

World physics union meets in London

Nearly 90 delegates from 33 countries attended the general assembly of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) in London from 2–4 November. Delegates took part in debates and heard a range of speakers, as well as voting on assembly resolutions and elections to the IUPAP council and commissions.

The event was hosted by the IOP, whose chief executive, Bob Kirby-Harris, is also secretary-general of IUPAP. The IOP provides the secretariat for IUPAP and IOP staff organised the assembly.

The programme included a session designed to give a flavour of current research and achievements in physics in the UK and Ireland. Among the speakers was Ernie Hill of the Manchester Centre for Mesoscience and Nanotechnology, who described techniques for producing graphene and its potential applications such as chemical sensing and transparent electrodes in touchscreens.

Prof. Helen Gleeson, of the



Prof. Helen Gleeson speaks about liquid crystals to delegates at the IUPAP meeting.

University of Manchester's School of Physics and Astronomy, spoke about the properties of liquid crystals. While current applications such as liquid crystal displays had been highly successful, new research offered greater potential, such as devices that could be 10 times faster, she said.

Sir Richard Friend, Cavendish Professor at the University of

Cambridge, described research and applications in organic electronics including light-emitting diodes made from synthetic polymers. Prof. David Payne, director of the Optoelectronics Research Centre at the University of Southampton, outlined the history of optical fibre research and the UK's role in it, while Sir John Pendry, Professor of Theoretical Solid State

Physics at Imperial College London, spoke about the theory of cloaking devices and metamaterials.

Prof. Chris Dainty, of NUI Galway, described his work on precise modelling of the eye to improve cataract surgery. In the future, he said, "the lens will be customised just like your own natural lens to adapt for the aberrations of the cornea".

Among the resolutions passed by IUPAP were decisions to support the establishment of an International Year of Crystallography in 2013 and the campaign for the UN to proclaim 2015 the International Year of Light; to give increased support to the International Association of Physics Students; and to approve a number of detailed measures to work for the advancement of women in physics. It also revised its 2008 resolution on the universality of science to include opposition to discrimination on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.

www.iupap.org

Physics assembly supports SESAME

The project to build a third-generation light source as a shared facility in the Middle East is thriving but it needs more funding if it is to stay on course, its president, Prof. Sir Chris Llewellyn-Smith, told the general assembly of the International

Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) at its meeting in November (see story above).

Llewellyn-Smith, an honorary fellow of the IOP, said that the Synchrotron Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) centre is intended to be an outstanding place that will attract the best scientists to spend time using the facilities there, which would also foster collabora-

tion across political divides. With SESAME now under construction in Allan in Jordan, the project is actively seeking new members and sources of funding, he said.

The assembly passed a resolution to express strong support for SESAME, to call on relevant bodies to provide the funding that the project needs, and for IUPAP to give financial support within its own resource limits.



Chris Llewellyn-Smith spoke to IUPAP.