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# 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WFSJ



**Veronique Morin**  
Science journalist  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
1<sup>st</sup> president of the WFSJ

We should all look back to the last 10 years with great pride and a sense of tremendous achievements. It seemed like an improbable task at first: creating a worldwide organization with a group so dispersed of science journalists who work in third world conditions, –very few might differ- even in developed countries.

In this special 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of the WFSJ electronic newsletter, you will read the stories from my colleagues all instrumental in making the federation a reality, and who recount the numerous tentative prior to 2002 to connect science journalists worldwide. The desire has certainly been there for a long time. After all, the idea made sense, but until 10 years ago, international science journalists' gatherings remained limited to too few.

Two years prior to the official establishment of the World Federation of Science journalist, and as the then president of the Canadian Science Writers association, CSWA, I had in mind to create ties with another national association, the Quebec Association of Science writers, ACS. The experience had been so successful, that together we decided to expand our horizon, and seek to hold a world conference in Montreal by convincing the group that had met on a few occasions - led by Jim Cornell, president of ISWA- (see other stories) at their next meeting that was to be held

in Brazil (3<sup>rd</sup> WCSJ).

Coming into the Brazil conference meeting, in 2002, I felt hope, admiration and genuine excitement to meet other fellow journalists who had been behind the fantastic idea of linking together science journalists worldwide. Of course, we (Jean-Marc Fleury, then vice-President of ACS and I, president of CSWA) came with the intention to bid to hold the next World conference in Montreal by 2004. But, I understood that the pretension of holding a world conference was closely linked to the ability to see a federation come to life. I had done my research, and was aware of some of the roadblocks to the formation of a true WFSJ, namely that the UNESCO was an irritant for some important potential members (see other stories), and that if a WFSJ was to ever see the light, it had to be linked to important national associations.

Knowing it was absolutely necessary to convince big players (Americans, British, French) to support the WFSJ, we suggested that it might be time for the WFSJ to break free from its official ties with UNESCO. This suggestion was not taken lightly and gave rise to several debates and arguments (see picture). It might seem a bit futile to try to summarize 3 days of intense meetings where participants (see pictures) expressed their conviction and ideas about the potential of a worldwide network of science journalists with great passion. The discussions were heated and frank, all coming from different backgrounds and cultures, and different views on what a world federation should be, but we were all genuine and respectful of each other.

After these intense meetings, it was voted that Montreal, and the CSWA- ACS, (which were a great example of partnership), were going to be the next host of the World conference, and that a board should be constituted. As the president of the CSWA, and journalist, the group voted to have me preside as first

Meeting of delegates to discuss the creation of the WFSJ. In this photo: Mariko Takahashi with Kenji Makino, Jean-Marc Fleury, Lisbeth Fog, Darryl D'Monte, Jens Degett, Istvan Palugyai, Werner Hadorn, Jim Detjen, Fatima Amade, Martin Yriart, Prakash Khanal, Jim Corniel Morin  
Brazil 2002



president of the WFSJ. It was a great honour, which I did not take lightly.

It was a time a great synergy for me, and I am in awe with all the people who helped make it happen, to name only a few, Jean-Marc Fleury, our very wise and energetic executive director, Arthur Bourne, Jim Cornell, Mariko Takahashi, Wolfgang Goede, whom have also written pieces for this special issue, and of course, the board members, current and past, and the thousands of individual members of the national associations which now constitute the World Federation.

I hope the WFSJ continues to live and prosper for a very long time, and that we can all look back 10 years from now, to celebrate the WFSJ's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and its preceding world meetings with great pride.

Long live the WFSJ!

## The First World Conference of Science Journalists: An Idea Realised



**Arthur Bourne**  
*President Emeritus*  
*EUSJA*

The easiest part is to have an idea, the most difficult part is to make it happen and that requires the support and effort of others. The author of the idea for the first World Conference of Science Journalists (Tokyo, Japan; November 1992) was fortunate in that others were sufficiently enthusiastic and willing to support him.

I was, at the time the idea formed in my head, editor of *Spectrum*, *British Science News*, published by the Science Unit of the Central Office of Information. The idea for an “international conference of science journalists” occurred during a stopover in New Delhi on my way to Tokyo to attend the International Whaling Commission in 1968.

I knew many of the British science journalists; not a few contributed to *Spectrum*. But an added bonus was that, as the editor of a publication widely distributed overseas, I was reasonably well known. The stopover turned out to be an opportunity to meet the local science journalists and discuss issues that were important to them. I was invited to one of their meetings and presented my views on the importance of science journalism in communicating science to the general public.

That meeting and subsequent discussions with Japanese journalists in Tokyo confirmed that an international meeting of science journalists was worth pursuing; but how to achieve it was another matter. You cannot patent an idea, it has to be developed and this requires commitment.

