

**Report to the 29th General Assembly
FIG Congress in Munich, October 2006**

President's Report

This President's report covers the third year and partly the last year of the term of the office of the current Council. In this report I will focus on the activities that have taken place between the Working Week in Cairo and July 2006. The overall evaluation of the achievements of the German led Council will therefore be prepared first for the Working Week 2007 in Hong Kong so that we can cover the whole period including the highlight of the four-year term of office – the FIG Congress in Munich. This is due to the fact that normally the last months of the term of office are busy both for the Council and for the commissions when all reports and projects need to be concluded before the Congress and the end of the year.

The highlights of the past year were the Working Week in Cairo, Egypt the biggest ever FIG Working Week attracting more than 900 delegates from more than 80 countries. This was the first time when the FIG Working Week was organised together with another international association – the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure. Special thanks belong to the local organising committee that consisted of the Egyptian Committee for Surveying and Mapping (ECSM), and the Egyptian Survey Authority (ESA). In the conference programme there were more than 400 papers and poster presentations in more than 50 technical sessions and 7 pre-conference workshops. Not only the records with attendee numbers and papers but the quality of the technical conference and social events exceeded our expectations. I am sure that the conference also had an impact in the role of surveyors in Egypt. I have asked representatives from Cairo to tell us about the outcome of the conference at this General Assembly.

I am not alone with these thanks as based on the comments from members and delegates as well as facts from statistics and financial report the conference was a success and gives an indication that the concept approved by the Council – having a larger Working Week every second year possibly with a partner organisation – could be a persistent solution. In the years between the Council plans to organise a regional conference, which is another concept that has worked out well. The concept of having a regional conference only every second year is at the same time our answer to those requesting that FIG should reach out to its members and allow attendance also to those that cannot attend our normal meetings. At the same time it will give more space for Commissions and their own activities by not overloading the agenda of FIG functionaries.

The 5th FIG Regional Conference was organised in Accra, Ghana in March 2006. This conference was successful in many aspects. It was the first FIG conference in West Africa and therefore it was our great pleasure to see the enthusiasm of the Ghana Institution of Surveyors and local organisers welcoming the FIG family to this region. We were also happy of the extremely good participation from the region – Nigeria should be mentioned in particular. The arrangements, participation and financial result should also be mentioned as positive results – as well as the relaxed atmosphere and social environment. There are also two other points that I want to mention in this context: first the co-operation with the Land Administration Program

and with the World Bank as well as with the United Nations and its agencies. It seems that a bigger local project that can be linked to the FIG event could give a boost to the profession, not only in the country but in the whole region. The second issue that I want to raise is the impact that the FIG meetings can have to the profession in the public mind. This was taken care extremely well by the local organisers both in Cairo and in Accra. In both cases the media coverage on TV, radio and newspapers raised the awareness of public on the role of surveyors in building society. A similar impact was the support and attendance from the ministers and leaders of the hosting country.

The only disappointment concerning events during the last year was that we had to cancel the regional conference planned for last September in Cuba. We hope to organise a regional conference for our Latin American members in late 2007.

The FIG General Assembly takes place this year later than normally. This has some implications to the administrative issues but I think that the result will be worth of these exceptional arrangements. For the first time the FIG Congress is linked to the German Intergeo, which is the biggest surveying and GIS exhibition in the world, and the German national conference. This offers to the FIG family and the German participants a unique opportunity to learn from each other and learn from the latest technologies.

The highlight of the General Assembly in Munich will be the election of the new President and two new Vice Presidents. We are lucky to have many experienced and active people in FIG who are also interested to devote their time to FIG. We have got three candidates for the position of the President and two for the two open posts of Vice President. Even though I personally would have liked to see even more candidates and also new names among the candidates I am convinced that we will get an active and effective new Council. In the case that further a post of a Vice President will be opened after the President election we have surprisingly more candidates for this position. I am happy to know already now that we will – again – have a woman in the Council. The German Council was in fact the first Council to have a female Vice President. I am sure that this will now become a standard.

The General Assembly has also to decide on the venue of the Working Week 2011. I am happy that the Council received four applications to host the main FIG annual event. It shows that the interest on FIG and its events is still increasing.

The same can be said about the membership. At this meeting we will welcome six or seven new member associations (Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Mongolia, Islamic Republic of Iran and Tanzania). By this the total number of members will be 99 or 100 and it is possible that we will even go above the magic 100 members level during the Congress. The number of countries in FIG will reach 110 as we have also got a new affiliate member from Iceland among others.

One of the publications that the General Assembly has for endorsement at this meeting is the report from the joint Working Group on Under-represented Groups in Surveying. The FIG policy report “Enhancing Representation of Under-represented Groups in FIG” offers the policy on how to get women, young surveyors and students better integrated in the profession and FIG. I hope that we will find ways how to attract more students to surveying profession and how to empower the role of all under-represented groups in FIG. The other issue that has

been discussed in FIG during the past years has been how to better serve members with other language than English as their mother tongue and how to take into account different cultures. One way to proceed seems to be a close co-operation between FIG and the linguistic or regional groups that have been established during the last years. I only mention the Arab Union of Surveyors and the newly established FGF for the French speaking surveyors. I am convinced that we can find a good solution for our close co-operation and joint activities.

At the General Assembly also an interim report of the Task force on the Future Governance of FIG will be presented. Based on the discussions and feedback from commissions and member associations it seems that the basic governance structure is on place and no bigger changes are wanted either to the number and structure of commissions or the general structures.

