

**Report to the 31st General Assembly
FIG Working Week in Stockholm, Sweden, June 2008**

President's Report

Introduction

This President's report is my second report to the General Assembly covering the period from the General Assembly in Hong Kong in May 2007 to the General Assembly in Stockholm in June 2008.

As mentioned in several occasions we have now completed the transition period of the FIG administration. The final step will be taken in Stockholm where the General Assembly will adopt the revised statutes, internal rules and other regulations. With this decision we will leave behind the last remainders of the transition period and FIG will be legally ready to face a new era of government based on a global and directly elected Council. It is my conclusion that the transition period has been carried out very smoothly by the previous UK, US and German Councils. From the proposal for new statutes you can see that there are only minor changes needed to keep the Federation on full run. The Council is still working on revision of the rules of organising the FIG congresses and working weeks to guarantee a regional distribution and a better economic outcome to FIG. In the future, we shall enter into direct partnership with the hosting association and thereby also sharing the surplus.

A main issues for the General Assembly in Stockholm will be election of Vice-Presidents and election of chairs elect for the Commissions. I am convinced that you share my delight of having got several well qualified candidates for the two vacant positions as Vice-President. This promises well for the future. At the same time the Council is a bit disappointed with the smaller number of candidates for the Commission elections and having two Commissions without a single candidate. The Council proposes to the General Assembly that we postpone appointments of Chair-Elect for these two Commissions until 2009. However, on the positive side, we have from the past good examples of how a Commission can be put to track even within a short time frame.

In the following I will evaluate the work of the Federation and Council during the first full year of the new administration.

The overall theme of the Council "*Building the Capacity*" covers well many of the activities that we have done during the past year. The Council has prepared a separate report on the implementation of the Council work plan, so that the members will be able to follow and evaluate implementation of the work plan.

The main FIG event during the past year was the successful Working Week in Hong Kong that attracted more than 500 participants from 64 countries. All those who participated this conference will still remember and admire the hospitality of HKIS and the effectiveness and professionalism of local organising committee.

The second big effort was the 6th FIG Regional Conference that took place in Costa Rica. Being the first FIG Regional Conference in Latin America and the first FIG event in Central America, we can be happy with the good participation and with the fact that FIG is well recognised also in this region – adding one more step towards a truly global association. The theme “Pro Poor Coastal Zone Management” is crucial not only for the region and for countries struggling with tourism and other kind of commercial use of the coastal areas but also to more than half of the world’s population who live close to the coastline. And this figure is increasing rapidly partly because of the climate change that will become a threat for the future of the mankind. As a result from the conference FIG is preparing the FIG Costa Rica Declaration on Integrated Coastal Zone Management that is planned to be launched in Stockholm.

I want once again to repeat my second motto “*to fly high and keep the feet on the ground*”. We should never forget the practising surveyors and their needs but at the same time we should raise the FIG role as global player especially in helping the poor and contributing to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. We are working hard on this goal but there is still some way to go.

Members

FIG has been lucky to get new member associations every year for a longer time. When writing this we have one more member association that will be brought to the General Assembly for adoption and there are some others in the evaluation process. But as I warned you last year, we are about to reach the level where the number of member associations cannot be expected to increase much more. At the same time when we get some new member associations and fill in gaps in the FIG world map, we will also loose some others due to unpaid membership fees. We have not yet been able to find solutions how to help the members from poorest countries. The Council is also working to find the right policy to deal with the cases where some national associations are merging with other national organisations.

As promised in the Council work plan we shall also look at ways to get new members through secondary membership, especially through affiliate membership. I am most interested to see how the special forum organised for national mapping and cadastral agencies in Stockholm will work out and to see the results in increased FIG affiliate membership at the Congress in Sydney 2010, where I am convinced the system will be on place.

During the past year, since May 2007, I have been happy to visit Czech Republic, Finland, USA, Russian Federation, Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Spain, and during these visits have the opportunity to meet with representatives of member associations. Before the coming to Stockholm I will further visit Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In addition to my visits, Vice-Presidents have represented FIG at national events e.g. in the Republic of Korea, Canada and Morocco. It is my experience that even in the new era of e-communication, nothing can compete with personal meetings.

I want to mention one visit in particular. This is my visit to Israel to see the preparations for the Working Week 2009. Let me assure you that the ALSI has made all efforts that the Working Week will be unforgettable and something that you should not miss.

