

Inter-American Network of Academies of Sciences (IANAS)

IANAS General Assembly in Mexico City, Mexico

3-4 September 2025

Minutes

The Inter-American Network of Academies of Sciences (IANAS) held its 8th General Assembly (GA) on September 3-4, 2025, in Mexico City, Mexico. The GA was hosted by the Mexican Academy of Sciences at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico (UNAM). The General Assembly brought together IANAS member Academies and representatives from twenty invited academies, to appraise the network's actions in the 2022-2025 triennium, to revise the Statutes and approve the Rules of Procedures, and to elect the leadership of the network for the next three years.

The following IANAS member Academies attended the General Assembly: Academy of Medical, Physical and Natural Sciences of Guatemala (José Rodrigo Sacahui Reyes, representative); Academy of Sciences of Ecuador (Nora Oleas, representative); Brazilian Academy of Sciences (Marcos Cortesao, Executive Director of the ABC); Caribbean Academy of Sciences (Roshnie Doon, representative); Chilean Academy of Sciences (Cecilia Hidalgo, representative); Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences (Helena Groot, representative); Cuban Academy of Sciences (Luis Velázquez, President); Latin American Academy of Sciences (Tamara Rosenbaum, representative); Mexican Academy of Sciences (José Seade, President); National Academies of Sciences, USA (Karen Strier, IANAS Co-Chair and Academy member; John Boright, NAS Executive Director); National Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Argentina (Alicia Dickenstein, President); National Academy of Sciences of Argentina (Beatriz Caputto, IANAS Executive Director and President of the ANC); National Academy of Sciences of Bolivia (Manuel Arellano, President); National Academy of Sciences of Costa Rica (Henriette Raventós, Vice-president); National Academy of Sciences of Honduras (Mario Lanza Santamaría, President); National Academy of Sciences of Peru (Alberto Gago, President); National Academy of Sciences of Uruguay (Juan Cristina, President); Nicaraguan Academy of Sciences (Josefina Vijil, representative); Panamanian Association for the Advancement of Science (Luisa Morales, representative); The Royal Society of Canada (Darren Gilmour, Executive Director of the RSC).

Apart from the official President/representatives of each IANAS Academy, some other members of the academies were present: José Luis Morán (Coordinator of International Affairs at the Mexican Academy of Sciences), Daniel Placht (Program Officer at the National Academy of Sciences, USA) and Gloria Dubner (Women for Science Co-Chair; National Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Argentina).

Authorities from the Mexican Secretary of Science, Humanities, Technology, and Innovation (SECIHTI); and authorities from some Mexican Universities were also present at the event: Rosaura Ruiz Gutiérrez (Secretary, SECIHTI), Leonardo Lomelí Vanegas (Rector, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico [UNAM]), Gustavo Pacheco López (General Rector, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana [UAM]), Alberto Sánchez Hernández (General Director, Center for Research and Advanced Studies of the National Polytechnic Institute [CINVESTV-IPN]), Imelda López Villaseñor (Director, UNAM Institute of Biomedical Research) and Isabel Hubard Escalera (Director, UNAM Institute of Mathematics). As well as Invited Speakers for the different lectures: Julia Carabias (*The Sustainability of Development: The 21st Century's Challenge*, distinguished lecture), Juan Luis Díaz de León Santiago (*A new ministry that leverages S&T for Mexico's*

development and global competitiveness, SECIHTI address), Blanca E. Jiménez (Safeguarding Water Quality to Ensure Sustainability, distinguished lecture), William Lee (Commitment to advancing Latin American Scientific Development through cooperation, UNAM Address), María Helena Medina Mora (Anxiety crisis, what is happening to our adolescents?, distinguished lecture), and Pedro Salazar (Leveraging Artificial Intelligence to Empower Migrants, distinguished lecture).

The Opening Ceremony was held at the Auditorium of UNAM's Institute of Biomedical Research "Dr. Alfonso Escobar Izquierdo". The inauguration started with welcoming remarks by Dr. José Seade, followed by the invited authorities from SECIHTI, UNAM, UAM, CINVESTV-IPN and IANAS Co-chair Karen Strier.

