

Oral Contributions

[MS42-04] Crystallography in Africa

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Crystallography in Africa was first established in Cape Town as an offshoot of the Bragg school. From there it gradually spread through South Africa and, at one stage, even into Rhodesia; so well that there was a conspicuous South-African presence at the first IUCr Assembly. Despite negative geopolitical problems the IUCr subsequently maintained its active involvement with South Africa although contact with the rest of Africa was lost.

More recent outreach into Africa resulted in some activity which gained momentum since the imaginative ECA decision to incorporate Africa as a full partner. The positive effect of this is most noticeable in North Africa where some active schools are flourishing. The current state of affairs in the rest of the continent and possible new initiatives will be discussed.

Because of the relative isolation from Europe the organization of regional events, with ECA support, needs to be stimulated. The regular series of Indaba meetings, which acquires an increasing international character, is one example.

The major challenge is to remain in step with the development of the science internationally. The importance of nano- and macromolecular systems is already recognized and practically pursued in a number of laboratories. However, more than a service activity, crystallography as the fundamental structural science, must remain at the cutting edge in the theoretical recognition of emerging problems related to such as four-dimensional and nonlinear effects, also in Africa.