At about the same time and unbeknownst to me, in faraway Europe, another idea was moving in the direction that would lead one day to realising mine. The author of this other idea was Giancarlo Massini, science journalist with *Corriere della Sera*, who persuaded a group of like-minded European science journalists to form what was to become a truly multinational organisation, albeit a European one. Out of their meetings was created the European Union of Science Journalists' Associations (EUSJA).

The immediacy for the realisation of my own idea was to lapse as my career changed. The world was changing, too. The Cold War was over and Europe was getting back into something resembling its pre-war shape. Mindful of the times, our Austrian colleagues,

Hugo Obergottsberger and Franz Mayrhofer, seized the moment! In 1990 they organised the pivotal European conference *Science, the Economy and the Media East and West*. Pivotal, because for the first time science journalists from the so-called Eastern Bloc met with their counterparts from the West. The conference, held in the town of Krems not far from Vienna, was, to put it mildly, a joyous occasion.

As the then President of EUSJA, I had the pleasure, and with the wholehearted backing of the board, to invite our new-found Eastern European colleagues to join us in EUSJA. Hence, in the small town of Krems, was finally created what one could describe as a truly “European” Union of Science Journalists’ Associations, with the credibility and critical mass of an organization that could really represent European science writers and their interests. These goals were expressed by delegates from the twenty countries of the expanded EUSJA in a document that came to be known as the “Krems Declaration.”

In the meantime, in the United States, the long-established National Association of Science Writers (NASW) had grown into a major professional organization with several thousand members. In Australia, India, and Japan, too, there were organised groups of science journalists. And, on the world scene, the International Science Writers Association (ISWA), an organization founded in the late 1960s, now offered representation for individual science journalists scattered around the globe.

In 1989, as part of the growing atmosphere of internationalism, Manuel Calvo Hernando, chair of the Iberoamerican Association of Scientific Journalism, was busy arranging for South American science journalists to meet members of EUSJA at an international conference in Spain celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that country’s Council of Scientific Investigations (CSIC).

However, there was a problem. How could the type of conference I envisaged ever be called “international” without the participation of those science journalists I had met in Africa and other countries of Asia?

The first part of the answer, obviously, had to be funding. It was one thing to find funding for small groups to visit each others countries, but an International Conference worthy of the name and on the scale I was thinking about could only be realised if we could find a willing sponsor or sponsors. The conference would require finances and organisational expertise beyond the resources and time of our collective organisations.

By fortuitous circumstance at this time I was appointed a consultant to the publications division of UNESCO in Paris. The thought occurred to me that a world conference of science communicators was ideally suited to UNESCO’s Framework Programme, *Science, Technology, and Society*. I took it upon myself to pursue the idea within the organisation. I had met the chief of the Science, Technology, and Society Unit, Vladislav Kotchetkov, and through my work I also had access to the Director-General of UNESCO, Frederico Mayor. Mayor was not only a scientist, but one, as I soon found out during one of our meetings, who had a deep interest in communicating science to the public at large.

The upshot of my efforts was that I was asked to submit a written proposal for the conference. Alas, during subsequent meetings, I was not too encouraged, because, as explained, UNESCO had no allocation available for such an event in the current round of funding. However, I did leave the discussions with an understanding that the Director General and his colleagues would explore other possibilities. What those possibilities were I had no idea. Silence prevailed.

In 1990, Spain’s Calvo Hernando organized the Fifth Congress of the Ibero-American

Association of Scientific Journalism in Valencia, another international meeting that brought together scores of journalists from both Europe and the Americas and had the special distinction of including the presentation of Honorary Doctorates by the University of Valencia to oceanographer and science communicator Jacques Cousteau and UNESCO's Mayor.

On the evening of his award, Mayor gave an after-dinner speech during which he announced, to my surprise and delight, that "Arthur Bourne's international conference of science journalists" was on! And, thanks to the National Federation of UNESCO Associations of Japan, it was to be held in Tokyo in November 1992.

There it was--an idea had become a reality. It had its supporters and, in the final stages, its various runners. UNESCO had drawn them all together--the invitation to participants read "UNESCO, jointly with the Japanese Organising Committee [and] the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ), and in close collaboration with the European Union of Science Journalists (EUSJA) and the International Science Writers' Association (ISWA)"--but scores of other individuals and groups had made vital contributions.

Because I was not privy to what was going on elsewhere, my emphasis must be on the roles

played by the EUSJA board members; by Federico Mayor and his colleagues in UNESCO, including Adnan Badran, Assistant Director-General for Science, who opened the conference on behalf of Mayor; by the ISWA officers who helped identify representative journalists from the developing world; and, most importantly, by our Japanese hosts, including Mr. Kishida, Chairman of the Japanese Organising Committee; Mr. Takashima, Chairman of the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan; Mr. Kuwada, Vice-President of the Science Council of Japan, and Mr. Kaku, Chairman of Canon Inc., who, in the end, made the First World Conference of Science Journalists (WCSJ) possible.