The Council has intensified co-operation with the Corporate Members by appointing Peter Normann Hansen as the FIG ambassador for corporate members. He is also acting as the chair for the Corporate Members meetings. At the moment we are considering how to improve the benefits for corporate members and to develop co-operation between sponsors and FIG.

I have also been happy to be able to visit events organised by our sponsor members including the ESRI User Conference in San Diego in June 2007 and the Map Middle East in Dubai in April 2008.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all hosts of these visits.

Council, ACCO and the FIG Office

The Council has met twice after the meetings in Hong Kong. We met during the regional conference in San José, Costa Rica and in Copenhagen in January 2008. The meeting in Copenhagen was the annual meeting that the Council is organising to discuss the policy issues and bring forward new initiatives. Between the meetings the Council is working effectively by email and phone calls. The co-operation in the multi-cultural Council has worked smoothly and brought new ideas and initiatives to the administration.

The new Commissions have been active to get their work plans realised. Even though their term of office started late in 2006, a lot has been achieved already. I want to mention some of the Commission events that have impressed me and my colleagues in the Council: Commission 2 meeting in Prague; two seminars of Commission 3 with several partners in Sounio, Greece and in Valencia, Spain in February 2008; Commission 7 annual meeting and seminar in Seoul, Korea; and Commission 9 seminar in co-operation with FAO and others in Helsinki, Finland. All these have been labelled with high professionalism, enthusiasm and good partnership with other actors.

The FIG Office is functioning well based on the new split of responsibilities between the Director and the Office Manager. However, we had to face some problems such as the Director's longer sick leave; but, through corporate efforts, we have managed to run the daily operations of the Federation.

At this point I also want to thank the Danish Association of Chartered Surveyors, DdL for their continuous support to FIG during the years and also after moving to the new premises in Copenhagen. We have adopted the policy of developing FIG to a more independent organisation. This will be implemented step by step so that FIG is now taking care of all running costs of the permanent office, and from 2010 we will also pay rent for the office space. Even after these changes in the contract with our Danish host, we will still be supported by DdL, so it is my pleasure to thank DdL for this continuing sponsorship that we will also recognise formally during the General Assembly in Stockholm.

Co-operation with the United Nations and international organisations

Co-operation with the United Nations is one of the main topics on the Council Work Plan. Especially surveyors' contribution to implementation of the Millennium Development Goals is a key issue. This will be coordinated by the UN Liaison Committee and the Task Force on Developing Tools for Pro Poor Land Management, which is our main contribution to the MDGs.

I am also proud to say that FIG is well prepared to organise a high-level conference with the World Bank in Washington DC late 2008 or early 2009, and to contribute to the 4th World Urban Forum in Nanjing, China in November 2008. The cooperation with the UN is bilateral as we have strong support from UN and its agencies to our events. One of the highlights of this co-operation is the joint FIG/UN-Habitat Seminar on Slum Upgrading and Innovative Finance Mechanisms that will be organised as a fully integrated part of the Working Week 2008 in Stockholm. We are also happy to welcome Mrs. Anna K. Tibaijuka again as the keynote speaker at the opening ceremony.

Co-operation with international professional organisations

The co-operation with sister organisations is organised through the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies that met in Moscow in August 2007, where I handed over the chairmanship of the Joint Board to Prof. Ian Dowman, President of ISPRS.

Cooperation with international professional organisations has intensified during the past year. I attended the Cambridge Conference in July 2007, that offered an excellent opportunity to meet with heads of national mapping and cadastral agencies and to discuss the situation in developing countries in particular. I further attended the South East Asia Survey Congress in Christchurch, New Zealand at the end of October 2007. Our continuous co-operation with the ASEAN surveyors could be an example for other regions as well. We expect that this co-operation will also benefit the next FIG Regional Conference to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam in October 2009. The third event that I want to mention is the Geo Quebec Conference in Canada in October 2007 that in addition to high level professional contents gave a good opportunity to meet with many surveyors from Francophone countries and to develop co-operation between FIG and the Federation des Geometres Francophones (FGF).

Final remarks

To conclude my report I would like to express my thanks to member associations, other members, commission chairs, officers and delegates and to my Council members. My special thanks belong also to the Swedish Association of Surveyors, SLF and the Organising Committee of the FIG Working Week 2008. I am convinced that we will have a great conference in Stockholm.

Stig Enemark
FIG President

1 April 2008