Conference Call

Bringing IUPAC to Southern Africa Division II promotes IUPAC in Africa by meeting in Botswana and co-sponsoring the 2nd Symposium on Organic and Inorganic Chemistry, Southern Africa.

by Lars Öhrström and Ishmael Masesane

Scientists seldom meet outside the high-income countries without an explicit purpose to promote development or solve problems in low- and middle-income countries. While such meetings may serve a good purpose, the very format and objective do not create a platform where all scientists can connect and discuss as equals. Moreover, this geographical restraint of the regular conference circuit also means that low- and middle-income countries to a large extent, and especially in Africa, often miss out on this both formal and informal scientific exchange of ideas and information.

Decisions on where to hold conferences and symposia are largely up to individual groups of researchers and seldom guided by any overall policy aimed at a geographical diversity. This is therefore an arena where individuals, or groups of individuals, can make a difference and promote a truly global scientific culture [1].

IUPAC's technical divisions meet every second year under the larger IUPAC umbrella of the General

*This stamp was issued in 1974 for the 10th anniversary of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.
(Thanks to Daniel Rabinovich)*

Assembly during the World Chemical Congress, and in the intervening year an “off-year” meeting is organized by the divisions themselves. The Inorganic Chemistry Division had for some years discussed whether it would be feasible to hold one of these “off-year” meetings somewhere in Africa, and the right conditions materialized in 2018.

Hosted by the University of Botswana (UB) in the capital Gaborone, the Division first assembled for an informal evening meeting with the Head of the Chemistry Department, Prof Ishmael Masesane, followed by the regular off-year meeting from 2-3 October, including a visit to the chemistry department facilities, and lunch with faculty members.

As the division meeting was concluding, with some matters postponed to a break-out session with participation from potential new IUPAC-membership countries Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, the speakers of the following days upcoming symposium started to arrive. Consequently, an informal get-together session with the speakers and the local organizing committee was held in the evening and the guests were welcomed by the conference co-chairs Ishmael Masesane and Lars Öhrström.

Then, early morning the next day (because that is how to organize things in a semi-arid hot climate) the 2nd Symposium on Organic and Inorganic Chemistry, Southern Africa was inaugurated in the new conference center just beside University of Botswana's main campus in the center of Gaborone. The importance with which the local UB community regarded this event was emphasized in the inaugural speech delivered by the acting Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Dr. Oathokwa Nkomazana. She had to step in at the very last minute for the Vice Chancellor, but

2nd Symposium on Organic and Inorganic Chemistry, Southern Africa

Organizing bodies: University of Botswana, IUPAC Division II, Swedish Research Links – Swedish Science Council via a network grant.

Additional sponsoring organizations: University of California –Berkeley, USA, through the Berkeley Global Science Institute; Chalmers University of Technology through the Area of Advance Energy; IUPAC through the Financial Support for Conferences in Scientifically Emerging Regions; University of Helsinki

Nations present (by residence and origin): Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Ghana, Sweden, Finland, Spain, Italy, Germany, Slovakia, USA, Peru, Jordan, Singapore.

Attendance: Around 60

Venue: University of Botswana Conference Center in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana. With about 500 000 inhabitants it is the country's largest city with around 20 % of the total population.

www.chalmers.se/en/conference/Organic_Inorganic_Chemistry/Pages/default.aspx

nevertheless delivered an inspiring talk about IUPAC and our goals and ambitions; even more impressive as Dr. Nkomazana's comes from the UB School of Medicine.

Other memorable talks of the morning's open session were Prof. Omar Yaghi's (Univ. California – Berkeley, USA) on "An Obsession with Science Discovery" and the "Philatelic Tour of Chemistry in Africa" from Div. II project manager Prof. Daniel Rabinovich (Univ. North Carolina, Charlotte, USA). Daniel impressed the audience when he showed a stamp featuring the first buildings on the UB Gaborone campus from the mid 1960s [2].

The announcement of the Periodic Table of Young Chemist awards for Mo, W, Te, and Sr was another point that briefly put Botswana in the limelight of the world-wide chemical community. It was presided by IUPAC Executive Committee member Prof. Javier Martinez and Chemical Society of Botswana president Dr Florence Nareetsile. This short event was broadcast live on IUPAC's Facebook page [3].

But the real highlight were the brilliant talks given by the young emerging scholars from southern Africa, among them Dr Banothile Makhubela (Univ. of Johannesburg, South Africa) and Dr Gift Mehlana (Midlands State Univ., Gweru, Zimbabwe. 2017 Green Chemistry for Life IUPAC/UNESCO/PhosAgro grantee). Also, the poster session had several high-quality contributions.

