

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH



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Minutes of the EC-XXVIII

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**Minutes of the Twenty-Eight Meeting of the IAI Executive Council (EC)
May 21, 2009, Bogotá, Colombia**

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Note: This report is not a strictly chronological record. For completeness, greater clarity and readability the IAI Directorate has grouped discussions of an agenda item together under the first occurrence of the topic.

**28th Meeting of the IAI Executive Council (EC)
21 May 2009, Bogotá, Colombia**

AGENDA

Thursday – 21 May 2009

Morning session (08:30 – 12:30) (Coffee Break 10:30 – 10:45)

Registration

Approval of the Agenda

Approval of the Action List of the EC-27

Review of CoP-16 items for action by EC-28 and implementation strategies for action items from EC-27 and CoP-16

Strategies for strengthening member country relations

Process for review of host country agreement

Discussion of CRN science synthesis

Establishment of working groups

Future meetings and sites

Adjourn

12:30 Lunch

Afternoon session (02:00 – 05:00) (Coffee Break 03:30 – 03:45)

Working groups as required

1. Opening Remarks

Paul Filmer, the EC Chair, welcomed the participants and thanked the host country for its hospitality. He went through the meeting agenda and mentioned that the CoP had not requested any specific action to the EC. However, since it was the last EC meeting before the following CoP, they had to build the work scheme for the coming year.

The most important item to discuss would be the strategies for strengthening the relations with Member Countries that were not present at the meetings. He expressed his concern because the CoP almost failed the day before and remarked the double role representatives have in representing their countries to the IAI and the IAI within their countries.

Participants at the meeting were:

EC Country Representatives

Brazil: Maria Virgínia Alves
 Canada: Charles Lin
 Rosanna Proto
 Costa Rica: Roberto Villalobos
 Mexico: Gerardo Arroyo
 United States: Paul Filmer, Louis B. Brown
 Venezuela: Gladys Maggi

Observers – Member Countries:

Colombia: Ricardo Lozano, Mauricio Cabrera Leal
 Paraguay: Fernando José Méndez Gaona

IAI Directorate:

Holm Tiessen (Director), Rafael Atmetlla (Assistant Director: Finance & Administration), Marcella Ohira (Assistant Director: Capacity Building), Tania R. Freire Sánchez (Assistants to the Director), Paula Richter (IAI Newsletter & Communications), Elvira Gentile (IAI Directorate support).

Local staff

Adriana Pedraza, Carlos Noguera Cruz

2. Approval of the Agenda

The EC approved the Agenda of its Twenty Eighth Meeting without amendments. (<i>Action 1</i>)

3. Approval of the Action List of the EC-27

The EC approved the Action List of its Twenty Seventh Meeting without modifications. (*Action 2*)

4. Strategies for strengthening Member Country relations

IAI Director: Yesterday we had a CoP almost without quorum. It is not the first time it happens, we have been very close to that margin, we have had to bring diplomatic representations and perhaps Parties are not completely aware that this situation endangers the functioning of IAI as a whole. If we had not been able to find a solution to the quorum issue, the IAI would not have officially an approved budget or approved country contributions. It is a clear signal to those countries that support the IAI that perhaps the support from other member countries is not sufficient.

That leads to a review of Member Countries relations with the IAI. The Directorate and its staff are exposed to this uncertainty on an annual basis. These crises affect both the functioning of the Directorate and the functioning of the IAI in its relations to the Member Countries.

We need a review and a revisiting of the relationships in the Member Countries that cannot be driven by the Directorate. We only can do that if we have activities, if it is content driven. I think the IAI needs the involvement of its Parties not only in their own countries but also in neighboring countries, in countries where they have bilateral agreements, in order to achieve effective communication. That has to be a responsibility of all the members of the IAI. Every country has a different case, but we have an Agreement Establishing the IAI and it could be extremely useful if we knew why some of the countries are not celebrating that Agreement; reasons that are political, organizational, and -e.g. in the case of Guatemala-, legal. That review needs to be driven by a signal of interest by other Member Countries of the IAI, particularly by those parties of the EC because it is the only entity within the IAI that exists permanently besides the Directorate.

EC Chair: One of the basic goals of the EC is to prepare the agendas for the CoP. We should have an agenda that is attractive for countries. In 2010 there will be elections for the SAC and the EC (this is an attractive issue for policy). We also have to think of the development of the IAI programs. The CRN is in its third year and it is time to formulate the theme, strategies and activities to follow at the end of CRN II. This is the forum where countries can express their opinions and their priorities. I suggest these items for the next agenda. The Director has also asked for the help of the Parties to recommit Member Countries.

