

REPORT ON BUSINESS MEETINGS OF COMMISSION J - RADIO ASTRONOMY

Chair: Professor Roy S. Booth (Sweden)

Vice-Chair: Professor Jacqueline N. Hewitt (United States)

FIRST BUSINESS MEETING: 16 AUGUST 1999

1. Election of Vice-Chair

One candidate was nominated for the position of vice-chair, Professor Makoto Inoue of Nobeyama Radio Observatory in Japan. Seventeen letters from Commission J delegates were transmitted to the Chair before the General Assembly, testifying to the strong support for Professor Inoue's candidacy. Professor Inoue accepted the position of Vice Chair of Commission J.

2. Discussion of Commission J Sessions at General Assemblies

A discussion took place on the organization of sessions at URSI general assemblies. There was general agreement that at these meetings topics with strong connections to the other URSI commissions should be emphasized, that the session devoted to science should be made longer, and that conflicts between Commission J sessions and joint sessions involving Commission J should be avoided.

3. Review of Commission Activities

Professor Booth reviewed the activities and budget expenditures of the previous triennium.

4. Discussion of Coordinating Committee Meeting.

Professor Booth reported on the discussion that took place at the meeting of the Coordinating Committee. The participants' views on the publication of the Assembly abstract book and Reviews of Radio Science were solicited. There was a general feeling that more use should be made of electronic technology; for example, General Assembly abstracts should be put on the web. Participants strongly supported URSI's plans to distribute Reviews of Radio Science in CD form.

5. Reports of the Working Groups

Dr. Schilizzi reported on the activities of the Global VLBI Working Group. It was felt that this group should continue to operate, coordinating VLBI activities around the world.

It was decided that the Large Telescope Working Group would cease to operate since it had been successful in launching significant activities toward the development of a Square Kilometer Array (SKA) radio telescope. National research programs working toward the SKA are well under way, and an international steering committee coordinating and leading these efforts was being formed.

It was further decided that the Millimeter/Submillimeter Array Working Group would also be dissolved. Work in this area is now moving ahead with the ALMA project.

A discussion was held on new working groups that might be formed. It was felt that there is a need for a working group to participate in the effort to form an international radio quiet reserve for radio astronomy. Its role would be to communicate the scientific need for such a reserve, to develop technical specifications based on this scientific need, and to coordinate technical efforts.

6. Commission J Resolutions

Professor Booth invited proposals for resolutions to be presented at the Assembly. A discussion was held on the process for bringing resolutions to the Assembly; the opinion was strongly voiced that the Secretariat's requirement, that the resolution be written before the Assembly, was impractical. Rather, resolutions must be developed at the Assembly with the full participation of those present.

SECOND BUSINESS MEETING: 18 AUGUST 1999

1. Report on IUCAF

Dr. Baan presented a report on the activities of IUCAF. Of the four Commission J members (W. Baan, J. Cohen, K. Ruf, and J. Whiteoak), all except one (K. Ruf) were rotating off. It was agreed that Dr. Baan would remain as an ex officio member; Drs. van Driel, Tzioumis, and Davis were elected as new members.

2. Review of Radio Science

R. Strom reviewed the procedures for writing and submitting papers to the Review of Radio Science in preparation for further discussion at the next business meeting.

3. Commission J Resolutions

Two proposed Commission J resolutions were discussed: one that would create a working group to support efforts to create a radio quiet zone for astronomy, and one that would create a working group to study issues associated with the leap second.

THIRD BUSINESS MEETING: 20 AUGUST 1999

1. Tribute to Victims of Plateau de Bure Accident

A. Baudry spoke in memory of those killed in the tragic accident at Plateau de Bure.

2. Commission J Resolutions

Four resolutions were presented to the group and approved by those present.

These were:

- (1) To set up a working group to provide support to the OECD Task Force on safeguarding radio astronomy use of the spectrum
- (2) To set up a working group to study the effect of halting leap second insertions into UTC
- (3) To continue the activities of the Global VLBI Working Group
- (4) To recommend formation of regional working groups to monitor spectrum use and to safeguard radio astronomy use of the spectrum

3. General Assembly 2002

Topics for the next general assembly were presented by participants and discussed. The following topics for sessions were approved:

- (1) Radio and radar studies of the solar system
- (2) Post-COBE cosmic microwave background studies
- (3) Wide field imaging and mosaicing in radio interferometry
- (4) Interference mitigation for radio science
- (5) Antenna metrology and active control
- (6) Wideband array technologies and systems

The participants agreed to propose that the General Lecture be on the subject of measurements of the cosmic microwave background. The participants further agreed that the Commission J tutorial should be on the subject of "Positional Radio Astronomy and the Move Toward Microarcsecond Accuracy from Geodesy to Cosmology."

The participants suggested that the poster sessions be organized in a way that would encourage poster presentation and make them more accessible. Reserving time in the program for a poster review would increase their visibility. It was also felt that there should be more joint session with other commissions, and fewer sessions overall. The participants requested that a larger room be made available to Commission J during the next general assembly, and that arrangements be made so that it would be possible for participants to use their personal computers in presentations.

4. Reviews of Radio Science

The following topics for review papers were approved:

- (1) Gravitational lenses
- (2) Planetary radar astronomy
- (3) The search for extraterrestrial intelligence