Those of us who had the privilege of attending that first conference in 1992 remember it as one of the highlights of our professional lives. With the sixth world conference planned for London in 2009, we should perhaps ask ourselves whether we have lived up to the promises we made at the first.

Have we, the signatories of the Tokyo Declaration, delivered on our, then, good intentions? Reflecting even further back, has the seminal Krems Declaration, signed some two decades ago, also delivered on its promises?

It is an honour to those who helped realize these ideas that we can answer both questions in the affirmative.

World  
Conference  
of Science  
journalists  
2002  
Brazil



# A World Wide Network of Science Journalists



**Jean-Marc Fleury**  
Executive Director  
World Federation of Science  
Journalists  
Bell Globemedia Chair in Science  
Journalism, Université Laval, Québec

Science journalism was late at organizing itself on an international scale.

Of course, individual science journalists and science communicators have been loosely linked for nearly 40 years through the International Science Writers Association (ISWA). And, for even longer, numerous associations have grouped science journalists at the national and regional levels. For example, the German Association of Science and Technology Journalists (TELI), was created in 1929 and the United States' National Association of Science Writers (NASW) was founded five years later.

But it is only in 2002, that these associations formally joined in a single world federation.

## Five world conferences = One world federation

Crucial steps leading towards the creation of an international federation of associations of science journalists were taken incrementally in a series of five international meetings:

- 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists, Tokyo, 10-13 November 1992
- 2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists, Budapest, 2-4 July 1999
- International Conference of Science and Technology Journalists, Tokyo, 24-26 October 2001
- 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists, San José dos Campos, Brazil, 24-27 November 2002
- 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists, Montréal, 10-14 October 2004

## Tokyo (1992)

The first world conference was the brainchild of Arthur Bourne, an English science writer who was then President of the Association of British Science Writers (ABSW) and President of the European Union of Science Journalists Associations (EUSJA). His proposal found fertile ground at UNESCO ... and in Japan.

In the early 1990s, Japan was enjoying an unprecedented economic boom. Holding the First World Conference of Science Journalists was an opportunity to showcase its science and technology. Japanese science writing, as a form of journalism rather than a mechanism to popularize science, was emerging in a distinct discipline. Its proponents, particularly Kenji Makino, a science journalist and subsequently a professor of the sociology of science at the



**Founding members** (picture above)

Ulysses Capozzoli (Brazil), Fabiola de Oliveira (Brazil) Jean-Marc Fleury (Canada) Véronique Morin (Canada), Jiang Yan (China), Lisbeth Fog (Colombia), Jens Degett (Denmark), Wolfgang Goede (Germany), Istvan Palugyai (Hungary), Darryl D'Monte (India), Kenji Makino (Japan), Mariko Takahashi (Japan), Fatima Amade (Mozambique), Prakash Khanal (Nepal), Werner Hadorn (Switzerland), James Cornell (USA), Jim Detjen (USA)

University of Tokyo, saw the World Conference as an opportunity to strengthen that trend.

Although many major newspapers started science news beats in the late 1950s and the community of science journalists had grown steadily, there was no national association at that time, in Japan, explains Mariko Takahashi, science journalist with The Asahi Shimbun, who participated in the First Conference. On direct result of the Conference was the establishment of the Japanese Association of Science and Technology Journalists (JASTJ), in July 1994. “JASTJ is rightly the fruit of the First World Conference”, says Ms. Takahashi.

For UNESCO, the First World Conference of Science Journalists was seen as an opportunity to encourage science journalism worldwide, while offering science journalists from Africa, North America, Asia, Europe and Latin America, a chance to meet face to face, in many cases, for the first time. The financial backing came through the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan and a host of private corporations. EUSJA, ISWA and the Ibero-American Association of Science Journalism served a co-organizers.

The science journalists assembled in Tokyo declared that science journalism is a profession and that its further development through training and education programmes was necessary to enhance this professionalism. They agreed on the need for cooperation among science journalists and for international exchanges of information and mutual support. Finally, they held that freedom of research, freedom of the press, and access to information, is essential.

According to Fabiola de Oliveira, then professor at Universidade do Vale do Paraíba, in Sao José dos Campos (Brazil), who participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists AND organized the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the journalists and science publishers who attended the Tokyo conference were

concerned about the science and technology information gap between the developed and the developing countries. They recommended that all science journalists assist their colleagues through the world and that science journalists organizations provide assistance to new developing associations.

In the Tokyo Declaration issued at the end of the Conference, the 165 science delegates from 31 countries asked UNESCO to encourage the establishment of new associations of science journalists, initiate linkages between existing science journalists associations, and sponsor further conferences.

