

**Report to the 28<sup>th</sup> General Assembly  
FIG Working Week in Cairo, April 2005**

**President's Report**

The past year was the second full year that our Council has been responsible for the administration of the Federation. The General Assembly in its meeting in Athens elected two new Vice Presidents to the Council, Ken Allred from Canada and Stig Enemark from Denmark, who officially started their work as Council members in the beginning of January 2005 in Munich. Together with Matt Higgins, who is the new Commission representative (ACCO representative 2005-2006) in the Council, they will provide excellent additional expertise to the Council work. I would also like to express my best wishes to Bettina Petzold who had to leave the Council for personal reasons and to Gerhard Muggenhuber as the previous ACCO representative.

The General Assembly also elected in Athens the new Commission chairs-elect who will be the chairpersons in 2006-2010. In the elections we had the problem that the elected chairs are representing too much the developed world, especially Europe, and this is something that we need to discuss. In the Council the balance is better, when we have representatives from Europe, Asia, North America and Australia and the Pacific. Concerning the commissions, we still need to elect a new chair to Commission 4 for 2006-2010. In this respect we expect active approach from you as a member. In commission 8 where we used to have some problems, we have now a new active leadership and are working to get this important commission to work properly.

The Council has decided to establish a Task Force to study the Commission structure in the future and also if there is any need to change the statutes and internal rules concerning the Council and election procedures. I wish all the best to Ken Allred in his job as the chair of this very important task force and also encourage the member associations to send their representative to the meeting on this topic here in Cairo. In parallel the Council will study the proposal from our French colleagues how to best help member associations with economic problems. Meanwhile I would like to ask you to consider whether your association would be able to help financially those associations that are about to fall apart from the Federation.

The past year started in "Olympic Spririt" in Athens, where our Greek member associations the Technical Chamber of Greece and Hellenic Association of Rural and Surveying Engineers (HARSE) organised an extremely successful FIG Working Week. It was a great idea to have the main FIG event in Athens in the home of the Olympic Games just prior the actual games. On behalf of us all I congratulate our Greek colleagues for organizing such an unforgettable event. Not only the great technical and social events but also the opening and restructured closing ceremonies showed way for the future FIG events. This is an example of the improved level of policies in the FIG events. We now have a keynote speech of the President in all our major events and all conferences end with written conclusions of the event. I hope you are able to distribute the outcome of the different events to your members in an appropriate way thus convincing them of the benefits of FIG membership.

The second highlight of the past year was the 3<sup>rd</sup> FIG Regional Conference that was organized in Jakarta, Indonesia by Ikatan Surveyor Indonesia and Bakosurtanal. It was already the third time that FIG organized this kind of regional conference, and it clearly confirmed that this concept is highly appreciated both by surveyors in that region and by surveyors internationally. Despite the travel warnings and concerns this event attracted good attendance from the region and around the world and even made the event self-financing. We are keen to see how this concept will work this year in Havana, Cuba September 26-29, 2005 when we have our first regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean and next year in Accra, Ghana in March at the first regional conference in the Western Africa.

During the past year there has also been good progress in co-operation between FIG and the United Nations. The co-operation was intensified with UN-Habitat, when I together with other FIG representatives was able to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Urban Forum in Barcelona in September. At the WUF also the Marrakech Statement on Urban-rural Inter-relationship was launched with good feedback. The statement was further presented as one of the highlights of the celebrations of the World Habitat Day in Nairobi in early October. Other highlights of the UN co-operation include the UN/FIG/PC IDEA Inter-regional Special Forum on Development of Land Information Policies in Americas that was held in Aguascalientes, Mexico in October 2004. The Forum was organized by FIG based on the decision of the UN Regional Cartographic Conference in 2001. I would like to express my special thanks to John Parker and Stig Enemark who both organized this event on our behalf and also prepared the report which will be published in the FIG publication series. Last year ended in Vienna where FIG signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs. This co-operation will also offer new opportunities in the very actual issue of disaster management. Also many of our commissions – especially 7, 8 and 5, have been active in their relationship to the United Nations.

FIG took over the chairmanship and the management of the Habitat Professionals Forum in September at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Urban Forum. This is an indication of the good reputation that FIG has in the UN-Habitat, but more important, it gives us the opportunity to bring surveyors in frontline in discussion of human settlements – especially challenging for our commissions 7, 8, 9 and 10. Habitat Professionals Forum intends to participate actively in the World Congress of the International Union of Architects in Istanbul this year. An additional opportunity to broaden the profession is the revised definition of a surveyor.

FIG has also been active in communicating with our traditional international partners both through the Joint Board of Spatial Information Societies, which will have a meeting in Cairo to discuss the goals and administration of this Board. This will also offer excellent opportunities for our commissions to strengthen co-operation with our professional partners. I am especially pleased with the closer co-operation with the International Association of Geodesy (IAG), whose President Prof. Gerhard Beutler attended both the Working Week in Athens and the Regional Conference in Jakarta. It has been delightful to see the increased participation of IAG and FIG in each others meetings and how they have increased their coordination of mutual events. I am confident that this cooperation that has been implemented especially by FIG Commission 5 and IAG Commission 4 will strengthen the geodetic profile of our profession and organisation. Now we look forward to a similar development with ISPRS and ICA. I am glad that the International Cartographic Association (ICA) also sent their representative to both FIG main events last year. I also have already met with Prof. Ian

Dowman, the newly appointed President of ISPRS in London in December and with Prof Yu Changxing, President of ISPRS in Jakarta in October 2004.

