

# ISTRC



## Newsletter



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# ISTRC Newsletter



A publication of the  
International Society for  
Tropical Root Crops

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## ISTRC Executive Council 1998-2000

President:	<i>Dr. N. Poulter</i>
Immediate Past-President:	<i>Dr. S. K. Hahn</i>
First Vice President:	<i>Dr. Masashi Kobayishi</i>
Second Vice President:	<i>Dr. M. O. Akoroda</i>
Secretary/Treasurer:	<i>Dr. Lynda Wickham</i>
Councillor Publications:	<i>Dr. M. Bokanga</i>
Councillor for Regions:	
Africa:	<i>Dr. J. A. Otoo</i>
Asia:	<i>Dr. Katsumi Komaki</i>
Caribbean:	<i>to be appointed</i>
Latin America:	<i>to be appointed</i>
N. America/Europe:	<i>Dr. P. K. Biswas</i>
South Pacific:	<i>Dr. S. Chandra</i>

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Cover photo: Participants of the 11th ISTRC Symposium at the University of West Indies, Saint Augustine, Trinidad.

# Report of the 11th International Symposium for Tropical Root Crops (ISTRC)

The triennial symposium was held in Port of Spain Trinidad and Tobago during the period 19-24 October 1997 and was hosted by the University of the West Indies (UWI St Augustine) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources (MALMR).

Over 70 papers and 30 posters were presented to the Symposium from around 120 delegates drawn from 33 countries around the world.

The Symposium was opened by the Minister (MALMR) and the UWI St. Augustine Campus Principal and Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture.

The proceedings of the Symposium were divided into plenary and simultaneous sessions covering production and productivity, propagation and tuberisation, utilization and utility, pests and diseases, genetics and breeding technology. A book of abstracts which also includes details of the programme is attached.

Sponsorship for delegates to participate at the Symposium were received from six principal sources. These were:

- (i) Commonwealth Foundation
- (ii) European Commission (DG XII)
- (iii) Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)
- (iv) Department for International Development (Central funds)
- (v) Department for International Development (RNRRS Crop Post-Harvest Research Programme)
- (vi) International Foundation for Science (IFS)

In addition support was also received from the International Science

Programme for Uppsala University, Sweden.

Sponsorship supported the attendance of a total of 31 delegates valued at approximately US\$ 60,000. This sponsorship is gratefully acknowledged and was recorded at the Official Opening Ceremony, during the General Meeting of ISTRC Members and at the Official Closing Ceremony. The support from sponsors will be recorded in the Proceedings of the Symposium.

The proceedings will be published as a special issue of the Journal of Tropical Agriculture of the University of the West Indies and these are expected, subject to additional sponsorship to be ready to go to press by April 1998.

During the Symposium the Executive Council of the Society held a General Meeting of members present and elected a new Council led by Dr. N. Poulter as the new President.

The quality of the scientific presentations made to the Symposium were judged to be of a high standard, though variable depending on the resources available to some researchers in developing countries. The fact that the Journal of Tropical Agriculture is willing to accept the majority of papers for publication, albeit well edited, is testimony to their level of quality and relevance to the leadership.

The logistical arrangements for the Symposium, both scientifically and socially, were very well organized allowing optimal interactions between delegates from around the globe.

## ISTRC 2000

The 12th International Symposium of ISTRC will be held in Tsukuba, Japan, September 10-16, 2000

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# Acceptance Speech of ISTRC President-elect at General Meeting of 22 October 1997

*Nigel Poulter, President elect*

Mr. President, Members of the Executive Council, Members of the Society.

Our Society, indeed any Society, is only as good/strong as its membership.

The Executive Council gives guidance and facilitation to its members - which it must represent. It is therefore **your** Society and you must be persistent in demanding what you want from it.

My feeling from what I've seen over the last six years, in my earlier roles as Councillor Publications and VP (Fund Raising) is that members are strong and enthusiastic, but perhaps feel a little let down by the wider contribution that the Society has made up to now.

I have not therefore taken acceptance of this nomination as President lightly - since if I am to be what I consider to be an "effective" President then it will require a great deal of commitment and foresight.

