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*for a sustainable future*

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**FINANCIAL REPORT**

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**DE LA FACULTAD DE MEDICINA**

**UNIVERSIDAD DE CHILE**

**Independencia 1027 - Casilla 70086 - Santiago 7 - Chile**

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***II Coordination Meeting of the Latina American  
and Caribbean Focal Points of the ICGEB Member Countries***

**Santiago de Chile, November 15th, 1993**

ACCOUNT**I. POCKET MONEY PROVIDED TO THE INVITED PARTICIPANTS**

1. Dr. Augusto F. García - Argentina	335
2. Dr. Eduardo H. Charreau - Argentina	35
3. Dr. José Gino Aguirre - Bolivia	335
4. Dr. Luiz Antonio Barreto de Castro - Brazil	35
5. Dr. Rafael Aramendis - Colombia	335
6. Dr. Gabriel Macaya - Costa Rica	335
7. Dr. Angel C. Aguilera - Cuba	335
8. Dr. Washington Benitez - Ecuador	435
9. Lic. Clara Moran - Mexico	335
10. Dr. Jorge Arevalo - Peru	335
11. Dr. Brahma Narine - Trinidad y Tobago (including partial airfare)	835
12. Dr. Diogenes Infante - Venezuela	335
13. Dr. Oscar Grau - PRB PNUD/UNESCO/ONUDI	335
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>US\$ 4.355</b>

(See enclosure I. - 1 to 13)

**II. AIRFLIGHT TICKETS**

1. Dr. Augusto F. García - Argentina	258
2. Dr. José Gino Aguirre - Bolivia	434
3. Dr. José Gino Aguirre - Bolivia	219
4. Dr. Luiz Antonio Barreto de Castro - Brazil	846
5. Dr. Rafael Aramendis - Colombia	819
6. Dr. Gabriel Macaya - Costa Rica	855
7. Dr. Angel C. Aguilera - Cuba	986
8. Dr. Washington Benitez - Ecuador	796
9. Lic. Clara Moran - Mexico	1.020
10. Dr. Jorge Arevalo - Peru	438
11. Dr. Diogenes Infante - Venezuela	767
12. Dr. Oscar Grau - PRB PNUD/UNESCO/ONUDI	283
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>US\$ 7.721</b>

(See Enclosure II - 1 to 12)

**III. HOTEL**

1. Diogenes Infante  
(Dr. Infante was robbed of his money in Santiago and for that reason his hotel bill had to be paid)

US 165

(See Enclosure III)

**IV. ADMINISTRATION**

1. International Communications  
Faxes, Phone, etc 749
2. Bank Charges, Fees for preparation  
of reports 420
3. Photocopies, Transparencies, Slides, etc 400
4. Files, Identification Labels, Targets,  
Coffee, mailing, courier, etc 190

SUB-TOTAL US\$ 1,759

(See Enclosure IV - 1 to 4)

TOTAL OF EXPENSES US\$ 14.000

Received - 1st Payment of Contract: US\$ 11.200Balance to be received US\$ 2.800

Jorge E. Allende

Santiago, December 9th, 1993

**REPORT ON THE II COORDINATION MEETING  
OF THE LATIN AMERICAN ICGB MEMBER COUNTRIES**

Santiago, Chile, November 16th, 1993

**I. PARTICIPANTS**

- *Dr. Augusto Garcia (Argentina)*
- *Dr. Eduardo Charreau (Argentina)*
- *Dr. Gino Aguirre (Bolivia)*
- *Dr. Luiz Barreto de Castro (Brazil)*
- *Dr. Rafael Aramendis (Colombia)*
- *Dr. Gabriel Macays (Costa Rica)*
- *Dr. Angel Aguilera (Cuba)*
- *Dr. Washington Benitez (Ecuador)*
- *Lic. Clara Morda (Guatemala)*
- *Dr. Jorge Arevalo (Peru)*
- *Dr. Brechma Nasine (Trinidad)*
- *Dr. Diogenes Infante (Venezuela)*
- *Dr. Jorge E. Allende (Chile)*
- *Dr. Oscar Grau (Regional Program of Biotechnology UNDP/UNESCO/ONUDD)*

