

EMS Committee for Developing Countries (CDC)

Where we stand and where we'll go
Herbert Fleischner (Chair)

At its annual meeting in April, this year, CDC formulated its policy as follows.

CDC policy

The EMS CDC should assist developing countries (DCs) wherever and whenever possible. For practical reasons, our main activities during the next years will see us focussing on African and Asian DCs. The EMS CDC is in a position to assist DCs at the following levels:

- (1) Developing mathematics curricula for schools and for universities.
- (2) Cooperating with local staff in conducting MSc and PhD programmes; holding special courses in areas of mathematics where there is no local expertise.
- (3) Helping to build up libraries through donations from colleagues in developed countries; mobilising funds to buy books for postgraduate studies and research purposes; supplying mathematical literature upon request by institutions and/or individual researchers in DCs; negotiating with publishers on special book rates for DCs.
- (4) Helping to build up regional centres and networks of excellence: these are centres directly or semi-attached to universities, which provide expertise in areas and on levels that regional universities are in need of.
- (5) Providing information about where students from DCs (who already have an MSc) can do their PhD, and what possibilities for PhD grants exist. At the same time, in order to minimise a brain drain, we will support efforts to build up PhD programmes in DCs according to international standards (regional centres of excellence could serve this purpose).
- (6) Mobilising funds for junior and senior researchers to attend conferences in developed countries, and also helping (both on an academic and financial level) to organise conferences in DCs.

In each of these topics (1)–(6), several CDC members and others within the EMS have already considerable experience. It is our intention to build up these activities to the full extent.

CDC members

CDC now consists of eleven 'regular' members: Herbert Fleischner (Vienna), fleischner@oeaw.ac.at; Leif Abrahamsson (Uppsala), leifab@math.uu.se; Lars Døvling Andersen (Aalborg), lda@math.auc.dk; Georg Bock (Heidelberg), Bock@ivr.uni-heidelberg.de; Doina Cioranescu, (Paris) cioran@ann.jussieu.fr; Michel Jambu (Nice),

Michel.Jambu@unice.fr; Angel Jorba (Barcelona), angel@maia.ub.es; M. S. Narasimhan (Trieste), narasim@ictp.trieste.it; Bernt Oksendal (Oslo), oksendal@math.uio.no; Andrzej Pelczar (Krakow), pelczar@im.uj.edu.pl; Tsou Sheung-Tsun (Oxford), tsou@maths.ox.ac.uk. H. Fleischner is CDC Chair, Tsou Sheung-Tsun his deputy, and Doina Cioranescu is the EMS EC member connected with the CDC.

Apart from CDC members, we also have colleagues whom we call CDC associates, who are involved in various CDC activities. CDC associates contribute to CDC activities on a more-or-less regular basis, but may be involved in DCs independently (which makes it rather desirable for CDC to assist them, whenever possible).

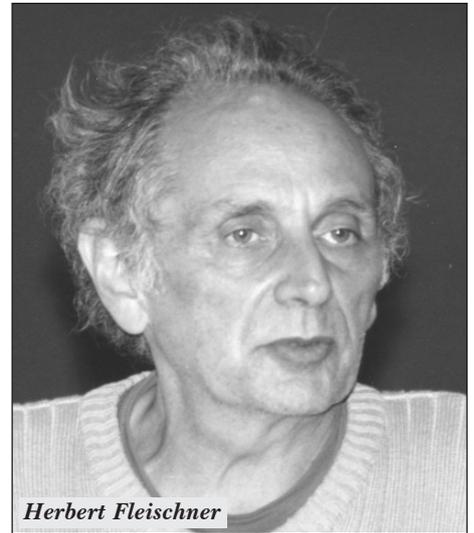
It may be that the CDC will be enlarged in the future: time and experience will show whether such enlargement will be needed. For the moment, however, we have not yet reached cruising height and cruising speed – to use airline language. We are still in the state of climbing to gain height, and still have to unfold activities where they are needed, combine efforts, build on the experiences of each other (that is, create synergies), so a lot of work lies ahead of us.

However, given the fairly short time since the end of April, when the CDC was re-activated, we have been quite successful – it is on track, anyway. On top of that, as the CDC's work progresses, it might get support from new CDC associates: offers of assistance have been considerable so far.

CDC subcommittees

The following CDC subcommittees have existed since the April CDC meeting.

