

## THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF BOTANICAL NOMENCLATURE

The ultimate responsibility for all matters concerning the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature rests with the International Botanical Congresses. The Congresses have been held at intervals of about five years; each convenes a nomenclature section which deals with proposals to amend the Code and with those to conserve names. Furthermore the section appoints the nomenclature committees and the rapporteur-général. The decisions taken by the nomenclature section are submitted to a plenary session of the Congress for final action. No modification of the Code, whether textual or involving the lists of conserved names, is valid without this sanction by a plenary session of a Congress.

The International Botanical Congresses are independent. Each Congress can make its own rules (in general) and has full power to organize itself in any desired way. For practical purposes, however, it has been agreed that the Division of Botany of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) acts as the permanent representative body between Congresses. The General Assembly of this Division of Botany is a plenary session of the Congress. This plenary session appoints the officers of the Division and makes decisions on general policy such as, for instance, on the location of the next Congress.

The International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT), an independent organization of plant scientists and plant science institutions, constitutes the Section for Plant Taxonomy of IUBS. The Code states that the Nomenclature Committees appointed by the Congress work under the auspices of IAPT. This means that IAPT handles for IUBS all matters involving botanical nomenclature. Thus organized botanical nomenclature receives its material support from IUBS and IAPT.

The scientific structure of IUBS consists of a confederation of international associations and organizations in the field of biology. The supporting (fee-paying) members of the Union are the national committees for biology, or the academies of science, of the subscribing countries. There are no private members. The Union comprises four divisions: General Biology, Botany, Zoology and Microbiology. The divisions are divided into sections which are usually identical with independent international associations such as IAPT.

IUBS itself is part of a confederation of similar international scientific unions: ICSU, the International Council of Scientific Unions. Organizations like IAPT, IUBS and ICSU are regarded as non-governmental international organizations in contrast with organizations like Unesco, FAO and WHO, which are government-sponsored. ICSU and Unesco have a contract by which Unesco channels all its financial support for international scientific enterprises (other than its own), through ICSU. A similar understanding exists for biology between IUBS and ICSU.

Organizations like Unesco, ICSU, IUBS and IAPT are newcomers as far as internationally organized botanical nomenclature is concerned. The International Botanical

