

**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF  
DANGEROUS GOODS AND ON THE GLOBALLY  
HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION  
AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS**

**Sub-Committee of Experts on the  
Transport of Dangerous Goods**

**(Twenty-third session, 30 juin-4 July 2003  
Agenda item 13)**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**Application for consultative status by the  
World Federation for Culture Collections (WFCC)**

**Note by the secretariat**

1. The secretariat reproduces below information received from the **World Federation for Culture Collections** requesting consultative status as a non-governmental organization for participation in the work of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.

WFCC is a federation of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) and a commission of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), which are both in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

2. The Sub-Committee is invited to decide whether WFCC may participate in its work with a consultative status.



## WORLD FEDERATION FOR CULTURE COLLECTIONS

### *Request for observer status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council's Sub-Committee of experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods*

The World Federation for Culture Collections (WFCC) is a federation of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) and a commission of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) with responsibility for the promotion and development of collections of cultures of microorganisms and cultured cells. As such, it has an on-going concern with all aspects of culture collection activity and in particular with the encouragement of new initiatives and improvement in the standards of scientific services provided to the international user community.

The WFCC has key objectives that are relevant to the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods particularly as its members supply biological material world-wide and many of the organisms are considered dangerous goods. The WFCC has a total membership of around 600 from 62 countries of these 462 are culture collections and the remainder are individual members representing staff of collections and the user community (microbiologists and cell biologists). 2,422 people work in these culture collections. A full list of member collections is available from the World Data Center on Micro-organisms (WDCM) (<http://wdcn.nig.ac.jp>).

The WFCC operates through its executive board made up of 14 members representing 11 countries. It designates co-ordination of activities through seven committees:

- Biodiversity Committee
- Capacity Building and Education Committee
- Patent and Industrial Property Committee
- Postal, Quarantine and Safety Regulations Committee
- Networking and Inter-operability Committee
- Standardization and Normalization Committee
- Endangered Collections Committee
- World Data Centre for Micro-organisms (WDCM)

The WFCC confirms its interest in the goals and objectives of the Sub-Committee of experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. The WFCC recognises the Sub Committee's work on global harmonization regarding criteria for health hazards and hazards to the environment, and that it is already co-operating with the International Labour Office, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation. In addition that it has a role in the protection of workers, consumers and the general environment, in collaboration with experts. It also recognises the need for the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods to participate actively in relevant activities associated with the implementation of Agenda 21, and to co-operate with international bodies involved in activities related to the transport of dangerous goods. Recent activities of the Sub Committee have resulted in changes to the 2003 IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations regarding diagnostic specimens. The WFCC believes that it can provide relevant background information to the committee with regard to safe transport of potentially dangerous biological material. It could also act as a conduit for the recommendations and information back to the practitioners in the field. The WFCC would welcome the opportunity to offer its expertise regarding the safe handling and distribution of biological materials to the sub-committee. The WFCC contributes to activities and information provision that help find collaborative solutions and procedures to compliance with regulations or that help define best practice. Its involvement with major international initiatives allows information flow for knowledge generation. Reports, publications, workshops, conferences and training courses provide the vehicles for information exchange and knowledge development. One specific example where the WFCC could provide valuable input is providing a logical basis for the shipment of cultures of cells and microorganisms where shipping regulations should be based on appropriate risk assessment.

The WFCC invites the United Nations Economic and Social Council's Sub-Committee of experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods to consider its application for observer status.



<http://www.wfcc.info/>

## **Secretariat**

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**TO:** Olivier Kervella  
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## **Request for observer status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council's Sub-Committee of experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods**

### **Information on the World Federation for Culture Collections (WFCC)**

#### ***(a) The purpose of the WFCC;***

The World Federation for Culture Collections (WFCC) is a federation of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) and a commission of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) with responsibility for the promotion and development of collections of cultures of microorganisms and cultured cells. As such, it has an on-going concern with all aspects of culture collection activity and in particular with the encouragement of new initiatives and improvement in the standards of scientific services provided to the international user community.

#### ***(b) Information on the programmes and activities of the WFCC in areas relevant to the work of the Sub-Committee and the country or countries in which they are carried out;***

1. To establish effective communication on all issues regarding culture collections between persons and organisations concerned with culture collections and between them and the users of cultures.
2. To encourage the study of procedures for the isolation, culture, characterisation, conservation, and distribution of microorganisms and to publicise those procedures;
3. To promote the training of personnel in the operation of culture collections and to organise conferences and symposia on topics and problems of common interest;
4. To attempt to find solutions to problems of distribution of cultures of microorganisms that may arise through postal regulations, quarantine rules, patent laws, public health problems, and other factors of international importance;
5. To make recommendations through sponsoring organisations to national and international organisations on any question within these terms of reference when, in the judgement of the Federation, this is desirable or necessary.

The WFCC operates through an executive board and a series of focussed committees reporting to it. The two committees of key relevance to the United Nations Economic and Social Council's Sub-Committee of experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods are:

### **WFCC Committee on Postal, Quarantine and Safety Regulations**

Remit to:

- Gather and distribute information on quarantine, safety and shipping data world-wide.