The EC committed to help the IAI Directorate in strategies for strengthening member country relations. (*Action 3*)

Canada: I agree on the importance offering an interesting agenda to countries. In Canada they have two regional centers of expertise, one in Quebec and one in British Columbia. One is focused on regional climate change and impacts. The other is dedicated to climate solutions. In Environment Canada we are defining our role vis a vis these regional centers. What I am proposing to our management is that we have two levels of services: a basic level of service where we provide climate change scenarios data and tools such as statistical downscaling and help for these uses. The second level would be individual projects discussed on a win-win basis. This is still under discussion. I am wondering if something like

this could be set up for the IAI: one level for providing data and tools, and guidelines on how to use it; the second level would be specific projects.

Venezuela: We should identify the lines of work or programs for the next CRN. We could define issues where we could bring a position that might help the presence of the IAI in other international contexts; we have some discussions in other international fora and we bring them here but afterwards we do not work in an integrated fashion. For example, regarding the IPCC, we know that all countries participate in it, but we have not had joint discussions. It would be interesting to identify regional themes that would allow specific discussions. It would also be attractive for the countries that have not been participating in the IAI.

IAI Director: This suggestion reminds me of the possibility of training events with UNESCO last year, but unfortunately this initiative did not prosper. This year I spoke with people from the IHDP and they also think that the learning platforms are the best way to develop this kind of ideas in order to turn them in future action. They are an excellent opportunity for initiating the dialogue between countries. I suggest recovering what we had discussed last year and see what we can do to involve countries in these platforms of learning and dialogue.

EC Chair: I see we are developing a very interesting discussion and it is of crucial importance for the IAI: which is the balance we desire among training issues, science support and provision of tools and services? Since we work with limited resources, we have to prioritize the activities in the IAI program.

Brazil: I do not know exactly the balance but at least in Brazil if you organize a capacity building event you can do it jointly with the country. If you add a workshop, you are able to get funds to cover part of these activities. If we apply in advance we can get some money to pay for students mainly. I think this should be explored in other countries.

Canada: IAI is an intergovernmental organization; there are cross-cutting issues. If we take the example of adaptation to climate change it is clearly a regional issue. I think it is a challenge, but also an opportunity where an intergovernmental agency as the IAI can play a role in these cross-cutting needs while, at the same time, remain versatile enough to satisfy regional requests. Perhaps through the CRN idea, some emphasis could be put on adaptation to climate change. We have heard from the scientific talks yesterday that this topic of adaptation to climate change is going to be driving the environmental agenda and IAI needs to be well positioned to take advantage of that.

Costa Rica: It is very important that the EC give instructions to the Parties so that when they give their reports to the CoP include information about the projects that are being developed in their countries. In the case of Costa Rica, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who is not necessarily well informed of the IAI funded science, sometimes integrates the delegation from Costa Rica. Keeping Foreign Affairs offices informed of what is being done with IAI funds is crucial because they usually have an important role in payments to International Institutions. In Costa Rica, the Ministry of the Environment is paying the IAI contributions from its budget and the Government has a scientific agenda related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and it would be interesting to see how IAI science could be used in the country reports for the UNFCCC.

EC Chair: The idea would be to provide a guideline indicating which are the responsibilities implied in the role of an IAI representative. These include the duties of every Party at the CoP and, on the other hand, what the IAI representatives should do in their country.

The EC decided to create a document defining the role, responsibilities and activities expected from IAI representatives. The representative of Costa Rica will start drafting this document. (*Action 8*)

Costa Rica: The IAI focal point has a very important dissemination function, not only in his Ministry but also in the Foreign Affairs office. There are a lot of results in the web site of the IAI but sometimes people do not know about them and hence they cannot take profit. We should disseminate IAI annual reports in our ministries so that they can see where resources are being invested, and if the country does not have a project portfolio, then analyze the reason why.

IAI Director: It is a very good opportunity for dissemination when the focal points contact researchers that are working in their countries. For example, in Costa Rica the project about dry forests is a legally accepted vehicle for land conservation decisions in the country. It is accepted at a governmental level for decision-making. If we can convince other ministries that we produce useful information, we will advance substantially. Next June all CRNs and Human Dimension programs will meet in Montevideo to initiate the synthesis of IAI science. We are proposing regional themes to researchers. Perhaps there are other themes of political interest that we could identify today to bring forward to the Montevideo meeting.

