

## International Committee

Minutes of the Meetings 7-15 August 2022  
Yogyakarta, Indonesia and on Zoom

Present:

Benjamin Burton	President	ab@maths.uq.edu.au	Australia	2021-2024
Sun Teck Tan	Host 2021	tanst@comp.nus.edu.sg	Singapore	2016-2022
Yugo Kartono Isal	Host 2022	yugo@cs.ui.ac.id	Indonesia	2018-2023
Ágnes Erdősné Németh	Host 2023	erdosne@njszt.hu	Hungary	2019-2024
Eslam Wageed	Host 2024	eslamwageed@gmail.com	Egypt	2020-2025
Jhonathan Castro	Host 2025	jhtan@jhtan.com	Bolivia	2022-2026
Eduard Kalinichenko	Elected	eduardische@gmail.com	Latvia	2018-2022
Mile Jovanov	Elected	mile.jovanov@gmail.com	Macedonia	2019-2023
Ricardo Anido	Elected	ranido@unicamp.br	Brazil	2021-2022
Catherine Espinoza	Elected	catespinozar@gmail.com	Chile	2021-2023
Araz Yusubov	Elected	ayusubov@ada.edu.az	Azerbaijan	2021-2024
Eljakim Schrijvers	Treasurer	eschrijvers@eljakim.nl	The Netherlands	
J.P. Pretti	Secretary	jpretti@uwaterloo.ca	Canada	

### Welcome

Ben gave a brief welcome to Mile and Araz (online) and the others on location in Yogyakarta. Jhonathan will attend IC meetings this week if/when the GA ratifies Bolivia as the host of IOI 2025.

### Apologies

There were no apologies.

### Confirmation of Agenda and Meetings

The agenda was confirmed.

### Previous Minutes

Ben noted that work on previous minutes is still in progress. He said current drafts list names with votes and wondered if this should become standard practice moving forward. Concern was expressed about this restricting IC members' ability to vote freely because of requirements imposed on them by their government or other authorities. Others preferred the transparency of recording how each member votes. It was suggested that this would help the GA at election time. No decision was made but IC agreed to continue this discussion.

### Urgent decisions regarding IOI 2022

In response to a question about handling positive COVID tests and other possible implications of the pandemic, Yugo indicated that a COVID task force is prepared for the unexpected and will constantly monitor the situation. Discussion ensued about the frequency of testing and quarantine protocols.

### Report by President

Ben listed four items that he would like the IC to consider and discuss, even if only informally for now:

1. The impact of the pandemic on IOI 2023.
2. Voting reform for IC and GA in the presence of more than two options.
3. Polling "the GA" between IOIs which would require identifying a long-term contact for each country.
4. EDI training materials which are still in the process of being created.

## **Report by Secretary**

J.P. reported that the OIOI continued to meet monthly. The IOI 2022 hosts joined the conversation on a few occasions to receive and give updates as well as have a dialog about the upcoming event.

Typical secretarial business was conducted including the setting of agendas for GA and IC, calls for nominations for IC and ISC and expressions of interest for ITC, and responses to miscellaneous inquiries.

Standard replies were given to membership inquiries. It was noted that research will be required in one case in light of Statute S2.1 of the IOI regulations. For another case, J.P. gave some history and an update on the extensive communication (by e-mail and on Zoom) with a potential new country but indicated that he still feels insufficient information about the required criteria has been received. Details about recent national competitions are unknown. All received documentation will be forwarded to the IC and unless anyone objects, J.P. will reply to the interested party that the IC is unable to accept their membership until the required information is received.

## **IC Voting Rules and Procedures**

Ben suggested we use Ricardo's software on a trial basis this week for all votes with more than two options. Ricardo suggested that another test be conducted first. IC agreed to this at the next meeting.

## **Finances and Budget**

Kim noted that 2021 numbers were sent to IC a few days ago. The format has changed because they are now done using an external party. This is happening because of the money received by Huawei and because it is common practice in other organizations.

Kim reminded IC that the book year used to be from the start of IOI to the start of the next IOI, but this has changed to the calendar year. This is now standard and yields years of equal lengths. It means that at IOI 2022, the GA will approve the 2021 report, a status update will be given for 2022 and the 2023 budget will be proposed for approval.