- Become proactive in the development stages of new relevant regulations that impact on the operations of culture collections
- Review of safety standards for Microbial Resource Collections.

### **Standards and Normalization**

- Promote best practice in culture collections.
- Define optimum standards for operation of culture collections.

### ***(c) Confirmation of WFCC interest in the goals and objectives of the Sub-Committee;***

The WFCC has a professional interest in the goals and objectives of the Sub Committee. WFCC members are routinely responsible for world-wide distribution of biological materials many of which fall into the description of dangerous goods. The WFCC recognises the Sub Committee's work on global harmonization regarding criteria for health hazards and hazards to the environment, and that it is already co-operating with the International Labour Office, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation. In addition that it has a role in the protection of workers, consumers and the general environment, in collaboration with experts. It also recognises the need for the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods to participate actively in relevant activities associated with the implementation of Agenda 21, and to co-operate with international bodies involved in activities related to the transport of dangerous goods. Recent activities of the Sub Committee have resulted in changes to the 2003 IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations regarding diagnostic specimens. The WFCC believes that it can provide relevant background information to the committee with regard to safe transport of potentially dangerous biological material. It could also act as a conduit for the recommendations and information back to the practitioners in the field.

Correct packaging and shipping of biological materials is a matter of justified concern. For many years this kind of international bio-legislation has been one of the main topics of discussion for the WFCC Committee dedicated to providing information and best practice regarding international or regional developments on Postal, Quarantine and Safety Regulations. This committee has contributed considerably to the distribution of information and consequently to a raised awareness in this area and functions as an information forum. There are currently eleven members of different nations in this Committee, all are experienced scientists working in renowned culture collections/biological resource centres. They have hands on practical knowledge of the implementation of safety measures and bio-legislation (further information at <http://www.wfcc.info>).

The WFCC believes that shipping of microorganisms should be based on an adequate and appropriate risk assessment and not be based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) Risk Group definition designed to protect personnel working with biological agents in the laboratory. The risk to those handling correctly packaged materials in biological risk group (RG) 2, often as inactive freeze-dried preparations, is considered minimal.

Those microorganisms classified in RG 2 can by definition cause disease to humans or animals. However, considering their low infectivity and pathogenicity and that preventive and therapeutic measures are available, the risk is low to workers and the public. The potential of microorganisms classified in RG 2 by the European Council Directive 2000/54/EEC of September 2000 (amending 90/679/EEC) to cause disease varies considerably. The risk group includes a high number of described species known to live as commensals e.g. on the human oral mucosa or which are generally widespread in the environment. Furthermore, it should also be taken into consideration that there is no international harmonisation of the Risk Group allocation: e.g., there is a number of species allocated to RG 2 in Europe that are allocated to RG 1 in the USA. It is important to note that the assignment of microorganisms to the Risk Groups as defined by WHO is done at a national level and often depends on national/regional health and safety infrastructures. Discrepancies in the classification present problems to individuals and collections involved in the shipment of microorganisms.

If a RG 2 organism regarded as a low grade pathogen is properly packed in a high quality UN packaging

combination system according to IATA Packing Instruction PI 650 (for diagnostic specimens), such a consignment it is considered as safe as if packaged to PI 602 (for infectious substances). Shipments containing low-grade pathogens of known species are in most cases no more dangerous than shipments containing diagnostic specimens with an unknown pathogenic potential. The WFCC would welcome the opportunity to offer its expertise in such areas to the sub-committee.

***(d) Confirmation of the activities of WFCC activities at the national, regional or international level;***

The reports and activities described on the WFCC web-site are testament to its activities at the international level. The membership of the WFCC Board, their committees and the general membership demonstrate the truly international nature of the WFCC. Members contribute to activities and information provision that help find collaborative solutions and procedures to compliance with regulations or that help define best practice. The WFCC disseminates such information and best practices widely. Its involvement with major international initiatives allows information flow for knowledge generation. Reports, publications, workshops, conferences and training courses provide the vehicles for information exchange and knowledge development.

Currently the WFCC is a member of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and has representation on the OECD Biological Resource Centre Task Force looking at long-term sustainability of BRCs, common policy and setting quality standards for their operation. The International Congress for Culture Collections, organised every four years, brings together interested parties and members from many different countries to discuss issues relevant to biological resource centres. This provides an opportunity to put in place best practice and practical measures to facilitate compliance with international rules and regulations.

***(e) Copies of the annual or other reports of the WFCC with financial statements, and a list of financial sources and contributions, including governmental contributions;***

The most recent report is included below but past documents can also be made available. Newsletters and reports are published on the WFCC web site - <http://www.wfcc.info/>.

**Report on WFCC activities, 2002**

**Secretariat / Treasury**

- The membership list was partially actualised on the basis of the WDCM database. Members were invited since May 2002 to renew their membership and pay their fees. Invitations to sustaining members were accompanied with an extended invitation letter and information package. Updating of the membership list is continued on the basis of the response to these invitations.
- On the basis of the first results of the cashing of the membership fees, D. Smith set up a draft budget estimate. During a working meeting of the president with D. Smith in London a strategic plan was discussed, drafted by D. Smith and proposed at the Executive Board meeting in Paris, July 2002. After review and amendment by the EB members via e-mail, the plan was made available to the WFCC members through the WFCC website for eventual comments.
- It was agreed to publish the WFCC Newsletter electronically from end 2002 on, and to provide hard copies only to sustaining members, to cut down the production costs.