Setting up an international body was not discussed in the preparations for Tokyo, and the words federation of international association were not mentioned in the preliminary program. However, Istvan Palugyai, a Hungarian science journalist, planted the idea in the minds of delegates and made sure that further cooperation on a global scale was a topic of discussion during the Conference. In the end, largely at his insistence, the Tokyo Declaration recommends that UNESCO and its partners support linkages that would lead to the establishment of a truly global network. Mr. Palugyai and fellow science journalism activists believed that UNESCO was the only organization that could support an international project in science journalism.

### **Budapest 1999: the idea of a World Federation**

The concept of a world federation was explicitly described in Budapest, in July 1999, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists. Mr. Palugyai and his Eastern European colleagues strongly pushed for a recommendation asking UNESCO to support the creation of a world federation of science journalists' associations.

Some Western journalists expressed disdain for the concept, although their opposition was

quite benign, mainly asking “who needs it?” Others, such as Arthur Bourne, argued that what was really needed was more funding to enable better collaboration between existing organizations. Jim Cornell, President of ISWA, shared that feeling, but, in the end, agreed to support the idea and helped draft the ‘Budapest Declaration’ which would include recommendation for such a federation.

That Declaration, agreed upon by the 146 participants from 29 countries meeting in Budapest, stressed the crucial democratic and international significance of science journalism in linking the world of science and technology with the daily life of the ordinary person. Its recommendations called on all journalists of science to “recognize our increasing responsibilities to the people of the world to report accurately, clearly, fully, independently and with honesty and integrity”. Editors, publishers, and broadcasters were asked to provide more support, space, programme time, staff and training for science journalists. Strangely the Declaration also included a demand that the World-Wide Web “be constantly monitored for its quality, accuracy, objectivity and integrity”.

Again UNESCO was given a central role and asked to support “the establishment of a world federation of science journalists and national and international science journalists’ associations”. It was expected that this world federation would convene “biannual international meetings” and “create a world community of science journalists through a well-designed, easily accessible, edited and quality-controlled world-wide web site.

### **Striving for a worldwide consensus**

For some key actors behind the creation of the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ), the UNESCO umbrella was necessary and welcome, but they also felt they needed wider support. They were faced with a real dilemma. They knew they needed solid support from a

wider variety of Western associations, particularly from the United States and Britain.

The science journalists from Europe and the developing world who strongly wanted to create the World Federation found a strong ally with Japan. Their Japanese colleagues created another great platform to move the idea forward.

A decisive push for the concept of a federation was given once more by Japan.

Answering a demand from the Japanese government to showcase national science and technology, the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Kagaku-Miraikan) was opened in July and Japanese science journalists led again by Kenji Makino organized the International Conference of Science and Technology Journalists, 24-26 October 2001. Kenji Makino could highlight his Japanese Association of Science and Technology Journalists (JASTJ) but he also wanted to provide one more platform for the creation of the World Federation of Science Journalists.

The proceedings of the 2001 International Conference reflect the tension between those in favor and those questioning the usefulness of a world federation. The minutes include specific mentions of the world federation idea, but do not endorse its establishment. Rather, a handful of international delegates, most of whom had participated in past discussions about such an organization, met informally to discuss how a federation might be created.

As a result of these informal meetings, a first draft of a World Federation of Science Journalists was drafted by the group and transcribed by Werner Hadorn, as science journalist from Switzerland then president of EUSJA, with the intention of distributing it widely via the internet.

The prologue of this draft read: “An ad hoc group of international science journalists has

proposed to establish a world federation of science journalists that would serve as an umbrella organization for international, regional, and national science journalism associations, as well as for individuals”.

Although some delegates were reluctant to sign the draft without prior approval from their national boards or general assemblies, most of the signatories did not feel they were officially representing anyone other than themselves. “Interestingly, most Western associations, especially the United States’ association, had no opinion at all”, recalls Jim Cornell. Many American writers simply did not think in international terms “or care about the issues facing writers in developing countries, who were very keen on an international body”. “What was more important to United States writers, according to Jim Cornell, was the perceived connection with UNESCO, which by then had a bad reputation in their country, mainly for the insistence of its Third World members that there be ‘a new world order’ for journalism. In addition, the United States had pulled out of UNESCO due to pressure from the conservative right.

Another problem was the concern of some EUSJA members (especially from the United Kingdom) that the sponsorship of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists in Budapest had been costly and that support for a world federation might be additional strain on the EUSJA budget.

Véronique  
Morin,  
Lisbeth Fog  
and Werner  
Hadorn  
Brazil 2002



Finally, it was decided that the World Federation of Science Journalists would become a reality at the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference, planned for autumn 2002, in Brazil.

### The World Federation of Science Journalists

Brazil offered to organize the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists. Fabiola de Oliveira grafted the international event to a national meeting of Brazilian science communication academics and science journalists. For the WFSJ proponents, the time between Tokyo and Brazil continued to be a risky period.