- *Subcommittee on Africa*
Originally consisting of A. Pelczar and H. Fleischner, it was later joined by B. Oksendal and L. Abrahamsson, so this subcommittee comprises much experience gathered in large parts of this continent. On top of this, ICTP and CIMPA activities in Africa and direct assistance given by these two institutions to CDC make this subcommittee the most viable one at present.
- *Subcommittee on Asia*
The members are G. Bock and S.-T. Tsou. Through Bock's connections to Vietnam, and the CDC book donation programme (see *EMS Newsletter* 44 and below), we may consider Southeast Asia relatively covered by the CDC's current activities. Unfortunately, this subcommittee is currently the weakest – both in terms of members and (probably as a



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consequence) in terms of EMS assistance given to this region.

- *Subcommittee on scientific literature*
Originally staffed by H. Fleischner only, he and S.-T. Tsou (on the basis of their above-mentioned article 'Can you spare books?') are the most directly involved CDC members. In addition, B. Wegner has provided a lot of information about e-journals and electronically available scientific literature, otherwise available in print. Likewise, ICTP can be used as a source for scientific literature available on-line, and Bordeauxtheque is a source for research papers as well. This information still needs to be conveyed to our colleagues in DCs. However, as soon as we published the article in the *EMS Newsletter*, this book donation programme consumed most of the time dedicated to this subcommittee's work. This programme will continue (see below), and we will also include all the information on electronically available literature. This rapid development forces an expansion of this subcommittee, and this has already happened.

So much for the subcommittees which have existed since April. In addition, initial steps have been taken for establishing the following committee.

- *Subcommittee on Latin America* (including the Caribbean region).
Ultimately, A. Jorba will head this subcommittee, and L. Andersen will assist him in the leadership of this subcommittee, at least initially. However, other EMS members have ample experience in, and connections to, this region. Some are CDC associates, some are not (yet). Not only are such individual activities *per se* a valuable contribution to development cooperation, but such connections can help enormously in establishing a network of links between the CDC and the region (see below, concerning distribution centres).

We are aware of the fact, however, that due to historical developments, the needs of African, Asian and Latin American DCs may differ considerably. Here we are still in a learning process as a group, based on the connections between the CDC and corresponding partners in DCs. So much for

the subcommittees.

M. S. Narasimhan (ICTP) and M. Jambu (CIMPA) are not directly members of any subcommittee: they are active on a more global level within their respective organisations. Their expertise and connections as such, together with assistance (including financial aid) by ICTP and CIMPA for our activities, are of great help for the overall success of the CDC. Thus we may call ICTP and CIMPA the 'cornerstones' of the CDC's activities.

The CDC also needs money!

So far, CDC doesn't have its own budget which it might dispose of immediately. However, it does have an account – it's an EMS account, but it is a special account for the CDC. Here are the details: Account holder: European Mathematical Society Bank: Nordea Bank Finland Plc Acc. no. 157320-381160 (EUR) with SWIFT code (BIC) NDEAFIHH; IBAN: FI7815723000381160; Address: Branch 1572 Senaatintori, Aleksanterinkatu 30, FI-00020 Nordea, Finland.

Note that any convertible currencies can be transferred to this account. Unfortunately, transferring smaller amounts (stemming from individual donations, say) from outside Finland may be too costly in comparison to the donated amount. We are aiming therefore at a situation where the mathematical societies of individual EU-member countries act as a go-between, in that they collect small donations from individuals and transfer corresponding lump sums to the CDC's Helsinki account (the Austrian Mathematical Society is about to open an account for donations on the CDC's behalf; and as of 2004, donations for the CDC can be combined with payment of the annual membership fee).

With regard to shipping expenses in the framework of its book donation programme, the CDC has no financial worries at the moment. Transportation costs have been covered so far by donors' universities, ICTP and the University of Zimbabwe (that is, the receiver's side itself); we may also rely on EMS to some extent, and possibly CIMPA. However, fundraising will be an important activity for our immediate future.

