World Federation for Culture Collections

Minutes of the General Meeting, 2 to 4 November 1988, College Park, Md.

Minute 1. *Call to order.*

The General Meeting of the World Federation for Culture Collections (WFCC), presided over by B. E. Kirsop (President) with A. H. S. Onions as Secretary, was called to order on 2 November 1988 in College Park, Md., during the Sixth International Congress of Culture Collections. The results of the first postal ballot conducted according to the recently amended statutes were announced. The President, Vice-President, and six board members were elected.

Minute 2. *Resolutions.*

During the Sixth International Congress of Culture Collections, the following resolutions were prepared and presented to the Plenary Closing Session on 4 November 1988.

(i) *Resolution 1.* Taking note of existing WFCC requirements for collection affiliate membership and of WFCC work in improving standards through training courses, the Education Committee, and other means and anticipating potential advantages that collections and their users could derive from higher levels of professional credibility, be it resolved that appropriate measures should be made for:

(a) WFCC guidelines for good laboratory and manufacturing practices for collections;

(b) WFCC minimal standards for documentation, preservation, quality control of cultures, and records of issues;

(c) WFCC consideration for developing the professional status of collection staff; and

(d) recognition that the above should be achieved in the context of the differing resources, actual or attainable, in different parts of the world.

(ii) *Resolution 2.* Noting that the microbial gene pool presently conserved and protected in collections is but a small fraction of the total natural diversity, noting the development of biotechnology and the potential benefits to health, agriculture, and the environment by safe release of genetically engineered microorganisms, noting the need to conserve such organisms, and recognizing that risk assessment associated with such releases is hampered by lack of knowledge, be it resolved that national, international, public, and private funding agencies should be made fully aware of the needs of collections for appropriate financial and material support for research on the isolation, characterization, systematics, ecology, and conservation of natural and genetically engineered organisms to enable the collections to competently and professionally fulfill their research and service potentialities.

(iii) *Resolution 3.* Recognizing the benefits accruing to collection users from computerized databases of holdings and properties and of networks and information exchange and noting the role of WFCC in the international promotion of these developing resources, be it resolved that:

(a) WFCC should facilitate harmonization of these endeavors;

(b) collections should be encouraged;

(c) WFCC further should use its good offices to assist the World Data Center and the Microbial Strain Data Network;

(d) WFCC should cooperate with CODATA in its actions to harmonize the terminology, vocabulary, and nomenclature of different microbiological disciplines; and

(e) national federations and like organizations should compile local inventories, or update existing ones, of culture resources and share where appropriate.

(iv) *Resolution 4.* Noting that work in which living microorganisms are used becomes a matter of public domain when the work is published scientifically, be it resolved that editors should use their powers:

(a) to ensure that authors use collection designations for cultures only when the cultures have been obtained directly;

(b) to ensure that indirectly obtained cultures be properly designated as derivatives; and

(c) to encourage deposition of original and other cultures in collections as open, unrestricted deposits.

(v) *Resolution 5.* Noting the similarity of national regulations concerning safe packaging of biohazardous cultures, be it resolved that those postal authorities that impose prohibitions should be made fully aware that these prohibitions inhibit scientific work, often of medical importance, that such prohibitory regulations can be abused, and that satisfactory and sensible arrangements for safe dispatch by post are possible.

(vi) *Resolution 6.* Recognizing that the Budapest Treaty is open to different interpretations on certain important issues affecting both international depository authorities and their depositors, be it resolved that the WFCC:

(a) should redouble its efforts to acquaint national and international patent authorities with these issues; and

(b) recommends that the World Intellectual Property Organization take the lead with these authorities to consider the issues urgently so that necessary steps toward harmonization of interpretations may be taken.

V. P. Canhos, *Secretary*