**Executive Board and promotional actions**

- An executive Board meeting was held in Paris (July 2002). A preparatory meeting was held in London (June 2002, D. Smith, J. Swings, J. Mergaert).
- Following the bio terrorist events in the US, concrete actions were undertaken to tackle allegations by the press and to inform and advise the membership.
- Actions to enhance visibility of WFCC included visits of the president to institutions in Morocco, Taiwan, the Philippines, China, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore. Another action was the production and distribution of a specific flyer with regard to the activities of the PQSR Committee.
- The president contributed to the production of Newsletter No. 34 (Jan 2002).
- The presidency organised a workshop on the "Bacterial species concept" in Gent (February 2002).

- A WFCC session entitled “Ensuring dangerous microorganisms reach the hands” was held at the IUMS congress in Paris, July 2002, with oral contributions from D. Smith and B. Holmes.

### **WFCC committees**

- All committee chairs were regularly asked for an update of their activities and achievements, via e-mail or at meetings.
- Although some committees did not report on their activities, steps were made by the presidency, in collaboration with other WFCC members and BCCM to contribute to these WFCC Committees objectives.

### ***Biodiversity***

- WFCC has become affiliate participant in GBIF.
- Several WFCC members are active in the OECD Task Force on BRCs.

### ***Postal, quarantine and safety regulations***

The PQSR Committee focused on mainly two outstanding topics, the bio-weaponry thematics and the shipping regulations. For reasons of public relations and worldwide distribution, the Committee has produced a multi-colour flyer, the intension of which is to raise awareness on the existence of the activities of WFCC and this Committee.

- In the light of the sequels of the anthrax attacks in the US there was a close collaboration with the PQSR committee. Two of the results of the anthrax craze were the irradiation of postal mail in the US, and the more rigid rules with regard of transport of biological material. Relevant information on irradiation was collected and practical advice for shipping biological materials to the US was put on the web site.
- A proposal by the PQSR Committee for less strict transport rules for class 2 organisms was submitted the UN Subcommittee of Experts for the Transport of Dangerous Goods at their regular meeting in Geneva held in July 2002. The PQSR Committee proposal has not been adopted whereas the UN Subcommittee exclusively concentrated on diagnostic specimens. As a consequence, a deregulation for the diagnostic specimens has already been implemented by IATA DGR 2003. All dangerous goods restrictions still fully apply for shipments of microorganisms classified in risk group 2 because they are regarded as being ‘cultures’. The definition by the new UN Model Regulations, 2.6.3.1.3 is as follows: ‘cultures are the result of a process by which pathogens may be amplified or propagated to generate high concentrations not normally found in nature, thereby increasing the risk of infection when exposure to them occurs’. As there is no doubt about agreement among the WFCC membership that the ‘cultures’ need a closer look and further discussions for envisaging a deregulation of shipping regulations, WFCC via the secretary applied for official observer status to the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods.
- PQSR Committee posted a survey/questionnaire to members via the web site in order to obtain a broad international overview, which could play an important role in developing a new position on transport regulations (deregulation of low risk organisms). The committee will make the results available to a member of the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

### ***WDCM***

- Through WDCM, e-fora were created for an easier and faster communication within the Executive Board, the Committees and among the members.
- A more visible web site address was installed.

### ***Capacity building and education***

- I. Kurtboke started organising a workshop “Commercial Use of Microbial Diversity” to be part of the 13th International Symposium of the Biology of Actinomycetes (1-5 December, 2003, Melbourne, Australia).
- A WFCC training course, “Management of Culture Collections of Microorganisms”, planned to be held in Rabat, Morocco in May 2004, is in preparation in collaboration with USFCC and CCMM. Partial

funding by UNESCO has been granted.

### **Standardization**

- This committee has developed a draft summary on Authentication, defining the concept and listing the minimum standards for characterization of bacteria, metazoan cell lines, molecular entities, fungi, protozoa and viruses. The Document on Authentication has been submitted to the Secretary, D. Smith. That document is being considered further but should be available for publication with WFCC literature this year.

### **IPR**

- P. Desmeth is finalizing a Material Transport Agreement, in the frame of BCCM. This document was generally approved at the ECCO meeting in Krakau, Poland, October 2002, and can serve as a template for a WFCC version.

### **Networking**

- WFCC has become affiliate participant in GBIF.

### **Endangered collections**

- P. Green has been able to get agreement of SGM for a grant of £4390 to help the Uzbek collection National Collection of Agricultural Microorganisms, Institute of Microbiology, Tashkent.
- P. Green has got approval from SfAM committee to initiate an annual fund specifically to help endangered collections. It will be able to award up to £2500 per year.

