

Report of Committee on International Organisations (CIO) September 2015

The aim of the Committee on International Organisations (CIO) is to develop continuing consultative interactions between CAETS and other international scientific and technological organisations. CAETS is a member of the InterAcademy Council (IAC) Board. There are also continuing links with programs of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Council of Science (ICSU). Both organisations are developing programs that relate to improving the resilience and sustainability of society, and such programs will depend upon contributions from engineering and technological sciences. As its member academies involve the leading engineers and technological scientists in their countries, CAETS is best placed to provide authoritative advice on these issues both at a national and international level.

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

In order for CAETS to be formally recognised at the WMO Congress in June 2015, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was drafted by WMO in July 2014 for consideration by CAETS. At the CAETS executive committee meeting in November 2014, it was decided “to postpone action on this proposal pending a discussion on the general issue of CAETS relations with international organizations at the next meeting of the Board of Directors, on 12 October 2015 in New Delhi”. Consequently CAETS was not represented at the WMO Congress in June 2015. The WMO strategic plan agreed at the Congress includes the priorities of a greater focus on urban issues, disaster risk reduction and climate services to assist climate change adaptation and sustainable development. Bearing in mind the year of delay since WMO drafted the MOU and given the common issues for WMO and CAETS, it would be appropriate to expedite finalisation of the MOU with WMO.

International Council for Science (ICSU)

With support from ATSE, I participated in the ICSU General Assembly in New Zealand in September 2014. CAETS was invited to make a brief presentation during the opening session. Using a prepared statement, my presentation was well received and provided the basis for further discussions on links between CAETS and other international organisations. A report on the meeting was sent to the executive committee.

Over the last few years there have been a number of meetings between representatives of CAETS and ICSU, especially relating to the new ICSU-ISSC Future Earth program on sustainability. As noted previously, the Science Committee for Future Earth has no engineering expertise in its membership. The Science Committee is complemented with an Engagement Committee to provide strategic advice on the involvement of stakeholders in the program. In discussions over the last year, it was agreed that it would be desirable to have engineering represented on the Engagement Committee. Apparently no suitable candidate was initially nominated. Towards the end of the process, CAETS was approached but a candidate with the required credentials was not found.

In 2014, ICSU invited an external review of its policies and operations, and the response to the review is likely to include actions to engage more fully with other fields of science, including engineering and computer sciences through CAETS and WFEO. For example, annual International Science meetings may be convened to focus on contemporary science and technology policy challenges. It is likely that organisations like CAETS will be invited to such meetings, which would provide an effective forum for consideration of major engineering and technological science

issues.

InterAcademy Council (IAC)

CAETS is a member of the Board of the IAC, and Achiel Van Cauwenberghe is the CAETS representative. Prof. Van Cauwenberghe will report at the CAETS Council meeting on interactions with IAC.

InterAcademy Partnership (IAP)

The IAP is a newly formed organisation aimed at bringing together established global networks of academies of science, medicine and engineering into a new collaboration in which academies will work together to support the special role of science and its efforts to seek solutions to address the world's most challenging problems. The IAP is an amalgamation of the Inter-Academy Panel, the Inter-Academy Council (IAC) and the Inter-Academy Medical Panel (IAMP), based on the recognition that separate existence meant that each group was not globally viable.

During the ICSU General Assembly in 2014, I had discussions with Daya Reddy, who is the president-elect of ICSU and who is a member of the executive committee of IAP. We noted the potential for CAETS to represent engineering in the new framework.

In November 2014, there was a meeting in Berlin between CAETS executive and IAP. At that meeting, CAETS was invited to consider joining the new IAP as a fourth major unit which would be devoted to Engineering and Technology. The report of that meeting states that CAETS “would not become legally involved or financially liable for IAP activities”. Moreover, “CAETS participation in a study/activity would depend on finding one or more members of CAETS member academies with the appropriate technical expertise willing to participate and with the financial and other resources needed.”

Minutes of the CAETS executive committee meeting of 27 April 2015 show that Baldev Raj has been invited and will represent CAETS at the IAP meeting in New Delhi in late September 2015. That meeting could provide an opportunity to commence the development of a strategic approach to international engagement by CAETS.

Recommendation

International arrangements for academies in science and technology are evolving quite rapidly. Opportunities for further engagement with WMO, ICSU and IAP are identified in this report. However, in deciding on the approach to be taken in each case, it would be appropriate for CAETS to conduct a review of its strategy for international engagement. At least three broad options should be considered.

- The first option is to continue engagement with other organisations on a project-by-project basis, with no financial or continuing commitment. This approach represents business as usual.
- The second option is for CAETS to become aligned with another organisation, such as ICSU, which in turn would represent engineering and technological sciences in international forums. This approach would allow CAETS essentially to continue its present arrangements, but the technological sciences and engineering in international forums would

be under the auspices of another organisation.

- The third option is for CAETS to become recognised as the representative organisation for the technological sciences and engineering in international forums, specifically IAP. This is the preferred option, as it will allow CAETS promote its formal objectives by influencing global considerations of issues related to the technological sciences and engineering.

It is therefore recommended that CAETS should conduct a review of its strategic approach to engagement with international organisations, including the internal and external implications of alternative approaches.

M.J. Manton
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