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From diplomacy to physics and back again: The changing roles of IUPAP in the second half of the 20th century

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The talk discusses the changing structures and functions of the International Union for Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) from its re-establishment after World War II until the late 20th century in relation to broad historical processes based on ongoing studies within the *IUPAP 100 history project*. IUPAP restarted its activities in 1947 after World War II had dramatically altered the social and political implications of physics research. The establishment of a new world order and the new social and political role of science led to a reconfiguration of international institutionalization of scientific cooperation and exchange. The umbrella organization of international scientific unions, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), had just re-established its activities in formal cooperation with UNESCO. The new formal agreement between ICSU and UNESCO dramatically changed the nature and range of activities of IUPAP. While IUPAP had been rather inactive in the interwar period, the post-WWII period saw the emergence and rapid blossoming of various committees devoted to specific sectors of physics. After discussing the major features of this transformation, the talk chronicles main developments of the activities of IUPAP and its committees in the following decades. These highlights from the history of IUPAP demonstrate the delicate balance between scientific goals and diplomatic concerns shaping the way in which IUPAP officers and its committees operated in different historical contexts.

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