

Stebbins #1162

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March 1, 1962

Professor Joshua Lederberg  
Genetics Department  
School of Medicine  
Stanford University,  
Palo Alto, California

Dear Josh:

The International Union of Biological Sciences, in collaboration with the International Council of Scientific Unions, the International Union of Biochemistry and the International Union of Physiology, is planning an International Biological Program of scientific research. We hope that this may eventually have an impact upon scientists and the public comparable to IGY, but realize that such programs require careful planning, and that parts of them should be tried out first on a smaller scale. We believe that the benefits of such a program would be threefold. First, it should focus the attention of biologists on those problems of our society toward the solution of which, information from basic biological disciplines can have a particular value. Second, it should secure better collaboration between biologists of different nationalities and disciplines. Third, it should make the public better informed about the present and potential future contributions of biology to human welfare.

The theme adopted for the program by the General Assemblies of IUBS and ICSU is the productivity of biotic communities and its alteration through human interference. A Planning Committee will meet in Morges, Switzerland in May to formulate a more definite program and to start the search for personnel to carry it out. One of the principle tasks of this Committee will be to reduce this broad theme to reasonable proportions, while at the same time, retaining enough of its appeal so that governments and private agencies will consider the program worth supporting on a large scale. We must also retain enough diversity and breadth so that the program will interest biologists of several different disciplines and secure their active participation.

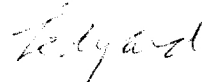
To help us with this task, representatives of the Committee are asking some of our best informed colleagues to review a comprehensive outline which I have prepared, and to fill out a questionnaire regarding it. I hope that you will have time to do this for us, and to discuss the

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problem informally with other biologists. Your answers will be kept confidential within the Committee, and we ask you to avoid giving any outside publicity to either the outline or the questionnaire.

While we would like to have you consider this problem carefully, and not reply in haste, I should nevertheless, like to have a reply by April 1, so that I can digest the information received and transmit some of it to other members of the Planning Committee before our meeting in May.

Yours very sincerely,



G. Ledyard Stebbins  
Secretary General

GLS:MH

Enclosures