EC Chair: IAI has different information sets. The basic one is the “country information sheet” and each focal point should revise it and indicate to the IAI Directorate: which are the most useful points, which are lacking and which are not needed. That would be very useful to prepare the necessary information for the country agencies in order to show what is being done regionally and thematically.

By request of the EC Chair, the EC will provide revisions to the “country information sheets” indicating which items are useful, which items are missing and which items may not be needed. That information should be available for every country and it should be referenced regionally and thematically. *Action 4*

IAI Director: originally that information about countries used to be very long. Now we reduced that information to two pages. If countries require more details we can send additional information.

EC Chair: there are eight countries where we should make a special effort to look for the focal point, and strengthen relations (Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, and Guatemala). We should help the IAI Director and we could try, through our Foreign Affairs offices, through visits to the countries, or through other international meetings, ask them to participate more actively in the IAI.

Mexico: When there are bilateral agreements, we could take profit of those meetings. We could make a calendar of the bilateral meetings of our countries with those we are interested in contacting and see how we can include in the IAI issue in the agenda. For example, Mexico could contact Guatemala or Jamaica.

The EC decided to use the Twiki site to create a calendar of bilateral meetings among member countries in order to contact country representatives less involved in the IAI. All EC members will contribute to complete this calendar. (*Action 5*)

Colombia: We should try to disseminate IAI information beyond focal points. Usually, the focal points are environmental entities, however the IAI issues exceed their ambit and reaches other areas such as economic viability, agricultural or energetic issues, etc. Perhaps the information is not reaching other final users.

The EC accepted the proposal of Colombia of disseminating information on the IAI to institutions beyond environmental institutions in member countries. (*Action 7*)

Costa Rica: Costa Rica integrates the SICA (Sistema de Integracion Centroamericana). The next meeting will be after July and Dominican Republic and Belice will be present. We could disseminate IAI activities within SICA and approach Guatemala regarding its IAI membership.

The EC accepted the offer of Costa Rica (member of the Central America Integration System - SICA) to approach Guatemala regarding its IAI membership. Costa Rica also offered to disseminate IAI activities within SICA. (*Action 6*)

Marcella Ohira: In Ecuador we are organizing to events at the end of June in the context of the Mac Arthur Project: a Meeting on Biodiversity and Climate Change and a Science Policy Forum on Ecosystem Services and Adaptation to Climate Change. We are working closely with institutions from Ecuador for the Forum and we have the confirmation of high-level policy representatives. The Secretary of Development and Planning (chief of our representative, the Secretary of Science and Technology) will be present. We hope to have meetings with these contacts in order to talk about the IAI and strengthen our relationship.

USA: the Science Agencies are working closely with the Department State. They all strongly support IAI, its programs and its activities. You can count on both the science agencies and the Department of State working together in the US to assist the IAI in improving wherever we can the IAI relationships with its Member Countries.

EC Chair: USA could communicate through its Embassies its support to the participation of different countries in the IAI but it would be more effective if two or three Foreign Affairs Offices issue a *joint demarche*.

The USA offered the IAI full assistance in contacting IAI member countries not fully involved in the Institute through their Science Agencies and the Department of State. In addition, USA suggested that two or more Foreign Relations Offices issue *joint demarches* urging countries to become actively involved in IAI activities. (*Action 9*)

USA: We can also take profit of the annual bilateral meeting USA-Brazil. In the last meeting I was with Thelma Krugg and there is a strong will of cooperation USA-Brazil to advance the interests of the IAI.

Director: While doing these contacts, it would be useful to mention the issue of the political and legal status of the IAI in the countries in order to guarantee the support to the participation of national scientists in IAI international activities

The IAI Director suggested that, while making contacts with member countries, representatives mention and examine the issue of the political and legal status of the IAI in order to guarantee that the participation of national scientists in IAI international activities be supported. (*Action10*).

Canada: showed some slides on its regional centers mentioned before.

Brazil: IAI should provide the data and the tools but some countries are not used to sharing data or even process the data before opening and this would mean a considerable amount of work.

