

PHYSICS SOCIETIES IN ASIA AND PACIFIC FORM UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION

A new force in physics has appeared in the form of the Association of Asia-Pacific Physical Societies. AAPPS held its first general meeting last August in Seoul, South Korea, and elected officers to two-year terms. C.N. (Frank) Yang, representing the Hong Kong Physical Society, is president. Yang is associated with both the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The vice president of AAPPS is Michiji Konuma of Keio University, a former president and current vice president of the Physical Society of Japan, and the secretary is Kenneth Young, a physics professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Twelve physicists active in the affairs of physical societies in the Asia-Pacific region were elected to the first council. They include Abdus Salam, director of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste.

Yang, in an address delivered at the Fourth Asia-Pacific Physics Conference in Seoul, described AAPPS as a natural result of four factors: rapidly accumulating knowledge from education and research in all branches of physics; the growing importance of physics to industrial, economic and environmental developments in all countries; the increased economic and political weight of the Asia-Pacific region; and shifting alignments in the world economy and in regional politics. "The formation of AAPPS is the right event at the right time," Yang said.

According to Konuma, who described the new organization to *PHYSICS TODAY* during a visit he made to New York, the main initial activity of AAPPS will be support of regional conferences, workshops, symposia, summer schools and general conferences. The association already is publishing a newsletter, and starting this year, it will be folded into *Asia Pacific Physics*, a private journal-magazine supported by UNESCO, ICTP and the Physical Society of Japan.

The merged publication will be named *AAPPS Bulletin*, and the first issue will appear in June 1991.

The idea of forming an all-inclusive Asia-Pacific association of physical societies originated in discussions first held around 1980, which continued at conferences in 1983, 1986 and 1988. In 1988 an *ad hoc* group was formed to discuss the establishment of AAPPS, and in early 1989 it invited all major physical societies in the region to join as founding members. Seventeen societies responded, and AAPPS was formally established in October 1989.

As presently constituted, AAPPS is an umbrella organization representing member societies, not countries. Thus it has been able, for example, to accommodate physical societies from the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and discussions have been held with a view to bringing in a North Korean physics organization. (The Korean Physical Society, representing physicists in South Korea, already is a member.) Expectations are that cooperative arrangements will be reached with The American Physical Society and the European Physical Society.

DAVIDSON TAKES OVER AS DIRECTOR OF PRINCETON PLASMA PHYSICS LAB

Ronald C. Davidson, a professor of physics at MIT and director of MIT's Plasma Fusion Center from 1978 to 1988, has become director of the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory. He succeeds Harold P. Furth, who is now a senior research scientist at Princeton.

The Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory faces a critical period, with both national and international policies regarding magnetic confinement fusion in some disarray. The lab has suffered repeated budget cuts in recent years, and its staff has dropped from around 1300 (in 1984) to about 800. Nonetheless, the lab has largely satisfied the experimental objectives it set for operating its Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor on deuterium, and it is preparing to start experiments with deuterium-tritium fuel in mid-1993.

In addition to running the TFTR, Princeton has proposed building a Compact Ignition Tokamak at a cost currently estimated at about \$940 million. The question of whether to authorize a compact tokamak, together with cuts in the Department of Energy's fusion budget, were among the issues that led in 1989 to the

highly controversial resignation of Robert O. Hunter Jr as DOE's director of energy research (see *PHYSICS TODAY*, January 1990, page 49). DOE's fusion policy advisory committee has recommended to Energy Secretary James D. Watkins that DOE increase fusion funding and proceed with construction of the compact tokamak.

Davidson's experience in government as well as his leadership of another major fusion lab recommended him to Princeton, according to the university's provost, Paul Benacerraf, who led the search for a new director. Before joining MIT's faculty, Davidson worked for two years in DOE's office of fusion energy, and from 1982 to 1986 he was chair of DOE's magnetic fusion advisory committee.

A native of Canada and a US citizen, Davidson earned a BS at McMaster University in 1963 and a doctorate at Princeton in 1966. After doing a postdoc at the University of California, Berkeley, he joined the University of Maryland, where he became a full professor of physics in 1973.

Davidson's research interests have included plasma turbulence, nonlin-