

## An End of Term Report of the FIG Council 2003-2006

### 1. General

The FIG Council 2003-2006 (German Council) selected "Shaping the Change" for its motto. The motto was very appropriate for following reasons as described in the work plan: "The world and its societies are changing rapidly and so does the profession of surveyors. The most essential changes for FIG are the continuing process of democratisation and the increasing commitment of the profession to sustainability and more equity all over the world. This happens in coincidence with the well-known principles of good governance and the development towards a civil society. To protect and to develop the position of the profession in international and national surroundings and to assist the transition to the already adopted new administrative structure of FIG the important challenge for the new Council is to shape the change within and outside FIG in 2003–2006." The leading topics for the period 2003-2006 were:

1. Promoting democratisation
2. Increasing participation both numerical and multicultural
3. Taking on responsibility in global and national affairs
4. Learning from each other
5. Helping in the process of globalisation
6. Broadening the view and practice of the profession
7. Co-operating and communicating especially also with politics and politicians
8. Searching optimal structures
9. Increasing professionalism
10. Enhancing and assessing of quality and costs

The detailed work plan is described in the FIG publication no. 32 ([http://www.fig.net/pub/figpub/pub32/pub\\_32.pdf](http://www.fig.net/pub/figpub/pub32/pub_32.pdf)). The implementation of the work plan is described in more detail in the FIG Annual Review 2006 that will be available before the Working Week in Hong Kong. In the following only some major achievements are described.

### 2. Governance

The German Council concluded the transition period of FIG administration from a member association hosted Council and congress to a fully international Council that is independent on the venues of FIG events. The transition period was started over ten years ago during the British administration and continued during the US administration.

### 3. Membership and communication with members

The membership basis of FIG ([www.fig.net/members/membindex.htm](http://www.fig.net/members/membindex.htm)) has been broadened so that 20 new member associations have joined FIG in 2003-2006 and at the same time 5 associations have resigned, total number of member associations being 101 at the end of 2006. New countries represented in FIG by a member association include in the Arab countries: Algeria (new association), Tunisia and United Arab Emirates and in Latin America: Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba and Mexico. The most successful development has been in Africa,

where Botswana, Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania and Togo are now represented in FIG. Africa was a special focus of the “German “period! In Asia new members come from Brunei Darussalam, Iran and Mongolia (new association) and in Europe from Kosovo MIK, Slovakia (second association), Serbia (new association) and Georgia. In addition new affiliate members have joined from Australia/New Zealand, Belgium, Hungary, Iceland, Mongolia, Peru and Saudi Arabia while one has been expelled. The number of corporate members was 34 at the end of 2006 including new platinum members Intergraph and Topcon.

The first membership to FIG is often through academic membership. During 2003-2006 the number of academic members increased from 48 to 77 academic institutions from 48 countries (39 new members and 8 resigned/expelled). The new memberships were very often the result of visits and on site lectures of the President and Council or commission representatives.

The Council strengthened its support to member associations by increasing co-sponsored events and participation to national conferences (by linking visits to such events). During the visits and at the events the Council managed to focus discussion on the professional qualifications of member associations and their individual members.

#### **4. Co-operation with the United Nations and other international organizations**

At the end of the term of office of the German Council FIG is now considered to be one of the main professional partners of the United Nations. These partners include especially the United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) on land related issues. The co-operation with the United Nations Environment programme (UNEP) has been intensified during the FIG conferences in Marrakech 2003 and in Munich 2006. New memorandum of understanding has been signed with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA) in 2004. First time since its establishing the President of FIG was also chairing the Habitat Professionals Forum. FIG participated following UN events in 2003-2006: United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat): 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat (Nairobi, May 2003), 2<sup>nd</sup> World Urban Forum (Barcelona, September 2004), World Habitat Day (Nairobi and Geneva, October 2004), Expert Group Meeting (co-organised by FIG Commission 7, Nairobi November 2004), Global Land Tools Network (Oslo, March 2006) and 3<sup>rd</sup> World Urban Forum (Vancouver, June 2006); UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): High Segment Round table on Urban-Rural Interface and Slums (Geneva, June 2003); UN Statistics Division: Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific (Okinawa, July 2003), Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas (New York, June/July 2005); UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE): Working Party on Land Administration (Athens, May 2003 and Tbilisi May 2006); UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA): Committee on Development Information (CODI III) (Dar-es-Salam, May 2003); UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA): GNSS Meeting (Vienna December 2003, December 2004 and December 2005). FIG organised also together with INEGI and PC-IDEA on behalf of the United Nations the Seminar in Aguascalientes in October 2004 and further an Expert Group meeting together with UN-Habitat in Bangkok in November 2005 (Commission 7).

The main activities in promoting sustainable development have been joint activities with the United Nations and participation to UN events e.g. the ECOSOC High Level Segment Round table in Geneva in June 2003 and the two UN-Habitat World Urban Forums in Barcelona and Vancouver. FIG further established a working group on risk and disaster management under Commission 8 after the tsunami catastrophe which then was extended to co-operation with other sister organisations in JB-GIS.

