

NETWORKING IN AFRICA

The 28th General Assembly of ICSU which was held in China in October 2005 approved the ICSU's Strategic Plan for 2006-11. Details on this Strategic Plan may be obtained from www.icsu.org. Within the realm of this Strategic Plan of ICSU, and considering the immediate needs of the African continent, the ICSU Regional Committee for Africa has identified four priority areas which are, (i) Health and Human Well-Being, (ii) Sustainable Energy, (iii) Natural and Human-Induced Hazards and Disasters and (iv) Global Change.

Time for action is now ripe and the ICSU Regional Office for Africa has prepared a road map for the realization of its targeted goals, especially the four priority areas. We will be moving along two pathways which lead to the same destination, "prosperity for Africa through the application of science and technology."

Pathway Number 1: In order for us to register great success when pursuing the four priority areas for societal benefit, there will be permanent and cross-cutting projects which will be embodied in each of these priority areas, and these include, (a) well-functioning Regional Office, (b) creation of databases of African scientists for each scientific discipline. We will also include the African scientists in the Diaspora; (c) capacity building programmes, (d) promotion of indigenous knowledge and skills, (e) gender balance, (f) outreach (advocacy) activities, (g) strategic partnerships with other organizations within and outside Africa and (h) fund-raising.

Action for Pathway Number 1: Networking around each of the four priority area is under preparation. Consequently, all scientists from within and outside Africa who are interested in teaming up for the realization of the objectives of each of the four priority areas are kindly requested to register with the Regional Office. The required details are, (a) name, (b) university qualifications and areas of specialization, (c) employer/organization, and (d) reliable electronic mailing address. These details should be sent to: m.pillay@icsu-africa.org and secretariat@icsu-africa.org.

Pathway Number 2: The Regional Office will perform its expected duties of promoting the relevant activities of the ICSU family and its partners (for details go to www.icsu.org) in Africa. We are currently creating micro-databases of African scientists for each Union and other affiliated bodies of ICSU as a starting point for networking purposes. It is these networks, which have grass root membership of scientists, that the Regional Office will be utilizing during the realization exercise of the relevant objectives and targeted goals of the ICSU family in Africa.

Action for Pathway Number 1: Networking within Africa for each Union and other affiliated bodies of ICSU is under preparation. We have requested the whole ICSU family (Unions & Other Affiliated Bodies) to send us their existing contacts (scientists based in Africa) as a starting point for the networking exercise on the continent.

We would also like to kindly request all scientists within Africa who are involved in the activities of the ICSU family on the continent to register their names with the Regional Office. The required details are; (a) name, (b) university qualifications and areas of specialization, (c) employer/organization, and (d) reliable electronic mailing address. These details should be sent to: m.pillay@icsu-africa.org and secretariat@icsu-africa.org.

The 2nd Regional Consultative Forum for the purpose of the evaluation of the progress made by the Regional Office in the period of one year (June 2005-June 2006) will be held in Pretoria (South Africa) in August 2006. Other issues of interest to the continent will be discussed during this major event which will be the first one to be organized by the Regional Office. The previous meeting which was held in Harare (Zimbabwe) in October 2004 was a preparatory one. It did set up a stage for the establishment of the Regional Office and its Committee. The first circular for this international forum will be mailed in January 2006.

Kindly disseminate this information to all potential stakeholders and partners inside and outside Africa; and please make time to frequently visit the website (www.icsu-africa.org) of the Regional Office for useful information for you and your colleagues.

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