

6 March 1995

To: WG5 members
From: Miles Ellis — Acting Convenor
Subject: The Tokyo meeting, and other things

1. Change of (Acting) Convenor

As most of you already know, at the last meeting of WG5 in Edinburgh Jeanne Martin, Convenor of WG5 since 1982, announced her retirement from the position as a result of changes in priorities by her employers, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California. She agreed to continue as Acting Convenor until a new Convenor was appointed, and was duly appointed to that role by the SC22 Plenary in September. Since the Secretariat for WG5 was held by the United States it fell to them, in the first instance, to nominate a replacement for Jeanne. However, no suitable candidate could be found and in October the US National Body formally announced that it was relinquishing the Secretariat [SC22 N1718, WG5 N1073], although it indicated that Jeanne would be able to continue as Acting Convenor until a replacement was appointed.

At this critical time in the development of Fortran 95 and the planning for Fortran 2000, it was felt by many that a replacement should be found as soon as possible and at its meeting on 7th December the BSI's Programming Languages Committee decided to offer to take on the Secretariat for Fortran and to nominate me as the next Convenor of WG5.

I had already planned to attend my last meeting of X3]3 in Houston, TX, in late January, and so arranged to take that opportunity to discuss details of the hand-over with Jeanne (with whom I had earlier, of course, discussed the possibility of my taking over from her - replacing her is hardly possible. Although Jeanne had originally been planning to attend the Tokyo meeting (at her own expense!), the fact that I had been formally nominated made her change her plans and she will not now be attending - a fact which many of us will, I am sure, very much regret.

Almost the first matter that faced the new SC22 Secretariat, Bill Rhinehuls of the USA, when he took up the post in succession to Joe Cote, was this transfer of the Acting Convenorship, and on February 7th he officially appointed me as Acting Convenor of WG5 in succession to Jeanne. A formal letter ballot to confirm this appointment has now been issued to SC22 members, closing on June 6th.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Jeanne for her advice and assistance as I attempt to step into her shoes. WG5 owes her an enormous debt of

gratitude for her work as Convenor over the last twelve years, especially during the difficult days in the late 1980s before peace broke out between X3J3 and WG5, leading to the much closer and (hopefully) more productive collaboration that exists today.

2. Priorities for Tokyo

All the signs are that the attendance at the Tokyo meeting in April will be substantially less than at most recent WG5 meetings, although probably still more than some other Working Groups often attract. It is, however, an extremely important meeting, as it will be the last before the next revision of the Fortran Standard (IS 1539-1) is released for CD balloting by SC22.

The current plan is as follows:

April 17-21	WG5 meets in Tokyo to review the draft revision (N1094) and prepares a list of changes required before its release
April 24-28	X3J3 meets in Maui to incorporate the changes requested by WG5
May 22	Revised WD transmitted to the SC22 Secretariat with a request for it to be issued for CD balloting
mid-June CD	ballot commences
mid-September	CD ballot ends. Comments forwarded by SC22 Secretariat to WG5 Convenor
early October	CD ballot comments distributed to WG5 by the Convenor
November 6-10	WG5 meets in San Diego to review ballot comments and determine what action to take
November 13-17	X3J3 meets in San Diego to incorporate the changes requested by WG5
mid-December	Revised draft distributed to WG5, and informal ballot of WG5 members begins
late January, 1996	Informal WG5 ballot ends

Depending on the result of the ballot one of two procedures will then follow:

Either (if the informal WG5 ballot indicates no problems with the draft DIS)

mid-February	Revised CD transmitted to SC22 Secretariat for DIS balloting
early March	DIS ballot commences

early July	DIS ballot ends. Comments forwarded by SC22 Secretariat to WG5 Convenor
mid-July	Convenor passes (trivial) corrections directly to document editor
early August	Final text of DIS forwarded to ITTF in Geneva
September 1996	Fortran 95 (IS 1539-1 : 1996) published