### **WFCC Treasurer's Report: June 2002**

- A UK Deposit account has been established and \$20, 532.28 (final amount) transferred from the Netherlands account.
- Current business account remains open in the Netherlands and it is recommended that this is closed after 31st December 2002. (This will allow easy transfer of any membership payments inadvertently made to the previous WFCC's account). (The UK business account has yet to receive funds).
- The financial positions will be alleviated by the issue of membership invoices in June 2002. On discussion with the Secretariat, it has been decided to issue invoices for two years membership 2000/2001 and 2001/2002. It is proposed that further invoicing would occur in 2003 for an additional two year period 2002/2003 and 2003/2004. This would have the benefit of aiding clarity on registration fees for members for ICCC – X in 2004.
- The draft business plan for WFCC – once the response rate to the current round of invoicing is completed it is intended to revise the business plan in the light of the receipts. The Executive Board may wish to consider a list of priorities for expenditure should be developed to guide the next stage of the process.
- Consideration needs to be given to the transfer of funds to the organising committee for ICCC-X. The sum of \$5,000 is usually transferred from the WFCC Treasury for this purpose.
- The Executive Board are reminded that the surplus made from the receipts for ICCC-IX remain with Dr. Lindsay Sly and there needs to be a strategy developed on expanding this sum to the benefit of WFCC.
- The Executive Board should note that the current level of expenditure on the WFCC Newsletter is unsustainably high. It should be discussed as to whether the general membership should only receive an electronic version of the Newsletter and printed copies restricted to Sustaining and Collection members and others who would have difficulty receiving electronic copies.

### **WFCC Financial statement for 2002-2003**

#### **Dollar Account**

Account opened in UK 23 April 2002

Transfer of funds from Netherlands Secretariat account	20 532 28
Subscriptions paid June August 2002	3 388.59
Subscriptions paid Sept – Nov 2002	11 409.21
Subscriptions paid Dec 2002 to Feb 2003	3 375.16

<b>Payments</b>		
Opening of Sterling Account	2000.00	
Bank charges	799.33	
<b>Total in dollar account</b>		<b>35 905.91</b>
Sterling Account		
Deposits US\$2000 opening account	1 276.57	
Deposit	27.00	
<b>Payments</b>		
Bank charges	49.84	
<b>Total in account</b>		<b>1 253.73</b>

*(f) A list of members of the governing body (Executive Board) of the WFCC and their countries of nationality;*

Jean Swings, President - Belgium  
Makoto Watanabe, Vice President - Japan  
Alan Doyle, Treasurer - UK  
David Smith, Secretary - UK  
Vullapa Arunpairojana - Thailand  
Ray Cypess - USA  
Ipek Kurtboke – Russia –currently working in Australia  
Irena Ivshina - Russia  
Gina Koenig - USA  
Erko Stackebrandt - Germany  
Joost Stalpers – The Netherlands  
Ken Suzuki - Japan

***Ex-Officio Members:***

Hideaki Sugawara: Director of WDCM - Japan  
Vanderlei Canhos: Past President - Brazil

*(g) A description of the membership of the WFCC, indicating the total number of members, the names or organizations that are members and their geographical distribution;*

The WFCC has a total membership of around 600 from 62 countries of these 462 are culture collections (summarised below) and the remainder are individual members representing staff of collections and the user community (microbiologists and cell biologists). A full membership list can be provided. 2,422 people work in these culture collections. A full list of member collectons is available from the World Data Center on Micro-organisms (WDCM) (<http://wdcm.nig.ac.jp>); it has indexes by country, main subjects studied, cultures held, the culture availability, their staff, and services offered. The WDCM collections hold in excess of 1 million strains, 44% are fungi, 43% bacteria, 2% viruses, 1% live cells, and 10% others (including plasmids, plant, animal cells and algae).

**AFRICA**

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF CULTURE COLLECTIONS	CULTURE S
Egypt	2	1,495
Nigeria	2	223
Senegal	1	210
South Africa	2	5,360
Uganda	1	550
Zimbabwe	2	702
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8,540</b>

**ASIA**

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF CULTURE COLLECTIONS	CULTURE S
China	15	50,525
Hong Kong	1	60
India	14	10,200

Indonesia	15	4,486
Iran	1	496
Israel	2	576
Japan	23	81,093
Korea (Rep. of)	4	17,693
Malaysia	5	2,508
Pakistan	1	213
Philippines	6	3,092
Singapore	2	1,389
Sri Lanka	4	276
Taiwan	1	10,398
Thailand	58	41,918
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>224,923</b>

### EUROPE

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF CULTURE COLLECTIONS	CULTURE S
Armenia	1	7,575
Austria	1	1,570
Belgium	5	52,277
Bulgaria	3	11,888
Czech	11	14,772
Denmark	2	23,400
Estonia	1	2,300
Finland	2	4,903
France	25	51,020
Germany	11	24,218
Greece(Hellenic Rep.)	4	3,245
Hungary	6	7,657
Ireland	1	380
Italy	7	10,039
Netherlands	6	56,192
Norway	2	2,602
Poland	8	8,234
Portugal	3	2,558
Romania	1	275
Russian Federation	11	35,323
Slovak	3	4,954
Slovenia	2	4,160
Spain	3	7,860
Sweden	3	52,700
Switzerland	1	2,700
Turkey	5	3,573
U.K.	20	72,122
Uzbekistan	1	-
Yugoslavia	2	815
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>469,312</b>