I would also expect this level of commitment from our **councillors** and you the membership. Shakespeare, the world famous poet, wrote a play called "The Merchant of Venice". You may be familiar with this play, in which the merchant wished to "extract his pound of flesh" in return for a favor that he gave. Councillors and members may therefore wish to look upon me as "the merchant" of roots because I will expect everybody to contribute fully. I may not be liked as a consequence.

As the new President I intend to develop together with you a vision for the Society, (with an associated strategy for its achievements) which I hope will be sustained as we move through the next years.

I believe the Society has a significant role (through its membership drawn from around the world) to serve as an effective lobby group to provide and advise on coherent policies for research and development of tropical root crops into the future.

We will raise our profile as a profes-

sional Society, capable of guiding and responding to the needs of all sectors "Our Stakeholders" - ranging from the general public, which includes tropical root crop farmers, traders, processors, consumers and their associations through such agencies as National Agricultural Research and Extension Organizations, the so-called Advanced Research Organizations, the International Centres of the CGIAR and the Private Sector".

We will improve the level and quality of communications between members of our Society.

To do this, we will do a number of things which include: publish the Proceedings of the Symposium in good time.

We will explore mechanisms for the appropriate use of electronic information exchange, mechanisms, including e-mail domains, web sites and by other means.

We will develop the Society's Newsletter to become a regular and informative feature of the Society, and we will identify and commission reviews and studies on topical issues which I intend to publish on a regular basis as a bulletin series of the Society.

We will look to our beneficial association with other respected professional societies and networks thereby serving as a conduit for interchange of information from our commodity based society to other more broadly based societies - such as the various national and international Crop Science Societies, the Tropical Agriculture Association and so on, and with National and Regional Root Crops Society such as those in the Caribbean, Japan, Brazil, India and so on. We will also explore in depth the relationships that ISTRC has with its regional branches in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific.

It is my intention to consider the establishment of a permanent Secretariat for our Society to ensure that there is con-

tinuity into the future so that we might develop an improved institutional memory and archives, whilst serving as an effective clearing house for coordination of our new activities and roles.

I would also develop clear terms of reference for each members of the Council, including the President.

It would be my intention to seek support for all these activities from the range of traditional sponsors as well as new sponsors. For our Society to grow in stature we need to be seen to be credible source of professional advice arising from our membership. Success breeds success, and I believe that if we can raise our professional profile, we will attract strong support. This will in turn raise the numbers of our membership.

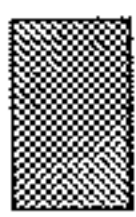
I have therefore come full circle in that I started by saying that **Our** Society is only as good and as strong as its membership. Growth in our membership will be a strong indicator of our success.

In conclusion, I will, as your new President, give my very best efforts to the positive evolution of Our Society - to make it one which our members re- overly proud of and which is known for its professional integrity and ability to deliver by all our "stakeholders".

I cannot finish without thanking outgoing members of the Executive Council, and in particular our President, Dr. Hahn, our Secretary/Treasurer, Dr. Bonsi, and finally Dr. Ceaser, our Past President. These colleagues have contributed very significantly to the Society to make it what it is today and would like us all to acknowledge their contribution to our Society.

I am humbled by your nomination as President of this Society at a time when we have returned to our roots here in Trinidad and Tobago. I hope that, I, together with our Council, will be able to make these roots flourish and flower abundantly into the future.

Thank you.



# Draft Terms of Reference for ISTRC Executive Council (November 1997)

## President

Job Description: To represent, as leader of the Executive Council and the Society's membership, the best interests of the Society in furtherance of its Aims.

Terms of Reference:

- To oversee the actions of the Executive Council and to ensure appropri-

- ate actions are taken to schedule.
- To represent the Membership, in accordance with the Constitution.
- To develop and maintain the development of the Society, in association with the Executive Council through its strategic action plan, publications and fund raising activities.
- To preside over the Triennial Symposium.

- In association with the Secretary/Treasurer, ensure suitable arrangements are made for the hosting and delivery of the Triennial Symposium.
- To ensure actions, as appropriate, are taken to maintain the society in positive financial balance, at all times.

## Vice President (Fund Raising)

Job Description: To act on behalf of the President and Members of the Society to solicit appropriate funding and other support for the Society's activities in furtherance of the Society's aims.

