

Report to the 33rd General Assembly in Sydney, Australia, 11-16 April 2010

President's Report

Introduction

This President's report is my fourth and at the same time last to the General Assembly as the FIG President even though my term of office will come to an end first at the end of December this year. This is why the overall report and evaluation of the work of our four year term of office will be delivered first at the end of 2010 and will be presented for adoption of the General Assembly in Marrakech in 2011. This report covers the period from the General Assembly in Eilat in May 2009 to the General Assembly in Sydney in April 2010.

Highlights in 2009

The Working Week in Eilat can be considered in many aspects a big success. After postponing the meeting in Israel for some years it took place in May 2009. We can now honestly say that the extra preparation time allowed the organisers to provide an outstanding conference. The participant figures exceeded the expectations that FIG and the local organisers were expecting. About 650 participants from 65 countries is a good result for a normal FIG Working Week without having a major partner. I congratulate ALSI and the Israeli surveyors for their efforts in organising this well functioned conference.

The second major event in 2009 was the 7th FIG Regional Conference in Hanoi, Vietnam that once again demonstrated that the concept of regional conferences is well functioning. It also looks that the current concept of having a regional conference every second year is quite well in balance between our resources and the requests from our member associations in the regions where we organise these events. Once again participation figure – 400 participants from more than 50 countries – in Hanoi was excellent. As part of the conference FAO organised a two-day Regional Consultation Meeting that brought to the meeting also professionals that do not normally attend FIG events.

Both conferences were well managed also in economic terms and gave FIG an income that helped us during a year that was otherwise influenced a bit by the global economic crises.

Publications

As the term of office of the Council is coming to its end it is natural that many projects are finalised for presentation at the Congress in Sydney. This results in several publications. I am very proud that during this year we will be launching more new FIG publications than ever before in the FIG history. The total number of these publications will exceed ten and several of these will be available already in Sydney.

For the FIG member associations the publications together with the events is the most visible way to show what FIG can offer for them. The publications include both policy statement and more practical guidance and ideas related to our daily business.

I would like to mention here only two reports. These are both outcome from our conferences and are closely linked to our co-operation with the United Nations. The first is “*Land Governance in Support of the Millennium Development Goals*” which is a report from the FIG/World Bank Conference that was held in Washington DC in March 2009. This report has been published jointly with the World Bank as a FIG Policy Statement (FIG Publication No. 45).

The second publication is the *Hanoi Declaration on Land Acquisition in Emerging Economies* that is the FIG response and recommendations to the issues raised in conjunction to the FIG Regional Conference in Vietnam.

I would further like to notice the valuable work that the Task Forces are doing. From the current four Task Forces the one addressing *Institutional and Organisational Development* has finished its work by launching its final report. The Task Forces on Spatially Enabled Society and on Africa are still continuing their work.

Members

As mentioned in my previous reports FIG has been lucky to get new member associations every year for a longer time. In Sydney we will have at least three more member associations joining FIG. There are some other new members in the process of preparation. The special financial reserves that were created last year has allowed for special support offers for a few member associations that were about to pull out from FIG. This small support has helped them over the critical period. We have still four member associations on the expulsion list in Sydney but I am sure that they will sort out their arrears before the meeting in Sydney. The Council has put efforts to avoid any expulsions in Sydney. This will still require some additional work with regard to affiliate and academic members.

The Council is in the process of enrolling new members through secondary membership and especially through affiliate membership. As part of this activity the third Director General Forum will take place in Sydney. I am excited to see the result of these efforts.

The Council has intensified co-operation with the Corporate Members over the last years. This has helped us to keep the major corporate members over the financial turn down of the global economy. The role of the corporate members is crucial to the work that FIG is doing. Therefore we owe special thanks especially to our platinum level corporate members.

The Council is further considering how to improve the benefits for the Academic Members and to ensure their continuing membership of FIG.

At this point I want to thank also the Danish Association of Chartered Surveyors, DdL for their continuous support to FIG by hosting FIG in Copenhagen. This support will continue also after FIG will start to pay rent for the office space from this year.

Visits

Since the Working Week in Eilat I have been happy to visit member associations and representatives in Czech Republic, France, Iran, Lebanon, Kenya, Norway, Malaysia and United Kingdom. As you are aware, reports from these visits are published at the FIG web site and announced through the FIG monthly newsletter.

I would also especially mention my visit to Nigeria where I gave the 27th Olumide Memorial Public Lecture in October. The visit allowed me to see Abuja, the venue for FIG Working Week 2013 and enjoy the hospitality of Nigerian surveyors. I was most amazed by the enthusiasm that our Nigerian colleagues are preparing for 2013.

