive who were elected at the Colomian Congress, and those who are serving their first or second terms.

At the meeting in Cartagena, dates for the XXIII Congress in India were decided. An MOU was finalised between ISSCT and the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI) for the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat in Mauritius. An agreement was also signed by the undersigned with the Permanent Secretary on 15th September for a period up to the end of the XXIII Congress, which is renewable for a further period of three years.

Mid-Term Meeting 15-22 February, 1997 - New Delhi /Coimbatore
All members of Executive attended the first mid-term meeting in India from 15 - 22 February, 1997. There were internal meetings of Executive and with COC. Members of the Technical Co-ordination Committee also had mid-term meetings in Delhi at this time, and both Executive and TCC visited the Daurala Sugar factory on 19th February and travelled to Coimbatore from 20th February to 22nd February to visit Sakthi Sugars, the Sugar Cane Breeding Institute, and the Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Paper factory. These were the places identified by COC for the Northern and Southern Pre-Congress tours.

In early 1996, all the records with the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association (HSPA), who had been the ISSCT Custodian from 1935 to 1995, were shifted to the Permanent Secretariat in Mauritius. A letter of thanks on behalf of ISSCT, and a plaque to commemorate the 1st Congress (Annexure-B) was presented to HSPA in September 1996.

Accounts for the period 1.3.1995 to 31.1.1997 signed by the Secretary Accountant MSIRI, Permanent Secretary and the undersigned, were presented and approved by Executive.

An application to hold the post-Congress tour in Pakistan in February 1999 was received from the Pakistan Society of Sugar Technologists through their councillor, Mr A Qureshi, and was accepted.

At the XXII Congress in Cartagena, Colombia, an application to host the XXIV Congress in 2001/2002 was received from the Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists, and ATAGUA - the Society of Sugar Cane Technologists of Guatemala. Their interest was expressed in letters from both organizations in September, 1995. A fax was also received on 30th January, 1997, from Julius Lewinski expressing interest of the Mexican Sugar Technologists Association in hosting the XXIV Congress in 2002. This matter was discussed by Executive in January, 1998.

A review of the archives was held at this mid-term meeting, wherein it was found that the proceedings of the XX Congress in Sao Paulo and the XXI Congress in Bangkok were not available. We have been successful in procuring copies of these proceedings and are grateful to the Affiliated Societies concerned. It was also decided that efforts should be made to deposit a copy of the Society’s proceedings in three Central Libraries in the USA, U.K., and Australia. (See Report of Permanent Secretary)

The Technical sessions for the XXIII Congress were finalised by the Technical Co-ordination Committee, as well as the subjects for the Plenary Sessions. Hotel and convention facilities were inspected by Executive and TCC members, and presentations were made by the COC Travel Agency. These were found suitable and clearance was given to COC.

Executive was very concerned about the high cost of Congress, and an appeal was made to COC to “vigorously"
renegociate rates, especially with the hotels, and also to obtain maximum sponsorship so as to substantially lower the overall cost of Congress. As COC could not give an idea of the final package costs, and as this matter was of great importance, a second meeting was scheduled in January, 1998. The final decision on the convention site between Vigyan Bhawan and Taj Palace hotel was also deferred to the second mid-term meeting.

It was agreed by COC that pre-prints would be available to delegates, preferably before the Pre-Congress tour. It was also stressed that the final proceedings must come out within six months after the close of Congress.

A budget and forecast of income and expenditure for the period ending February, 1999, was presented to Executive and was approved. A proposal for setting up a Trust through donations from sugar mills, to establish a stable income stream for funding the Permanent Secretariat, was considered. A small sub-committee consisting of the Chairman, Peter Rein, Jean-Claude Autrey and Benjamin Legendre, was appointed to study the issue of resource mobilization and other associated matters. It was also decided that financial statements of the Society should be examined by Executive on a yearly basis.

It was felt that the operational manual prepared by TCC Secretary Brian Purchase, which gives details of the procedures to be followed by Commissioners and Section Chairmen for the processing of papers should be updated. The schedule for the Congress newsletters up to end 1998, and their content was finalised, and it was agreed that there would be no restriction on the publication of papers of ISSCT proceedings in all journals, provided ISSCT was suitably acknowledged.

It was felt that the linkage between the Permanent Secretary and Councilors was extremely important, and that maximum efforts should be made to get the affiliated societies to appoint their Councilors for the XXIII Congress as early as possible.

**Second Mid-term Meeting - New Delhi - 25-27 January 1998**

All members of the Executive Committee attended the second mid-term meeting, which was held in New Delhi, and was again hosted by COC, with the exception of Ben Legendre and Guillermo Galvez who had other commitments. We are thankful to COC for these efforts, which we considered essential. The statement of accounts for the period up to 31.12.1997 signed by the Chairman and Permanent Secretary of ISSCT, and the Secretary Accountant of MSIRI were presented, discussed and approved by Executive.

