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Press Release

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APBIONET, ASIA'S LARGEST BIOINFORMATICS ORGANIZATION, SIGNS AFFILIATION AGREEMENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY

SINGAPORE, PALO ALTO, AND SAN DIEGO – May 10, 2002 - The president of the Pacific Rim's foremost bioinformatics organization, the Asia Pacific Bioinformatics Network (APBioNet), today signed an agreement of affiliation with the world's largest bioinformatics group, the International Society for Computational Biology (ISCB). Both groups are nonprofit societies dedicated to the advancement of scientific understanding of living systems through computation.

Through the affiliation agreement, the two groups will be able to extend their reach in promoting bioinformatics, specifically, the development of the bioinformatics network infrastructure, the exchange of data and information, the development of training programs, workshops and symposia.

"We have more than 400 individual members in more than a dozen economies in the Asia Pacific, from Russia to New Zealand, from India to USA. All our members need to be plugged into the international scene, and we are proud to be affiliated with the ISCB," said Professor S Subbiah, President of APBioNet.

"The ISCB is thrilled at the opportunity to connect with APBioNet. Affiliation with such a prestigious group will benefit the membership of the both organizations as well as strengthening our ability to promote bioinformatics as a scientific discipline worldwide," said Philip E. Bourne, president of the ISCB, director of Integrative Biosciences at the San Diego Supercomputer Center, and professor of pharmacology at UCSD. APBioNet is the most recent geographical group to join the ISCB, which has eight other affiliates worldwide.

The affiliation agreement involves cross-promotion of the two societies through publications and conferences, a voice for APBioNet to promote regional matters on the ISCB board, and potential support for APBioNet's regional activities, such as travel sponsorships. According to Bourne, the ISCB hopes the new agreement will provide the ISCB with an increased understanding of issues in bioinformatics in the Asia Pacific region as well as outreach to APBioNet's membership.

APBioNet has a strong record of outreach around the Pacific Rim, encouraging collaboration in the field of bioinformatics in the Asia Pacific region as well as promoting awareness among biologists of the need to acquire bioinformatics skills. With over 1300 members in 42 countries, ISCB has similar aims on a global scale, and hosts the annual international conference on Intelligent Systems for Molecular Biology (ISMB).

"We are pleased to achieve peer-to-peer mutual recognition with our counterparts in the European Molecular Biology Network (EMBnet) earlier this year. This affiliation with ISCB will give an even bigger boost to our initiatives in our region " said Professor Shoba Ranganathan, Vice President of APBioNet, who is also Secretary of S* Alliance and Founding Chair of the WEB series.

"The APBioNet secretariat hopes to work closely with ISCB in the areas of promoting greater awareness and outreach. More importantly, we hope to follow up with key projects to build up the bioinformatics information infrastructure, the manpower capability and the human networking which ISCB affiliation will open up to us." said Dr Tan Tin Wee, the founding Convenor of APBioNet and Secretariat currently coordinating the APBioGRID and the bioinformatics curriculum initiative in APBioNet.

About APBioNet

The Asia Pacific Bioinformatics Network (APBioNet) is a non-profit, non-governmental, international organization founded in 1998. It focuses on the promotion of bioinformatics in the Asia Pacific Region. Since 1998, its mission has been to pioneer the growth and development of bioinformatics awareness, training, education, infrastructure, resources and research amongst member countries and economies. Its work includes the technical coordination, liaison and/or affiliation with other international bodies such as the EMBnet and ISCB.

APBioNet has more than 20 organizational and 400 individual members from over 12 countries in the Asia Pacific region, and members include those from industry, academia, research, government, investors and international organizations. APBioNet has coordinated or co-organized more than 20 international and national meetings in cooperation with members in different economies. It is spearheading a number of key bioinformatics initiatives in the region in collaboration with international organizations such as APAN, APEC, S* Alliance and A-IMBN. More about APBioNet can be found at: <http://www.apbionet.org/>.

About ISCB

The ISCB a scholarly society dedicated to advancing the scientific understanding of living systems through computation, with an emphasis is on the role of computing and informatics in advancing molecular biology. Founded in 1997, the ISCB serves a global membership with the goal of increased understanding of the significance of bioinformatics in the scientific community, government, and the public at large. More about the ISCB can be found at: <http://www.iscb.org/>.

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