Once again it has not been possible to attend all events where I or Council representatives have been invited. So in these cases I have sent a greeting or a welcome address in writing.

From the Council members Teo CheeHai has attended the national conferences in the Philippines and Thailand and Chryssy Potsiou in Turkey and Matt Higgins at the Intergeo in Germany.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the hosts of all these visits for their kind hospitality.

Commissions

The Commissions are working very effectively both by facilitating technical programmes for the FIG conferences, by organising their own events, and through their working groups where many of these provide valuable contributions to the FIG publication series. In many ways the commission work represent the very heart of FIG through the possibility for national delegates to participate and interact in developing the various disciplines of surveying and land management. I have been able to attend personally the Commission 7 Annual Meeting and Seminar in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia just before the Regional Conference in Vietnam.

I would like to thank all Commissions that have prepared new publications on areas such as Enhancing surveying education through e-learning (Commission 2); The need for spatial information management in rapid urbanisation and mega cities (Commission 3); and in promoting cost effective GNSS positioning techniques (Commission 5). More publication are on the way for being launched in Sydney or by the handover ceremony in Copenhagen in November 2010.

Co-operation with the United Nations and international organisations

During this term of office co-operation with the United Nations has been one of the pillars of the Council Work Plan. Especially surveyors' contribution the Millennium Development Goals is a key issue. This work is directly under the President who is supported by a liaison group including also the Liaison Ambassador for the United Nations, Paul van der Molen.

The follow up of the FIG/World Bank Congress in Washington and also our contributions to the UN-HABITAT Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) have had a key priority in our action plan over the last months.

The second major UN partner over many years has been the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with whom we worked in very close co-operation during the conference in Hanoi.

The co-operation with sister organisations has been organised through the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies where I attended the meeting held in conjunction to the GSDI Congress in Rotterdam in June 2009 and the UN Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and Pacific in Bangkok in October 2009.

General Assembly in Sydney

In addition to many reports and statements and normal administrative issues, the most exciting issues on the General Assembly agenda in Sydney will be the elections. Election of the new FIG President is crucial for the future of the Federation, because the President in person gives the face and profile to the whole FIG. I am happy that we have three qualified candidates for the President's position. I urge you to consider carefully and listen to their presentations before making up your mind on your candidate.

The same applies naturally to the candidates for FIG Vice Presidents that will also be elected in Sydney. At both elections all candidates will be given time in the first session to present themselves and their ideas about developing the FIG agenda. The actual elections will take place in the second session.

The other issue that the members have to vote is decision on the venue of FIG Congress 2014. Once again this decision is important for FIG. Therefore the Council has put more efforts than earlier into evaluating the two excellent bids that we have received from Malaysia and Turkey. The evaluation report - including financial consequences – will be available by mid March. Please consider the evaluation report before making your decision.

The FIG office has been working to develop a quality management system for the Federation's administration. I will give a separate report on this to the General Assembly. Some unexpected changes in the office staffing have caused some extraordinary expenses for FIG over the last year. These additional salary costs indicate the vulnerability of organisation employing a small number of staff. I can however guarantee that this was a one time situation and that the FIG finances and new economic structure continues to be healthy and sustainable.

I will extend my presentation in Sydney with an interim evaluation of the results of the current FIG work plan. An overall presentation of the FIG Achievements during this term of office will take place at the first plenary session (Monday) at the Congress in Sydney.

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 and the FIG staff. My special thanks belong also to the hosts of the FIG Working Week in Eilat and the Regional Conference in Hanoi.

I also thank SSSI and the organisers in Sydney already now for their great efforts in organising the biggest FIG congress in history based on the size of the technical programme. The congress will follow the traditional concept but with a few new aspects. These include the inclusion of a one hour slot for “flash sessions” just after lunch for paper presentations in a short format (like poster sessions). This one hour slot is also used for special invited presentations. The program also includes a special forum for invited Director Generals of Mapping and Cadastral Agencies from throughout the world. The forum will be hosted jointly by Warwick Watkins, Surveyor General of NSW and Iain Greenway, Vice President of FIG. Furthermore, we have organised a special full day seminar on “Small Island Development States and the MDGs” with invited participants from especially the Pacific Region and sponsored by AusAID, FAO and others. I would like to thank the organising team led by Dr. Diane Dumashie (Chair of Commission 8) for preparing this seminar.

Finally, we will aim to produce a FIG Declaration as an outcome of the Congress. The draft for this declaration will be tabled at the first session of the General Assembly and adopted at the second session just before closing the Congress.

Stig Enemark
FIG President

8 February 2010