Kim mentioned that almost all countries participating online have paid their registration fees and many other countries have as well. He continues to work with countries that owe from past years. He noted that transfer fees sometimes leave a country in a debit or credit situation which is accounted for by adjusting their registration fee for the subsequent year.

Finally, Kim noted that the transfer of money from Huawei went smoothly and quickly. An amount was then transferred to Indonesia without much difficulty. Checks and balances are in place to account for the relatively large amount of money involved.

## **Sponsor Talks**

Ben said that leaders have wondered if sponsor talks are required or optional. Yugo said they are optional. Ben asked that this be made clear to everyone.

## **Prospective New Country**

Ben and J.P. announced that they just discovered that the previously discussed prospective new member delegation has shown up at the Hyatt asking to speak to Ben. Ben will provide answers. He will note that we denied their request to attend as observers (officially or unofficially) and J.P. denied their request for an appearance before IC made about one week before IOI 2022. Ben asked IC what should be done if they show up at the GA or other IOI events. Mile felt it would be okay for them to be present but not participate because they are here anyways. Nobody else shared this view. Eslam, Sun Teck and Ben all spoke to say that they felt it would be inappropriate because this specific request had already been requested and denied.

Agnes and Eslam then mentioned a few people who will be helping future IOIs that are present. Eduard noted

that the regulations say they can attend GA meetings provided they are invited by IC or the Chair. They will follow up with Brian, but the room did not express any concern about these people attending the GA to prepare for their future responsibilities. Ben asked that any other cases be emailed to the IC and if nobody objects, Brian can invite them to the GA.

### **Report on IOI 2023 – Hungary**

Agnes provided an update on IOI 2023. The highlights are:

- There is a new design. The 120th anniversary of John von Neumann's birth will be celebrated and his now 80yr old daughter will attend.
- The dates for the 2023 winter meetings (20-24 Feb) and IOI 2023 (28 Aug - 4 Sep) are unchanged.
- The contest venue has changed. It will now be held at a new handball arena.
- Sponsor discussions continue and Hungary has government backing if things fall through.
- Many key organizers for 2023 are here in 2022 to observe and learn.
- The website will be available and ready by this coming weekend.

In response to questions, Agnes said that:

- Hungary is planning for a fully onsite IOI and this is their strong preference but they are also making technical plans should a hybrid format be required. No deadlines on making this decision have been determined but there are a number of "check-in points".
- There will be a bus between the two hotels. It is a short 5-minute ride. Consideration will be made about allowing/supporting walking routes between locations.
- Support will be provided for obtaining visas.
- The dates for winter meetings are relatively fixed but Ben and Agnes can talk about running these by committee members that are newly elected this week and who have not had a time to consider their availability for these dates.

### **Voting Software**

IC ran a test of prefPolls. In response to questions, Ricardo indicated that it currently does not record names with votes but this can be implemented easily. He says that with a bit of work, it can also be adapted so that only a designated subset can see who voted for what.

### **Enforcement of Masks**

Jakub Łacki (ISC) sent a message to Brian Marshall and IC indicating that a sizeable number of contestants are not wearing masks. He wanted to know if this would be enforced and if not, whether an announcement be made that masks are optional. Brian and IC had a brief discussion. It was established that the Indonesian authorities dictate that masks must be worn and consequently this will be enforced. This will happen as soon as possible at the practice session which is just beginning.

### **New Member of IC**

Ben welcomed Jhonathan to the IC following the GA's ratification of Bolivia as the host of IOI 2025.

### **Regulation Changes Follow-up**

The second team from Indonesia has asked if regulation change 7 about second teams can be effective 2022. Eduard and Ben are suggesting this is not necessary because the status quo already allows what they want. IC did not object.

Feedback has been received on the "quorum" rule for the regulation change about IC voting procedures. The proposal is to change the criteria from needing at least 3 "winning votes". Eduard felt this still meets the spirit of IC's intention with this regulation change and sought opinions from IC. Mile reiterated his concerns from the

previous meeting. He is uncomfortable with the idea that a motion can pass with only 3 members of IC supporting the motion. Ricardo agreed with Mile and does not see a difference between voting no and abstaining. Ben spoke in favour of Eduard's suggestion. Eduard mentioned using 4 as a threshold. Eslam then spoke in favour of 5 as a threshold. Discussions of game-theoretic aspects, different reasons for abstaining (sometimes because of political constraints; sometimes lack of information; sometimes indifference). Cathy isolated the issues of not wanting things to pass with too few people and wanting decisions to be made. She wondered if we are trying to fix both issues with one solution and need another mechanism to solve the inability to make decisions. After much discussion and disagreement, Ben suggests that we do have one proposal that we agreed to previously and we should stick with that. No further objections were received.