The idea of the Federation had strong support within the developing world. Lisbeth Fog, a Colombian science journalist, was particularly active. Otula Owuor from Kenya, Nalaka Gunawardene (Sri Lanka), and Prakash Khanal (Nepal) were also strong supporters. The supporters from the South could rely on the support of Werner Hadorn, president of EUSJA. But the opinion amongst the EUSJA membership itself was split, with the Dutch and British associations being quite resistant to the idea, while Germany, through Wolfgang Goede, was more supportive. As president of ISWA, Jim Cornell also admits that he originally saw an eventual world federation as the “usurper”. Now, he sees the World Federation of Science Journalists more as the logical “successor” to ISWA.

In November 2002, in Sao José dos Campos (Brazil), a new and expanded draft of a constitution for the eventual World Federation of Science Journalists was written and agreed upon by a handful of delegates, and then transmitted to EUSJA members by Werner Hadorn and to ISWA members and the US association by Jim Cornell.

The WFSJ constitution did put some distance between journalists and scientists. Science journalists can no longer be mere translators of

science – “clever spokespeople for researchers” but rather they must be thoughtful critics and commentators, linking the world of science and technology to the daily life of ordinary persons, clarifying the processes of research and discovery, and making the public aware of the social, economic, and political context of science and technology, and its impact on society.

This seminal constitution states that WFSJ intend to “support the professional training of science journalists, especially young journalists in the developing world. One major goal is to assist the formation of science journalists’ associations in countries where there are none and energize existing organizations”.

The document specifies that WFSJ is a “non-profit, nongovernmental international organization representing science and technology journalists’ organizations in all parts of the world”. Individual science journalists from countries without national associations can seek WFSJ representation by becoming members of the International Science Writers Association (ISWA).

After ten years of discussion, the WFSJ founders finally took the decisive step in Brazil and the first WFSJ Board was elected on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2002 in Sao José dos Campos. That Board included Véronique Morin (Canada) as the very first President of WFSJ; two Vice-Presidents: Lisbeth Fog (Colombia) and Werner Hadorn (Switzerland); Prakash Khanal (Nepal) as Secretary; Mariko Takahashi (Japan) as Treasurer; and two members at-large: Jim Cornell (United States) and Istvan Palugyai (Hungary).

### **Different roles for science journalism**

The history of the creation of the World Federation of Science Journalists encapsulates the different roles played by science journalists in different epochs and societies. Some would say that these roles represent different stages in the evolution of the profession, from

spokespersons of the scientific community to a corps of independent investigators who report what happens at the intersection where science and society meet.

Finally, at the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists held in October 2004 in Montréal (Canada), the international body of science journalists in attendance with representatives from some 30 associations, including the WFSJ’s most skeptical critics, enthusiastically embraced the creation of the World Federation of Science Journalists.

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Other documents available on the website of the World Federation of Science Journalists: [www.wfsj.org](http://www.wfsj.org)

# International Science Journalism Associations



**James Cornell**  
*President*  
*International Science Writers Association*

It has been suggested that the bug-like tendency of science journalists to swarm, or as Philippe Marcotte and Florian Sauvageau describe it, their “propensity for grouping and mingling,” stems from their sense of isolation – from other types of reporters and even more so from their sources. Neither fish nor fowl, science writers tend to be a breed apart, often the only one of their kind in a news room – or, in the developing world, sometimes in an entire country.

Surprisingly, then, the creation of mutual support systems for science writers is a relatively recent phenomenon. Although the first national group – the German Association of Science and Technical Journalists – was founded in 1929, followed by the formation of the U.S. National Association of Science Writers (NASW) in 1934, the majority of the 55 national and regional associations counted in a 2007 survey published by the World Federal of Science Journalists (WFSJ) were formed since the mid-1970s, with many in the developing world created only in the last decade.

## Internationalization of Science Journalism

The rapid and luxurious bloom of science journalism worldwide in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century mirrored in part the transformation of science research into an international endeavor. As the world became increasingly interconnected, it was clear that issues such as climate change, water shortages, sustainable development, and pandemics knew no borders. Because global problems demanded global solutions, many

science journalists hoped to establish effective global networks for sharing vital information, ideally through a world “union” or “federation” of the many new national groups.

The first step toward internationalism was creation of the Ibero-American Association of Science Journalism (AIPC) in 1969 by the Spanish writer Manuel Calvo Hernando. The AIPC linked a score of national associations in Latin America (some of them extremely small) with a base group in Spain. In addition to promoting exchanges of journalists and conducting training programs, the AIPC sponsored a series of bi-hemispheric “congresses” that would set the model for future international conferences. Indeed, at the 1977 congress in Madrid, the Venezuelan delegation proposed creation of a “World Union of Science Journalists.” Although an international organizing committee was formed and some potential funders, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), were contacted, this first formal expression of the “world union” concept went little further due to political, economic, and linguistic limitations.

