

## The 2007 inter-sessional Science Board and Governing Council meeting: A note from the Chairman

At the invitation of the Japanese Delegate, Dr. Hideki Nakano, the 5<sup>th</sup> inter-sessional joint meeting of the PICES Science Board and Governing Council was convened on April 19, 2007, at the “Work-pia Yokohama” in Yokohama, Japan. This was followed by a short meeting of the Governing Council in the morning of April 20. These events were preceded on April 16–18 by a workshop to develop a Future Integrative Science Program (FISP) of PICES. While the practice of holding inter-sessional meetings began only in 2003 in Victoria, Canada, it has now become an essential opportunity for mid-term reviews of scientific activities and in-depth discussions on administrative issues of the Organization.

The first order of business for the joint meeting was a systematic update on the activities of the various scientific bodies of PICES. The Chairmen of the Committees and the CCCC Program presented reports of their Action Plans, status of inter-sessional workshops and the progress of their publications, all of which were approved at previous Annual Meetings. The primary issue for this meeting, however, was the revision of the *North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report*. The first report was published in 2004, based largely on the scientific achievements of the CCCC Program. The report enhanced the reputation of PICES as an international scientific organization, not only in the academic community but also among policymakers in the Contracting Parties. Nevertheless, the ecosystems of the

North Pacific have continued to change, so periodic revisions of the report are highly expected.

The Governing Council established a Study Group on *Ecosystem Status Reporting* (SG-ESR) at PICES XV in Yokohama to develop options of principles and procedures and budgets for the next version. At the inter-sessional meeting, SG-ESR presented four options ranging from incremental improvements to fully integrated comparative ecosystem assessments. At PICES XVI in Victoria, the Governing Council will establish a strategic plan to revise the report, taking into consideration the amount of resources that the Organization can afford, as well as the high expectations from the Contracting Parties for an updated version.

The remainder of the joint meeting was devoted to reviewing upcoming PICES-sponsored activities and arrangements for PICES XVI in Victoria. A new PICES award for organizations or groups that have been steadily conducting ocean monitoring and data management in the North Pacific was also discussed. The proposal was supported by the Science Board and Governing Council, and the award was named the PICES Ocean Monitoring Service Award. The Science Board will develop the criteria and procedures for selection, with the first recipient(s) to be named in 2008, at PICES XVII in Dalian, People’s Republic of China.



*Science Board and Governing Council representatives. Front row from left: Kyoung-Jin Kim, Hideki Nakano, Gongke Tan, Laura Richards, Ig-Chan Pang, Tokio Wada, Vera Alexander, Samuel Pooley, Lev Bocharov, Skip McKinnell; back row from left: Sinjae Yoo, Oleg Katugin, Glen Jamieson, Michael Dagg, Harold Batchelder, John Stein, Michael Foreman, Kuh Kim, Gordon Kruse, Michio Kishi, Sei-Ichi Saitoh, Alexander Bychkov, Anna Karulina, Igor Shevchenko, Yuji Uozumi.*

The main order of business for the Governing Council meeting was scientific cooperation between PICES and non-member countries. This issue was first discussed at PICES XIV in Vladivostok, and subsequently a Study Group on *Scientific Cooperation* (SG-SC) was established at PICES XV in Yokohama, under the chairmanship of Dr. Laura Richards. Its purpose was to identify options and propose mechanisms for cooperation with other countries at the 5<sup>th</sup> inter-sessional meeting. The Study Group was entirely negative to the idea of amending the Convention of the Organization to expand the “area concerned”. However, SG-SC recognized the scientific necessity and advantages of cooperating with non-member countries, and recommended that PICES introduce an affiliate member system. This type of arrangement was implemented some time ago in ICES to allow non-member countries to participate in its activities. After intensive discussions, the Governing Council accepted the conclusions of the Study Group, but felt that further discussion was needed before introducing the affiliate member system. SG-SC was asked to examine how such a system would influence the current structure and management of the Organization. The final report of SG-SC will be presented at PICES XVI, and we expect that an appropriate decision will be made for expanding the scientific cooperation.

Another important issue for consideration at the Governing Council meeting was a report by Dr. John Stein, Chairman-elect of the Science Board, on the outcome of the FISP Workshop, held immediately prior to the inter-sessional meeting. For SG-FISP to develop an actual science program, a Writing Team composed of experts of various scientific areas, from ocean climatology to ecosystem management, was established after PICES XV. The Team met for the first time in February 2007, in Seattle, and then in April 2007, in Yokohama, with a larger contingent of participants, and much progress was made during these meetings. The overarching scientific questions about the North Pacific Ocean were grouped initially according to

whether they dealt with “status”, “mechanisms”, and “consequences”. The participants also identified and discussed several key scientific questions under each overarching question. Work will continue in order to finalize a draft Science Plan at PICES XVI.

Unfortunately, the weather during the FISP workshop and the joint meeting was not good for enjoying the Japanese spring time because it was rainy and windy every day. However, the spirits of all participants were lifted by an invitation to a welcome party in the evening of April 16, hosted by Japan, and Japanese traditional foods and drinks were enjoyed by all.

With growing evidence of global warming, the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems and bio-resources in the North Pacific has become an urgent issue for the Contacting Parties. There is a great expectation that PICES will provide scientific advice on these issues appropriately and promptly. The development and implementation of a new integrative science program and revision of the *North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report* are the top priorities of the Organization to meet these expectations. PICES will continue to develop its scientific abilities to gather knowledge and to provide advice. This is the reason why we are addressing cooperation with a broader range of scientific entities, including non-member countries, and involving early career scientists in the PICES activities, as well as reinforcing the functions of the Secretariat.



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