

Major Outcomes from the 2008 PICES Annual Meeting: A Note from the Chairman

The Seventeenth Annual Meeting of PICES was held from October 23 to November 2, 2008, under the theme “*Beyond observations to achieving understanding and forecasting in changing North Pacific: Forward to the FUTURE*”. About 400 scientists and administrators from 16 countries and several organizations attended this meeting, which was hosted by the State Oceanic Administration of the People’s Republic of China in Dalian, a beautiful seaside city with a great deal of exotic atmosphere. With the expansion of PICES’ activities, tight collaboration with non-member countries and other organizations and programs, efficient administration and alternation of generations of scientists have been essential for the sustained development of the Organization.

Cooperation with non-member countries

Scientific cooperation with non-member countries and other international organizations is crucial for extending the activity of PICES, and has been an important subject of discussion in Council, especially because many of the issues addressed by PICES are not unique to the North Pacific. At the 2006 Annual Meeting (Yokohama, Japan) a Study Group on *Scientific Cooperation between PICES and Non-member Countries* (SG-SC) was established to explore options on how scientific cooperation with other (non-member) countries could be best achieved. A draft SG-SC

report was presented at the 2007 inter-sessional Science Board/Governing Council meeting (Yokohama), and a final report was given and adopted by Council at the 2007 Annual Meeting (Victoria, Canada). The Study Group was unanimously negative to the idea of amending the PICES Convention to expand the “area concerned”. However, recognizing the scientific necessity and advantages of cooperating with non-member countries, it was proposed that an affiliate member status be established by PICES, similar to the arrangement implemented some time ago by ICES. A draft *Affiliate Member Policy* was extensively discussed at the 2007 Annual Meeting, but Council was unable to reach consensus on the adoption of the document.

In Dalian, Council went back to the basics of this discussion, and agreed with an alternative option—to amend the PICES Rules of Procedure (ROP) in order to accommodate experts from non-member countries and/or other organizations to our expert groups. The current ROP already has a clause that allows representatives of other organizations and non-member countries, with the endorsement of the Science Board and approval of the Council, to become *ex-officio* members of an Advisory Panel. We considered applying similar clauses to other subsidiary bodies of our Standing Committees. An amended ROP will be tabled for discussion at the next inter-sessional Science Board/Governing Council meeting



Participants at the 2008 Governing Council meeting in Dalian: (front row, left to right) – Yukimasa Ishida, George Boehlert, Doan Jeong, Zhanhai Zhang, Laura Richards, Tokio Wada and Lev Bocharov; (back row, from left to right) – Jeonghwa Kim, Baoying Zhu, Handi Guo, Igor Shevchenko, Sik Huh, Serge Labonté, Yingren Li, Patricia Livingston, Harumi Yamada, Elizabeth Tirpak, Samuel Pooley, Oleg Katugin, Alexander Bychkov, Gongke Tan and Dongmei Tang.

(April 2009, Qingdao, China) and/or at the 2009 Annual Meeting (October 2009, Jeju, Korea). These amendments should allow the recruitment of essential experts to our activities from outside of the PICES member countries, and thus to contribute to further development of our Organization.

Scientific priorities and outcomes

With the expansion of PICES' activities, expectations from Contracting Parties on the scientific outcomes have been increasing year by year. The North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report (NPESR) is an example of an important outcome. The pilot report titled *Marine Ecosystems of the North Pacific* was published in 2004 (PICES Special Publication No. 2), based on the scientific results from the PICES-GLOBEC Climate Change and Carrying Capacity (CCCC) Program, the first integrative scientific program of PICES. This report provided a status of the ecosystems of coastal and oceanic regions throughout the North Pacific, approximately covering the 5-year period from 1998–2002, and addressing system components from climate and hydrography to fish, birds and mammals. The document was regarded as a useful and timely one for policy making by Contracting Parties. The preparation of the next NPESR, with focus on status and trends in marine ecosystems of the North Pacific and its marginal seas for the period 2003–2008, has just started under the direction of the Science Board. Publication of a report for a scientific audience and a brochure for policy makers, managers, and other interested members of society, is expected in 2010.

FUTURE, an acronym for **F**orecasting and **U**nderstanding of **T**rends, **U**ncertainty and **R**esponses of North Pacific **M**arine **E**cosystems, is the second integrative scientific program of PICES, and it will be the highest priority activity for the next decade. The FUTURE Science Plan was approved in principle by Council at the 2007 Annual

Meeting, and its final version has been posted on the PICES website in February 2008 (http://pices.int/members/scientific_programs/FUTURE/FUTURE_final_2008.pdf). The Implementation Plan is now under development, with a goal of initiating the program in 2009. As a successor of the CCCC Program, FUTURE aims to understand the responses of North Pacific marine ecosystems to climate change. At the same time, FUTURE has some new aspects. It will evaluate the human dimensions of ecosystem dynamics and improve the communication of scientific results to policy makers and stakeholders. These are the outcomes expected by Contracting Parties. Council has also been paying great attention to linkages between our scientific outcomes and the ocean management policies of our Contracting Parties. Council, in consultation with Science Board, will advise FUTURE on the direction of its scientific progress and well-timed feedback of its outcomes.