As mentioned several times the ten technical commissions of FIG are the heart and soul and the spirit of FIG. Without the professional work of the Commissions, their chairs, officers and delegates we would not be able to provide the services that we do. In this year's Annual Review we have reserved more space for the Commissions to introduce their activities. As you read in the Review or in the four-year reports from the Commission chairs, you can only admire the work that has been done during the past four years by the Commissions – all voluntary work. This shows better than anything else the impact of NGOs and civil society in building sustainable future. I want already now record my sincere thanks to the out-going Commission chairs and delegates for their work.

The co-operation with the United Nations has continued as close and fruitful as ever. The main activities – in addition to the strong input of FAO, UN-Habitat, UN ECA and the World Bank to our events – have this year been with the UN-Habitat. FIG has become one of the main civil society partners of UN-Habitat especially on tenure issues. FIG has committed to support the Global Land Tool Network and its activities. We have already organised one expert group meeting on GLTN and are prepared to help with further events. FIG was also actively involved at the 3rd World Urban Forum in Vancouver. We attended two GLTN sessions and organised one networking event under the Habitat Professionals Forum. I have been also happy to chair the Steering Committee of the Habitat Professionals Forum having meetings in Istanbul in July 2005 and in Vancouver in June 2006.

The work of the Joint Board of Spatial Information Societies has started well. After the meeting in Cairo the Joint Board met in Vienna in July 2006 under my chair. The main activities in the co-operation are at the moment organised in two ad hoc Committees: one about capacity building in Africa that has got a good start and the second on risk and disaster management. FIG has an active role on both subjects.

The Council has been active in communicating directly with member associations by visiting their annual meetings and other events. I was delighted to attend the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Polish Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography in Warsaw in June. During my visit to the UIA Congress in Istanbul I also had the possibility to visit the Chamber of Surveying Engineers of Turkey in Ankara in July 2005. I further attended the 5th European Congress on Village Renewal in St. Pölten, Austria in September and the 43rd National Congress of the Consiglio Nazionale Geometri in Palermo in October 2005. I was also happy to attend the Expert Group Meeting on Incorporating Sustainable Development Objectives into ICT Enabled Land Administration Systems in Melbourne in November together with

other FIG representatives. In May 2006 I had the possibility to visit the Ukrainian member association at the GEOFORUM 2006 in Jaworiv and Lviv. I attended also in May and gave a keynote presentation at the 9th Austrian Geodetic Days in Krems in Lower Austria. The following week I visited Georgian surveyors in Tbilisi in conjunction to the UN ECE WPLA meeting. As a result of this visit the Georgian surveyors will now join FIG as a member association. This is a good example on how the corporate members can promote the surveyors role in their country, in this case thanks belong to LKN Earth Research & Consulting in Georgia. At the end of May I made also a long-planned visit to Israel to meet with the member association and to discuss the arrangements of the Working Week 2009. In June I attended the International Geodetic Students Meeting in Krakow. IGSO is interested to strengthen the co-operation with FIG and even to become a member. The Council has taken a positive position on this idea, but we need to find the right structure to implement this proposal.

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. FIG attended again the ESRI Survey and GIS Summit in San Diego in July 2005. Vice-President Stig Enemark attended the 70th Anniversary of the Agustín Codazzi Geographic Institute in Bogotá, Colombia in August. FIG Council members attended the Intergeo 2005 in Düsseldorf, Germany. Vice President Ralf Schroth participated the 4th National Congress of the Ordre National des Ingénieurs Géomètres-Topographes in Rabat, Morocco in November where the Federation des Géomètres Francophones (FGF) was founded. Vice President Ken Allred made a presentation at Rendezvous 2005 in Spokane Washington, USA in October. Vice President Drees attended Commission 9 symposium in Xian, China in November 2005.

Together with Vice President TN Wong I attended the 8th South East Asia Survey Congress in Brunei Darussalam 21–25 November 2005. This is an excellent example how regional activities can be combined to the global work plan of FIG. In addition to my keynote address and remarks at the closing ceremony an already traditional FIG session was held.

I do believe that personal visits are beneficial both for FIG and for its 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.

As last year I would like to repeat how important the public role of surveyors is and how crucial it is 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. I also once again congratulate our Commissions and active people on the contents of our 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. By the end of this year we will get several new publications in the FIG publication series as result of the commission activities.

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 FIG office last year and also in the future. The financial result from last year was very good because of the good result of the Working Week in Cairo and the role of the FIG office in organising the event.

This year the office has been in charge for the Regional Conference in Accra which will also help our financial situation. The positive development would not have been possible without the professional staff in the FIG office.

During the past years the tasks of the FIG office and the Director have increased remarkably. In order to solve the problem of the workload and the related managerial problems the FIG office has been reshaped to better cope with the tasks. This includes a division of responsibilities into two areas of policies/strategies and administration. We welcome Mr. Per Wilhelm Pedersen, our new Office Manager, to FIG. He is now in charge with Ms. Tine Svendstorp for the daily administration of the office. After Per's appointment as the first FIG Office Manager, the FIG Director will now focus on strategy issues and projects. I would like to express my thanks to the FIG office for their good work.

Concerning other financial issues I only make a reference to the report provided by Vice President Ralf Schroth. My only concern linked to the finances is how to keep the member associations – especially from developing nations – also when they have financial problems. Therefore I would like to ask you once again to consider whether your association would be able to help financially those associations that are about to fall apart from the Federation.

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 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 and chair or President of some other professional bodies and even NGOs. To get this FIG success all done we owe a big thank to all FIG functionaries, to all our members and to you personally.

I warmly welcome you all to my home city, Munich, to the FIG Congress 8-13 October 2006. I can assure you that this congress will remain in your memories.

Holger Magel
President of FIG

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