Director: If we were to embark in something like this, we will need funding. Besides, we should cope with countries that are not used to making their data available freely. For example, INPE ten years ago did not provide access to any of its information, but nowadays has made everything available freely and finds in an economic analysis that the spin-off benefit is great for Brazil. I think that countries and institutions go down this route such as Canada and INPE is something that should be known and public through the IAI, through our country representatives. This is an opportunity. Representatives can transmit this message to agencies in their countries, especially meteorological services that have no tradition of sharing data.

Canada: People need to realize that the more people who use your data the more valuable your data become. This point has to be reinforced. Products on our network are totally free.

The 3rd World Climate Conference (September, Geneve) is going to propose a global framework of climate services.

The *EC Chair* asked that the date of the meeting be registered in the Twiki calendar

Director: The IAI science synthesis begins next month and that means free and open exchange of information. My intention was to use the event to put together the content of the next IAI Newsletter. Could I ask those of you who have experience with the benefit of the free open exchange of information to contribute to the next newsletter and write a small 200 words article with illustrations in which we can highlight the initiatives of all Member Countries and of the IAI itself towards the free and open exchange of information in the corresponding synthesis efforts.

The IAI Director requested that representatives write brief articles (about 200 words) for the IAI Newsletter on the benefits of the free and open exchange of information in their countries and how that is being done. Articles should be submitted to the IAI Newsletter not later than June 25. (*Action 11*)

5. Host Country Agreement

IAI Director: As previously reported in EC 27, the emergency of Brazilian staff provided by Brazil has largely been resolved. There are three remaining areas that need to be addressed in the Host Country Agreement:

- Brazil has changed a lot over the last 20 years in terms of scientific capacity. A Preamble has to be included in the Host Country Agreement reflecting about the mutual benefit of the IAI being in Brazil in terms of science, international outreach, etc.
- There is still a need to finally resolve the staffing issues (because the solution we found is temporary). The competencies that we require from our staff, both within Brazil and with international meetings and international contacts, are considerably beyond what might be required of an average Brazilian assistant or secretary. Therefore, it is very important to us to maintain the excellent staff we have and to make sure that the Directorate has the means to manage its staff in Sao José dos Campos in such a way that we can maintain continuity of that excellent support that we have
- In the last 20-25 years there have been changes in Brazilian legislation concerning international organizations in Brazil in issues such as taxation, immunities, etc., due to the establishment of more international institutions. The IAI Host Country Agreement precedes these changes and we need to review it.

I can manage with the two first areas; I can intervene on behalf of my staff, I can formulate an introduction to the Agreement (with the advice of the SAC and the EC) but as to the reconsideration of immunities, privileges, etc., my personal interests are affected to such a degree that I need to ask you to form a committee to work with Brazil in order to move this forward because I would be in a conflict of interest.

Brazil: just to complement the last point he mentioned about changes in Brazilian legislation. Even when we have an EC committee we will need some legal advice. Probably we will not have the capacity to propose something because it is not our expertise.

EC Chair: I imagine the Director has already looked for legal advice in Sao José dos Campos but perhaps some international advice is needed besides the local advisors. I would ask the EC members if there are any volunteers to help the IAI Directorate in this issue.

Brazil and the *Director* would prepare a brief report indicating clearly which topics are specific to Brazilian legislation and which would be of interest of the Executive Council.

Venezuela: I will ask the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a legal expert. I will notify when I have an answer.

The EC Chair will send a letter to all representatives asking for volunteers to help the IAI Director in the review of the Host Country Agreement. Venezuela offered to ask in its Ministries for a legal expert on the issue. (*Action 12*)

6. Discussion of CRN science synthesis

IAI Director: The CRN program is now two and a half years old. The Human Dimensions program has concluded its first year. When I joined the IAI I asked myself what is the value added that the IAI adds to its science funding programs? What the IAI does that a funding agency in an individual country could or would not do? One answer was that we have experience in managing international networks, contracts, administrative problems, etc. The second one is becoming more important and has to do with informed action and making science available to decision making. That is to redefine the science, to synthesize it toward a shape and form that can be read and used by decision makers, by civil society, by social actors.

We now have two major synthesis out of CRN I, one refers to the importance of that science to society and how we communicate it (book published by Island Press), and the second one is a book we developed jointly with the IICA (Inter American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture). Both are available on the web. We also have a policy brief.