The IOI statistics data policy requires IC permission to change the name of a past participant in the historical record. Eduard asked IC for permission to do this for a transgender past contestant. IC approved this with 9 votes for, no votes against and two abstentions.

### **Deadnaming**

Ben noted for future host that deadnaming (referring to a transgender or non-binary person by a name they used prior to transitioning) happened at the opening ceremonies and asked for attention to this at future events. In 2022, an attempt will be made to correct this in the CMS, on the scoreboard and in other locations.

### **Condolences**

Eslam extended condolences to Araz and Azerbaijan on the passing of Ramin Mahmudzade.

### **Report on IOI 2024 – Egypt**

Eslam provided an update on IOI 2024. The highlights are:

- In 2021, Egypt hosted APIO. In 2023, Egypt will be hosting the Bebras International Workshop.
- The likely venue was recently the location of the Pentathlon World Championships.

Kim asked about possible funding concerns. Eslam indicated some exceptional circumstances caused issues in 2022 but should not be a concern moving forward. However, one real concern is inflation which will need to be addressed. Eslam said he will use dormitories and speak to authorities about controlling the cost of food. Government support and connections will help with the big costs of machines and transportation.

Eduard asked about temperature control upon hearing the possibility of a large outside tent being used as the contest hall. Eslam feels this should not be a problem

### **Report on IOI 2025 – Bolivia**

Jhonathan provided an update on IOI 2025. The highlights are:

- Five-star hotels have been identified as possible accommodations.
- Modern large facilities have been selected as likely locations of the contest and ceremonies.
- Plans and brainstorming are underway for potential excursions.
- At a meeting on June 30, the government of Bolivia expressed support for IOI 2025

There were no questions.

### **Funded Projects**

Mile previously shared the *Concluding Report for IOI Project on TPS (Task Preparation System) Development* describing how the considerable majority of the project work has been completed. Mile asked about providing this group with the final two installments to fund completion of the project. Araz says his feeling is that it is ISC-dependent and suggests we need ISC's input. Everyone agreed that connecting with ISC is important, but it would not be possible to ask for detailed feedback in time for this project to be mentioned to the GA. The committee agreed to consult ISC briefly now and assuming they are content, ask the project group to speak to the GA. ISC will then be asked to do a more detailed analysis after IOI 2022 is

over. There was debate about whether to pay both remaining installments now, or one now and the other after receiving this detailed feedback. The IC voted to pay both installments now with 6 votes in favour and 5 against.

### **Voting System**

The IC decided to keep playing with its voting system before making a decision on it.

### **Medal and Honourable Mention Regulation Change**

Eduard talked about his plan to ask the GA that they approve the first regulation change (inclusiveness of boundaries for medals and honourable mentions) to be effective immediately. This is to try and ensure discussion of this topic occurs before any 2022 results are known.

### **IOI Clothing**

Ben reported on a request received for future hosts: shirts with a female cut should be provided.

### **Updates from ITC**

Fredrik Niemelä did not have much to report because all is going very well. There were no major problems with Contest Day 1. HTC has been very easy to work with and ITC has eased into an advisory role. He also noted that ITC does have some ideas about possibly polling the GA between IOIs.

Ben asked about everything running in the cloud. Fredrik says this was not because of the hybrid format but more to prepare for the possibility of being fully online. Use of the cloud means fewer laptops. We want to take care to not normalize this. Some hosts may need or want the previous number of machines. Sun Teck asked why we prefer machines over the cloud. Fredrik says it tends to be easier to solve with direct access to the hardware. ITC also feels it is more straightforward to set up physical machines.

Ben asked if there is concern about the loss of institutional memory because it has been three years since the format of the IOI was “normal”. Fredrik indicated this is a reasonable concern, but he is thrilled with how eager Hungary has been to learn and observe this year. There is also lots of experience on ITC.

