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Interciencia Focuses on Plant Resources and Latin Biotechnology Network

This spring, the Interciencia Association (IA), assisted in a program aimed at encouraging the utilization of underexploited plant resources in the Americas while continuing to cooperate with a new Latin American Network of Biotechnology Centers.

• At Ríonegro, Colombia, in March, botanists, phytochemists, and other experts from the nine countries whose scientific organizations constitute IA (Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, the United States, and Venezuela) led a seminar ranking the merits of plant species which are potential new sources of food, energy, or industrial raw materials. Together with delegates from the member associations, they drafted a report recommending establishment of the Interciencia Bioresources Program (PIRB) and indicated some eight species as prime candidates deserving the research, development, or commercialization efforts of more than one country. The report is to be presented to the Inter-American Development Bank which supported a 2-year study leading to the PIRB recommendations, and to other potential funding agencies.

AAAS was represented at the meeting by Richard Evans Schultes, director of the Harvard University Botanical Museum, who has chaired an AAAS advisory panel on PIRB since 1982, and by Philip H. Abelson, editor of *Science*.

Participating scientists were enthused at the prospect of fresh approaches and increased resources for cooperative research in tropical America on useful plants, whether typified by the jessenia and peach palms, or leguminous shrubs such as calliandra and prosopis. As IA president Michel Bergeron remarked to leaders of the Colombian Association for Advancement of Science, who hosted the seminar, "Three years of work have led to eight projects, which should launch a great endeavor—the essential objective of Interciencia."

• Several thousand miles south, scientists from the principal biotechnology centers of Latin America gathered at La Plata, Argentina, to plan for stronger Latin American participation in world biotechnology through regional technical cooperation. With the encourgement of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Unesco, and other groups, organizing scientists from seven countries, together with delegates from the governments of Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela reached agreement during the week of 19 March to establish the Latin American Network of Biotechnology Centers. (Brazil was represented at the meeting by individual scientists; governmental endorsement is expected soon.)

Presentations at La Plata conveyed a sense of urgency regarding the needs of Latin America and developing countries for training and investment if the benefits of biotechnology—in agriculture and human and animal health—are to be available on acceptable terms, and if the gap between developing and industrial countries is not to widen indefinitely. Objectives of the Network include strengthening the basic science related to biotechnology, especially microbiology, molecular biology, genetics, and immunology; creating industrial pilot projects; sharing data systems; and addressing problems of a multinational character.

Several core activities are planned for an initial 3-year period, with a budget of some $500,000, provided primarily by United Nations–related agencies. "We give this a very high priority," said a senior UNDP representative, referring to the problem areas to be addressed by the Network, including nitrogen fixation, biofuels, monoclonal antibodies, and vaccines for tropical diseases.

Planners of the Network were aware of the formation last October of the Interciencia Continuing Committee for Networking in Biotechnology (NBI), whose chairman, Rodrigo Zeledon, attended the La Plata meeting (see *Science*, 6 April, page 49). Network organizers asked for the continuing collaboration of IA in the implementation of the Network's plans of action, specifically in organizing a series of workshops and in circulating a newsletter about biotechnology in Latin America.

Chilean biologist Jorge Allende saluted the role IA has played in the inception of the Network, through the pioneer symposium, "Biotechnology in the Americas: Prospects for Developing Countries," held in San Jose, Costa Rica, in 1983.

JAMES W. ROWE
Interciencia Association

Truman and Science

A four-page bibliography on Harry Truman and science has been prepared in connection with the special exhibit, on display at the 1984 AAAS Annual Meeting in New York City, commemorating the centennial of Truman's birth.

The bibliography is available, free, from AAAS Archivist Michele Aldrich, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036

New Data Guide Available

The Scientific Manpower Commission, with a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), has published a "roadmap" to data on scientists and engineers. Designed to enhance the available data from all sources, and particularly from NSF reports, this new guide will assist both the regular researcher and the occasional user of data on scientists and engineers.

The 288-page *Guide to Data on Scientists and Engineers* consists of three indexes (bibliographic, by field, and by year) to data collected since 1973 by 49 organizations and published in about 170 reports or series of reports.

The bibliographic index is organized alphabetically by publisher. It includes

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