**II. AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES**

**AGENDA**

- 1- Possible collaboration projects in research which each country with an Affiliated Centre could submit to the ICGB
- 2- Activities of the ICGB in Latin America. Opportunities to develop these activities for 1994.
- 3- Coordination of ICGB activities with the ones sponsored by other international institutions.
- 4- Priorities of Latin America inside the ICGB.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To exchange information and to promote the cooperation of Latin American laboratories in the Collaborative Research Projects of the ICGEB to be submitted before December 31st, 1988.
2. To stimulate complementation of the biotechnology facilities existing in the Latin American Affiliated Centres of the ICGEB (Microsequencing facility, monoclonal antibodies facilities, pilot-plant facilities, transgenic animal facilities, courses, workshops).
3. Discussion of the total participation of the Latin American countries and other activities of the ICGEB (grants, courses, bioinformatic net).
4. To facilitate the participation of the ICGEB focal points in the III Latin American Congress of Biotechnology to get a global overview of research in biotechnology being done in Latin America.

### III. SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS

#### a) Remarks of each country representative

All the participants took the floor to make statements about their respective countries participation in the ICGEB, their future activities in biotechnology and interest in regional collaboration.

Some of their comments were the following:

- *Dr. Garcia and Charreau (Argentina).* Their country is actively participating in collaborative research projects. They are committed to support the ICGEB as long as their contribution is at a reasonable level.

They expressed that the Argentinian National Biotechnology Program includes priority areas in Human Health (vaccines, diagnostics and production of reagents); and in Agriculture (animal health, pest control, transgenic plants, phytopathogen diagnosis, and plant improvement).

- *Dr. Gino Aguirre (Bolivia).* He stated that Bolivia has had very limited participation in the ICGEB but is interested in biotechnology, especially the area of agricultural biotechnology. They are participating in the FAO biotechnology regional program. He pleaded for more integration and coordination of activities among international agencies.

He stated that Bolivia's priorities were in plant tissue culture (protoplast fusion), extraction of natural products for aromatic plants, diagnosis of phytopathogens. Also he said that highest priority should be given to the training of human resources and the establishment of minimal infrastructure.

*Dr. Luis Barreto de Castro (Brazil).* He stated that Brazil has been participating in the ICGEB although the financial benefits that his country receives from the Centre are marginal compared to the internal investment in biotechnology.

He mentioned that one of the major problems his country sees for the future of the ICGEB is the failure to attract other industrial countries to participate.

He stated that the Program for the Development of Science and Technology (PADCT) has set a number a priority areas such as research in endemic diseases, vaccines, soy-bean production and innovation in food industry.

He stated the need to have meetings to organize collaborative research projects for ICGEB, and also the possibility of using ongoing CRP projects to link up in networking.

*Dr. Rafael Aramendis (Colombia).* The Colombian delegate handed out copies of official documents (Gaceta del Congreso) that informed that the Colombian Senate had approved and ratified the ICGEB Statutes in its session of June 1, 1993. The President of Colombia will be signing the ratification which would be sent immediately to the UN Headquarters in New York. Dr. Aramendis said that as soon as that filing is accomplished, Colombia would also notify their agreement that the Statutes should enter into force. Colombia also informed the participants of its decision to request the establishment of an ICGEB Affiliated Centre in that country.

Dr. Aramendis informed the group that his country had approved a national biotechnology program that has a budget of 2 million dollars that is being spent in agriculture (58%), Health (28,2% and Industry (16%). He expressed special interest in biological control of insect pests, plant diagnostics, genetic conservation of biodiversity in vitro and transgenic plants of coffee, tobacco, potato. Also he expressed the need to do research in "Tristeza" Virus that attacks citrus trees.