CDC activities

Through our book donation programme, and also through establishing new contacts in DCs, the CDC has gained already considerable publicity in quite a few DCs, and also in the developed world. In fact, our book donation programme underwent a snowball effect, and as soon as our article 'Can you spare books?' appeared in the June issue of the *EMS Newsletter*, response by colleagues in Europe set in – practically immediately afterwards – and we even obtained books from the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton. Some colleagues even offered to collect books on our Programme's behalf; the *London Math Society (LMS) Newsletter* reprinted our article in its September issue, and a retired Canadian colleague, becoming aware of

our programme on the basis of our article as published by the LMS (!), has privately donated a large amount of books, almost exclusively of high standard. He has then initiated that the Canadian Mathematical Society publishes a modified version of our article (produced by CDC associate Gert Sabidussi with Herbert Fleischner) in the November issue of the *CMS Notes*. Practically simultaneously, Gert Sabidussi, Université de Montreal (UdeM), declared his readiness to act as a collecting point and 'clearing house' for book donations from Canada – that is, UdeM will not only provide space for storing the incoming parcels, but Sabidussi will sort the incoming books by quality. This help is not only a great support for the programme's logistics, but will also make the programme more effective from a global point of view; and towards the end of October, a colleague from Kent State University (having become aware of our programme by the same *LMS Newsletter* article), offered to donate several hundred advanced books; he also offered additional assistance for our programme.

By the time we turn to the AMS to join us in this book donation programme, in early 2003, we'll already have some contact persons in the USA. So, through the book donation programme and the preceding articles, we are already well known in large parts of Europe and Canada, and in smaller parts of the USA. Matters are developing in a self-propelling way. Later on, we may also turn to Australia and New Zealand to join this programme. Connections between the CDC members and associates and the SADC region (Southern Africa Developing Countries), and also other sub-Saharan African countries have already existed for some years. The book donation programme enriches these connections considerably, and through e-mail contacts with Jan Persens (President of the AMU) we are connected with all of Africa on a more general level: it is not an overstatement to say that we are already known in large parts of Africa. For Asia, the picture seems to be quite different. We are only represented in Vietnam through G. Bock's work, and some of the books donated to our programme went there. Likewise with Latin America and the Caribbean, the CDC as such doesn't seem to be known there yet.

The preceding remarks have already covered the book donation programme from various angles. However, there is an important aspect to this programme which is of relevance for our future work, far beyond the donation and distribution of scientific literature – establishing networks, whose nuclei are (in this case) the distribution centres in DCs through which we reach whole regions with our book donation programme.

At the very beginning of the book donation programme it became clear that it would not be practically feasible to supply individual universities, or centres of excellence, on a one-by-one basis. So, the idea of establishing distribution centres serving entire regions, or all universities of a pop-

ulous country (such as in Nigeria or South Africa), was soon born. First, the University of Zimbabwe (having been the first to obtain a donation) declared its readiness to serve as such a distribution centre for the SADC region, except for South Africa (SA). Soon afterwards, AIMS (the African Institute of Mathematical Sciences) likewise declared its readiness in the same direction. So, AIMS will serve South Africa in its entirety, whereas the University of Zimbabwe will distribute literature throughout the rest of the SADC region. We are about to establish formal contacts with new potential distribution centres, such as the Nigerian Mathematical Centre (NMC) in Abuja, which would serve all of Nigeria, and Senegal, serving West Africa (both anglo- and frankophone). A regional network embracing Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya might also be a potential distribution centre. So, in Africa, we soon will have four or more distribution centres, covering large parts of the continent.

In Asia, the only distribution centre so far is Vietnam, and in Latin America and the Caribbean region, we have at present two centres, in Venezuela and in Guatemala. More centres in both regions will be established in the future, we hope. Ultimately, the aim should be to establish a network of distribution centres which covers all DCs. In the long run, the distribution centres might also serve as focal points for the respective regions, in connection with other regional programmes, such as MSc or PhD programmes.

Other CDC activities involve individual CDC members and associates in the MSc and even PhD programmes in Africa and/or Asia, be it on the level of organising such programmes and/or in a teaching capacity and/or on the level of supervising the writing of theses. In future articles, we might describe the working of such programmes in more detail. Right now, plans are under way to organise a summer workshop at the University of Zimbabwe or in South Africa in 2004, involving CDC, CIMPA and MSISA (Southern Africa Mathematical Sciences Institute) as organising institutions, with mathematicians from European countries other than France, and African colleagues giving lectures to students. The CDC has also been asked to be a co-sponsor for a series of workshops in West Africa, or at least to assist them in finding additional funds (ICTP and CIMPA are the main sponsors). A closer cooperation between AIMS and CDC (apart from the book donation programme) might very well develop in the future.

As far as cooperation between the CDC and Asian countries is concerned, corresponding contacts still need to be established (apart from Vietnam). With regard to Latin America, the situation is not so 'grim', since we have 'dormant' contacts there, which will soon be activated by the CDC's corresponding subcommittee. The annual CDC meeting (8-9 February 2003, to be hosted by CIMPA in Nice) will pay particular attention to these questions.