Actually, the idea of a world union had come up even earlier – and was dismissed – during the creation of the first truly global such association, albeit one made up of individual journalists, the International Science Writers Association (ISWA). In 1966, a group of senior science writers and editors (among them Gordon Rattray Taylor of the BBC, John Maddox of *Nature*, and Dennis Flanagan of *Scientific American*) met in London to discuss the benefits of forming a loose network. The next year, using the occasion of the World’s Fair in Montreal (EXPO 67), this core group, joined by several other prominent writers (including Robert Cowen of the *Christian Science Monitor*, Howard Lewis of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and Fred Poland of the *Montreal Star*), met to write and approve a draft constitution, to elect officers,

and to debate, and finally dismiss, a motion to create a “federation of associations” in favor of what ISWA would become (and remains today): an “organization of individual membership.” Maddox became the first president.

For the next 30 years, ISWA would provide science journalists around the world, particularly those living and working in countries without national associations, connections with the wider world of science communication. Initially serving a largely Anglo-American-Canadian group of journalists who lived or worked abroad (including the notable expatriate Sir Arthur C. Clarke of Sri Lanka), ISWA actively sought out young journalists from emerging nations in the 1980s. Today, the organization has some 200 members in 25 countries, and through its website, ISWA offers them information about jobs, training, and educational opportunities, as well as assists in planning, organizing, and conducting workshops on science communication.

### **A World Union?**

While ISWA has remained an organization of individuals, the concept of an organization made up of associations still resonated with many writers. In 1971, Giancarlo Massini of Italy’s *Corriere della Sera* persuaded a group of like-minded European science journalists to form what was to become a truly multinational organization, although a purely regional one. Out of their meetings was created the European Union of Science Journalists’ Associations (EUSJA).

The original union included just seven associations, but following the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, there was an upsurge of interest from Eastern European countries, all of whom now play an active role in EUSJA’s activities, which include exchange visits between member countries and training for young journalists. Member countries (as of

March 2009) are Albania, Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. EUSJA has its headquarters in Strasbourg at Euroscience – where it has its own secretariat.

Those forerunners of a “world union” – EUSJA, ISWA and AIPC – would all play significant roles in organizing the first “world conference of science journalists,” and eventually, if somewhat painfully, the formation of an actual world federation. But despite these contributions, that first conference was essentially the result of one man’s vision and persistence.

Arthur Bourne, a British science writer, world-traveler, and occasional consultant to the United Nations, had tried for nearly two decades to organize a truly “international conference” of journalists from all parts of the world—and particularly from the emerging nations of Africa and Asia. Finally, in late 1990, Bourne, by then president of EUSJA, persuaded UNESCO to sponsor the first world conference in Tokyo. With generous assistance from Japanese business and philanthropic groups, some 50 journalists from 35 countries were invited to meet with approximately 100 of their Japanese colleagues in November 1992.

Despite the great success of the Tokyo meeting, its declaration of the need for a world association, and the continued efforts by Bourne and others to organize a follow-up, a second world conference would not be realized for another seven years. Held in Budapest in July 1999, this conference reflected the changes in science journalism brought about by new technologies, as well as the changes in European society brought about the collapse of the old Soviet bloc.

The organizer and host of the Budapest meeting, Istvan Palugyai, science editor for the newspaper *Nepszabadsag*, had been a leading

proponent of the federation concept at the Tokyo meeting. As such, he led the effort to write “The Declaration of Budapest,” a set of eight recommendations for UNESCO aimed at improving the state (and status) of science journalism worldwide. A key recommendation was the formation of a “world federation” bringing national and regional associations under an umbrella organization that, among other things, could convene international conferences on a regular basis.

The next milestone was 2001, when Japanese science writer and teacher Kenji Makino organized an international mini-meeting on science and technology reporting at Tokyo’s then new “innovation museum.” The meeting closed with still another call for a “world federation,” but the accompanying draft constitution caused some controversy because the signatories to the document did not necessarily officially represent their national associations.

The third world conference would be convened within a year at the Universidade do Vale do Paraiba in Sao Jose dos Campos, Brazil. Any lingering doubts about the usefulness of an “umbrella group of associations” and concern over its awkward introduction in Tokyo seemed to have disappeared by this time. The result was a formal announcement creating a World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ), complete with a set of officers and a draft constitution that would be approved at the next conference, held in Montreal in 2004.

By April 2007 and the fifth world conference in Melbourne, Australia, the WFSJ was a well-established entity, with some two dozen member organizations, a sustaining budget, and active outreach and mentoring projects for reporters in the developing world. The sixth conference was held in London in the summer of 2009, by which time the WFSJ represented 40 associations of science and technology journalists around the world. Its flagship project is *SjCOOP*, which encourages

partnerships between well-established science writing associations and newly formed ones in the developing world. One highly successful partnership has been that between the Arab Association of Science Journalists, representing writers from the Middle East and North Africa, and the NASW in the US.

