



INTER-AMERICAN NETWORK OF ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES

*Science Academies working together to promote science and technology  
for development, prosperity and equity in the Americas*

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## **IANAS Executive Committee Meeting Minutes October 12, 2021**

### **Participants:**

Helena Nader and Jeremy McNeil (IANAS Co-chairs); Beatriz L. Caputto (IANAS Executive Director); Alberto Gago (Academy of Sciences of Peru); John Hildebrand (NAS); Winston Mellowes (Caribbean Academy of Sciences); Marcos Cortesao (Brazilian Academy of Sciences); John Boright (NAS); Victor Ramos (Academy of Sciences of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Argentina).

### **1. Ongoing activities with other partners**

#### **Connections to sustain science in Latin America; Lounsbery Foundation.**

John Boright gave a short report on a joint program funded by the Lounsbery Foundation that is being carried out by NAS, the Academy of Sciences of Latin America and IANAS. There are two components to the programme. The first, which is well underway, is an all-purpose communication hub providing information on resources for scholars in Latin America. This offers opportunities to take courses not available at the students' home institutions. The other part of the project will be symposia involving early career Latin American leaders in science, medicine and engineering where they can work together and develop interdisciplinary partnerships. Winston Mellowes asked for the Caribbean region to be included.

#### **Nobel Prize Dialogue with Latin America and the Caribbean.**

Helena Nader spoke about a 2021 project between the Brazilian Academy of Sciences and the Nobel Prize Outreach that brought together two Nobel Prize winners and 80 students from Brazil. Given the success, a second event involving students from all over the Americas and the Caribbean is being organized for November 16, 2021. There will be several sessions with individual Nobel Prize winners, and have a joint session at the end. There was a call for the IANAS Academies to nominate students to participate in this event, and as a follow-up the IANAS Secretariat will send a "gentle reminder" to those Academies who had not sent in their nominations.



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## **Climate Change and Health report.**

Jeremy McNeil gave a short presentation on the Climate Change and Health in the Americas report with the financial support of IAP. A Steering Committee with representatives from different countries was established but unfortunately the pandemic made it difficult for them to meet in person. Therefore, with the approval of the steering committee, Jeremy worked with Dr. Sherilee Harper, a Canada Research Chair in epidemiology who studies the effect of climate change on health in several countries in the Americas. The first draft of the report has been circulated within the committee and once edited will be circulated for external peer review. Dr. Harper, together with representatives from the other regional networks and IAP, will be presenting on the report at COP26 on the 10th of November.

## **Biofuels.**

IANAS received an enquiry from EASAC about the possibility of a joint statement on biofuels. It was clear following a zoom call with experts from both regions that the views on biofuels were quite different in Europe and North American. It is not clear if this is going to move forward or not.

## **Bioeconomy and Food Systems.**

There is an ongoing discussion with IAP about bioeconomy and food systems. IANAS is being represented in the ongoing discussions by Elizabeth Hudson and Eduardo Trigo. We will have to see how this evolves but if it moves forward, it is possible that the IANAS academies will select representatives, the same way that we did in the past for the Food Security Sustainable Agriculture project.

## **2. Ongoing activities of the working groups**

Jeremy McNeil gave a short report on the activities of the IANAS Programs

### **Water Program:**

They have published a number of Policy Briefs and have an arrangement with the "Frontiers in Water" journal to publish future reports. They also published a "Water Quality in the Americas: A survey" both in English and Spanish.



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There is an ongoing study of the Water Resources in the Caribbean and they are preparing a series of Water and Health webinars being led by Ricardo Izurieta from Ecuador. The joint project on water scarcity with the African Network is currently on hold due to the pandemic situation. They are also initiating study on Groundwater in the Americas.

### **Energy Program:**

Their ongoing project “Rethinking cities”, led by Anthony Clayton, is examining the role of cities in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Women for Science:**

They are working on a report of women who obtained science training but have since become very prominent in other fields. There is a possibility that the IANAS group will join a project with the Australian Academy of Sciences, who have submitted a grant request to IAP.

They also awarded the Anneke Levelt Sengers Prize 2021, which was won by Joana Laddo from Uruguay.

### **Science Education:**

A panel of representatives from different countries was established and after several virtual meetings produced a publication with recommendations on how to support learning in and outside schools, as well as how to engage the public in STEM Education. The digital version of the book was distributed to all the IANAS Academies and is being translated to Spanish.

A grant proposal is being prepared for submission to IAP, for funds to continue this project.

### **3. Haitian Academy: Request of membership.**

Their membership was turned down by IAP, with the recommendation that they start by joining IANAS. The EC discussed their application and decided unanimously that the Haitian Academy of Sciences would be invited to be an “Observer Member” until their application be presented for consideration at the next IANAS General Assembly, in 2022.



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#### **4. 2022 General Assembly.**

The National Academy of Sciences of Argentina offered to host the Executive Committee and accepted the invitation to have the IANAS 2022 General Assembly in Córdoba, Argentina.

#### **5. Other business.**

There was a discussion concerning the situation in Mexico, where several academicians have been accused of misusing research funds, and if found guilty could end up in prison. This issue has been taken up by several human rights international organizations. It was agreed that we contact the colleagues in Mexico and consider writing a letter.