

1987 and lightly revised in 1994. The Year 2000 revisions will be much more thorough-going, taking into account the considerable international experience of implementing them.

However, ISO says that the revised standards, like the current ones, will impose no rules on the presentation of a quality manual. It states, "This will allow organizations to continue to document their quality management systems in a manner which reflects their own ways of doing business. The revision of the ISO 9000 standards will not require the rewriting of an organization's quality management system documentation."

In order to ensure that the revised standards will be of maximum benefit, ISO has conducted an international survey of user requirements. In addition, it has an ongoing process which allows for direct feedback from users and customers at key points during the development of the revisions. This process is helping to determine how well user requirements are being met in the documents under development and to identify opportunities for improving them further before publication as ISO standards.

The revised standards, ISO 9001 and ISO 9004, are currently at the stage of "Committee Drafts" (CDs), which normally are internal documents circulated for comment only to the ISO members directly participating in their development. After the CD stage, the standards are released to ISO's membership as a whole as Draft International Standards, which are publicly available documents. Due to the huge interest in the ISO 9000 revisions, orders for the CDs of ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 may be addressed to ISO national members and to the ISO Central Secretariat. However, it should be understood that the documents are dynamic ones which will certainly evolve before they reach the status of International Standards.

ISO/TC 176/SC 2, the ISO technical body responsible for developing the revised standards, has established a World Wide Web site to provide information. Users who would like to give input or participate in the validation of the standards may contact ISO/TC 176/SC 2 directly via the web site: <http://www.bsi.org.uk/iso-tcl76-sc2/>. Information may also be obtained from ISO's national members, as well as being posted on ISO's own web site, *ISO Online*: <http://www.iso.ch/>. For more information: Roger Frost, Press Officer, Tel.: + 4122 749 0111, Fax: + 4122 733 34 30, E-mail: frost@iso.ch.

WHO and Pharmaceutical Industry to Set Up Joint Working Group

With one-third of the world population deprived of easy access to the most essential drugs and vaccines, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the phar-

maceutical industry decided to set up a joint working group that will analyse the situation and make recommendations to overcome existing bottlenecks.

The group will be formed and start its work in the immediate future. Its composition will be agreed in consultation with the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (IFPMA), which currently represents over 50 national associations of research-based pharmaceutical companies from countries in every WHO region.

This decision was made on 21 October 1998, after a four-hour meeting organized at WHO in Geneva between Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO's Director-General, who initiated the meeting, and ten senior representatives of the pharmaceutical industry, selected by the IFPMA.

"The decision we have taken is a first step to benefit an estimated 100 million people worldwide through improved cooperation between the public and private sectors. I am looking forward to further development in this area," stated Dr. Brundtland.

"We in the pharmaceutical industry are pleased to see changes in the renewed WHO, changes that could potentially make everybody a winner. It is up to all of us now to translate this potential into actions," commented Dr. Harvey E. Bale, Jr., Director-General of the IFPMA.

News from the Federation of European Chemical Societies (FECS) General Assembly, 17–18 September 1998, Istanbul Turkey

Millennium Celebrations

100 Distinguished European Chemists

The President informed the General Assembly that the project had been approved by the Executive Committee in March and that in August member societies had been sent a letter inviting them to submit nominations by the closing date of 26 February 1999.

Guidelines for considering the nominations would be approved by the Executive Committee in October. The Working Party on the History of Chemistry would be involved in the selection process, the final decision to be taken by a selection committee

FECS Calendar

The President informed the General Assembly that plans for a calendar to mark the Millennium had been approved by the Executive Committee, although the question of the necessary funding had not been resolved.