### AMERICA

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF CULTURE COLLECTIONS	CULTURE S
Argentina	7	4,285
Brazil	44	30,562
Canada	17	45,544
Chile	1	-
Colombia	1	3,961

Cuba	3	1,337
Mexico	14	5,692
U.S.A.	18	194,094
Venezuela	2	150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>285,625</b>

#### OCEANIA

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF CULTURE COLLECTIONS	CULTURE S
Australia	34	67,758
New Zealand	7	16,947
Papua New Guinea	1	270
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>84,975</b>

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF CULTURE COLLECTIONS	CULTURE S
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>1,073,375</b>

**(h) A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the WFCC is provided below. In addition, a brief document summarizing the information required under (a), (b), (c), (d), (f) and (g) above, has been prepared for submission to the Sub-Committee at its forthcoming session (30 June - 4 July 2003).**

Original publication of the statutes in Int. J. Syst. Bacteriol., 22: 406-409, 1972  
 1st amendment in Int. J. Syst. Bacteriol., 25: 90-94, 1975  
 Complete Publication of newly amended Statutes in WFCC Newsletter July 1984, p. 6-9

#### WORLD FEDERATION FOR CULTURE COLLECTIONS STATUTES

**Article I:** Name. The name of the organization shall be the World Federation for Culture Collections (hereinafter referred to as the Federation or as the WFCC).

**Article II:** Purpose. The purpose of the Federation is to promote activities that support the interests of culture collections and their users.

**Article III:** Structure. The Federation is a Multidisciplinary Commission of the International Union of Biological Sciences and a Federation within the structure of the International Union of Microbiological Societies. It seeks the sponsorship, on appropriate activities, of other international non-governmental organizations, including the FAO, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIDO, WHO, and UNEP/UNESCO/ICRO Panel on Microbiology.

**Article IV:** Functions and Activities. The functions and management of the Federation are determined by the Statutes and Bylaws. The activities of the Federation are conducted under the authority of the General Assembly, which is composed of all members of the Federation. The Executive Board of the Federation (EBWFCC) administers decisions of the General Assembly between successive General Assemblies.

**Article V:** Headquarters. The official headquarters of the WFCC is the office of the Secretary of the Federation.

**Article VI:** Objectives. The general objectives of the Federation are: to establish effective liaison between persons and organizations concerned with culture collections and between them and the users of cultures; to encourage the study of procedures for the isolation, culture, characterization, conservation, and distribution of microorganisms and to publicize those procedures;  
 3. to promote the training of personnel in the operation of culture collections; to promote the establishment of a world network of data services concerned with the location of, and information about, microorganisms maintained in culture collections and to publish derivative information in

the form of a world directory of collections, lists of species maintained therein, and related documents;

5. to promote and aid the establishment of culture collections; to promote the establishment of special reference collections and identification services, and to aid existing identification services;

7. to establish official means of communication among culture collections, their personnel, their users, and related organizations;

to organize conferences and symposia on topics and problems of common interest;

9. to attempt solutions of problems of distribution of cultures of microorganisms that may arise through postal regulations, quarantine rules, patent laws, public health problems, and other factors of international importance;

to attempt to provide for the perpetuation of important collections and cultures;

to make recommendations through sponsoring organizations to national and international organizations on any question within these terms of reference when, in the judgement of the Federation, this is desirable or necessary.

**Article VII: Membership.** The Federation consists of members. In addition to Ordinary individual members, there may be Honorary, Sustaining, Affiliate, and Adherent members. Membership shall not be on a national basis, nor shall there be any restriction on the numbers of members from any one nation or institution.

1. Ordinary. Any individual with a declared interest in culture collection activities is eligible to membership. Honorary/Life. An individual may be elected to the life tenure of Honorary/Life membership after long productive service to the Federation in executive and committee work and on the recommendation of the Executive Board.

3. Sustaining. An individual or organization may be accepted as a Sustaining member usually on the basis of extraordinary support of the objectives and activities of the Federation. Any member of the Federation may recommend any individual or organization for acceptance by the Federation as a Sustaining member. Such recommendations shall be made in writing to the Secretary of the WFCC and shall be considered by the Executive Board of the WFCC which shall determine admission.

Affiliate. Any culture collection may become an Affiliate member if it meets standards established by the Federation. A Collaborating Affiliate conforms to all standards set by the WFCC; an Associated Affiliate conforms to a specific restricted portion of the standards. See Bylaw E: Standards for Culture Collections admitted as Affiliates of the World Federation for Culture Collections. Each Affiliate shall designate one of its staff to represent the Affiliate in the Federation.

5. Adherent. Any national or regional federation of culture collections, national committee, or similar international organization have interests in culture collection activities may become an Adherent member of the WFCC.

