

PREFACE

The XXIIIrd General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union was held August 17 to 30, 1997, in the Kyoto International Conference Hall in Kyoto, Japan, at the invitation of the Science Council of Japan and the Astronomical Society of Japan. The National Organising Committee, chaired by Prof. Daiichi Sugimoto, and the 40-strong Local Organising Committee chaired by Dr. Toshio Fukushima, had arranged a very well-organised and pleasant meeting, which was much appreciated by the nearly 2000 IAU Members and Invited Participants from 59 countries, and nearly 200 Registered Guests. Substantial financial support for the participants was received from NASA, ESA, and ESO, and through the generosity of many individual members of the Astronomical Society of Japan, and is gratefully acknowledged here.

The General Assembly featured an exceptionally rich scientific programme, organised by Prof. Immo Appenzeller, IAU General Secretary 1994-1997. Between three Invited Discourses, six Symposia, 23 Joint Discussions, three Special Scientific Sessions, and well over 100 Commission and Working Group meetings, over 800 oral and 1100 poster papers were presented. Proceedings of the Symposia will appear in the regular *IAU Symposium Series* as IAU Symposia Nos. 183 - 188, and condensed proceedings or summaries of the other scientific events of the General Assembly are in press in the series *Highlights of Astronomy*, Vol. 11A&B.

The present Vol. XXIIIB of the *Transactions of the International Astronomical Union* records the organizational and administrative business of the XXIIIrd General Assembly. Chapter I contains the addresses given at the Inaugural Ceremony on August 20, which was honoured by the presence of the their Majesties, the Emperor and Empress of Japan, and representatives of the two host organisations. Chapter II records the results and decisions of the two Working Sessions of the General Assembly itself on August 20 and 27, while Chapter III contains the addresses given at the Closing Ceremony on August 27.

Chapter IV presents the Report of the Resolutions Committee and the Resolutions approved by the General Assembly. The Reports of the Executive Committee and of the Divisions, Commissions, and Working Groups are the subject of Chapters V and VI, while Chapter VII contains the Statutes, Bye-Laws and Working Rules as modified and approved by the General Assembly and the Executive Committee. In Chapter VIII, a revised edition of the *Rules for Scientific Meetings* is published as a guide to potential organisers of future scientific meetings sponsored or co-sponsored by the Union. Finally, Chapter IX provides details on the Membership: The Adhering Bodies representing our Full and Associate Member Countries, and the names of the Individual Members listed by Commission membership and member country as well as in alphabetical order. The list of addresses of Individual Members is also printed in a separate volume, and is also maintained accessible on-line from the IAU WWW page (www.iau.org).

I wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the Division and Commission Presidents for providing their contributions in standardised or camera-ready format, and of the Resolutions Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Jean-Claude Pecker and the official translators, Drs. Janet Rountree and Thierry Courvoisier, for ensuring the correct preparation of the Resolutions of the General Assembly. I also sincerely thank our Secretariat staff, Mss. Monique Léger-Orine, Julie Saucedo, and Jodi Greenberg, for carrying a major share of the work of editing this volume; I regret that a number of human and computer health problems have delayed the completion of this volume despite their efforts. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the IAU Publishers 1967-1997, Kluwer Academic Publishers (formerly D. Reidel) for their pleasant cooperation in the preparation of this and numerous previous publications of the IAU.

Paris and Copenhagen, September 1998

Johannes Andersen
General Secretary