With the CRN II we have the opportunity of making the synthesis as a learning process during the ongoing projects. It is becoming an active process that will receive support from the SAC. I think a large part of the products of the synthesis process is to be directed at you, at the political representatives of the IAI and at your peers beyond and, therefore, we need an active engagement by the EC and the CoP in that synthesis process. When I wrote the invitation to the Montevideo Meeting to the investigators, I wrote some examples of what the products might be: integrated management of a large region as the La Plata Basin, the linkage of models on land-climate-hydrology (how can we use models in order to communicate our science) and how we condense these things into policy briefs. We need your help to turn this into a constructive process.

EC Chair: Do all representatives have copies of the products mentioned by the Director?

The IAI Directorate will send a letter to all representatives indicating the available dissemination materials and their location in the IAI website. (*Action 13*)

7. Other issues

The IAI Director asked Colombia: yesterday in the scientific session we heard about the problems of putting value on the work we do, the cost and benefits analysis. We cannot quantify the true cost and benefit of research in public intervention on issues of environmental and global change problems. Would you, as part of this special issue of our Newsletter, address that problem particularly? It refers very closely to the synthesis of our science. We can synthesize the scientific part, we can make the information available but the question always comes up: what is the value of this information? What can we do with it? How can we cooperate about this issue? We have to cooperate in the long term in order to find solutions. We could implement a process to reach estimates.

Colombia: We can make a summary of the difficulties we found in the process of calculating costs. The Macizo Project already has some economic approaches for the implementation of policies in the issues

of poverty and climate change. However, only next week we will have some advances on costs estimates. Once we have these results, I offer to share them with the other representatives.

7. Future Meetings & Sites:

EC Chair: *Brazil* in the CoP expressed that could host the next EC and CoP meetings. I encourage EC members to be active in the construction, with the IAI Directorate, of the agenda for the next meetings.

Director: We should have the date, place, and agenda of the meetings by September so that we can organize everything with enough anticipation and the delegates can make the necessary arrangements for their attendance.

The EC accepted the proposal of the Director that the venue for the next meetings of the EC and CoP be set by September 2009. (*Action 14*)

8. Adjourn

The EC Chair thanked all the representatives for their presence. He said that during the meeting many good ideas had emerged and he encouraged IAI delegates to devote some time to the IAI once back in their countries.

On behalf of the EC, he specially thanked the Government of Colombia through the Minister Carlos Costa (Ministerio de Ambiente, Vivienda y Desarrollo), Ricardo Lozano, Director of IDEAM and Mauricio Cabrera, (Subdirector de Estudios Ambientales-IDEAM). He also thanked the local staff and the IAI Directorate staff for their support.

Finally, he made a special mention to Luciana Ribeiro (Assistant to the IAI Director), who could not attend the meetings. She has been an invaluable help not only to the IAI Directors but to the EC and CoP as well. He informed that she was leaving the IAI after several years of duties and wished her all the best in her new activities.

The meeting was adjourned

**28th Meeting of the IAI Executive Council
21 May 2009, Bogotá, Colombia**

Action List

1. The EC approved the Agenda of its Twenty Eighth Meeting without amendments.
2. The EC approved the Action List of its Twenty Seventh Meeting without modifications.
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6. The EC accepted the offer of Costa Rica (member of the Central America Integration System - SICA) to approach Guatemala regarding its IAI membership. Costa Rica also offered to disseminate IAI activities within SICA.
7. The EC accepted the proposal of Colombia of disseminating information on the IAI to institutions beyond environmental institutions in member countries.
8. The EC decided to create a document defining the role, responsibilities and activities expected from IAI representatives. The representative of Costa Rica will start drafting this document.
9. The USA offered the IAI full assistance in contacting IAI member countries not fully involved in the Institute through their Science Agencies and the Department of State. In addition, USA suggested that two or more Foreign Relations Offices issue *joint demarches* urging countries to become actively involved in IAI activities.
10. The IAI Director suggested that, while making contacts with member countries, representatives mention and examine the issue of the political and legal status of the IAI in order to guarantee that the participation of national scientists in IAI international activities be supported.
11. The IAI Director requested that representatives write brief articles (about 200 words) for the IAI Newsletter on the benefits of the free and open exchange of information in their countries and how that is being done. Articles should be submitted to the IAI Newsletter not later than June 25.
12. The EC Chair will send a letter to all representatives asking for volunteers to help the IAI Director in the review of the Host Country Agreement. Venezuela offered to ask in its Ministries for a legal expert on the issue.

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