Modifications to the application form to host future Congresses were discussed, and a revised format was finalised. The response to the appointment of Councilors was quite good. A listing of Councilors at the last three Congresses' was presented (Annexure C). As of now, we have confirmed communication from 18 affiliated societies regarding their nomination of Councilors. The selection of three libraries as depositories for the ISSCT proceedings was finalised; the details are contained in the Permanent Secretary's report. In future, five copies of the proceedings will be given free by COC - two for the ISSCT archives, and three for the depositories.

Website: [http://www.sugarnet.com/issct/](http://www.sugarnet.com/issct/)

Priority was given to the hosting of a website. This was started in July 1997 and is hosted free of charge by the American server SUGARNET, which is based in Hawaii. Files are regularly being updated on a monthly basis, and information on the XXIII Congress in New Delhi was being continually shown and accessed by members. It is felt that Council may like to record its gratitude to SUGARNET for this service, and authorise the Permanent Secretary to communicate the same.

The challenge before all of us, especially Executive and Council, will be to understand our customers and members needs and satisfy the same. The only way to do this is to utilise the Internet effectively, and have intense collaborative efforts starting with members of Executive and Council. We need to extend this to a
maximum number of research and technology institutes and other related organisations. We would like our site to provide cross linkages with as many relevant sites as possible, so that we are the premier site for the quick retrieval of sugar and sugarcane related information. We would endeavour to publish important papers, research programmes, events, and also workshop communications on our site, in the intervening period before the next Congress. We would also attempt to get a comprehensive information on sugar machinery, chemical and other product manufacturers and their sites.

There is a large amount of technical information freely available among the members of ISSCT. Making such information readily available to members worldwide on the Internet would be a very cheap and cost-effective collaborative effort, and thus ISSCT would be bringing real value to its members. The rapid advancement of e-mail facilities has greatly facilitated communication between office bearers of the Society and the various committee members. A major use of this facility was in the preparation of the revised constitution, and policies and procedures.

A unique event was the holding of the Breeding Workshop in Mauritius, where an opportunity was given to sugar cane technologists worldwide to participate in the debate. Abstracts of communications were posted on the Net, and questions invited from specialists. I strongly believe that this form of active discussion on specific items of technology, can lead to enhanced interactions between our members. It may also be mentioned that the report on the discussions of the combined Factory and Agricultural Engineering Workshop in Mexico, was made accessible to all sugar cane technologists on the ISSCT website.

In Memoriam
Since the last Congress in September 1995, past Chairman and Honorary Life Member of ISSCT Robert Antoine from Mauritius, and Maurice Paturau, another Honorary life member from Mauritius, passed away. Mr Antoine, a past Director of MSIRI, was a renowned pathologist and past Chairman of the ISSCT Pathology Section. Mr. Maurice Paturau was one of the most renowned technologists in the Co-products area. He travelled extensively and has been responsible for bringing this area into the limelight in ISSCT as Chairman of the Co-products section for many years. Dr Margaret Clarke, Director of the Sugar Processing Research Institute (SPRI), New Orleans, USA, a vibrant personality at recent ISSCT Congresses also passed away. She contributed greatly to the Factory processing section. Mr G. L. Montenegro, Councilor for Cuba, and Mr. John Warner of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association, USA, a renowned sugar cane breeder and past Chairman of the Breeding Section in ISSCT, also passed away. Council may like to record its condolences. At the moment, we have 17 Honorary life members, and 20 Honorary life members have passed away.

Workshops
Six workshops were held, with an attendance of 455 persons. Attendance at workshops helped in recruiting new members, except for the workshop in Mexico, which was a major disappointment on this account, as even after continual follow-up after the workshop, only two members registered out of the 120 members from 12 countries that attended. We greatly value the efforts made by Affiliated members in holding these workshops, but we earnestly request the host organisations to insist on ISSCT membership as a pre-requisite to attendance. The workshops will be covered in more detail in the report of Chairman - TCC.

Constitution and Policy & Procedures
This matter was discussed by Executive at both its mid-term meetings, and it was felt that a review of the policies and procedures currently in force needed to be urgently undertaken, so that they may be amended along with whatever changes are necessary in the constitution, at the XXIII Congress in New Delhi. Considerable efforts have been devoted by the Permanent Secretary and the undersigned to these issues. I would like to record here the untiring efforts put in by the Permanent Secretary and his staff in compiling these documents.

In the past, we relied too much on experienced, long serving officers, and a need was felt for standardising our procedures, and ensuring that our policies were clearly spelt out. Considerable efforts were made in defining the policies of the Society as specified by its constitution, and the procedures for the implementation of these
policies and procedures will continue to change with the rapid advancement in technology in our environment, and the evolving changes in the sugar industry itself. As such, this should not be perceived as a final document. It, however, expresses our current thoughts on what would facilitate the smooth functioning of ISSCT.

Mission Statement
A sub-committee of Executive consisting of Colin Ryan, Jean-Claude Autrey and Altaf Saleem was constituted to formulate a mission statement for the Society. This was accepted by Executive with minor amendments and is reproduced below:

"The Society is committed to the economic and sustainable advancement of the sugar cane industries of the world and associated communities, through promoting innovative research, development and the adoption of technology, and by sharing knowledge among its members for their professional development".