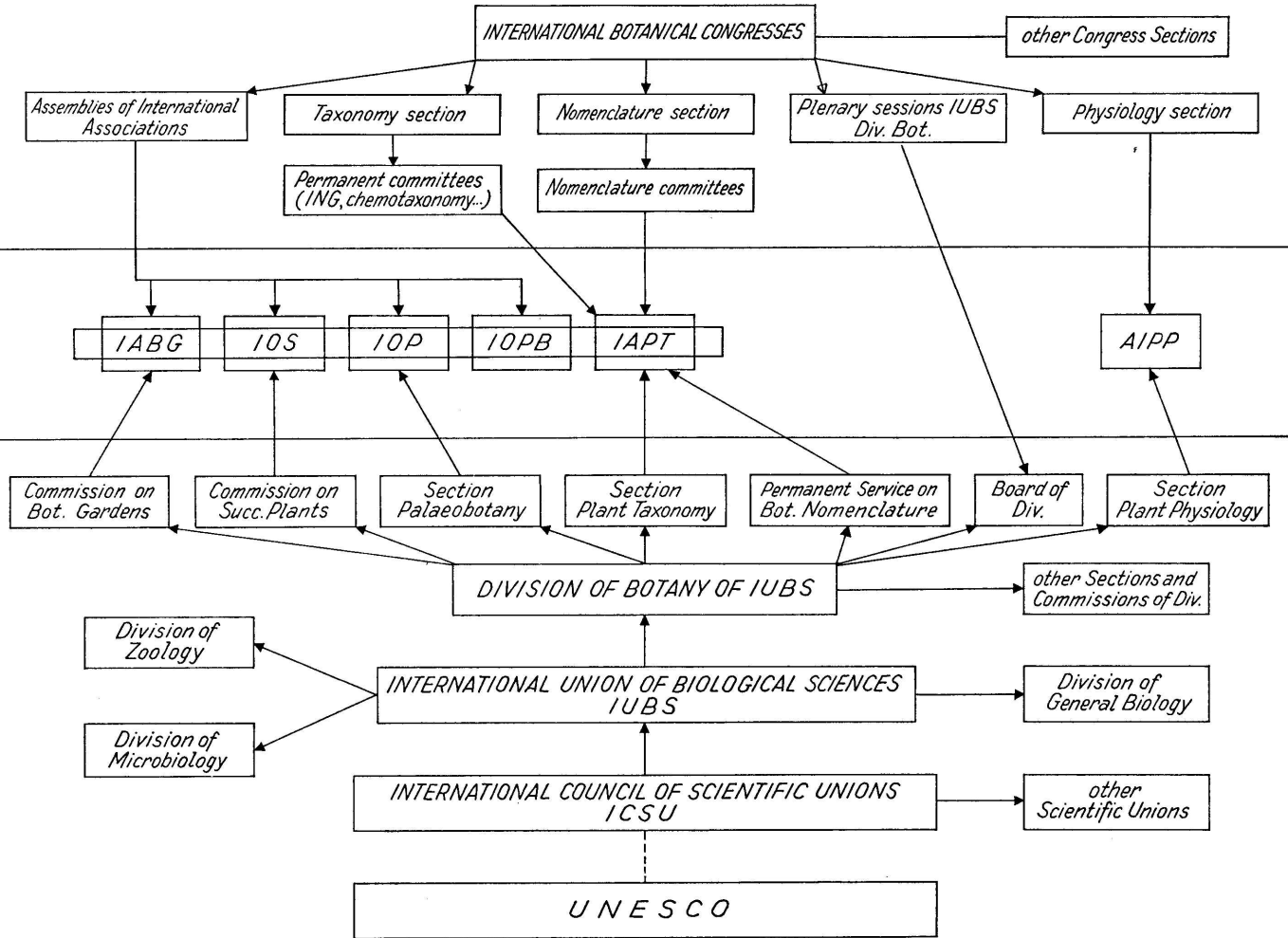
CONGRESS LEVEL

scientific sponsorship

Independent international organisations of disciplines

Material support

GENERAL INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS



Congress at Paris (1867) dealt for the first time with nomenclature and accepted a set of rules proposed by Alphonse de Candolle. The Vienna Congress (1905) accepted and published the first edition of the 'International Rules of Botanical Nomenclature'. The nomenclature section of that Congress consisted of a restricted number of botanists who had the right to vote. This 'Committee' remained in existence after the Congress and was the actual forerunner of our present General Committee. Nowadays, however, all botanists are invited to attend the sessions of the nomenclature section at botanical congresses as voting members. There is no change, however, in the principal tradition that the ultimate responsibility for botanical nomenclature lies with the plenary sessions of the Congresses.

The General Committee on Botanical Nomenclature acts as the permanent link for nomenclature between Congresses. In urgent cases it may recommend provisional action pending final action by a Congress. This General Committee constitutes the Permanent Service for Botanical Nomenclature of the International Union of Biological Sciences.

Nomenclature committees are of two kinds: the permanent (or standing) Committees, including the General Committee, are listed in Division III of the Code; in addition the Congress may appoint committees to deal with specific questions or tasks.

Proposals to amend the Code must be submitted to the rapporteur-général whose duty is:

- 1) to publish them, in full, in *Taxon* or *Regnum vegetabile* (since the Paris Congress of 1954 no proposals are accepted unless published in one of the publications of the IAPT).
- 2) to include them in the 'Synopsis of proposals' presented to the International Botanical Congress and to make this Synopsis available to the Botanical community.
- 3) to take a preliminary mail vote.
- 4) to publish the results of this preliminary vote before the Congress.

The Congress then considers the proposals and instructs its editorial committee how to deal with them. This committee publishes the new Code.

Proposals for the conservation of names of families or genera, or proposals to change existing entries for such conserved names must also be submitted to the rapporteur-général. Such proposals must be accompanied by a clear statement of the reasons in favour of and against conservation; they must include full bibliographic information, typification and a brief review of the occurrence in the literature of the names proposed for conservation and rejection. The rapporteur-général publishes these proposals in *Taxon* but is instructed by the Congress not to accept proposals unaccompanied by the relevant documentation.

Publication of a proposal in *Taxon* constitutes formal presentation to the General Committee and to the relevant Committee or committees for the special groups. The committee for the group to which a proposed name belongs studies the proposal, votes on it and publishes this vote in *Taxon*. This publication constitutes formal presentation of the Committee's proposal to the General Committee. The latter committee studies the case, takes into account remarks made by others (leaving a period of preferably three months after publication for reactions to come in) and in its turn takes a vote. If a proposal has been approved by the General Committee, botanists are authorized to retain the name proposed for conservation, pending the decision of a later International Botanical Congress.