

**Report for the 24th General Assembly  
FIG Working Week in Seoul, 6-11 May 2001**

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**General**

The past year has been a time for preparation for a new culture in the history of the Federation. The General Assembly in Prague decided in principle on the new governance model and statutes for a fully democratic FIG. This work has been followed by preparations of the statutes and internal rules both by the Task Force on the Future Governance of FIG and by the Bureau in discussions with member associations. I am happy to say that we are completing this long process that started with the establishment of the permanent office in Copenhagen two years ago.

Much work, however, is required before the new governance model is in full operation by January 2007. The FIG General Assembly in Seoul is in this respect most important because that is where we will discuss the principles of the future commission structure and the long-term strategies of the Federation during the breakout sessions. I am convinced that the new governance model will support the multicultural approach in the administration of the Federation. I want to encourage the member associations to express their views on increased FIG participation in the arrangements of congresses and working weeks which might allow FIG to generate additional, non-member income.

The Bureau has begun implementation of its work plan – with the help of member associations and the ten technical commissions. The highlights of the past year have been the successful working week in Prague in which I, because of family reasons, was unable to participate, and the several joint commission events. The very successful event organised for the Mediterranean region in Malta in September, hosted by several commissions, and the Commission 2-driven seminar in Rosario, Argentina were examples of the regional activities this Bureau has been anticipating and advocating.

This President's report takes the place of the former reports of the President, the Secretary General and the FIG office. Instead of a secretary general, a treasurer and three vice presidents we now have five vice presidents each having different responsibilities defined both by professional content and geographic region.

**United Nations relations**

FIG has for several years had close co-operation with the United Nations and several of its agencies, especially UNCHS (Habitat). FIG was invited to participate in the Urban 21

Conference in Berlin last July and the Experts Group meeting in Västerås, Sweden in November 2000 to prepare the draft Declaration on "Cities and other Human Settlements in the new Millennium" and review the implementation of the Habitat Agenda for the UN Special Session on Istanbul +5. Further, FIG has been represented at the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Human Settlements and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Prep Com on Istanbul + 5 in Nairobi this year and has taken a key part in preparations for the follow-up session itself. FIG will have an active role in New York in June together with partners from the Habitat Professionals Forum. We have also started our preparations for the FIG contribution of effort to the Rio + 10 process.

Last year FIG participated in the UN Regional Cartographic Conferences for Asia and the Pacific. This year we had a high profile at the UNRCC for the Americas in New York in January 2001. Both these meetings will result in new events and activities in which FIG will play an active role, to take place in the Mekong region and in Mexico in fall 2002.

The long-time co-operation with UN FAO is leading to a formal Memorandum of Understanding between FIG and FAO. I expect to have more information on this agreement to report to the General Assembly in Seoul.

### **Sister organisations**

Co-operation between FIG and the other international professional surveying organisations has been developed on bilateral basis since IUSM was disbanded in 1999. The former members of IUSM still meet during the congresses once a year but the main effort is on bilateral co-operation that is more closely related to commission activities and provides more deliverables.

The first Memorandum of Understanding with sister organisations was signed with the International Society for Mine Surveying (ISM) in Krakow during the ISM Congress in September 2000. A similar Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared with the International Association of Geodesy (IAG) that will be adopted by both associations during the spring.

It is our objective to formalise good relations with the other professional associations like ICA, ISPRS and IHO with similar agreements in the near future. I would also like to see us develop closer contact to the international association of surveying students (IGSO).

### **Commissions and Task forces**

The work of the Federation is dependant upon the ten technical commissions and their activities. I would again like to encourage member associations to nominate delegates to all commissions and to actively support their participation in that work. Delegates should be supported in attending seminars and meetings; if unable to attend, delegates should be encouraged to participate by correspondence, taking advantage of the many possibilities of modern communications technology.

The Bureau is pleased with the many activities of the commissions when organising their own events but especially with the increased number of joint events. Commissions 2, 3, 5 and 7 are examples of commissions that implement not only their own work plans and policies but also the FIG policy. A good example was the Commission 2 seminar organised in Rosario, Argentina in October representing the Federation and promoting FIG in South America and Latin America. Commission 3 is organising, jointly with UNCHS (Habitat) and the Institution of Surveyors of Kenya, a larger conference in Nairobi to be held in October this year. That will be the biggest FIG commission-driven event ever in Africa. This event is also a good example of the joint commission activities that have increased remarkably over the years. Another good example was the Symposium for the Mediterranean area organised in September 2000 in Malta to which five commissions took part under Commission 5 leadership while The Land Surveyors Society, Malta made the practical arrangements.

In Prague we established a new task force to review the role and structure of commissions, task forces and permanent institutions in FIG. I look forward to final proposals to encourage the commissions to take an even more active role in implementing the goals of the Federation. I would like to thank all the commissions for their good work during the past year.

I extend thanks also to the task forces that are making good progress on their special topics. I would especially like to recognize the work that we are doing in international standardisation, on supporting women and under-represented groups, and on work on mutual recognition. Mutual recognition was the subject of a joint expert seminar held in November in Delft on Enhancing Professional Competence of Surveyors in Europe. This seminar was a cooperative effort of FIG and the European surveying association CLGE.