Strategic Initiatives
Executive has given strong support in the implementation of our declared mission. We believe that at a time when we are entering a new millennium, and when the sugar cane industry is faced with increased competition, a review of our strategic imperatives is a priority. Our members have new concerns, new needs and they face new challenges. ISSCT must adapt itself so that we may fulfill these aspirations. The Society will continue to pursue its efforts in promoting technical activities, but we do need to make fuller use of the new tools of communications and information technology. This matter will be considered by Executive during this week, and any recommendations will be put before the Council later.

A survey for establishment of an ISSCT database was conducted and 96 questionnaires were sent to Executive, Councillors, Research Centres and other technology organizations. There was a strong interest in the database, especially for the index of ISSCT proceedings, and for publications on sugar cane technology. Another survey would be carried out amongst the delegates attending the current Congress. We are updating our website with the biodata of prominent members, and with information gathered from members at this Congress about other relevant sites. We urge Councillors to give great publicity to this exercise as it will help to boost the Society’s mission.

Permanent Secretariat
The Permanent Secretariat started operations after the XXII Congress, and initially devoted itself to the development of communications and other infrastructure. Staffing was gradually increased in keeping with the development of the office. By January 1997, all the bugs had been ironed out, and the office has been running effectively for the past two years. The objects of the Secretariat, and more details about its activities, are contained in the Permanent Secretary’s report.

The achievement of vastly improved communication amongst the ISSCT office bearers and members, have vindicated our belief in the necessity for such a Secretariat. The preparation and smooth implementation by COC of actions needed for the XXIII Congress in India, were facilitated by the frequent interactions between the Permanent Secretary, the Congress General Secretary-Treasurer, and members of his office. The interaction between COC and its Secretary General, the Permanent Secretary, the Chairman-TCC and myself has been effectively streamlined by the networking established by the Permanent Secretariat in Mauritius. Besides providing for some permanency between Congress, the Secretariat is now being pro-active in seeking out and fulfilling members needs through increased interactions, and usage of our Website.

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Finances

With the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat, and the increase in inter-congress activities of the Society, the management of the Society’s funds are now closely monitored. A more precise budget was prepared, with a cashflow to ensure maximum return from the investment of assets, without affecting the necessary liquidity for disbursements.

The expenses of the Society after accounting for the setting up of the Permanent Secretariat have been within budget. The financial support from the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI) has been invaluable, and I would request Council to put on record our appreciation for the same.

There is now a clearer picture of the financial resources required to maintain the Permanent Secretariat and strengthen the society’s activities. Several steps are being taken to mobilise financial resources for the society to be self-supporting. These include increasing income from membership dues, fees from Congress, and various sponsorships.

Revenues to ISSCT from the current Congress have not been up to our expectations. Against 50 corporate members in Colombia, we had expected 40 in India. Had this occurred, our resources would have been slightly more after the current Congress, than what we had after the Colombian Congress, instead of being down by US $ 21,000. We are extremely conscious of the trying times the cane sugar industry, and its research organisations are going through worldwide. However, unless we are able to increase funding even to a moderate degree, we will lose a golden opportunity to provide the required service to our members and the sugarcane industry, at this critical juncture. Proposals in this respect will be presented at this Congress, and I seek your support.

Future Prospects

The new millennium will pose new challenges and opportunities, and with the Infotech revolution which has encompassed us all, we are sure that our circumstances will be very different from the past. We feel that ISSCT can be in a position to effectively meet this onslaught. While the Secretariat and its Permanent Secretary will perform have to play an increasingly important role in our future endeavours, ISSCT is also fortunate in having an extremely committed and talented Executive Committee. Our deliberations which went down to basics were quite far reaching and it is hoped that we are able to use the electronic media to facilitate much more communication amongst Executive Members in the next inter-congress period. A start was made in the formation of some sub-committees, and though they have been a little slow to get off the ground, I feel sure this will pick up momentum in the next inter-congress period.

What we need now, is increased participation from Councillors at Congress and in the inter-congress period. This would bring about tremendous value addition. Even though our membership is extremely diverse, and resources are limited, we can become one of the foremost technical societies.

Acknowledgments

In fulfilling ISSCT’s mission, we rely on the support of our members, and the various organisations connected with the sugar cane industry throughout the world. I would like to thank all of them for their participation. I would also like to make a special mention of the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute, which has been hosting the Permanent Secretariat for the past three years, and who we hope will continue to host it for the next three years. The personal guidance and support given by the Director MSIRI, Jean-Claude Autrey is gratefully acknowledged. I would ask Council to request Dr Autrey to kindly pass on our sentiments to the Chairman and Members of the MSIRI Board.

It would not have been possible for me to fulfill my tasks as Chairman, without the guidance and support given to me by my colleagues on the Executive Committee. I thank them for their continuing support. Last, but certainly not least, the close co-operation and support I have and continually receive from Dr Peter Rein, Vice...
Chairman-Executive and Chairman, TCC, and Dr Claude Ricaud, Permanent Secretary, has been truly outstanding. I do not know if "troikas" are meant to be good or not, but we certainly are a successful one. My grateful thanks to them both.

20th February, 1999

Dhruv M Sawhney
Chairman - Executive
ISSCT