*Dr. Gabriel Macaya (Costa Rica).* He stated that his country was just becoming active in the ICGEB, having recently attained the status of an Affiliated Centre. He also informed that the ratification of the ICGEB Statutes was in the legislative agenda of his country's parliament.

He stated that Costa Rica is concentrating in 3 main areas: Plant viruses, molecular biodiversity of plants, and human and animal genetics. In plant viruses, they concentrate in the fine streaks virus of corn, in the gemini virus that attacks melons and in the virus that causes the white leaf in rice.

In plant biodiversity, they are working with forest trees but would like to participate in a regional genomic mapping of *Fuscoelus vulgaris*.

In the area of human genetics, they are interested in the genes responsible for a specific type of deafness found in Costa Rica and in inheritable manic depression.

*Dr. Angel Aguilera (Cuba).* He stated that his country has been increasing its participation in the ICGEB. Cuba's position is to emphasize regional integration and collaboration.

He stated that the main objectives of Cuban biotechnology continue to be in health, industry and agriculture but there is a rising concern about environmental contamination. Specifically they are now interested in drafting collaborative research projects in the field of the gemini viruses and in the protein structure of protease inhibitors. Also they are interested in transgenic corn and potatoes resistant to insects and fungal infections, fine mapping of the meningococcus antigens and endotoxin shock factors.

They are interested in organizing a course in transgenic plants.

*Dr. Washington Benitez (Ecuador).* He stated that his country's CONACYT had been re-examining the involvement of Ecuador in the ICGEB, reaching the conclusion that it is worthwhile to participate. They are looking into the matter of ratification.

They have given priority to projects in the areas of fermentations, the use of lignocellulose residues, some tropical parasite diseases such as Leishmaniasis and cirrosis. In the plant biotechnology area, they are specially interested in potato viruses.

Dr. Benitez stated that the ICGEB should review its policies so that more support is granted to the less developed member countries. He stressed the need for human resource training and for improving the infrastructure in equipment and bibliography.

*Lic. Clara Morán (Mexico).* The Mexican government is interested in the ICGEB and is willing to increase its participation. However, it is greatly concerned about the financial commitments that the autonomous centre will require of the participating countries and for that reason it has not notified.

Mexico is considering the following research projects for the ICGEB

- 1)  $\gamma$ -amino butyric acid and its role in the stress response to heat in *Aspergillus nidulans* and in *Arabidopsis thaliana*.  
Collaboration between groups in the Institute of Cuernavaca and the University of Chile.
- 2) Bioengineering strategies for the development of highly productive fermentations involving viscous bra....  
Institute of Biotechnology, UNAM, Mexico and Dept. of Chemical Engineering, Tianjin University, China.
- 3) Molecular factors involved in plant-defense responses.  
CINVESTAV, Irapuato, Mexico and Catholic University, Chile.
- 4) Molecular Characterization of Gemini Virus that infect Tomatoes in Cuba and Mexico.  
CINVESTAV, Irapuato, Mexico and Centro Ingeniería Genética y Biotecnología, Cuba.
- 5) Study of the Effect of different plant proteins on the Growth of some Phytopathogen Fungi.  
CINVESTAV, Irapuato, Mexico and University of Fortaleza, Brazil.



*Dr. Jorge Arevalo (Peru).* The participation of Peru in the ICGEB has been marginal but the present authorities are interested in exploring the possibility of increasing this participation.

Dr. Arevalo stated that the highest priority for Peru is the training of human resources in biotechnology. Regarding the research topics, he specified pharmacology of natural products, diagnosis of infectious diseases, bacterial leaching of minerals, and plant improvement.

*Dr. Brahma Narine (Trinidad).* The English-speaking countries of the Caribbean are interested in the ICGEB but have problems of language and contacts in establishing collaboration with other member countries.