**Article VIII: Membership Application and Termination.** Application for membership in any category recognized by the Federation should be on a form available from the Secretary, and the Treasurer. Application for Ordinary, Sustaining, and Affiliate membership should be made directly to the Treasurer and should be accompanied by an initial subscription for one year. Adherent applications should be made to the Secretary. An official register of active members in all categories will be maintained in the Headquarters of the Federation. Membership may be terminated by written notice from a member to the Secretary, by failure to pay subscriptions for two successive years or by a majority vote of the Executive Board for reasons of which the member shall be given notice in writing at least six months prior to the date upon which the vote is taken.

Proposed changes to:

**Article IX: Subscriptions and Donations.** Some categories of membership are maintained in an active state through payment of appropriate annual subscriptions to the Federation. The several levels of subscriptions are determined by the Federation on the advice of the Executive Board. Subscriptions are varied according to economic status of members. The classes of subscription are defined in Bylaw D.

Members may elect to subscribe above the annual minimum rate according to their individual means. The Federation may receive donations to the general Treasury of the Federation or for the specific activities of the WFCC approved by the Executive Board. All subscriptions and donations shall be forwarded to the Treasurer of the Federation.

**Article X: Rights and Privileges of Membership.** All members:

have full participation in the affairs of the Federation, including the right to vote by proxy, except as otherwise specifically stated in the Statutes and Bylaws;

2. receive a list of all publications of the Federation and a copy of certain publications of general interest; receive a copy of all publications of the Federation which are requested by the member, either gratis or at a privileged rate determined by the economic position of the Federation.

**Article XI: Obligations of Membership (Restrictions).** No member shall use his their connection with the Federation to further his their own interests or those of his their own or any other organization, except as is provided for in the Statutes and Bylaws.

No publication of the Federation shall bear an indication of sponsorship by any organization or institution other than those listed in Article III of the Statutes, except for an acknowledgment of financial assistance.

No publication of the Federation shall bear an indication of sponsorship by any organization or institution other than those listed as provided for in Article III of the Statutes, except for an acknowledgment of financial assistance or collaboration in joint programs for the furtherance of WFCC objectives. Commercial advertising is permitted in WFCC publications provided that it is accompanied by a statement disclaiming endorsement of the product or claims by the advertiser.

The Federation is not responsible for the utterances or acts of any member unauthorized by the General Assembly or the Executive Board.

**Article XII: Executive Board.** The Executive Board shall consist of eight elected members and four co-opted members. The Director of the World Data Center and the Editor of the Newsletter shall be ex officio members of the Board. The President, Vice-President and six members shall be elected by the following procedure:

not less than one year before the announced date of the next General Assembly, the President shall appoint a Nominations Committee to draw up a list of candidates for the elected members of the Executive Board.

not more than two months after appointment, the Nominations committee shall send the list to the President, with appropriate biographical information and written assurances that the nominees will serve if elected.

not less than nine months before the announced date of the next General Assembly, the Secretary will mail the list to the membership and request that any additional nominations be submitted within two months of the mailing. Any additional nominee shall be proposed by two members and the nomination shall be accompanied by a written assurance of willingness to serve if elected. Only actively subscribing members and official designates of Affiliate Members are eligible for election.

Six months before the announced date of the next General Assembly, the Secretary will send out the final list of nominations and ballot papers. On their return the ballots will be counted and the results announced at the next General Assembly.

An additional four Members shall be chosen from the members of the Federation by the eight members already elected by the General Assembly.

The Director of the World Data Center for Microorganisms shall be ex officio, a member of the Board. The membership of the Board shall reflect the interests of the Federation.

Members of the Executive Board serve one term but are eligible for re-election, except that a Member who has served continuously through two terms shall not be eligible for re-election until one term has elapsed. The Secretary and the Treasurer shall be appointed from and by the Board.

Vacancies on the Executive Board that occur between meetings of the General Assembly may be filled by the remaining members of the Board from among the membership of the Federation. Such co-opted Members shall retire at the next meeting of the General Assembly but shall be eligible immediately for nomination as Executive Board members.

The word 'term' refers to the time elapsing between successive meetings of the General Assembly.

**Article XIII: Officers of the Executive Board.** The officers of the EBWFCC shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Offices may be combined temporarily at the discretion of the Board. The officers of the Executive Board shall be the officers of the Federation.

The officers of the Executive Board shall retire at the close of the meeting of a General Assembly. They are eligible for re-election for a further term, provided that they remain as members of the Executive Board. No

elected officer may serve in the same office on the Executive Board for more than two consecutive terms.  
Proposed change to:

**Article XIV:** Duties of the EBWFCC and its Officers. The Executive Board shall supervise the work of the Federation, execute decisions of the General Assembly, and in general promote the objectives of the Federation.

The President shall preside at meetings of the General Assembly of the Federation and at meetings of the Executive Board.

The Vice-President shall perform the duties and shall exercise the powers of the President during any period of absence or incapacitation of the President.

