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CO-OPERATION BETWEEN UNIDO AND
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AUTOMATIC CONTROL (IFAC)^{1/}

by

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1.

What is IFAC

The International Federation of Automatic Control (IFAC), founded in September 1957, is a multinational federation of National Member Organizations (NMO's), each one representing the engineering or scientific society concerned with automatic control in their country. At the moment there are 39 IFAC NMO's representing all the four corners of the Globe. IFAC has neither political nor economic aims.

The purpose of IFAC is to promote the science and technology of automatic control in the broadest sense in all systems whether, for example, engineering, physical, biological, social or economic in both theory and application. IFAC is also concerned with the impact of automatic control on society. During the past few years IFAC has also become deeply interested in developing countries' problems and is attempting to spread its activities in these.

According to Article 3 of the Constitution, IFAC is to promote the science of automatic control through

- 1) the interchange and circulation of information on automatic control activities in cooperation with national and other international organizations
- 2) international congresses
- 3) such other means as may be considered desirable, as for example, publications.

International Congresses of IFAC are held every three years. Between congresses, IFAC sponsors many symposia and workshops covering particular aspects of automatic control.

IFAC publications include proceedings of IFAC congresses and symposia, monographs as well as brochures of particular interest, such as guidelines for authors and session chairmen, for organizers of symposia and congresses etc.

The Federation plays an active role in public affairs, making its broad technical expertise available to the United Nations family and other international and regional organizations. IFAC maintains technical liaison with agencies, such as the Office for Science and Technology of the United Nations, and it is ready to nominate representatives to serve as advisers and consultants on a task basis.

2. What IFAC can do

After this general introduction of IFAC, we can have a look at the contributions IFAC has made and can make towards the first objective of this meeting : to mobilize national and international resources for the rapid industrialization of developing countries, as called for by the Lima declaration.

The desirability of extending activities to developing countries was discussed within IFAC already in the nineteesixties but this discussion remained on a theoretical level till 1971 when Algeria became member of IFAC and immediately made a proposal for a conference to be held in Algiers on the subject "Systems Approaches to Developing Countries". This proposal was approved by the IFAC Executive Council in Paris in 1972 and the preparations for this conference were immediately begun, with the International Federation of Operational Research Societies (IFORS) as co-sponsor.

This IFAC-IFORS Conference on Systems Approaches to Developing Countries was successfully held in Algiers in the Palais des Nations on May 28...31, 1973, under the High Patronage of the Government of Algeria, and with representatives of UNIDO, UNESCO, and the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) attending. There were 362 participants from 25 countries and the results of the conference indicated clearly the necessity of this type of conference (Conference Report attached).

The Algiers Conference was the first experience in IFAC of an event devoted to the interests of developing countries. The success of the meeting showed that more such meetings are necessary but at the same time it became clear that if future meetings are to reach their full potential, engineers and specialists from developing countries will have to supply more initiative and more leadership in the planning of the technical programmes. This meant that the representatives of developing countries were to have active roles in IFAC affairs, and, therefore, IFAC immediately after the Algiers Conference set up an Ad Hoc Committee composed of engineers from developing countries interested in these problems and willing to work in IFAC.

This Ad Hoc Committee was named DECOG (Developing Countries Group) and has since worked effectively and studied the following problems:

- what kind of conferences the developing countries want and need
- what are the most important problems to be studied in future conferences
- how to get the developing countries take an active role in IFAC
- what organizational arrangements are most suitable for this purpose.

The intention is now to form the DECOG into a permanent IFAC Technical Committee in 1978 at the IFAC Congress in Helsinki, thus formalizing its existence.

So far DECOG has performed much useful work, and as a result of this a new Conference on Systems Approach for Development is to be held in Cairo, Egypt on November 26...29, 1977, again in cosponsorship with IFORS. The aim of this Conference is to further the development of the methodological and conceptual work so much needed in developing countries and to expose some successful projects and programs in the field of applications of systems analysis and systems management approaches. At the same time new problems will be examined and analyzed. The conference is expected to be successful and DECOG is going to use the experiences obtained in Cairo in planning their next similar IFAC event.

3. What UNIDO could do

Getting to the second objective of this meeting, the type of cooperation IFAC would expect from UNIDO in achieving the objectives of the Lima declaration and in improving its activities in developing countries, a long-planned IFAC activity would be to organize control engineering seminars in selected developing countries. Only few of these countries are members of IFAC and these seminar "crusades" are meant to reach these non-member countries that usually do not send any participants to IFAC events. This plan implies the formation of a team of automatic control specialists who would be prepared and willing to spend some time travelling in selected areas and lecturing in their industrial centers to representatives of the local industry. If successful, these seminars would then be repeated in other areas.

Here it is of highest importance to find suitable lecturers who are really ready and willing to spend their time in travelling to developing countries lecturing there to local industrial people. Having found these people IFAC will face the problem of financing these travelling seminars, i.e. the subsistence and travel of the seminar team and surely some compensation for their efforts as well. IFAC hopes that UNIDO would be willing to consider this question of financing these seminars, even possibly in cooperation with other organizations. At the moment IFAC does not see any means of its own to finance the travelling seminars. Also, financing the travelling of the representatives of developing countries to various IFAC events means a problem in many cases and should also be taken into consideration.

IFAC is both interested in and willing to organize symposia and congresses and to arrange travelling seminars in developing countries. In all cases the primary prerequisite is information. This information, surely available from UNIDO, would include information on:

- Interested countries
- organizations within these countries willing to cooperate with IFAC
- key people to be contacted and their addresses
- subject areas and problems to be discussed in each case, etc.

