BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTION
COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES (IST/5)

UK National Activity Report presented to the meeting of
ISO/IEC JTC1/SC22/WG5 (Fortran), Berchtesgaden, July 5-9, 1993

The BSI Fortran Panel has fourteen members, including a graphics liaison member. There have been two panel meetings during the past year; most of the panel's business is conducted by mail and e-mail. In addition, three of its members are also members of the BSI committee on programming languages, the national counterpart of SC22. The number of UK-based members of X3J3 is two and has not changed in the past year.

ISO/IEC 1539:1991 was adopted as a European Standard on 30 October 1992 and subsequently endorsed as a British standard (BS EN 21539:1992) with effect from 15 March 1993. It was reported to WG5 last year that there was concern at the very high price at which the ISO Fortran Standard was being sold by BSI Sales Department. The matter has been formally raised and widely discussed within BSI, without achieving any change in sales policy. Every effort has been made by the panel to advise potential purchasers of the availability of the standard via Unicomp Inc.

On future requirements for Fortran the UK panel, following the spirit of the last WG5 meeting, proposes a minimalist approach involving incorporation of corrections etc, plus a small number of items needed to remove major inconveniences to certain types of use; details are in WG5-N909. There is concern that unless demands for extensions are sparing, the targets set in the strategic plan agreed by WG5 will not be met.

In the WG5 ballot on approval of the Fortran 90 Maintenance Document, the UK approved most of the items but was strongly opposed to a few of the suggested corrections.

The Varying Length Character Strings in Fortran module has been a major item of consideration for the panel. The UK vote on the adoption of the WD on as a CD was a simple "yes" but the vote on its registration as a DIS was "no" on the procedural ground that to call the auxiliary standard an "amendment" was inappropriate and confusing. In the subsequent WG5 ballot the UK preferred the multi-part standard approach.

The panel drafted, on behalf of WG5, responses to the SC22 cross-language questionnaire (WG5-N835) so far as it concerned Language Independent Procedure Calling. As a result of this, it was suggested to IST/5 that LIPC would be much improved by example bindings to two major languages and this point was part of the UK vote on registration of LIPC as a CD.

In accordance with suggestions and discussion at the July 1992 WG5 meeting, the panel has developed the Guidelines for Bindings to Fortran 90 document (WG5-N889) for consideration at this WG5 meeting.

The British Computer Society Fortran Specialist Group continues to be the main open forum for discussion of Fortran matters in the UK. Four meetings have been held and the group has helped to organize two major conferences on Scientific Programming in C and Fortran which have involved members of the panel and which have given valuable guides to future user requirements.

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IST/5/-/5 (Fortran) Convenor
June 30, 1993