

## ICSU INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR 2007-08 PLANNING GROUP

28<sup>th</sup> January, 2004

Dear Mary,

### Update on the ICSU International Polar Year Planning Process

The ICSU International Polar Year Planning Group is pleased to update the community on the status of the planning for the IPY2007-2008. In response to our letter of September 2003 we can now report of several advances in the planning globally, as of 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2003.

- (1) The international science community, including individuals and teams from 22 nations, international science groups (e.g. SCAR IASC), some of the ICSU Unions and their Affiliated organisations (e.g. International Union of Radio Science, International Permafrost Association), intergovernmental science organisations (e.g. World Meteorological Organisation, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission) have submitted over 130 ideas to the planning group.
- (2) 13 nations have formed National Committees and we are aware of at least a further 6 who are in the process of doing so.
- (3) New ideas continue to arrive.

The ICSU planning group is very pleased with this high degree of mobilization of the international science community and thanks all who have contributed to date. All submissions have been logged and retained for the future. It would be helpful if you would advise us whether or not we can make individual submissions public.

The science ideas submitted so far encompass the 3 major themes of Change, Exploration and Decoding Polar Processes. The ideas are geographically balanced with a roughly even split between the poles. Although we envision the IPY 2007-2008 as an international and interdisciplinary activity we have subdivided the proposals into disciplinary clusters to highlight some of the gaps. Some disciplinary interests were skewed towards one pole or the other and some disciplines are poorly represented. Specific gaps we have identified are studies of the humanities, social sciences and solid Earth studies, especially in the Arctic. Also, some nations are notable by their absence.

We will be presenting the current state of planning to the ICSU Executive Board in February and will send another update at that point. The ICSU EB will decide whether or not to proceed with an IPY 2007-2008.

The ICSU Executive Board will also consider the proposals from the World Meteorological Organisation and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission to jointly support and coordinate the IPY. The World Meteorological Organisation coordinated the first 2 International Polar Years and jointly sponsored the IGY in 1957-1958.

Assuming that the ICSU Board decision to proceed with the International Polar Year 2007-2008 is positive, the primary activities for the IPY Planning Group for the next two months will be to update the community on the planning process, synthesize ideas submitted to date, and seek additional input. By late April, we aim to develop an outline Science Plan including justification for the IPY 2007-2008, and the major themes. The Science Plan will articulate the overarching big science questions to be addressed, integrate the ideas submitted into major clusters, and identify some of the initial proposed projects.

We aim to present this Preliminary Science Plan Outline at the Arctic Science Summit Week in Reykjavik, the European Geophysical Union in Nice, American Geophysical Union in Montreal, Arctic Social Science Conference in Alaska and the SCAR Open Science Conference in Bremen. We anticipate lively discussion and feedback.

In the meantime, we look forward to:

- (1) additional nations establishing National IPY committees;
- (2) receiving input from all the National IPY committees;
- (3) receiving input from ICSU scientific unions and additional relevant non-ICSU bodies;
- (4) receiving additional input from the international science community;
- (5) active and fruitful discussion with the international science community of the Science Plan Outline at the planned venues.

Input from National IPY committees, ICSU unions, other scientific bodies and the broader science community will be most useful if it is received by **March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004**. The Planning Group welcomes suggestions for additional venues for presentation of the IPY concept and the Science Plan outline.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C.G. Rapley'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C' and a long, sweeping tail.

C.G. Rapley (Chair)  
R. Bell (Vice Chair)  
On behalf of the ICSU IPY Planning Group