Standardization of Analytical Approaches and Analytical Capacity-Building in Africa

A World Bank study in 2003 determined that a major barrier to the export of commodities from many African countries is the inability of laboratories in those countries to provide test results that meet international standards. A new cooperative project among IUPAC's Analytical Chemistry Division, the Chemistry and the Environment Division, and IOCD* seeks to upgrade selected laboratories in Africa so they can produce reliable and internationally accepted analytical results. This will help farmers and enterprises in the private sector to export commodities to markets in the USA, European Union, and Japan, where compliance with international standards is required.

During phase one of the project, IOCD, in partnership with regulatory groups, Ugandan officials, and others, will first find out which laboratories and products are involved and what standards need to be met for specific Ugandan products. For phase two, an IOCD task group of five chemists (including two Africans) will visit Uganda and work closely with individuals in government and the private sector (economists, regulatory officials, farmers and entrepreneurs, laboratory managers, and staff scientists), to establish remedial measures jointly identified by the laboratories to build analytical capacity. Phase three will involve implementing these remedial measures Funding for the third phase will be requested from Ugandans, IUPAC, UNESCO, and other sources.

The support and involvement of IUPAC will be particularly critical in human capacity building (e.g., fellowships, expert visitors, workshops) and in laboratory upgrading (e.g., proficiency testing, quality assurance, research). IUPAC has generously contributed USD 10000 for a three-year period to sponsor training sessions. UNESCO, ALMA (the African Language Materials Archive program), and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences also have agreed to help.

Constructive feedback from IUPAC members and others would be appreciated.

For more information, contact Task Group Chairman Walter R. Benson <WBenson270@aol.com>.

www.iupac.org/projects/2004/2004-017-1-500.html

*IOCD is the International Organization for Chemical Sciences in Development; see May-June 2002 *CI* or <www.iocd.org>.

Young Ambassadors for Chemistry

As part of the Young Ambassadors for Chemistry (YAC) project, the first of a series of four workshops for Science and Language teachers was held 22–26 November 2004 at the National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) in Taipei. The workshops are intended to encourage public understanding of chemistry through events for young people in public locations.

Two graduate Young Ambassadors for Chemistry.

The event in Taipei was organized with the support of a number of partners—a measure of the level of collaboration that was achieved in preparing for the workshop. Those partners included IUPAC; Science Across the World (SAW); GlaxoSmithKline; NTNU; National Science Council, Taiwan; British Council, Taipei; Chinese Chemical Society, located in Taipei; and GlaxoSmithKline Taiwan. Representatives from all of the partner organizations attended the opening and grand finale of the YAC workshop.

Young Ambassadors for Chemistry Workshop

Four days of workshops, which followed the "train the trainer" model, introduced 25 participants—chemistry and language teachers and science museum staff from all over Taiwan—to the SAW program for increasing public understanding of chemistry. On the final day, the participants hosted students for a YAC day celebration in a public place.

The Graduate Institute for Science Education in Taipei offered an ideal setting for the workshops. Professor Mei-Hung Chíu, from the Institute, along with Dr. Shu-Nu Chang, provided impeccable organization and facilities. A large stand with all of the workshop details and the YAC logo was