Karen Strier (IANAS Co-chair) thanked José Seade for hosting the General Assembly, as well as the Mexican Academy of Sciences and IANAS Secretariat for the organization. She also reported the main IANAS activities since the last General Assembly and some upcoming projects. One of those being the Satellite COP 30 meeting that ABC is organizing for October 20-22 of 2025. Helena Nader (IANAS Co-chair) presented this project through a video recording as she was not able to participate in person for medical reasons.

After the IANAS overview, Dr. Julia Carabias gave a distinguished lecture titled "The Sustainability of Development: The 21st Century's Challenge".

Once it was finished, everyone reunited to have a discussion about the current IANAS activities at the Ignacio Chávez Seminar Unit within UNAM's campus. Karen Strier started the discussion by going over IANAS activities in more detail. She also highlighted the importance of thinking of other ways to obtain funding for IANAS projects in order to be more autonomous, of continuing and expanding ongoing programs, increasing collaborative network activities and engagement with regional professional societies, among others.

Following this conversation, Gloria Dubner, Women for Science Co-Chair, presented the program's activities for the 2022-2025 period. The WfS group carried out three different prizes with monetary rewards and with the participation of different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean: The Young Scientist Research Award and the Anneke Levelt-Senger Prize, which are both biennial and aimed at young women scientists in the Americas in recognition of their outstanding work; and the video contest for students: "Let's Discover Latin American Female Scientists!", which is an annual contest. In April of 2025, this program started the monthly lecture series 'Women Who Share Their Science', in which each month a prominent Latin American female scientist from a different country gives a lecture about her research. Among other activities during the last triennium, Dr. Dubner highlighted the Production of a document "A Silent Revolution. Voices of Women Scientists", based on the WfS Focal Point's experiences; the dissemination of women in science activities carried out in different countries, conferences, announcements of awards, etc.; and having regular Zoom meetings to update information, review competition rules, appoint award judges, and other matters related to the program.

To review the Water program, Dr. Katherine Vammen, Co-Chair, sent a video reporting on the activities for the past period, as she was not able to attend the GA in person. These included: webinars and capacity training, like the "Interaction of Water and Forests" virtual conference for Water Day; publications and policy briefs such as the *Water Scarcity on Two Continents* report, *Water and Health in the Americas* and *The Challenges of Managing the Urban Waters of the Americas*; participation in international events, like the IANAS Session at the Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress; and the organization of a new project to be carried out in

October 2025 related to the IANAS Amazon Initiative, the *Management of Water, Forests and Sands in the Amazons: Securing Ecosystem and Human Health*, workshop in Iquitos, Peru.

The Academy of Physical, Mathematical and Natural Sciences of Venezuela also submitted a project in relation to the Amazon Initiative, which was presented by Beatriz Caputto as the Academy could not send a representative to the Assembly. The project, *Critically Vulnerable Areas in the Amazon due to the Growing Threat of Illegal Mining*, aims to assess highly vulnerable areas due to increasing pressures and identify areas of opportunity for mitigation.

Following a lunch break, there was a distinguished lecture by Dr. Pedro Salazar: "Leveraging Artificial Intelligence to Empower Migrants".

The election of the new leadership of the network was the next item in the agenda. Karen B. Strier, from the U.S National Academy of Sciences, and Alberto Gago, from the National Academy of Sciences of Peru were unanimously elected IANAS Co-Chairs for the period 2025-2028. The Chilean Academy of Sciences offered to host the 2028 General Assembly, with no objection from any of the members. The following Academies were elected to the Executive Board of IANAS: National Academy of Sciences of Honduras, Caribbean Academy of Sciences, Brazilian Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Sciences of Bolivia, and the National Academy of Sciences of Argentina. The five elected Academies, together with the Mexican Academy of Sciences (host of the 2025 GA) and the Chilean Academy of Sciences (host of the 2028 GA), constitute the new Executive Committee. The Brazilian Academy of Sciences was also elected as the new host of IANAS Secretariat.