Terms of Reference:

- To develop, cultivate and maintain links with all appropriate sources of support to the Society, including financial support.

- To manage the sourcing of support in a manner professionally consistent with the aims of the Society.
- To ensure that all conditions associated with support granted to the Society are duly met.
- To call upon all other members of the Executive Council to assist the officer in the execution of his duties, as required.
- To prepare ad hoc and at minimum regular annual reports on the above to the Secretariat each year in Sep-

- tember, and in advance of the Triennial Symposium covering the previous three years.
- To attend the Triennial Symposium of the Society and provide a verbal report to the General Meeting supported by the written report which will be copied to all members attending the meeting in advance.
- To deputize for the President by arrangement with the President.

## Secretary/Treasurer (permanent)

Job Description: To serve as the operational and coordination centre of the Society and to manage its financial resources.

Terms of Reference:

- To hold, manage and account for the Society's financial resources.
- To release funds only with the prior agreement of the President.
- To serve as a centre for collation and maintenance of past records and information pertaining to the Society's activities.

- To prepare annual audited accounts of the Society and to have prepared in advance of the Triennial Symposium a statement of the accounts.
- To take responsibility for membership recruitment drives and follow through.
- To prepare ad hoc and at minimum regular annual reports on the above to the Executive Council each year in September, and in advance of the Triennial Symposium covering the previous three years.
- To attend the Triennial Symposium of the Society and provide a verbal report to the General Meet-

- ing supported by the written report which will be copied to all members attending the meeting in advance.
- To facilitate and accept all financial resources owing to the Society including income from membership fees, conference registration and other income.
- To maintain at all times a current membership list, ensure membership renewals are issued and received, and distribute the list annually to all members.
- To provide to the GM of the Triennial Symposium an account of the membership.

## Councillor Publications

**Job Description:** To promote the interests of the Society in furtherance of its Aims through the management of all dissemination outputs (publications) that arise.

### Terms of Reference:

- To seek and collate relevant information for publication in the Society's twice yearly Newsletter.
- To develop and manage the development of the Society's electronic

information systems.

- To manage the coordination of paper and poster contributions made to the Triennial Symposium - making arrangements for their selection, technical review and compilation, in association with the President and the Secretary.
- To develop and manage the public relations/awareness propaganda emerging from the Society.
- To manage the development of a Bulletin Series of the Society.

- To prepare ad hoc and at minimum regular annual reports on the above to the Secretariat each year in September, and in advance of the Triennial Symposium covering the previous three years.
- To attend the Triennial Symposium of the Society and provide a verbal report to the General Meeting supported by the written report which will be copied to all members attending the meeting in advance.

## Regional Councillors

**Job Description:** To be the Society's representative in the region to facilitate two way exchange of information relevant to the furtherance of the Society's aims.

### Terms of Reference:

- To publicize the activities of the ISTRC at appropriate fora.
- To serve as the linkage between the Mother Society and the regional branches of the Society.
- To seek new members to the Society.

- To review and contribute to strategic reviews, overviews of national/regional requirements and activities.
- To review scientific papers as required.
- To inform the ISTRC Executive Council through the Publication Councillor of activities, new initiatives, workshops, conferences, resolutions, national and regional plans and any other appropriate information which is of relevance to the Society and its wider membership.

- To prepare ad hoc and at minimum regular annual reports on the above to the Secretariat each year in September, and in advance of the Triennial Symposium covering the previous three years.
- To attend the Triennial Symposium of the Society and provide a verbal report to the General Meeting supported by the written report which will be copied to all members attending the meeting in advance.

# Highlights of Tropical Root Crop Activities in the South Pacific, 1994-97

## Dr. S. Chandra, Councillor, South Pacific

There are 6 participants from the South Pacific at this Symposium. They have given papers in areas of policy development, plant nutrition, economics and agronomy.

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) continues to support research into nutritional studies of cassava, sweet potatoes, taro and yams in the South Pacific. This work is undertaken by the University of Queensland and the Australian National University researchers and scientists in Samoa and Tonga.

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) funds agricul-

tural projects in the South Pacific. Several of these projects support agricultural production and protection which are directly and indirectly linked to tropical root crops.