The duties of the Secretary shall include recording of the minutes of meetings of the General Assembly and of the Executive Board, publication of the Minutes of the General Assembly within 6 calendar months of the close of each conference of the WFCC, distribution of the Minutes of the EBWFCC to its members within 6 months of the conclusion of the Board meetings, and responsibility in general for the maintenance of effective liaison among the Executive Board, sponsoring organizations, and the several categories of members of the Federation. The Secretary shall prepare the Report of the Executive Board for presentation to the General Assembly at each of its meetings, and be responsible for conducting the ballot for the election of Board members according to Article XII of the Statutes.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the administration of the finances of the Federation, and is authorized to receive monies on behalf of the Federation and to pay such debts as are incurred in the work of the Federation. The Treasurer shall furnish an audited balance sheet to the Executive Board annually and shall present a financial report and audited balance sheet to the General Assembly at each of its meetings.

**Article XV:** Signatures and Certification of Documents. Contracts and legal documents, other than cheques, shall be signed by the President and one other member of the Executive Board, after approval by the Executive Board. The payment of accounts and other disbursement of Federation funds shall be on Federation embossed cheques and shall require the signature of the Treasurer only.

**Article XVI:** Meetings and Quorums. An ordinary meeting of the members of the Federation is called the General Assembly and General Assemblies shall be held during the International Congress for Culture Collections at intervals of not more than four years and or at times and places determined by the Executive Board. Extraordinary meetings of the General Assembly may be held at any time determined by the Executive

Board, but not sooner than six months after issue of notices to the membership.

The Executive Board shall meet prior to each meeting of the General Assembly and at such other times and places as may be agreed upon by members of the Executive Board.

Sponsoring organizations shall be invited officially to send observers to all meetings of the General Assembly. Official observers may be invited by the Executive Board to attend its meetings in whole or in part.

A quorum for transacting business at any General Assembly shall be two-thirds of the members registered for the assembly. All decisions shall be by a simple majority of votes cast, including those of members present and those transmitted by recognized proxies, except that one-third of the members present can call for a postal ballot vote by all members on any agenda item. In the case of a quorum not being attained, the President may notify the General Assembly members that the meeting is adjourned to a later time, and if again a quorum is not attained, the members present shall constitute the quorum.

A quorum for transacting business in any meeting of the Executive Board is two-thirds of the EBWFCC membership.

**Article XVII:** Appeals. Appeals against any decision of the General Assembly or of the Executive Board acting for the Federation may be made in writing to the Secretary by a minimum of ten members of the Federation. The Secretary shall submit such appeals to the next General Assembly. Where appeals are against a decision of the General Assembly such appeals may be accompanied by a recommendation from the Executive Board. Recommendations for action on such appeals made by the General Assembly shall be submitted to postal ballot of all members of the Federation.

**Article XVIII:** Committees. The Executive Board shall establish such committees as may be requested by the General Assembly and, between assemblies, such *ad hoc* committees as may be necessary for the effective management of Federation affairs. The Executive Board shall determine the terms of reference of each committee unless these are otherwise defined by the General Assembly.

The Executive Board shall have the option of selecting the Chairman of each committee or of delegating the choice to the committee itself. Other officers, if any, within each committee shall be chosen by the committee from among its own membership.

The EBWFCC shall have the power to dissolve any committee when, in the opinion of the Board, the task of the committee has been accomplished or when the committee has ceased to function effectively. In the latter case, the Board may reconstitute the committee and report its action to the next meeting of the General Assembly.

Each committee shall present a report through the Secretary to the Executive Board six months in advance of a General Assembly for presentation at the Assembly.

All committees are dissolved at the time of the Business Meeting of each General Assembly. The new Executive Board formed during the General Assembly assesses the value and function of each committee and, within the guidelines of the Assembly, reconstitutes committees or not, with the same or different memberships.

**Article XIX:** Amendment of Statutes. Changes and additions in the body of Statutes are accomplished in the manner specified in Bylaw G: Amendment of Statutes and Bylaws.

- End of statutes document -

## **WFCC BYLAWS**

<http://wdcm.nig.ac.jp/wfcc/bylaws.html>

**A. Voting Rights.** Each member who subscribes financially to the support of the WFCC has one vote on the administration of the Federation. Each ordinary member may vote in person or by proxy, or, in the case of the election of members of the Executive Board WFCC, by post. Each subscribing Affiliate member and each Sustaining member may cast its vote through one of its own staff, identified in writing to the Secretary WFCC, or by proxy. An Adherent member has no vote unless it also qualifies as a Sustaining member.

**B. Proxy Authorization.** Any member holding a voting right may assign the use of that right to another member for use at a specific meeting of the Federation. Notice of proxy assignment must be in writing to the Secretary, naming the proxy and stipulating the meeting at which proxy votes may be cast.

**C. Postal Ballots.** Except for ballots for the election of members of the Executive Board WFCC, which must be conducted according to Article XII of the Statutes, when postal ballots are called for and acted upon, valid ballot papers received by the Secretary within six months of their date of issue shall be counted and a decision based on a simple majority of the votes received.

### **D. Financial Subscription of Members.**

Ordinary (Individual)	US\$20 per annum
Affiliate (Collection)	US\$100 per annum
Sustaining (Sponsors)	US\$250 per annum
Honorary	None
Adherent	None

Subscription of an Affiliate may be waived by the Executive Board on the basis of written application to the Treasurer. However, the Federation urges both non-contributing and contributing Affiliates to seek Sustaining membership of their governing bodies.

