

Report from ISBR President

Joachim Schiemann

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

The 9th International Symposium on the Safety of Genetically Modified Organisms (ISBGMO) is not a starting point and not an endpoint – we are in the middle of a process to bring together biosafety researchers, risk assessors, risk managers, regulators and policy makers. Our biennial series of ISBGMOs was born in 1990. At the Saskatoon Symposium in 2000 we established a permanent group from the earlier ad hoc organization, and the International Society for Biosafety Research (ISBR) was legally incorporated. During the last years ISBR has undergone a process of consolidation, including the adoption of by-laws, the establishment of the ISBR website (www.isbr.info), an Executive Committee, an Advisory Board, and several Standing Committees. ISBR is sponsoring scientific publications such as *Environmental Biosafety Research*, the only international scientific journal entirely devoted to GMO biosafety research, which publishes original work describing advances in the field of biosafety research in the broadest sense.

At the 9th ISBGMO an ISBR membership meeting was performed for the first time. The membership meetings will become an inherent part of the forthcoming ISBGMOs, and the ISBR President will give a short report during the Banquet.

According to the by-laws, the Executive Committee consists of Elected Officers, chairs of Standing Committees and additional members. The Standing Committee chairs gave a short report during the membership meeting. President for the terms 2004-2006 and 2006-2008 is Joachim Schiemann (Germany). The President-Elect for the term 2006-2008 (automatically ISBR President for the term 2008-2010) will be elected by email ballot of ISBR members right after the 9th ISBGMO. Six candidates were suggested by ISBR members, three of them agreed to be nominated: Ervin Balazs (Hungary), Thomas Nickson (USA) and Patrick Ruedelsheim (Belgium). Immediate Past-President, chair of the Long-Term Planning Committee and Treasurer is Alan McHughen (USA). Patrick Ruedelsheim serves as Secretary. Sally McCammon (USA) chairs the Symposium Committee. Editor-in-Chief of *Environmental Biosafety Research* (EBR) is Mark Tepfer (Italy). Kornelia Smalla (Germany) chairs the Website Committee, Ervin Balazs the Election Committee. Terry Medley (USA) is

chair of the Advisory Board of ISBR. Additional members of the Executive Committee are Tae San Kim (Korea), Leda Mendonca-Hagler (Brazil), Thomas Nickson, Bao-Rong Lu (China), William Anderson (Canada), and Jeremy Sweet, who serves as the chair of the Scientific Programme Committee for the 10th ISBGMO.

Some highlights from the short reports given by the Standing Committee chairs during the ISBR membership meeting: (i) ISBR is operating on a stable financial basis. (ii) Environmental Biosafety Research, the official journal of ISBR, becomes more and more visible in the scientific community. (iii) First discussions on the programme of the 10th ISBGMO started already in Jeju. (iv) Our future activities will focus on improving ISBR membership, establishing a network of local ISBR representatives, intensifying the information exchange with organizations devoted to similar aims as ISBR. ISBR feels strong and competent enough to focus and strengthen the voice of GMO biosafety research.

The ISBR membership expresses its deepest thanks to the Symposium Committee and its chair Sally McCammon, to the Programme Committee chaired by Sally McCammon, and to the Local Organizing Committee chaired by Gil-Bok Lee.