The Australian National University continues to work on a number of projects in Papua New Guinea which have impact on tropical root crops. The University of New England has several projects on the economics of tropical root crop production and marketing in Fiji and other countries.

The University of South Pacific, Suva and Alafua Campuses, continues to do work on production and breeding of

taro varieties.

The University of Technology, Papua New Guinea has a major program on taro and sweet potatoes agronomy.

National Agricultural Research Centres in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomons, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Niue and Kiribati continue to undertake research and extension work on cassava, taro, giant taro, yams and sweet potatoes. Main themes are on breeding, varietal selections, production systems, pests and disease control, post-harvest storage, marketing, human nutrition and extension messages.



# Closing Speech from the New President ISTRC

*Nigel Poulter, President ISTRC*

We have come to the end of another very interesting Symposium. This has been the 11th in which we have returned to the birthplace of the Society.

We have listened to over 70 papers and had the pleasure of viewing over 30 posters. More than one hundred people from 33 countries have attended.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, sweet potato, yams and taro have been firm favorites, with cassava and round potato taking something, for many presentations, of a back seat at this meeting. This may be in part a reflection of the importance of sweet potato, yams and taro in the Caribbean region, but also in Asia from where we have had strong representation at this meeting. Unfortunately, despite its relative proximity, representation of our membership from countries in Latin America has been disappointing, whilst our African brothers, despite problems of distance and visas, have made a good showing.

Looking at the balance of oral and poster presentations across the fields of research it is particularly interesting for me to note that a good proportion have dealt with post-production aspects. These have included product development, processing innovations, quality assessment and market development. This, I feel is an encouraging evolution, perhaps reflecting the increased involvement and interaction with private sector interests in tropical root crops, and perhaps also the view expressed on a number of occasions during the week with respect to the need for agricultural diversification and value addition for the benefit of smallholder farmers and consumers of these crops.

The Symposium organizers have been tough with authors of papers to ensure hard and electronic copies have been lodged in advance of the meeting and that they have been technically reviewed during the week. I think you will all agree with me that this discipline will be of benefit to those authors who have stood the pace and ultimately to the

Society in terms of the quality of the Proceedings it produces. We have heard that these Proceedings will be published as a special volume of the *J. Tropical Agriculture (UWI)* and it is the Ex Council's firm expectation that these will be prepared in record time.

We owe a considerable debt of gratitude to our hosts here in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. We have been hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, together with the University of the West Indies. We have enjoyed the traditional generosity and friendship of the peoples of this place. I believe those of us who are visitors will leave with sorrow but with fine memories which I am sure will linger on and draw us back whenever possible to these beautiful islands.

I would like again to thank most sincerely our hosts and to especially recognize the Trojan efforts and commitment of one person. This person, against high odds, and with little money, has learnt over the preceding months to become an insomniac, a banker, an editor, a travel agency and tour operator, an expert in making telephone calls around the world in the middle of the night, and confirmed *nouveau* addict of the computer and its e-mail functions.

And all this has been addition to her normal duties as a senior lecturer at the UWI at St. Augustine and as a top class research scientist. I do, of course, refer to the ISTRC Vice President for this Symposium, Dr. Lynda Wickham, new Councillor/Treasurer. But there are many other people to thank also, including our sponsors for this Symposium, who have been acknowledged in the Vote of Thanks at the Official Opening Ceremony. They include the Commonwealth Foundation, the European Commission, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the International Foundation for Science (IFS) and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) formerly known as the Overseas Development Administration

(ODA), together with a range of local sponsors. Again many thanks to you all for your tremendous support.

I would like to add to this list those who are unfortunately often forgotten - but without whom nothing could ever happen. These are all those people who gave us such a friendly welcome at the airport and swiftly facilitated our entry into Trinidad. And there are also those who carried us safely around Port of Spain and into the countryside on our various tours and visits. To all of you from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources, thank you.

I spoke in my address to you yesterday, as your new President, of the vision that I have for our Society. I spoke of the role that the Society will play in raising the profile of our mandated crops with regard to the place that they have in sustained food security into the next millennium. We will achieve this through putting our house in order, making our activities more transparent and delivering what is expected of us to our membership and the wider agricultural research and development community. You will therefore be hearing from me again soon and I sincerely encourage your active participation in this process.