The Council has been active also in communicating directly with member associations by visiting their annual meetings and other events. I was delighted to visit the Order of Surveyors Lebanon during the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Scientific Congress on Surveying and Topography in Beirut in September and the Slovenian Association of Surveyors on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Krim coordinate system, simultaneously with International Conference “*Land Surveying – Future Prospects and Reality*” in October. I further met with the Board members of the Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors (ICES) and the representatives of the RICS in London in December as well as with the Austrian Society for Surveying and Geoinformation during the UN OOSA meeting in Vienna.

As the President I am not able to accept all invitations that I receive, therefore I am happy to have a professional team in my Council that can represent FIG on all occasions. I would like to mention some of the visits during the last year made by my Vice Presidents and the Director, FIG Office. We have visited and met with representatives of member associations in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China P.R., Cuba, Denmark, Ghana, Egypt, Finland, Jamaica, Morocco, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and USA and will further visits member associations in Algeria, Italy, Kenya and Ukraine before the Working Week in Cairo. I think that the personal visits are beneficial both for FIG in developing its activities and for the members. FIG now has a face while the personal contacts also bring a human touch to our work. I would like to thank all hosts again for their wonderful hospitality and excellent arrangements.

I together with Vice President Ralf Schroth attended the successful ISPRS Congress in Istanbul in July 2004. FIG was also in charge of the FIG Forum at the Intergeo 2004 in Stuttgart, Germany and participated as a partner in the ESRI Survey Summit in San Diego, USA.

As you know, I am very much interested in the public role of surveyors and how to make surveyors better known to the big audience and also to policy makers. In this respect I am pleased with the progress made at the FIG events on the media relations as well as the increased visibility of FIG in the professional journals both linked to the events and to the role of the profession in general. I would also once again like to congratulate our Commissions and active people on the contents of our website. I continuously get positive feedback about the quality and contents of the website. It is a real showcase for our profession. We will not forget printed material either and we will go on with the Annual Review as well as statements and declarations on essential issues to our profession.

The membership of FIG has increased during the past year. In Athens we got new members from Algeria, Cuba and Tunisia. This time we have member applications from Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Kosovo UNMIK and the United Arab Emirates. In addition we have got a new affiliate from Peru. In total 9 new academic members have joined FIG since the General Assembly in 2004. Finally three new corporate members joined during 2004 (International Land Systems (ILS), USA, LKN Earth Research & Consulting, Georgia and SEPRET (Société des Etudes de Projets et Réalisation des Travaux S.A.R.L. from Morocco). The continuous increase in the membership has brought us to the situation which allows us to work for a better future.

The economic situation in FIG is very stable. Without going into details I would just like to thank our Danish host association DdL for their continuous support to the permanent office last year and also in the future. The financial result from last year was very good because the permanent office managed to generate new income by being more involved in organizing FIG events. This year the office will be in charge of the Working Week in Cairo and of the Regional Conference in Cuba. To me it is totally clear that in the future FIG has to take care of all our events – of course in co-operation with the hosting member association – therefore the decision on the venue of the congress 2010 is so critical also for our economic independence. The positive development would not have been possible without the professional staff in the FIG office. I would like to express our thanks not only to the Director but to his two assistants Tine Svendstorp and Dorte Rechendorff. Finally I would like to thank all Commission chairs and officers and especially my friends and colleagues in the Council, without their enthusiasm and work we could have not done what we managed to achieve.

As mentioned, I have been able to follow the preparations of the next FIG events here in Cairo and – the highlight of our term of office – the FIG Congress in Munich October 8-13, 2006. I am convinced that the FIG 2006 will be a great success thanks to the hard work made by the organizing committee and the support from DVW.

Last year ended with the biggest natural disaster during the last centuries; the earthquake and tsunami in Asia. It had an impact on the countries and citizens around the Indian Ocean directly and almost everybody was affected. The countries in the region suffered in an incredible way and lost thousands of citizens and so did many other countries as well. This disaster shows that even with the modern technology and expertise mankind is almost helpless in front of nature. We are all mourning and share our sympathy with those who lost their families, friends and colleagues in this terrible event as well as with those who have suffered in other ways from the event including those who have lost their homes and jobs. The disaster also shows the need for professionals to bring and share their expertise so that such disaster will never happen again or at least the damages can be limited. FIG together with other international organisations and its sister associations (IAG, ISPRS, IHO, ICA etc.) and the member associations should be prepared to give their help especially in rebuilding infrastructure, providing housing and developing society as a whole after the disaster. The ways we can help are related e.g. in developing risk and disaster management – a challenge to our working group in this topic – and in developing monitoring systems. In these FIG will co-operate with the United Nations e.g. with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). I would also like to encourage the member association to help our colleagues in Sri Lanka who have lost their homes and possibilities to go on with their profession.

As a summary I would like to state that the past year was very successful for FIG and for me as your President too. I enjoy the cooperation and contacts with you very much although it is a hard burden for me as a still active University Professor. I feel much enriched by this commitment and fortunately I am strongly supported by the Council members. To get this FIG success all done we owe a big thank to all FIG functioners (especially commission officers and national delegates who are mostly working as volunteers), to all our members and to you personally.

But first of all let's enjoy this working week here in the home of surveying, in Cairo. I am excited to see how the obviously largest FIG Working Week together with the 8<sup>th</sup> GSDI Congress will work out and what the comments from the members will be. Whether we should use this concept again at our annual working weeks or keep the working weeks mainly as internal discussion fora and technical conferences.

I wish you all a successful conference here in Cairo.

Holger Magel  
President of FIG

February 2005