

legal and social issues. This provides an essential opportunity for scientists and bioethicists to meet. Outside of the annual meeting, HUGO committees have produced policy statements on issues from EST patents to cloning and benefit sharing for research participants. These statements have had important effects on policy within the European Union, although they have been less influential in the US.

As a truly international organization, HUGO has been instrumental in reaching out to groups and nations that have not actively participated in the human genome project. Following a recent circulation of its membership, HUGO has recruited scientists from 24 countries to act as ambassadors for the genome community. These individuals will do outreach work in conveying the knowledge and implications of the human genome project to teachers, social workers and educational ministries—the ‘first line’ of society who must be informed and ready for the changes that knowledge of the genome will bring.

With the human genome sequence in hand, a truly international body is required now perhaps more than ever. Maximizing the benefits of the human genome project for all

humanity (and not just the wealthy western nations) requires international collaboration, resource sharing and continued dialogue. HUGO has evolved into an organization that is well placed to oversee the international ramifications of the human genome project and coordinate future research. If the nations that have made the largest scientific and economic contribution to the human genome project are committed to ensuring that the benefits are shared by all humanity, they need to be more active in participating in an international dialogue. Thus, there should be a recommitment to HUGO from the US (and, to a lesser degree, the U.K.) genomics community; they were conspicuously absent from this year’s meeting. At the same time, HUGO needs to assert its role in a world that is expectant of the fruits of the genome. Towards that end, HUGO should look at new means of enabling international research and building on the infrastructure that is in place. More than ever, the world needs a UN for the human genome. That organization should be HUGO. ■

**HGM2003 held in Cancun, Mexico; 27–30 April 2003.*

A new look

Regular readers of *Nature Genetics* PDFs online will have known for a few weeks now that the journal has been redesigned. We trust that the most obvious changes—artwork being splashed across the entire cover and the research material being given a new layout and style—will make the journal even more attractive to look at and to read. Why the new look? For one, *Nature Genetics* has not changed dramatically in appearance since its launch in 1992, and the time seemed right for a somewhat different aesthetic. More importantly, this redesign coincides with a similar process at the other monthly Nature research journals. Although each journal is editorially independent, the ‘family resemblance’ should now be more evident, reflected in consistent nomenclature for each section.

This redesign has also given us the impetus to include different types of content. On page 133, readers will find a page of ‘Research Notes’—short synopses of recent notable papers in

genetics. Pieces that normally ran under the heading ‘Progress’ will now be given the more straightforward title ‘Review’, the first of which appears on page 135. We will continue to run reviews—authoritative, balanced and scholarly surveys of particular areas of research—as well as commentaries, which will be less technical and more opinionated discussions of any topic of broad interest to geneticists. Starting next month, we will run an occasional ‘perspective,’ which will be a scholarly review of the literature that is perhaps too technical to be termed a commentary or puts forward a speculative hypothesis. As always, we welcome proposals for such pieces, in the form of one-page outlines, which can be sent to natgen@natureny.com. Finally, we will run obituaries to mark the passing of prominent people in the field. Sadly, the recent loss of Ira Herskowitz has meant that this section has been introduced immediately. On page 121, Anita Sil offers an overview of the life and work of this outstanding scientist. ■