Finally I would like to mention the Task Force on Sustainable Development that has now completed its work. The final report, "FIG Agenda 21", is an important contribution from FIG to implement Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda in the surveying profession.

## **Membership**

I am happy to report that the membership of FIG continues to grow. After adopting four new member associations last year we have this year an additional four new member applications (two from Armenia, one each from Finland and Puerto Rico).

I am also happy to say that in the beginning of the year academic members increased in numbers to over 30 from more than 20 nations. We also have new correspondents in Africa and have new affiliate members from Latin America supported by the US aid project "Hurricane Mitch Recovery Program".

Our sponsor membership – or corporate membership as it will be called in the future – continues to grow as well. During the past year Terra Map Server GmbH and Hansa

Luftbild Sensorik und Photogrammetric GmbH from Germany have joined FIG as corporate members. We expect to announce additional new corporate members at the meeting in Seoul. FIG depends on the support of the corporate members; and in return we offer certain advantages to corporate members.

### **Information delivery**

The FIG information delivery system is now available to more people than ever. I often hear positive comments on the FIG web site that we attempt to keep up to date, that includes relevant information for surveyors. I would like everyone to use it more actively and promote it to members of the member associations. Through the web site we can reach people that we may never contact through traditional communication methods.

The Bureau will continue to publish the FIG Bulletin quarterly. There have been some technical problems that have caused delays but they are now solved. We would like to raise the quality of the Bulletin and study possibilities to print it in full colour while keeping its newsletter profile. The second Bulletin this year will be an experiment, including both the Bulletin and the Annual Review 2000.

In addition to FIG Agenda 21 the General Assembly must decide on another important FIG publication in Seoul: the publication on FIG guidelines on women's access to land. The document is based on the work by a Commission 7 working group supported by Swedesurvey and accomplished by Dr. Susan Nichols and Katalin Komjathy.

### **Visits**

The Bureau intends to visit as many member associations as possible during its term of office. We will be unable to visit all countries, however, due to a shortened term of office while we convert to the new governance structure.

Following the Prague working week and prior to the Seoul meeting FIG Bureau members or FIG representatives will have visited members in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Kenya, Korea, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Morocco, the Netherlands, Poland, Puerto Rico, Slovak Republic, Sweden, Turkey, USA and Venezuela.

Although unable to attend the working week in Prague last year I helped the DdL celebrate their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Copenhagen in September after which I flew to Krakow, Poland, where I met with the Council of the International Society of Mine Surveying for signing of our new Memorandum of Understanding. I enjoyed taking part in the symposium the "Mediterranean Surveyor in the New Millennium" in Malta that same month. In December the Bureau visited Providence, Rhode Island in the US, where the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping held a joint conference with the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. Later in December Markku Villikka and I visited Japan; we were warmly greeted by representatives of the local

surveying profession who arranged a tour for us of the Sokkia and Topcon facilities. From there we traveled to Seoul for a review of plans for WW2001.

I joined Stig Enemark, Ian Williamson and John Parker in New York in January for our participation in the UN Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas. It is indeed gratifying to experience the respect afforded to FIG by agencies of the United Nations. At this meeting we made important contacts with leaders of the surveying profession in Latin and South America. In April I will make a tour of the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Lithuania and Latvia where I am expecting to discover that the surveying profession is growing ever stronger in those emerging economies. Once again it is clear that land and land markets are at the center of all economic activity and that the surveying profession is vital to the fair and efficient workings of those markets.

### **Permanent office**

The FIG office will continue in its Copenhagen office into the foreseeable future. The Bureau will sign a new contract with the Danish Association of Chartered Surveyors, DdL, in Seoul. This new contract will assure the continuation of the excellent service provided out of the DdL offices on the best of terms between FIG and DdL. I extend my warm thanks here to DdL and the Danish surveyors for their superb support of FIG.

The FIG Foundation has been moved from Australia to Denmark for administration. New statutes will be agreed and confirmed at the meeting of the Board of Directors in Seoul, to be confirmed by the General Assembly. The new format of the Foundation will offer better opportunities for FIG to serve its members in developing countries with greater efficiency, and to assist young surveyors in those countries.

### **Working Week 2001 and FIG Congress 2002**

I look forward to a highly successful working week in Seoul. The professional programme will be larger than ever for an FIG Working Week and the organisers have prepared an event that will be remembered for many years. Working Week 2001 is approaching a congress in scope with more than 30 sessions and workshops and more than 150 presentations. As for the administrative meetings I expect interesting discussions and new ideas especially from the breakout sessions whose themes are the future strategy of FIG; review of the Commission structure; and cultures and languages in FIG to be prepared by the task force established for that purpose by the General Assembly last year in Prague.

Our next major event after Working Week 2001 will be the Congress in Washington, DC in April 2002. The arrangements are proceeding smoothly. The combination of high-quality technical program and technical visits, biggest-ever surveying exhibition in the US, and grand social activities will provide a memorable 2002 Congress. As a result of the good relations FIG has with the United Nations and the commercial market we are able to announce the two keynote speakers for the opening ceremony: Dr. Anna K

Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) and Jack Dangermond, President and Founder of ESRI.

We look forward to see you all in Seoul in 2001 and in Washington in 2002.

Robert W. Foster  
President of FIG