One other “world union of science journalists” also deserves mention. The International Federation of Environmental Journalists (IFEJ) was formed in Dresden, Germany, in 1993, and Darryl D’Monte, Chairperson of the Forum of Environmental Journalists of India, was elected its first president. The federation includes as members both associations and individual environmental journalists representing some 88 countries.

The IFEJ is a founding member of the Com+ initiative (Communicators for Sustainable Development), together with the World Bank, Global Environment Facility, InterPress Service, Conservation International, BBC, DevTV, Television Trust for the Environment, *National Geographic* and a number of other partners. With InterPress Service, IFEJ runs an occasional feature service on sustainable development issues, among many other initiatives.

### Further Readings

Cornell, James. 1999. “Report: Second World Conference of Science Journalists Meets in Budapest.” *Science Communication*, Vol. 21 No. 2, December 1999, 200-202.

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Drillsma, Barbara, ed. 2006. *The Barriers Are Down: EUSJA Advances Across Europe*. Strasbourg, France: European Union of Science Journalists’ Associations.

Available for ordering from the official EUSJA website at [www.eusja.org](http://www.eusja.org), this book chronicles the history of the organization and its founding.

International Federation of Environmental Journalists. Organizational website available at: [www.ifej.org](http://www.ifej.org)

International Science Writers Association. Organizational website available at: [www.internationalsciencewriters.org](http://www.internationalsciencewriters.org)

Provides membership information, announcements of important events, and links to science news. A members-only area also provides job information, announcements of grants and awards, and access to the ISWA newsletter.

Marcotte, Philippe, & Florian Sauvageau. 2006. «Les journalistes scientifiques: des éducateurs?» Philippe Marcotte et Florian Sauvageau, Les Cahiers du journalisme, No 15, Hiver 2006, École supérieure de journalisme de Lille and Université Laval..

White, Jessica. 2007. 2007 Science Journalist Associations Guide. World Federation of Science Journalists, Gatineau, Canada.

It was in 1992 that UNESCO organized the first World Conference of Science Journalists in Tokyo. JASTJ did not exist at that time, but many Japanese journalists who had interest in science worked hard to make the Conference a great success. Jacques-Yves Cousteau was the invited speaker and gave the keynote lecture 'The Future of the Earth and the Role of Science Journalists'. I still find his speech deeply impressive when I read it now.

Please look at my article on the Conference in the January 1993 issue of KAGAKU ASAHI, scientific monthly published by the Asahi Shimbun.

([http://www.wfsj.org/files/image/news/2012/11/cousteau\\_b.png](http://www.wfsj.org/files/image/news/2012/11/cousteau_b.png)) The bar graph shows the result of a questionnaire survey of the participants. We asked how the world would be 50 years from 1992. The majority answers sketch as follows: in 2042, nuclear weapons still exist, world population is over 10 billion, there is an effective cure for AIDS but not for senile dementia, most simultaneous interpretation services at international conferences supplied by computers, but we still have not succeeded in contacting extraterrestrials.

## Congratulations on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WFSJ!



**Mariko TAKAHASHI**  
Board member of JASTJ  
Senior Staff Writer at the Asahi  
Shimbun

As a member of Japanese Association of Science and Technology Journalists (JASTJ) and a science journalist at the Asahi Shimbun, I would like to take this opportunity to compliment WFSJ and its great achievements.



Kagaku Asahi article featuring Jacques Cousteau, invited speaker at the 1992 WCSJ

Kenji MAKINO was the chairman of the executive committee of the Conference and I was the youngest member. JASTJ was born in 1994, as the fruit of the first WCSJ. It is

wonderful that WCSJ helped JASTJ to be created and JASTJ helped WFSJ to be created.

JASTJ and Japan Science and Technology agency (JST) organized International Conference of Science & Technology Journalists (TOKYO 2001) in October 2001. We invited James Cornell, Wolfgang Goede, Istvan Palugyai, Lisbeth Fog, Werner Hadorn and other brilliant speakers. I believe that this meeting was instrumental in preparing the constitution of WFSJ.

Public  
lecture  
meeting  
moderated  
by Mariko  
Takahashi  
during the  
first WCSJ in  
Tokyo 1992



A panel  
during the  
first WCSJ in  
Tokyo, 1992

I hope you would celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first WCSJ as well as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WFSJ.