### **E. Standards for Culture Collections admitted as Affiliates of the World Federation for Culture Collections.** Two classes of affiliated membership are established:

- Collaborating Affiliates conform to the following Standards 1-7;
- Associated Affiliates conform to the following Standards 1a, 1b, 2, 3, and 7.

- 1a. The collection and its future should be institution-dependent and not dependent merely upon the presence or interest of a single individual in the institution. The institution should be able to guarantee the collection its support for a period of not less than five years from the date of admission of the collection to the WFCC.
- 1b. Collections are also eligible for membership if they are nominated and accepted for support by a financing or governing body even if the institution in which the collection is housed may be changed, provided that the supporting body is prepared to be able to guarantee the existence of the collection for at least five years.
- 2. The collection should demonstrate that it can maintain its cultures in a viable and satisfactory condition with the necessary equipment for the maintenance of the cultures which it lists.
- 3. The person immediately responsible for the maintenance of the collection should have the necessary qualifications for the post, and his position should be permanent in terms of (1) above. (Note: the person concerned normally would be expected to hold a degree in microbiology or some equivalent field and to have had not less than five years of experience in microbiological work).
- 4. The collection must be willing to list its contents in the World Directory and List of Cultures and be prepared to issue the species it holds and those strains for which data are available.
- 5. The collection must be willing, within reasonable limits, to engage in the exchange of cultures with other collections within the framework of the WFCC. (Note: whether or not a collection charges for the cultures it distributes is its own decision).
- 6. The collection must be willing to engage, within the limits of its capacity to do so, in collaborative programs with other culture collections for the betterment of the organization of culture collections generally.
- 7. Affiliate membership may be reviewed by the Executive Board of the Federation on each General Assembly.

**F. Audit of Financial Records.** Routine audit of the Treasurer's accounts for reports to the General Assembly and annually to the Executive Board shall be by two individuals chosen by the Treasurer. However, the General Assembly shall, on the advice of the Executive Board, appoint auditors to review the accounts of the Federation and to report their findings to the next following ordinary meeting of the General Assembly or to any extraordinary meeting of the Assembly or the Executive Board called to discuss financial matters.

**G. Amendment of Statutes and Bylaws.** Proposals for amendment of the Statutes and Bylaws may be made in writing by any two members of the Federation. Emendation is accomplished by a simple majority of votes cast by members on a mail ballot submitted by the Secretary at the direction of the Executive Board after its members have had opportunity to review and comment on the proposals. An amendment becomes effective upon publication or notice issued by the Secretary or not later upon announcement at the next succeeding General Assembly.

#### **PROCEDURE FOR ELECTION OF HONORARY MEMBERS**

**Honorary Members / General Procedures.** Nominations for election to Honorary Membership may be forwarded to the Secretary up to 6 months prior to the next General Assembly. At this time the applications will be grouped and presented to the Honours Sub-Committee for assessment and review. Based upon the recommendations of the Honours Sub-Committee, nominees may be elected to Honorary Membership by the Executive Board prior to the next General Assembly. No more than 2 Honorary Members shall be elected at any General Assembly and if at any time the number of living Honorary Members exceeds 1% of the total membership of the Society, the number elected that year will not exceed 1.

**Honours Sub-Committee.** The Honours Sub-Committee to consider applications received shall be appointed by the Executive Board at its first meeting. The Sub-Committee shall consist of 3 members including the President, Vice-President and, if available, a former President of the Federation. If a former President is not available, the Executive Board may nominate one or two other distinguished Members to act with the President to form the Sub-Committee of 3.

**Procedure for Nomination.** A person shall only be considered for election as an Honorary Member when the

Secretary has received from the Proposer:

- A) a nomination for Honorary Membership signed by the Proposer, a seconder and 10 other signatories each of whom shall be a member of the Federation;
- B) a complete Curriculum Vitae together with a condensed summary and photograph suitable for publication in the WFCC Newsletter;
- C) a statement summarizing the nominee's major contribution to the discipline of microbiology and/or practice of microbial culture collection, to the Federation or to both, together with information attesting to the high personal and professional standards of conduct of the candidate; and
- D) a bibliography of scientific publications and/or contributions to a relevant area of microbiology and microbial culture collections.

Upon receipt, this information shall be forwarded to the Honours Sub-Committee for assessment and review.

**Assessment and Review.** After the closing date for nominations, the Honours Sub-Committee will review the nominations received and place those considered acceptable and of sufficient merit in priority order.

A maximum of 2 nominations from the top of the listing will be recommended to the Executive Board for election to Honorary Membership. Executive Board members are to be provided with the condensed summaries of these nominees and if they gain approval of two-thirds of Executive Board members, they will be duly elected to Honorary status. Their names will be placed on the Honours List; their election will be announced at the next General Assembly and their summaries and photographs will be published in the WFCC Newsletter.

Persons nominated for Honorary Membership who were considered by the Honours Sub-Committee to be acceptable and of sufficient merit but who failed to gain endorsement of the Executive Board will be automatically included in the nominations for the next list. If election to Honorary Membership still does not occur, a fresh nomination will be required if consideration is to be continued.