In other words, IFAC would very much like to be in the position of receiving relevant information from UNESCO to enable IFAC to plan their operations in the future. Correspondingly, IFAC should like to feed their information back to UNIDO in appropriate cases, i.e. where the field information would serve UNIDO's purposes in planning further measures to facilitate the industrialization of the developing countries.

Finally, IFAC is expecting UNIDO to make use of their consultative status and stands ready to offer their services in supplying advisors and consultants to UNIDO.

Through the activity of its 13 Technical Committees IFAC thoroughly represents the wide area of automatic control applications and theory in the industrial world of today. The channels provided by the Committee members and other IFAC officers are readily available for UNIDO to assist in finding and selecting the best experts for each particular problem in developing countries.

4. Cooperation with other NGO's

IFAC is a member of Five International Associations Coordinating Committee (FIACC), consisting of:

International Association for Mathematics and Computers in Simulation (IMACS, formerly AICA)

International Federation of Automatic Control (IFAC)

International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP)

International Federation of Operational Research Societies (IFORS)

International Measurement Confederation (IMEKO)

There exists a very close cooperation between the sister federations. They often cosponsor each others events, exchange information, and effectively coordinate their events as to avoid duplication of activities.

The present area of cooperation within FIACC could possibly be widened to include, for instance, the aforementioned travelling seminars. If these were planned to cover the whole field from measurement and simulation to automatic control and computerization of industrial processes, the effectiveness of these seminars against the costs could be increased enormously. This proposal has already been made within FIACC and the outcome depends clearly on the financial possibilities.

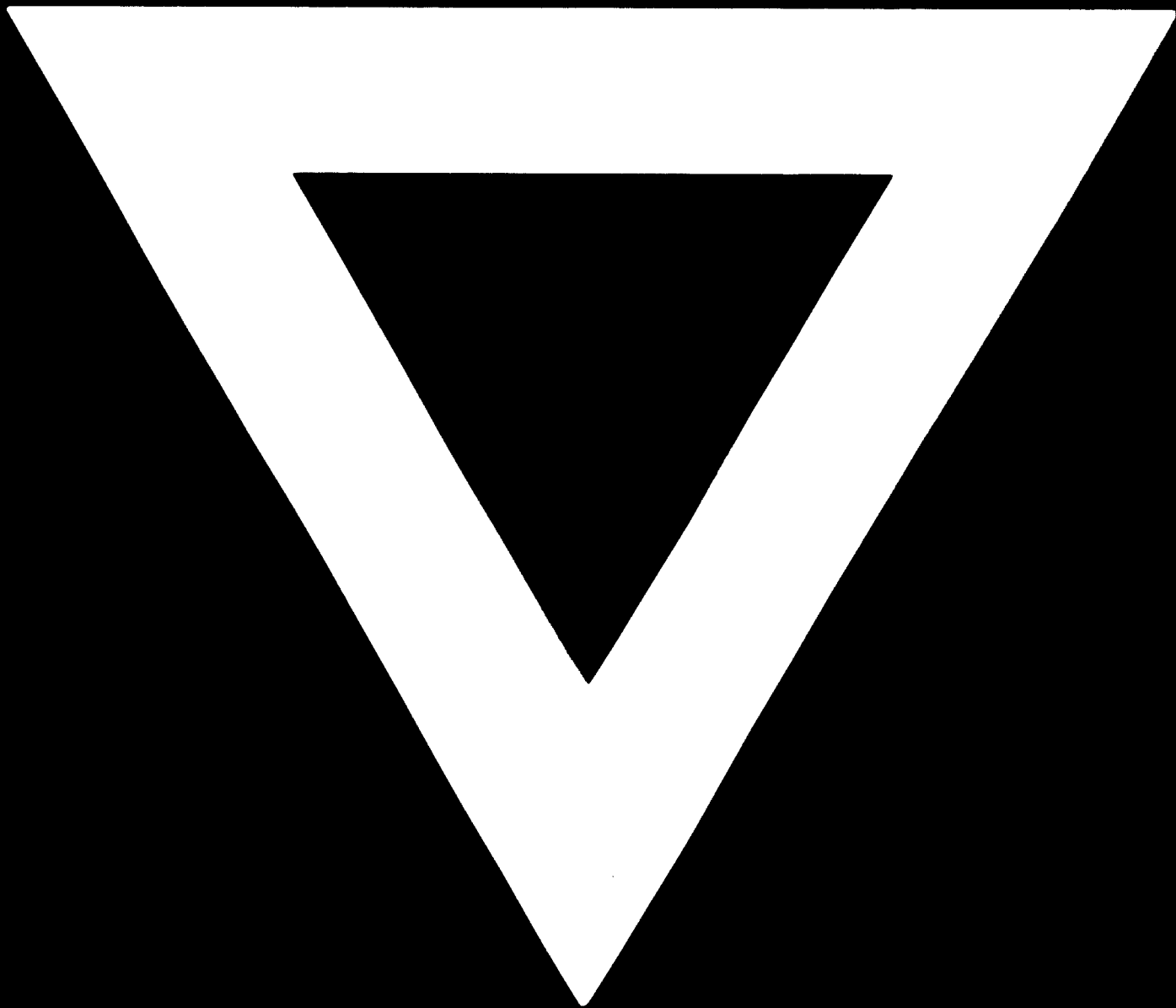
Neither IFAC nor FIACC have anything against widening the cooperation to include further organizations provided, however, that these further contacts are meaningful in content and purpose.

5. Summary

IFAC has a very long experience in organizing symposia, conferences, and other events. It has organized events in developing countries and is deeply interested in continuing this activity. In doing this IFAC expects support, advice, and aid from UNIDO and is willing to help and assist UNIDO in their important work. IFAC has very good relations and cooperation with its sister organizations and is willing to extend its cooperation further.



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