Co-operation with the professional sister organisations is based on bilateral agreements. In 2004 a memorandum of understanding was signed with the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) and in 2005 with the International Federation of Hydrographic Societies (IFHS). The co-operation with sister organisations is by initiative of FIG now coordinated by the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies (JB-GIS) whose position was formalised at a JB-GIS meeting during the FIG Working Week in Cairo. The FIG President is currently the chair of the JB-GIS. The President also attended the World Congress of the International Union of Architects in 2004.

Co-operation with the JB-GIS includes also a committee on capacity building and education in Africa.

## **5. FIG events**

The joint activities of the Federation were collected to the working weeks and regional conferences, however allowing commissions to have their annual meetings and expert group meetings separately when these have been considered more effective. The professional activities have been the task of commissions on the first place while the Council has been the main actor in external co-operation including co-operation with professional sister organisations and the United Nations, however using the special expertise of the technical commissions.

The quality of professional presentations at the FIG events has been two folded balancing between quality and allowing broader participation by allowing delegates to make presentations on their activities and professional studies. Different models to highlight best papers have been studied. These included recommended papers and idea of best practice studies. At the moment selected high profile papers are published as the article of the month on the FIG web site. Further the model of invited papers has been extended beyond plenary sessions to special high profile sessions at the congress. Further co-operation with scientific sister organisations (especially with the International Association of Geodesy, IAG) has been extended by organising joint expert meetings (Commissions 5 and 6) and by organising expert group meetings together with the United Nations (Commission 7). This better cooperation has a lot of positive impact on education and profession of geodesy, GIS and land management in the member countries!

The concept of regional conferences turned out to be a successful initiative. Regional conferences in Marrakech 2003, in Jakarta 2004 and in Accra 2006 all have gathered good participation from the hosting country and the region attracting participants that normally do not have change to attend FIG events. This has also promoted cultural diversity in the contents and context of the FIG events. In addition it has been possible to organise these event with reasonable registration fees and at the same time giving more financial surplus.

Unfortunately the regional conference planned for Havana had to be cancelled in 2005. A very positive outcome of these regional conferences was a better public and political awareness and marketing of our profession and our commitment for society and nature!

The establishment of regional conferences has gathered some commission events and has benefited smaller commissions, but at the same time increased the pressure on commissions and their officers. The bigger commissions still organise their own events which together with other international events makes the competition harder as it is not possible to attend all events. Commissions 5 and 6 have intensified co-operation with other organisations by organising joint seminars and workshops. FIG Office is now in charge for organising working weeks and regional conferences, which has generated more income to the Federation.

The importance of getting young surveyors to the work of FIG has been recognised. One result is the report prepared by the working group on under-represented groups in surveyors offering proposals how to help young surveyors and students to attend FIG activities and events. At the latest working weeks a special session and meeting has been organised for students. At the congress in Munich there was special programme for students. FIG and the FIG Foundation have supported also the meetings of the International Geodetic Students Meetings during last three years. The role of the FIG Foundation has increased, although the funds available have not increased as rapidly as one would have hoped. A very hopeful result is the increased commitment of members associations from Sweden, Denmark or Germany which have supported young students to participate FIG events. This could be a model at least for all wealthier member associations!

## **6. Information policy**

Services to member associations were strengthened by improved communication (e.g. monthly e-Newsletters and President's letters and by effective use of the FIG web site).

The FIG conferences have been covered in the media better than earlier and it is now standard to have media conferences at all events as well as articles on the national newspapers and television. A "political" opening speech and Summary reports and conclusions by the President have focussed the message of the events to national and international audience. The individual members of member associations have direct access on all FIG material on the web site and they are able to subscribe the monthly e-Newsletter directly (estimated more than 4,000 subscriptions). The Annual Review works as a more general marketing tool for FIG activities.

After intensive discussions with the Commissions the FIG World Report was replaced by the Surveyors Reference Library ([www.fig.net/srl](http://www.fig.net/srl)), which includes at the moment all papers from the FIG congress, working weeks and regional conferences since December 2003.

The e-Newsletter and the article of the month have resulted in more material about FIG in national surveying journals and newsletters.

## **7. Council and administration**

The responsibilities of the Council members were shared based on their professional expertise and regions where they come from. When the Council members represented several regions (Asia, North America, Europe and by the ACCO representative also Australia and the Pacific) this allowed closer co-operation with member associations and other members in the regions. The position of the FIG Office has been financially secured and the actions made to secure long-term efficiency.

## **8. Finances**

The financial situation has improved very well during the German administration. The equity has grown from € 219,660 at the end of 2002 to € 392,875 at the end of 2006, which means an increase of 79 per cent. The reserves have increased from € 226,270 to € 375,314 (increase of 66 per cent). The reserve covers now approximately one year's expenditure that was the minimum goal of the German Council.

The equity of the FIG Foundation has increased from € 72,510 at the end of 2002 to 116,767 at the end of 2006 and the reserves at the same time from € 83,396 to € 119,457.

## **9. Conclusion**

It was a great honour and wonderful enrichment to serve FIG and the global community of surveyors in more than 100 countries. Due to the impressive hospitality and technical support of our members and commissions the outgoing Council is deeply convinced that we could keep and even increase the strength and attractiveness of FIG. This was overwhelmingly demonstrated on all conferences and commission meetings, especially at the FIG Congress 2006 in Munich. Special thanks go to my loyal and efficiently working Council members. All what we have achieved is our common success!

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FIG President 2003-2006

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