A break-out session of the division meeting was also held in the evening of the first symposium day with invited observers from Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The division had postponed items dealing with reports from the various IUPAC organizations, and

Top: Attendants off the 2nd Symposium on Organic and Inorganic Chemistry, Southern Africa in Gaborone, 4-5 October 2018. First row 2nd from left is Chemical Society of Botswana president Dr Florence Nareetsile and in the centre we find conference co-chair professor Prof Ishmael Masesane. Directly above: Break-out session from the Div II off-year meeting. Standing, from the left: Daniel Rabinovich, Olayinka Oyetunji (Botswana), Gift Mehlana (Zimbabwe), Lars Öhrström, Javier García Martínez (Spain), Milan Drábik (Slovakia), and Veikko Uahengo (Namibia). Sitting, Lidia Armelao (Italy), Thomas Walczyk (Switzerland), Markku Leskelä (Finland), and Florence Nareetsile (Botswana)

the general project discussion and presentation. This gave the observers a good insight into IUPAC activities and the potential benefits of membership.

The meeting also gave a rare opportunity for chemistry BSc and MSc students from an African country to meet and talk to world leading scholars in the discipline. Networking was of course extensive also among students, and we are likely to see new collaborations emerging from this meeting. Interestingly, feedback received by the organiser indicate that intra-African

networking was also important, as it's not guaranteed that chemists in neighbouring countries actually have many opportunities to meet.

For the local chemists, the symposium offered an opportunity to hone their skills of how to organize and run an international chemistry event. The symposium was particularly beneficiary to the graduate students of the University of Botswana who acted as ushers and interacted with renowned chemists from all over the world. Their attendance of the symposium helped them to appreciate the role that chemistry research plays in everyday necessities such as water availability, healthcare, and food. Together with participants from other countries in Africa, local chemists were left with a better understanding of IUPAC and its activities.

With ambitions to work more with Africa and have more African NAOs, this was a unique chance for IUPAC people at different levels to see and experience Africa, and African science, with both its challenges and opportunities.

References

1. Lars Öhrström, Peter Weiderud, Morsy Abu Youssef, and Omar M. Yaghi, "Global Engagement in Science: The University's Fourth Mission?" *Science & Diplomacy*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (June 2018). <http://www.sciencediplomacy.org/perspective/2018/global-engagement-in-science-universitys-fourth-mission>
2. The University of Botswana, popularly known as UB, was established in 1982 as the first higher education institution in the country. The Gaborone campus, however is older as it was one of the sites of the university system known as UBBS, or the University of Bechuanaland (Botswana), Basotoland (Lesotho), and Swaziland; which was founded, pre-independence, in 1964.
3. Available also on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6454604653307916288>

Chemistry in Peru

by Olga R. Lock Sing

CIbQ Organizing Board – President

Under the sponsorship of the Peruvian Chemical Society (SQP), two conferences took place in Lima-Peru, between 16 and 19 October 2018. These conferences were the **IV Iberoamerican Congress** and the **XXIX Peruvian Congress of Chemistry**. This joint event is referred as ClbQ (from its acronym in Spanish). The ClbQ was organized to coincide with the 85th anniversary of SQP's foundation. Details of the ClbQ event were publicized through its web page www.spperu.org.pe/congreso-2018/.

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The event was sponsored by universities like PUCP, UNMSM, UNI, UN Agraria La Molina, UNAP, UNSAAC, and, UTEC; professional associations like CIP, CQP, CPQF; associations and institutes like CONCYTEC, FLAQ, IPPN, IUPAC, ACS, ANC; and, the direct sponsorship of CONCYTEC/FONDECYT, Hersil Laboratories, HACSA, CLARIANT, among others.

Attendance included about 400 participants: industrial chemists, researchers, academics, as well as graduate and undergraduate students from the country and abroad. A total of 220 summaries were submitted for publication.

IUPAC participated by providing six grants for Young Scientists, and the American Chemical Society provided awards to three investigations submitted to the Ernest E. Eliel Award, as well as covering the registration of 10 undergraduate and graduate Chemistry students. All guidelines, submissions, and results have been publicized in the ClbQ web page.

The ClbQ was organized in different types of forums, including presentations in different Chemistry areas (aka Academic Sessions), Symposiums, Round Tables, and Courses.

Areas covered in the Academic Sections included Education, History, and Philosophy of the Chemistry Science; Chemistry as a Basic Science (Analytical, Inorganic, Organic, Physical Chemistry, Theoretical, and Computational Chemistry); Chemistry towards Life Sciences (Medicinal, Food and Functional Foods, Biochemistry, Toxicology); Environmental and Green Chemistry; Materials Chemistry; Natural Products Chemistry; and Chemical Engineering.

Participants offering presentations in these areas included 25 professionals from South American countries like Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Uruguay, as well as participants from the United States, Spain, France, and Switzerland. Peru was represented by 20 researchers and academics. Also, other professionals from the industry and academia were invited to present in the four Symposiums (28), four Round Tables (16), and three Courses (11).

The Symposiums addressed current topics like; Biodiversity: It's Study and Sustainable Use; The Teaching of Chemistry: Vision, Delivery, and Accomplishments; Environmental and Green Chemistry; and Applications of Nanomaterials.

The Round Tables were aimed at providing a view of the state of the art of different industries in the country, including: Technological Advances in Mining, Hydrocarbons, and Energy in Peru; Innovations in the Industries of Textile, Cosmetic, Paints, and Adhesives;