Thursday's session started with the review of IANAS Statutes and Rules of Procedures, which were drafted by a small working group and presented by Beatriz Caputto. The modifications on the Rules of Procedure were concerning the Statements. For section II, article 5, item 5.1 it was proposed to change "If the Executive Committee determines that IANAS shall issue a Statement in which it takes a public position on a scientific or societal problem of a global or regional nature, the Executive Committee shall appoint an ad hoc Statement Committee to prepare a draft text" to "If the Co-Chairs or the Executive Committee determine that IANAS should issue a Statement in which it takes a public position on a scientific or societal problem of a global or regional nature, the Co-Chairs could appoint an ad hoc Statement Committee to prepare a draft text". Then, on item 5.2 it was proposed to modify that the draft be circulated with a request for comments within 10 days instead of 14. The final change submitted was regarding item 5.3, where it was proposed that "The revised draft will then be circulated for approval: no response within a week will be considered as a vote of approval. If the draft receives the support of a majority of all IANAS member Academies, it will be made public as an IANAS statement" be replaced by "The revised draft will then be circulated for approval: no response within 5 days will be considered as a vote of approval. If the draft receives the support of two thirds of all IANAS member Academies, it will be made public as an IANAS statement".

Subsequently, the Statutes were also revised. The observation made was in regards to item VII. Statements and Reports, where it was proposed to replace the existing text with the following "IANAS may issue statements and reports on matters of interest to its members and to policymakers. Any statement issued under the auspices of IANAS must, therefore, be presented to the Executive Committee and then forwarded to all IANAS members for revision and comments within 10 days. The final version will be circulated to all Academies for approval by electronic vote. Votes must be received from members within 5 days. Academies not voting will be counted as affirmative votes. A two third majority is required for an IANAS statement to be released in the name of IANAS. At the discretion of the Co-Chairs, the Academies may be asked



to be listed as endorsers on the statement. The Executive Committee may appoint special committees to develop reports on science and science policy questions of interest to the governments of the Americas. Such committees may be appointed in response to external organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO or the Organization of the American States. Prior to release, the reports must be approved by the Executive Committee of IANAS".

After a lunch break, Karen Strier proposed and was supported to open the Executive Committee meeting with both outgoing and incoming members to include all academies present. She began by asking outgoing EC members to comment on their experience, and incoming EC members to comment on their goals for IANAS. Several other key points were discussed, focused on ways to strengthen IANAS and its programs. Dr. Juan Cristina (President of the National Academy of Sciences of Uruguay) raised the possibility of a new initiative, similar to the Amazon Initiative, only focused on the Antarctic. Dr. Karen Strier noted that it had always been the intent to start with the Amazon but expand to other biomes, and Dr. Cristina agreed to pursue the possibility of launching an IANAS Antarctic Initiative with the organizers of an upcoming conference at which he was attending. Members expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming conference in Chile and shared experiences from their academies. Bolivia highlighted the severe impact of wildfires on its Amazonian region, with a potential loss of 10 million hectares in 2025. The need for better communication between Academies and IANAS was emphasized and a potential newsletter was proposed in order to be able to reach out to young people. A new Communications Committee was proposed and Dr. Rodrigo Sacahui, Academic Secretary at the Academy of Medical, Physical, and Natural Sciences of Guatemala agreed to lead it. The open EC meeting participants also discussed the relationship with the International Science Council (ISC), considering the duplication of efforts and financial implications. A plan to redefine this relationship was suggested, involving their new leadership and potential funding opportunities, with Dr. Helena Groot (Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences) agreeing to initiate conversations with the new ISC director.

Following the open EC meeting and a short coffee break, a series of lectures were organized, starting with a conference by Dr. Blanca E. Jiménez titled "Safeguarding Water Quality to Ensure Sustainability". The second talk was given by Dr. William Lee, in relation to UNAM's commitment to advancing Latin American Scientific Development through cooperation.

The participants then took a short break to visit the botanical garden within UNAM's campus. Once finished with the tour, they returned to the seminar room to continue with the guest lectures.

These included an address by Dr. Juan Luis Díaz de León, Vice Minister from the Mexican Secretary of Science, Humanities, Technology, and Innovation, entitled "A new ministry that leverages S&T for Mexico's development and global competitiveness". The last lecture was given by Dr. María Elena Medina Mora, who talked about anxiety in the young population.

The General Assembly concluded with a guided tour through UNAM's Biodiversity Pavilion followed by a typical Mexican dinner at the hotel.