Dr. Narine informed that his country is specially interested in projects dealing with micropropagation of bananas, pineapples and flowers. Also there is need of projects in biological pest control, specially of sugar cane pests, as well as in biotechnology of petroleum. There is also interest in the study of biodiversity of mangroves.

Trinidad also requires human resources and for that reason would like the ICGEB projects to find stipend for researchers and major equipment.

*Dr. Diogenes Infante (Venezuela).* Venezuela is participating actively in the ICGEB. The activity of the Centre considered most important is the CRP's.

One of the major projects carried out in Venezuela has to do with the preparation of blood derivatives.

There is another project in the finding of genes responsible for wildtype resistance to Gemini virus that attack tomato.

In the future they are interested in acquiring the capacity to transform solarwax and coffee plants.

Also they are interested in the molecular characterization of the hepatitis C virus and studies on the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* topoisomerase.

*Dr. Jorge E. Allende (Chile).* Chile has been participating very actively in the ICGEB. Chile has been prevented from "Notifying" due to the "Reservation" expressed in its ratification of the Statutes. The Chilean government, however, considers that the country has ratified the statutes and that it is ready to have full membership in the new autonomous body.

Chile has invested significant amounts of funds in biotechnology, especially using an Interamerican Bank Loan. It has funded the creation of 3 core facilities: one is synthesis and sequencing of oligonucleotides and peptides, another in the preparation of monoclonal antibodies and a third in spectroscopy methods. In addition, it is funding projects in plant and aquatic biotechnology.

For future ICGEB projects, Chile is proposing projects on:

- Plant Peroxidases
- Detection of Metal Contaminants
- Renewal of some the previous CRP's.

*Dr. Oscar Grau (Regional Program of Biotechnology UNDP/UNESCO/ONUDI).* Dr. Grau expressed the need to integrate and coordinate activities of the different agencies. He expressed that the Regional Program could finance meetings that may serve to generate CRP's for the ICGEB.

b) Discussion about the financing of the ICGEB.

During the meeting there arose a general but informal discussion about the future financing of the ICGEB. The opinions of the different representatives can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The Latin American countries could not cover the amounts that would be apportioned by using the UN scale of assessments to finance 50% of the budget of the ICGEB.
- 2) The amounts become more reasonable if the amount to be financed by the non-host member countries is limited to 20% of the ICGEB budget, an amount that would cover most of the CRP's, fellowships, courses and workshops.
- 3) Member countries should be encouraged to contribute additional resources to the ICGEB by funding international collaborative activities in their own Affiliated Centres.

These opinions arose from the discussion of a formal Brazilian proposal presented by Dr. Luiz Barreto de Castro.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The II Coordination Meeting was considered by those attending to have been extremely useful as a possibility to discuss common interests in the participation of Latin America in the ICGEB. A recommendation was made to the ICGEB to continue to organize these meetings every two years.
2. It was recommended that the ICGEB organize workshops in some topics in which there are several CRP's already approved and which may serve to nucleate other projects. This recommendation is based on the idea that it is difficult to find a partner in another country and that CRP's that are already in execution could be easier to link to by new project initiatives. These workshops could only cost US\$5000.
3. The discussions of the II Coordination Meeting made it clear that there are several specific areas such as Gemini plant viruses, tristeza virus of citrus trees and biodiversity studies which are common priority of several of the countries of the region.
4. The Regional Program of Biotechnology was asked to provide the focal points with an inventory of biotechnology research projects of all the countries of the region and to support small workshops designed to generate new projects for the ICGEB.
5. It was agreed to recommend that the ICGEB provide small research projects to those countries that have not yet achieved the level of an Affiliated Centre.
6. It was recommended that the ICGEB create several bioinformatic research nodes in Latin America, accepting the offers of several centres that have adequate infrastructure to serve that whole country and possibly neighboring countries. The ideal situation would be to have one node per member country.
7. The focal points agreed to set a deadline of October 31 for the CRP projects of 1994 so that they could exchange the information and possible collaboration could be established between projects in similar areas.