Jonathan noticed that Amazon Web Services is a sponsor and wondered if this meant cloud services are provided free of charge. Fredrik was not sure and recommended speaking to the current hosts. Jonathan also wondered about optimization and how much this has been addressed. Fredrik said speed is not the issue. The key issue is variance.

### **Regulation Changes Feedback**

Eduard noted:

- Lithuania and Switzerland raised concerns about the proposed voting regulations. Eduard said he would like to reply and stated a need to explain and defend IC’s proposal.
- Someone expressed discomfort with the second team proposal rooted more in the desire to not have a second team.

This was the only feedback so far and said he will therefore separate these two issues out and vote for the remaining ones as a batch. Eduard acknowledged Ben’s suggestion that we be prepared with alternate regulation text.

### **Updates from ISC**

Jakub Łacki said not much has happened since the winter meeting and now. So far, there have been no major issues this week. Jakub explained that ISC published a non-binding policy document to increase transparency. They will add to it over time. ISC has also established a rubric to help evaluate task proposals to make things less subjective and more repeatable. It could eventually go into the policy document which could help other countries develop their own task statements. Jakub noted that HSC did an excellent job setting a fabulous example for future hosts. Tasks were selected and prepared much earlier than usual.

Eslam asked if a lot of ties are expected on Day 2. He noted that there were four full scores on Day 1. Jakub indicated that the sentiment of ISC is that their goal is not to avoid ties at the top. The regulations don't identify a "winner" but instead involve gold, silver, bronze divisions. When choosing tasks, separating at the top is not a high priority. This did not concern anyone but did raise some important practical considerations (e.g. availability of physical trophies). The group also agreed that the idea of formalizing the notion of a winner, which is currently only a convention, would require a much lengthier discussion.

Cathy wanted to understand more about the hiding of the live scoreboard. Jakub responded to say that ISC and HSC do trust leaders and proctors. The concern is accidental leaks (e.g. in a lab online when someone walks by a screen on their way to washroom). ISC has mixed feelings and in general feels it is important to defer to HSC on this point.

Ben raised the issue of gender in problem statements. It was not an issue this year but in some years, all six tasks have involved only male actors. On other contests, there was more of a balance in terms of quantity but a prevalence of stereotypes. He asked if this issue has been encoded in the policy document or rubrics. Jakub said it is not written down yet but recently a conscious deliberate effort was made to consider this for the problem set. He agrees this could be put into the policy document which could also be expanded to higher level issues such as avoiding sensitive or disturbing topics. For example, one version of a submitted task discussed the global pandemic, and it was felt best to avoid this.

### **Polling "the GA" between IOIs**

Ben explained that upon the invasion of Ukraine, IC did not have a robust way to generate the right list of email addresses to use for soliciting opinions from the IOI community let alone a mechanism to conduct a poll. Ben said he agrees with a complainant who approached him earlier in the day to say that there will be rare circumstances where we really should at least gauge GA's opinion of something between IOIs. Ben suggests we create an informal straw poll mechanism which is not a formal vote but an opportunity for each country to have some say.

This generated a lot of discussion about how to achieve this. Kim said we could use the registration system to house contacts of this sort. Araz emphasized the need for multiple contacts per country which Cathy later reiterated. Ricardo suggested it would be much simpler to rely on the most recent leaders which was later supported by Eslam and Sun Teck. Mile opposed this idea and favoured keeping a permanent contact for each country which is confirmed or updated annually at registration time. J.P. asked how contact information on the IOI website was maintained and indicated this could be merged with the approach eventually taken here. Eduard expressed support for a permanent contact but said we could use the current leaders in the interim before IOI 2023. Ben expressed concern for using leaders as this would not work well for all countries (e.g. Australia) because of how they are organized.

In the end, everyone agreed that different delegations are organized in many different ways. After further discussion, the IC agreed on the short-term solution of asking the 2022 GA for administrative contacts and a person to contact for straw polls. Further discussion for a long-term solution is still needed.

### **Discussion of Russia/Belarus**

Ben updated IC on a proposed plan for the upcoming discussion on Russia and Belarus during GA 4. He will remind everyone of the background indicating that this is GA's opportunity to decide how to move forward. Three options to start with are (i) doing nothing, (ii) continuing the 2022 IC decision except with onsite participation, and (iii) removing these two countries from the IOI until further notice. GA will be asked to decide if the corresponding votes should be confidential. There will be lots of time for discussion. IC will accept new or amended proposals and the final discussion and votes will take place at GA 7.