Or (if the informal WG5 ballot indicates that problems remain with the draft DIS)

February 1996	Attempt to resolve problem issues via email
March 18-22	X3J3 meets and incorporates further changes requested by WG5
mid-April	Final (?) revision distributed to WG5 for informal ballot
mid-May	Informal WG5 ballot ends
late May	Revised CD transmitted to SC22 Secretariat for DIS balloting
mid-June	DIS ballot commences
mid-October	DIS ballot ends. Comments forwarded by SC22 Secretariat to WG5 Convenor
late October	Convenor passes (trivial) corrections directly to document editor
early November	Final text of DIS forwarded to ITTF in Geneva
December 1996	Fortran 95 (IS 1539-1 : 1996) published

The need for the informal ballot in December/January is, of course, because the new JTC1 procedures do not allow any technical, or other non-trivial, changes to be made to the DIS after it has been balloted. It is, therefore, important that all possible issues are identified before the DIS ballot and either resolved or accepted in advance as unresolvable.

This timetable assumes that it will be possible to resolve all CD ballot comments during the San Diego meeting in November and it is therefore important that the final WD (N1094, distributed with this mailing, where appropriate) should be broadly acceptable to all National Bodies so that there are no major surprises in the CD ballot — although it would be unrealistic to expect a unanimous "Yes with no comments"!

Will all National Bodies who do not expect to be represented in Tokyo please, therefore, review the document before the meeting and let me have their comments no later than noon GMT on Thursday 13th April, so that I can take them with me to Tokyo the following day.

There are four other major issues that I should also like to make progress on during the Tokyo meeting.

The first of these concerns the issue of a 3rd Corrigendum to Fortran 90. Document N1082 contains some 21 defect management items which have been approved by X3J3 and are awaiting WG5 action. There are believed to be about a similar number still awaiting an X3J3 resolution. In addition, document N1081 contains a further 15 items which passed the last WG5 ballot. No final decision has yet been made concerning a 3rd Corrigendum, but the planned schedule for Fortran 95 shows that, if all goes well, it will replace Fortran 90 in the last quarter of next year, only a few months after any 3rd Corrigendum is likely to be approved. We need to decide definitively

- Shall we issue a 3rd Corrigendum for Fortran 90?
- If so, should we base it on those items already approved by X3J3 (and possibly any further ones approved at X3J3's meeting in April), or should we delay it until later in the year in the hope that we can include all current interpretation requests?

I propose to issue the items in N1082 for a WG5 ballot following the Tokyo meeting, but exactly when, and in what form, will depend upon the answers to the second question.

The second question concerns the procedure for the next revision (after Fortran 95). In recent months there has been considerable discussion about the possible content of Fortran 2000, coupled with a view that some features are too important to wait until 2001, or later. Some of the papers in this distribution address particular areas of concern, but there are several others as well. We urgently need to address this issue, or Fortran runs the risk of being left behind completely. The promise of "jam tomorrow" is not always sufficient to prevent people feeling hungry today!

In particular we need to address the question which has been raised from several quarters of whether we can find a way of providing the incentive for vendors to add features for which there is a demonstrable market requirement without running the risk of a subsequent standard rendering their efforts non-standard and incompatible.

The third question concerns a proposed rationale for the new features in Fortran 95. At its last meeting in January, X3J3 asked one of its members to prepare a first draft of such a rationale, but was unable to approve the resulting document without further work. A revised version is included in this distribution (N1091) and WG5 needs to decide whether to incorporate this document, or a revision of it, in the CD to be balloted later this summer, to defer a decision on its inclusion until after the CD ballot (i.e. only add it, after further revision(s), at the DIS ballot stage), or not to include such

a section in Fortran 95.

The final question that I would like to make a decision on concerns the methods of communication and document distribution within WG5. Paper N1077 makes certain proposals in this area, and I hope that the meeting (with the assistance of any input from those unable to be present) can come up with a draft policy for balloting amongst the full membership.