Thank you all, safe journeys, and see you again very soon.



# Vice President (fund raising) Report to General Meeting Trinidad 22 October 1997

*Nigel Poulter*

In mid 1996 over 30 potential sponsors for the Symposium were contacted. Only around 10 replies were received by December 1996 and those not responding were recontacted in January 1997.

Sponsorship for delegates to participate at the Symposium were received from six principal sources. These are:

- (i) Commonwealth Foundation
- (ii) European Commission (DG XII)
- (iii) Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)

- (iv) Department for International Development (Central funds)
- (v) Department for International Development (RNRRS Crop Post-Harvest Research Programme)
- (vi) International Foundation for Science (IFS)

In addition support was also received from the International Science Programme of Uppsala University, Sweden.

This sponsorship supported the attendance of 31 delegates from 17 coun-

tries. These were Australia, Barbados, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Malawi, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, USA and UK.

The average cost to support delegates' attendance at the Symposium was US\$ 2000.

The CTA have expressed an interest in supporting the production of the proceedings that will be issued from the Symposium and this will be discussed with them in the next few weeks.

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## International Foundation for Science (IFS) – Research Grants for young developing country scientists

IFS is an international, non governmental, nonprofit organization.

Its Secretariat is located in Stockholm, Sweden. IFS is governed by an international Board of Trustees. The overall objective of IFS is to contribute to the strengthening of capacity in developing countries to conduct relevant and high quality research on the management, use and conservation of biological resources and the environment which these resources occur in and depend on.

IFS aims to identify young promising scientists with a potential for becoming future lead scientists and science leaders and supports them in their early careers to enable them to get established and recognized, nationally and internationally.

IFS support is primarily financial and in the form of research grants. These amount to USD 12,000 and may be renewed. An IFS grant is neither a travel grant nor a study fellowship, but rather is intended for the purchase of basic tools of research: equipment, expendable supplies, and literature. IFS grants are awarded on an individual basis.

Upon becoming an IFS grantee, the Foundation also makes available other kinds of support such as arranging scientific contacts for the grantee and organizing IFS workshops and regional meetings.

Supplementary travel grants may be awarded in order that grantees may attend scientific meetings. An important service provided by IFS is the purchase and delivery of equipment and supplies to grantees.

Applicants for an IFS grant have to be native to a developing country in Latin America, Africa, or Asia (excluding countries in Eastern and South Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union). They have to have an academic degree of not less than an MSc. or the equivalent. At the time they submit their first proposal to IFS, they have to be younger than 40 years and at the beginning of their research career. For candidates from China an upper age limit of 30 applies. Applicants must be employed at a university or research institution in a developing country; the institution is expected to provide salaries and basic research facilities. The research pro-

posed by the applicant has to be carried out in a developing country, and it must be relevant to the needs of the country or region. IFS accepts applications in the areas of Crop Science, Food Science, Forestry/Agroforestry, Natural Products, Animal Production, and Aquatic Resources.

Applications must be made on the IFS application form (in English or French) which is available from the IFS Secretariat. IFS relies on a worldwide network of senior scientists to evaluate the research proposals.

International Foundation for Science  
Grev Turegatan 19  
S-11438 Stockholm, Sweden  
Phone: +46 8 54581800, Fax: +46 8 54581801, Internet E-Mail: info@ifs.se



## Application/renewal of membership/request for publications

I wish to be a member of the ISTRC, and I enclose:

Membership fee 1998-2000 ..... US\$30.00

[please pay in US\$ using a bank draft made out to ISTRC]

Name: Prof/Dr./Mr./Mrs/Ms.\* .....

Address: .....

Phone No: ..... Fax No. ....

E-mail address: .....

Area of research/interest: .....

\*Indicate preferred title

I would like to join ROOTCROPS, the e-mail listserver of ISTRC Yes  No

### Please mail your payment and request form to:

Dr. Lynda Wickham, Secretary-Treasurer, ISTRC  
Crop Science Unit  
Department of Food Production  
University of the West Indies  
St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, W.I.

**From:** ISTRC

c/o Dr. Lynda Wickham  
Crop Science Unit  
Department of Food Production  
University of the West Indies  
St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, W.I.

**TO**

