



SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON ANTARCTIC RESEARCH*

SCAR Secretariat
Scott Polar Research Institute
Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER, United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 1223 336550 E-mail: info@scar.org
Facsimile: +44 1223 336549 Website: www.scar.org

* SCAR is an Interdisciplinary Body of the International Council for Science (ICSU)

SCAR is registered as a Company and a Charity in the UK: Company Number 6564642; Charity Number 1124840

ARGENTINA • AUSTRALIA • BELGIUM • BRAZIL • BULGARIA
CANADA • CHILE • CHINA • DENMARK • ECUADOR
FINLAND • FRANCE • GERMANY • INDIA • ITALY • JAPAN
KOREA • MALAYSIA • THE NETHERLANDS • NEW ZEALAND
NORWAY • PAKISTAN • PERU • POLAND • PORTUGAL
ROMANIA • RUSSIA • SOUTH AFRICA • SPAIN • SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND • UKRAINE • UNITED KINGDOM
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA • URUGUAY

President
Prof Mahlon C Kennicutt II
Director, Sustainable Development
Office of the VP for Research
Texas A&M University
Rm 318C Administration Building
1112 TAMU, College Station
Texas 77843-1112
UNITED STATES

Vice-President
Dr Antonio Meloni
Dirigente di Ricerca
Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e
Vulcanologia
Via di Vigna Murata, 605
00143 Roma
ITALY

Vice-President
Prof Dr Sergio Marensi
Director
Instituto Antártico Argentino
Cerrito 1248
1010 Buenos Aires
ARGENTINA

Vice-President
Dr Ad H L Huiskes
Netherlands Institute of Ecology
Unit for Polar Ecology
PO Box 140
4400 AC Yerseke
Netherlands

Vice-President
Dr Rasik Ravindra
Director
National Centre for Antarctic and
Ocean Research
(Ministry of Earth Sciences)
Headland Sada, Vasco-da-Gama
Goa 403 804
India

Past President
Prof C G Rapley
Director
Science Museum
Exhibition Road
South Kensington
London SW7 2DD
UNITED KINGDOM

Executive Director
Dr Colin P Summerhayes
SCAR Secretariat
Scott Polar Research Institute
Lensfield Road
Cambridge CB2 1ER
UNITED KINGDOM

Executive Officer
Dr Mike Sparrow
SCAR Secretariat
Scott Polar Research Institute
Lensfield Road
Cambridge CB2 1ER
UNITED KINGDOM

Dr. Carthage Smith (submitted via Maureen@icsu.org)
Deputy Executive Director, ICSU
5 rue Auguste Vacquerie
75016 Paris,
France

16 December 2008

Dear Carthage,

Re: **SCAR Comments on the Draft ICSU Strategic Plan 2012-2017**

Thank you for the opportunity for SCAR to participate in the process of consultation on the development of the next version of ICSU's next Strategic Plan.

I would like to offer you the following observations:-

SCAR already bases its actions on priorities established during strategic planning. We developed a strategic plan for 2004-2010, and are in the process of updating it for 2010-2016. We have found an agreed strategic plan essential for setting priorities and applying the very limited funds available in the most effective manner. A long-term strategy is essential to guide short-term actions.

SCAR agrees that programs past their period of usefulness must be ended. SCAR now has 5 major scientific research programs, after terminating several in 2004. It is essential to renew an organization's portfolio of programs on a regular basis and to have a procedure to do so. With limited funds, new initiatives can only be supported if prior programs have a finite and planned termination date.

SCAR considers that the ICSU plan needs to recognize that we are now entering the IPY legacy phase of the IPY 2007-2008, which will last for 10 years or more from 1 March 2009. The ICSU plan should recognize that SCAR and IASC will take a central role in ensuring the success of the IPY legacy in its various forms (capacity building, scientific research, data and information management, and observing systems). The roles of SCAR and IASC during this follow-up phase of the IPY will allow ICSU to continue to play a significant role in maximizing the impact of this unique effort.

The new ICSU plan should continue to recognize the importance of scientific research in the polar regions, which is where the effects of global change are

seen first and are at their largest, where research is more hazardous and difficult to conduct than anywhere else except in outer space and on the ocean bed, and where sea ice and constant darkness limit scientific activity to only half of each year.

The new ICSU plan should recognize explicitly that polar sciences are particularly relevant to global sustainable development, because of the likely effect of ice melt on global sea level and the consequent flooding of coastal lands and megacities.

In addition the political realities of the Law of the Sea and other international instruments and agreements will make the polar regions critical points of possible contention and conflict over the next few decades. Science will be an important non-governmental avenue to facilitate international cooperation in what may be contentious times.

The new ICSU plan should require all of its environmental subsidiary bodies, including its Interdisciplinary Bodies (IBs), to work together to improve both our understanding of the operation of the whole Earth System, and its predictability. All too often the activities of the larger entities (IGBP etc) have ignored both SCAR and the polar regions, thereby diminishing the sought for connectivity between the regional and global contexts. To ensure that such connectivity develops more effectively in the future, SCAR considers that a global science foresight exercise would be valuable. It is not sufficient to suggest that the SCARs of this world should ask the IGBPs of this world if they can be involved; cooperation between ICSU bodies should be mandated in the plan, not left to ad hoc arrangements.

SCAR agrees that considerable improvement is needed in data and information management. ICSU should foster a new paradigm for the sharing of data in real time in support of the global observing systems. The WDC system is in serious need of overhaul, not least to be able to handle the data outputs from the IPY.

SCAR points out that there is a lack of engagement between the Interdisciplinary Bodies and Unions (no IUBS representative attended the last SCAR meeting in July 2008). ICSU's plan must make it plain that to ensure constructive engagement partners have a shared obligation, and that Unions have a responsibility to ensure that linkages work for all parties involved. Union participation in the management of Interdisciplinary Bodies (IB) should be reviewed for consistency, and an assessment provided on whether the level of influence is commensurate with Unions' participation in IB activities and planning.

ICSU is a useful parent for SCAR because ICSU is much better known at the national levels where funding decisions are made. SCAR's decisions carry more weight at national level because SCAR is an ICSU IB. This may well be true also for other IBs.

We agree that ICSU's IBs and other subsidiary bodies should create, facilitate, and support opportunities for communities of young (early career) scientists. SCAR and IASC have done so in co-sponsoring the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS), which will foster the development of the next generation of polar scientists as part of the IPY legacy. SCAR also funds Fellowships for exchanges between National Antarctic Programs targeted at young investigators, and mentors early career scientists by involving them in all facets of SCAR science.

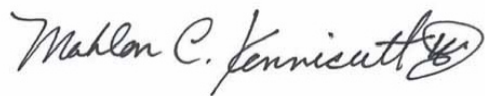
ICSU must enhance its commitment to the scientific development of regional and global observing systems. There, SCAR is doing its part by developing the Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS), which will bring more southern polar observations into the Global Earth Observing

System of Systems (GEOSS). In the north ICSU should closely monitor the development of the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) effort.

In the realm of outreach and communication, ICSU should use SCAR and IASC to organise briefings and other types of output to help ensure that polar science remains prominent in ICSU's strategy in the long term. This would go a long way to ensuring that bodies like ours are able to contribute effectively to ICSU's ability both to recognise and advertise the relevance and importance of the polar work that it sponsors once the IPY observation period ends.

I hope you find these inputs helpful, and look forward to continuing engagement with ICSU as the consultations on planning continue.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mahlon C. Kennicutt" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mahlon C. Kennicutt
(President of SCAR)

Cc.

C. Summerhayes (SCAR)

V. Rachold (IASC)

I. Allison (IACS)