## 43 Years After

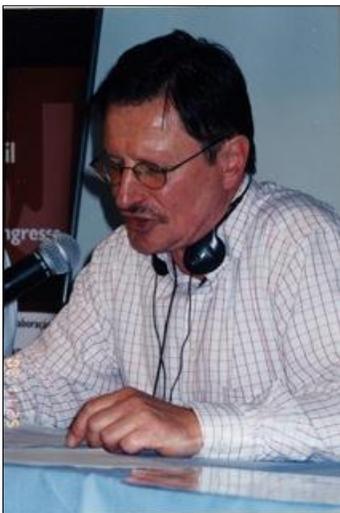


**Wolfgang C. Goede**  
Former Editor for  
*Popular Science Magazine P.M.*  
TELI Honorary Secretary

*On November 27, 2002, the World Federation of Science Journalists was born. "Co-midwife" Wolfgang C. Goede recalls some historical threads which led up to this birth.*

Sometimes historical research reveals new layers of reality. The World Federation is much older than ten years, even twenty years. Surprisingly, its origins can be traced back way beyond 1992, the year of the first world conference of science journalists in Tokyo. It turned out that the idea had already been born in 1969, when the Spanish journalist Manuel Calvo Hernando founded the Ibero-American Association of Science Journalists (AIPC), "the first international association of science journalists' organizations", as ISWA president Jim Cornell observes in the Fall Edition of the EUSJA Newsletter in his obituary. The pioneer and forefather of global science journalism died recently in Madrid. He was a grand visionary, way ahead of his time and most of his colleagues.

Wolfgang C.  
Goede  
Brazil 2002



In 1977, Calvo Hernando organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIPC congress, which became the very first kind of world conference with broad attendance of journalists from all over the world. Under the leadership of Calvo Hernando along with his Latin American colleagues, a world federation was proposed for the first time,

even a constitution was drafted.

This all led to the first official world conference in Tokyo with the main theme "Science in the Service of Humanity".

The summary of this event is, by modern standards, surprisingly simple. No flashy pictures, no fancy page design, just some very striking sentences, which have not lost their meaning until today – on the contrary: They remain an everlasting challenge.

The closing document states that "new development paradigms must be sought by all countries". Societies based on capitalism, competitiveness and consumerism create unhappiness, destroy cultures and traditions, indicated the Japanese hosts. Bold words, especially in those days, when harsh criticism of this type made speakers suspicious, as either left-wingers and close to communism or hopelessly naïve and disciples of the green movement. 20 years later, this perception has fundamentally changed. My country's conservative (!) government, for example, decided under the Fukushima impact to replace nuclear with renewable power and introduce a new worldwide model.

But is the world really changing? The global warming, also as a result of the waste of energy, seems to progress. It has been flooding a country like Colombia for years with torrential rains, while the world seems to be concerned only with the flooding of New York and many scientists deny outright climate change, detecting a conspiracy behind this generally accepted fact.

Moreover and among many other issues, we have been getting accustomed to the complaint that the world's nutritional and water supplies are deteriorating. It all seems to boil down to the overall drive to unlimited growth. There are many indications that science and research are no longer obliged to a truth-finding mission, but have become a mere tool of this new global ideology, which in Tokyo was already lamented.

When the World Federation of Science Journalists finally was created at the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists in Sao José

dos Campos in Brazil, many of these issues were addressed and given plenty of consideration and analysis at the four subsequent world conferences in Montreal, Melbourne, London and Doha. The WFSJ Presidents Véronique Morin, Wilson da Silva, Pallab Gosh, Nadia El-Awady, Vesa Niinikangas and the respective boards as well as the executive director and fund-raiser Jean-Marc Fleury performed little wonders, which quite frankly none of the founders had expected.

The Federation successfully narrowed the gap between the industrialized and emerging nations by professionalizing science journalists in Africa, reinforced the crumbling bridges between the Western and the Arabian world, helped to strengthen the reputation of science journalism throughout the world. Lots of admirable projects were accomplished; many still pile up on the agenda.

The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary reminds us of the roots of the world umbrella, a visionary and adventurous Spaniard, some concerned Japanese, their aspirations and worries. In their spirit, we science journalists have to become more daring, more outgoing and investigative, explore thoroughly the scientific-industrial complex and its manipulations, become much more narrative with compelling stories and, above all, cater to our constituents, citizens and taxpayers, who finance a big chunk of research and technology and have the right to hold them accountable.

It is the media and science journalists who make research transparent, who give people a voice in what their money is spent for and what kind of future they and their grandchildren yearn for. Only then democracy shall prevail.

*The author was senior editor for Germany's leading popular science magazine P.M. He is a freelancer now, based in Munich and Medellín, Colombia, mainly bridging science and the civil society and raising participation issues. He is*

*co-initiator of the TELI Science Debate and Honorary Secretary of the European Union of Science Journalists' Association EUSJA.*

For more information on the  
**World Federation of Science Journalists**  
[wfsj.org](http://wfsj.org)

**The 8<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Science Journalists**  
Critical questioning in the public sphere  
Helsinki, Finland 24 -28 June 2013  
[wcsj2013.org](http://wcsj2013.org)