### **Fee Update**

Kim said most countries have paid. One country is unable to pay on time. They were also late last time. He asked if it was okay to allow this. Ben said it was and no one disagreed.

## **Discussion of Russia/Belarus**

Following GA 4 where it was decided that votes about Russia and Belarus would be confidential, Araz said we should actively discourage abstentions. The committee accepted Ben's suggestion to use the Schultze method followed by a yes/no vote as was done for honourable mentions at IOI 2021

## **Hungary IOI Format**

Ben asked if Agnes has a message for the GA about possibility of a hybrid format in 2023. Agnes will speak at GA 7 about their preference for an onsite only event. Ben wondered if people are worried that this might exclude some countries.

## **Finances**

Kim reminded IC of the new book year and our need to approve a budget for 2023. He walked the committee through the line items. A small number of tweaks were made along the way.

In response to a question from Eduard, Kim explained that a contingency fund is a standard part of many budgets.

Ben asked how back to "normal" we are given the financial implications of two consecutive online IOIs. Kim responded to say that the last two years in Singapore were indeed highly unusual but they more or less "cancel each other out" so we are essentially back to a typical financial situation.

## **More Regulation Changes Follow-up**

Eduard said he followed up with Troy Vasiga about his concern about the second team regulation. Troy's main concern is about the awards ceremony. Eduard has accepted a friendly amendment to make it more clear that awards in a ceremony to second team members must be attributed to team Host-2 or Host-B.

## **Equity, Diversion and Inclusion**

Ben said that training materials are not available yet for IOI Allies (discussed at the winter meetings). Some resources are too expensive. Others are too detailed or too tailored to a specific context. Nobody expressed concern about his desire to inform the community about this initiative.

The mental health group discussion held earlier in the day was raised. At the discussion, someone suggested we have counsellors available at the IOI. Ben suggested we arrange for a handful of counsellors to be available online. They should come from a variety of different places and speak a variety of languages. Kim wants to know how we can make this sustainable and not just a one-year thing. Ben said we don't mean this to become a host responsibility but instead for it to be something offered by the community.

Related to mental-health, Cathy said it is important for us to gauge people's experiences. Do current participants feel safe and comfortable? Cathy agreed to draft questions that we propose the current hosts incorporate into the post-IOI survey which might give some insights into what issues or causes of discomfort we may be missing.

Eslam expressed the opinion that the mental health of a team is the responsibility of its leaders. Ben replied to say that he feels this is no different than the availability of doctors. Eslam felt otherwise because he feels mental health is a long-term issue and he has concerns about counsellors providing medication leading to addiction. He noted that Egypt is well set up to support the mental health of its participants. Eduard noted that not all countries have this infrastructure and long-term mental health care is important, but emergencies can happen in the moment. Araz agreed with Eduard saying this does not remove leaders' responsibility, but counsellors could help someone could be in crisis. He stressed the need to handle this in a culturally sensitive way. J.P. concurred and expressed confidence that a diverse group of experienced counsellors can be found. For example, in many countries, universities have a very diverse student body served by counsellors that provide culturally aware services.

There was brief discussion of an initiative from the Netherlands in the past where a 5<sup>th</sup> member was allowed for each IOI team as long as at least one competitor was female. Ben said no current hosts would be forced to do this. Eduard and Ricardo repeated concerns expressed at the gender diversity workshop about this type of

initiative.

### **Outreach**

Ben would like outreach to new countries to become a permanent new IC agenda item.

Sun Teck talked about an NUS initiative to provide support for computing Olympiads. He will continue to update IC. Huawei has been very supportive of this endeavor. In response to a question from Ben, Sun Teck said their current focus is on South-East Asia (e.g. Cambodia, Bruni, Myanmar and Laos) but they are happy to work anywhere in the world.

### **Future Hosts**

Ben explained that no bids to host 2026 have been received so we will have to continue as we did last year. Hopefully we will have at least one potential bid to consider at the 2023 winter meetings.

### **Trophies for Hosts**

Eslam suggested we begin awarding trophies to IOI hosts. Ben asked that we revisit this at another time because the trophies are quite expensive. Eslam says he may be able to find cheaper alternatives which Eduard notes would be wise regardless because of the previously discussed pressure of inflation.