

**WORKING GROUP FOR THE WORLDWIDE DEVELOPMENT OF ASTRONOMY**  
**GROUPE DE TRAVAIL POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT MONDIAL DE L'ASTRONOMIE**

Chairman: A. H. Batten

Members: J.B. Hearnshaw, B. Hidayat, H. Jorgensen, Y. Kozai, D. McNally, M. Pineda de Carias, J.R. Percy, D.G. Wentzel

Consultant: S. Raither

During the past triennium some effort has been put into setting up what we hope will be an effective Working Group which currently has the above composition. Membership includes the Presidents of Commissions 38 and 46 ex-officio, so some regular change is built in every three years, as these Presidents change. Thanks are due to R. Kippenhahn, P. Lena, and J. Sahade, members of the original Working Group, who have retired from its active membership. The Chairman retains an extensive mailing list of about some 100 names. All those on that list will continue to receive the WG Newsletter. The present system is to mail one Newsletter annually, in April. At the time of writing, two such mailings have been made since the last General Assembly.

In October 1995, a National Seminar on Astrophysics was held in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, immediately before the total solar eclipse, with financial support from the IAU. Much of the organization of the Seminar was undertaken by N.Q. Rieu of the Paris Observatory, and colleagues from several countries came to give introductory talks in several areas of astrophysics. A. Batten and D. Wentzel both participated. It is intended to publish the proceedings. D. Wentzel also went to a continuation meeting in Hanoi and visited Vinh University to investigate the possibility of a TAD (Teaching for Astronomy Development) programme in Viet Nam. Y. Kozai also visited Viet Nam early in 1996. Colleagues in Thailand used the solar eclipse as an opportunity for arranging an international meeting on binaries. This meeting, which was organized by K.-C. Leung, was not directly connected with the Working Group.

In April-May of 1996, A. Batten and D. Wentzel attended the II Curso CentroAmericano de Astronomia y Astrofisica, held in San Salvador, El Salvador, and went on from there to visit the Central American Observatory in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The six Spanish-speaking countries of Central America are collaborating in the development of astronomy in the region. All but one of them were represented in San Salvador. They have formed a regional astronomical society and are eager for collaboration with the IAU. A. Batten and D. Wentzel have each submitted reports on their visits to the Executive Committee.

A. Batten and D. McNally plan to visit Morocco for a week or ten days in October 1996. During their visit, they hope to assess the situation of astronomers in that country and to make appropriate recommendations to the IAU Executive. The decision to make this visit was at least partly a result of the session on "Astronomy in Africa" held at the last General Assembly.

J. Haubold, A. Batten, D. McNally and J. Percy (and others) have been cooperating on the preparation of a document on astronomy in developing countries to be published soon by the United Nations. It is hoped that this will be both a resource for astronomers in developing countries and a useful document for government officials. It should be available before the end of 1996. These people also expect to take part in the UN/ESA Workshop on Basic Space Science for Developing Countries, to be held in Bonn, Germany, in September, 1996.

The WG proposal, submitted in cooperation with Commissions 38 and 46, for a day-long Joint Discussion on the theme "Enhancing Astronomy Research and Education in Developing Countries", has been approved by the Executive Committee as part of the programme for the XXIII General Assembly in Kyoto, Japan in August, 1997. Preparations for this JD are now well under way.

Attention is drawn to the useful series of articles "Worldbeat" published in Mercury, the popular magazine of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. Although this series was not begun as an initiative of the WG or the IAU, it is doing much to draw attention to the needs of our colleagues in developing countries. A. Batten and J. Percy have already contributed to it.

The concerns of the Working Group overlap with those of Commissions 38 and 46, and readers may find the reports of those Commissions also to be of interest to them.

A. H. Batten,  
Chairman.