

WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT OF IMA

Welcome to the 19th General Meeting of the International Mineralogical Association! IMA's four-yearly flagship meeting has moved from one island nation, at a passive margin on the western edge of Eurasia, to another at an active margin on its eastern rim. Running a meeting as large as this requires a big team effort and we must all be sincerely grateful for the very hard work of Takamitsu Yamanaka and his colleagues over a period that I know from personal experience stretches over several years. These IMA meetings are important events because they are the only international meetings devoted specifically to mineralogy. The programme the team has put together is extremely exciting and will provide a wonderful show-case for current mineralogical research. Thank you all very much.

There have been many important changes, both internal and external to IMA, since we last met in Edinburgh in 2002. Internally, I have, sadly, to remind delegates of the recent death of one of our most distinguished Council members, Werner Schreyer. His wise advice to Council will be greatly missed. His place on Council has been taken by Walter Maresch, also of Ruhr-University, Bochum. Cornelis 'Kase' Klein, of the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, decided after many years of devoted service as treasurer of IMA that the time had come to stand down. His role has been taken over by Bob Downs, who is based one American state to the west, in Tucson, Arizona. We must all thank Kase for his work and patience over many years. The repeated difficulty he experienced in getting the national organizations of many countries to pay their annual dues to IMA remains a problem, and one that we shall, I hope, address in Kobe. We are delighted to welcome the mineralogical societies of Uzbekistan and of India to the membership of IMA, which now has 38 supporting organizations.

Following the Edinburgh meeting we began the practice of holding Business Meetings every two years rather than four, and two successful Business Meetings were held during the International Geological Congress in Firenze (Florence). It was particularly appropriate that our competition to choose a logo for IMA, which was carried out by Council without knowledge of the identity or nationality of the designers, was won by a young Italian scientist, Sabrina Nazzareni, of the University of Perugia. The 2nd Business Meeting voted to hold the 20th General Meeting of IMA, in 2010, in Budapest. It will be organized by mineralogists from Austria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, under the chairmanship of Ekkehart Tillmanns of the University of Vienna. A collaboration between Christine Lecluse and our Secretary, Maryse Ohnenstetter, in Nancy, France, led to the development of a modern and stylish IMA website (www.ima-mineralogy.org), with links not only to the websites of many of our supporting societies but also to those of many IMA Commissions and Working Groups.

An important external event occurred at the end of 2004, when the first issue of *Elements* magazine appeared. Rod Ewing, of the University of Michigan, introduced the concept of a semi-popular international magazine devoted to mineralogy, geochemistry and petrology, part thematic articles and part news-and-views, to the Mineralogical Society of America (MSA) at the end of 2000. The idea was developed with consultation outside the USA and early in 2003 an international steering committee was formed. At the end of 2003, MSA, the Mineralogical Association of

Canada (MAC) and the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland agreed to provide start-up funding. Mike Hochella and myself joined Rod as scientific editors and Pierrette Tremblay from MAC as managing editor. We all met for the first time in Michigan in April 2004 and, remarkably, in November the first issue (dated January 2005) appeared. By then the Geochemical Society, the Clay Minerals Society, the European Association for Geochemistry and the International Association of GeoChemistry had joined the consortium. By June 2006 there were eight contributing societies, including Société Française de Minéralogie et de Cristallographie, plus three 'affiliated' societies, IMA, the European Mineralogical Union and the AIPEA, who are provided with space when available but do not pay a subscription. Four other societies have applied to join the contributing consortium in 2007. The editors all hope that other major societies, especially Japan, will join very soon. The print-run is now about 10 000. *Anyone* may view *Elements* at www.elementsmagazine.org.

It is obvious that *Elements* has been a great success within the international mineralogical and geochemical community. We, as the International Mineralogical Association, have many people to thank for this, particularly Rod Ewing, for his vision and enthusiasm, and Pierrette Tremblay for her style and tireless efficiency. MSA, through its Executive Director, Alex Speer, provides guidance and infrastructure, including the subscription database that only a well-supported, professional scientific society could offer. IMA has capitalised on this unprecedented opportunity to reach its members with news and articles by the President and Secretary and by Chairmen of Commissions. At this meeting I am proposing that we appoint a 'communications officer' to Council to maintain a broader flow of news that might include articles describing the makeup and activities of the smaller Min Socs that make up an important part of IMA, or news and views from their members.

Just recently another very exciting proposal was presented to IMA. One of the most important roles played by IMA is the naming and classification of minerals. The dissemination of this information has been largely accomplished through journals. To provide a new means to present and interact with mineralogical data, Mike Scott, an avid gem collector and founding president of Apple Computer Corporation, is offering funding through the RRUFF project to build a web site and database that will be associated with IMA. The database will present the complete list of minerals, with experimental diffraction patterns, chemistry, spectroscopy, and means to search and identify minerals. The community will be encouraged to contribute and we can build a resource that will educate as well as provide research direction. Bob Downs, our new treasurer, will be talking about the project on Tuesday afternoon.

At our Council and Business meetings we shall be discussing further important initiatives that I outlined in the June issue of *Elements*. The foundation of an IMA medal recognizing international excellence should be a priority. We need to find ways of making the Commissions and Working Groups more pro-active in involving the whole community of mineralogists in their fields, perhaps through the medium of electronic newsgroups resembling MSA-talk. We need a long-term plan to co-organize meetings with other mineralogical and geochemical organizations between IMA General Meetings. We must solve our problems in collecting dues from member countries, perhaps by introducing a flat-rate system in place of the present banded system which makes membership much cheaper for members of the larger, often

richer Min Socs than those of the smaller, less well-funded ones. In my view we need to consider shortening the term of office of the President and decoupling the presidency from organization of the General Meeting.

Before I end I must give sincere thanks to our Secretary, Maryse Ohnenstetter, for her tireless efforts over the last four years. Presidents make speeches but it is Secretaries that make organizations like IMA work. Maryse works extremely hard on many aspects of IMA, both on a day-to-day basis and on more time-consuming activities like preparing reports for IUGS (which you can see on the IMA website), providing agendas and supporting papers for meetings like this, and maintaining the website. I shall pass the Presidency to Takamitsu at this meeting confident in the knowledge that he will have unfailing support from Maryse. We all have a great deal to thank her for.

Ian Parsons, President of IMA

Welcome speech rev [1]