

Report of the 20th ICCE, 3-8 August 2008, Mauritius

The 20th International Conference on Chemical Education (20th ICCE) was held from 3rd to 8th August 2008 at Le Méridien Hotel, in Mauritius. The theme of the conference was “Chemistry in the ICT Age”.

The 20th ICCE started with a virtual conference, which was held from 1st to 25th July 2008. 45 papers were presented in the virtual conference and 371 participants from 44 countries participated in the discussion. Prof L. Jones and her group presented the keynote address entitled “Designing Effective Visualizations of Molecular Structure and Dynamics”. The presentation entitled “Chemistry in Daily life: Good Reasons to Opt for Chemistry” from the second year BSc (Hons) Chemistry students from the University of Mauritius was well appreciated by the participants. Participants expressed their satisfaction about the virtual conference and many of them acknowledged that this was their first participation in an online conference.

Prof M.-H. Chiu, Dr L. Schoen and Dr E. Steenberg conducted the Young Ambassador Chemistry (YAC) Workshop from 31st July to 2nd August 2008. 30 local Chemistry teachers attended the workshop and on 2nd August, they performed several demonstrations to the students and the public.

200 participants coming from 40 countries attended the 20th ICCE in Mauritius, thus reflecting the international atmosphere of the gathering. There were 9 invited plenary lectures and one of them, “Chemistry’s Essential Tensions: Different Ways of Looking at a Science”, was delivered by Prof R. Hoffmann, the 1981 Chemistry Nobel Prize winner. He expressed three aspects of Chemistry namely (i) Chemistry a few hundred years ago, (ii) Chemistry becoming the art, craft, business and science, and (iii) The perception of chemistry today. In his plenary deliberation on climate change and the role of chemistry, Prof P. Mahaffy, the chairman of the committee on chemistry education of IUPAC, referred to the responsibility of chemistry educators to understand the link between human activity and chemical reactivity. The conference attracted 140 oral and 50 poster presentations. The presentations were mainly research findings, thoughts and approaches to using ICT in Chemistry and Science education. There were four parallel oral sessions and the discussion in each session was very lively with the participation of those internationally renowned in Chemical education. Apart from presentations, there were also 5 symposia and 6 workshops where the participants were involved in active learning and demonstrations.

K. Axberg and S. Olsson presented a drama entitled “Chemhistory Performance”. The drama relates to the history of Chemistry and was very well appreciated by the audience.

Participants of the conference also enjoyed the social evenings and the delicacies of Mauritius. There was also a one-day conference tour taking the participants to interesting places of the Island.

A satellite meeting was organized by Prof S. Wandiga on behalf of the Kenya Chemical Society and it was held at the University of Nairobi. 60 delegates registered, and they

included University staff, students and secondary school teachers of Chemistry. The majority of the participants were from Kenya and some of them were from Uganda and Tanzania.

The Organising Committee of the 20th ICCE, the President, Dr H Li Kam Wah, the Chairman, Dr P Ramasami, the secretaries, Dr S Jhaumeer-Laulloo and Dr M Gupta-Bhowon and other members would like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of the 20th ICCE. We hope that this meeting has been a suitable gathering and has generated interesting ideas for improving the teaching and public image of Chemistry.

The next International Conference on Chemical Education, the 21st ICCE, will be held from 8th to 13th August 2010 in Taiwan and the theme will be “Chemical Education & Sustainability in the Global Age”.

Assoc Prof P Ramasami
Chairman of the Organising Committee

Group Photo of the Participants