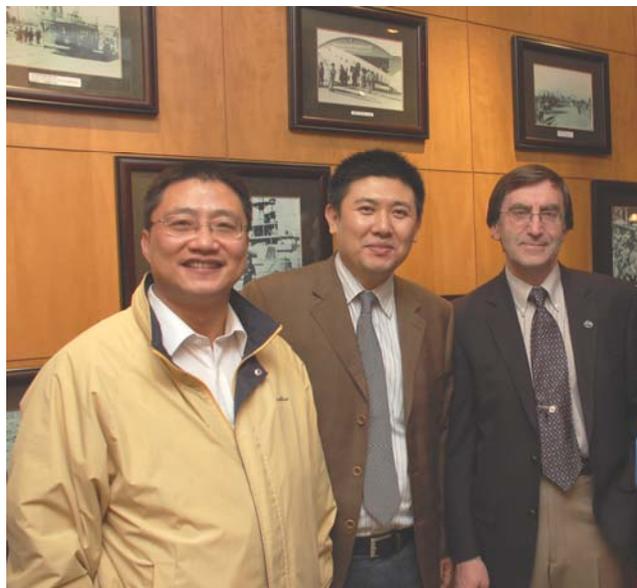
Capacity building

Encouraging the involvement of young talents in marine scientific research and activities of PICES is an issue of great importance for the Organization. Holding special conferences, summer schools and training courses for early career scientists, and providing financial support for their participation in our Annual Meetings and symposia, are essential components of PICES' strategy for capacity building. Participating in these events will allow young individuals not only to broaden their knowledge and to share their ideas, but also to interact with scientists from other nations and to build networks across disciplines and international borders that will persist for decades.

The PICES Intern Program, commenced in 2000, aims at the professional development of marine scientists and managers from PICES member countries. By working in the PICES Secretariat for periods of up to 12 months, they

gain experience in the operations of intergovernmental scientific organizations and the coordination of multi-disciplinary international ecosystem research programs.

At this year's Annual Meeting, two former PICES interns from the State Oceanic Administration, Gongke Tan (First Institute of Oceanography) and Chuanlin Huo (National Marine Environmental Monitoring Center), were the nucleus of the Local Organizing Committee and contributed greatly to the success of the meeting. It is an indicator that our Intern Program is working effectively!



Former PICES interns, Gongke Tan (left) and Chuanlin Huo (centre), with Dr. Alexander Bychkov, PICES Executive Secretary (right) at the Chairman's Reception in Dalian.

Restructuring of the PICES Annual Meeting

Under the current severe economic conditions, we must find an appropriate way to adjust our activities to fit within what can be allowed by the financial constraints of the Contracting Parties, and PICES itself. The Annual Meeting is our most important event, and the recent expansion of these meetings in scale and duration is evidence that PICES has become an internationally renowned scientific organization. However, this expansion has also been a burden for the host countries, participants, and the PICES Secretariat. Council discussed this issue and agreed to establish a Study Group on *Restructuring of the Annual Meeting* (SG-RAM) to consider ways of improving the time balance and order among various activities of the Annual Meeting, while also shortening its duration. Clarifying the responsibilities of the Science Board, Financial and Administration Committee, and Scientific and Technical Committees in the PICES decision-making process is viewed as a secondary task of this Study Group. The SG-RAM membership includes one representative from each Contracting Party, as well as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of PICES, the Chairmen of Science Board and Finance and Administration Committee, and the

Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary. It is expected that initial recommendations from SG-RAM will be discussed at the 2009 inter-sessional Governing Council meeting.

In keeping with the six-year rotation cycle, Council also confirmed host countries of next PICES Annual Meetings: the Republic of Korea (Jeju) in 2009, the United States in 2010, and the Russian Federation in 2011.

Elections

By consensus of Council, I and Dr. Lev Bocharov (Russia) were re-elected for a new 2-year term as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of PICES, respectively. Dr. Laura Richards (Canada), the Chairperson of the Finance and Administration Committee, completed her second term and stepped down from the position at the conclusion of this year's Annual Meeting. Ms. Patricia Livingston (U.S.A.) was appointed as the new Chairperson. With Dr. John Stein, the Science Board Chairman, and Dr. Alexander Bychkov, Executive Secretary, we will do our best for the further development and smooth administration of the Organization. We would like to ask for your kind cooperation.

During this Annual Meeting, we suffered great sorrow at the sad news that Professor Warren Wooster, the principle founder and first Chairman of PICES, passed away at 87 years of age on October 29, 2008, in Seattle, U.S.A. He was a world renowned oceanographer who dedicated his life to the development of marine science and to the progress of international cooperation in this field. Without his great effort and distinguished leadership, PICES would not have been established, and we would never have got together to discuss the marine science of the North Pacific. It was a great loss for us and the world of marine science. I believe that the realization of the spirit of international scientific cooperation beyond borders is Warren's desire, and PICES is his legacy for us. I would like to sincerely pay my last respects to Professor Wooster, along with the PICES community.



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