



A CHANGING WORLD

FIG'S NEW PRESIDENT CHRYSSY POTSIOU TALKS ABOUT THE ORGANISATION'S VISION FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS AND HOW SURVEYORS MUST LEARN TO BE AGILE

These days, technology and society are changing rapidly, challenging the surveying profession to revise its tools in terms of speed, efficiency and costs. It is important to build up a modern and sustainable surveying profession in support of society, the environment and the economy by providing innovative and reliable solutions based on good practice to our rapidly changing and complex world, acting with integrity and confidence about the usefulness of surveying, and translating these words into action.

The new FIG Council started its term at the beginning of 2015. The FIG Work Plan and vision set the direction for the following four years of the president and council, and an overall theme was formulated to lead the direction of the work of all the many volunteers in FIG: 'Ensuring the rapid response to change, ensuring the surveyor of tomorrow'.

Over the years, almost every incoming administration of FIG has acknowledged change as a reality of our world. Now the changes we face are more than technological; they are global and they are happening rapidly. Change is inevitable; as professionals we cannot manage change, we can only manage the way we respond to change, find the relevance of our profession and improve our efficiency to respond to change.

FIG and the surveying profession have continually changed, aiming to better serve a spatially enabled society, as we've gone from steel tape, logarithms and theodolite to the GNSS revolution and UAVs. We now have a leading role in modern cadastres and marine information

systems, and we are increasingly involved in land governance, especially in land administration, land management, land and property valuation, and quantity surveying.

The difference today lies in the fact that timing is a crucial factor. Change is constant and rapid:

- Changing economies and markets challenge us to adapt to international processes, rules and standards.
- Changing nature and changing societal needs challenge us to adapt our governance policies and tools, especially in land administration and spatial information management.
- Changing technology challenges us to maintain our proficiency.

A global transformation

Today, 'being geospatial' is a global transformation. We have reached the stage where there is increased recognition from the UN and World Bank of how reliable geospatial information can help to underpin the decision-making of governments and citizens. It can help to address issues such as:

- Population growth.
- The need for food and water security.



Members of January's FIG Kick Off Event, marking the organisation's new leadership

- The eradication of poverty.
- The rapid urbanisation of the world's cities, and the need to respond rapidly and intelligently in terms of housing, mobility and transport, modelling cities and buildings, saving energy, health care, managing water and waste, and governance in general.
- The tendency of development to cluster in the coastal zones of the oceans, the seas and the major river deltas.
- The need to rapidly respond to natural disasters and manage the impact of climate change.
- The interconnectivity in all areas of our economies, cultures, governmental operations and private lives, which heightens the need for harmonisation, compatibility and security of procedures.

Our professional services and products are changing the perception of how governments seek growth. Good land administration, for example, has a direct effect on lending practices and national economies. Governments are seeking innovative ways to encourage universal recording of parcels as quickly as possible. Citizens also understand that innovation helps everyone in the public and private sectors to make good decisions. There is fast growing civil demand and a changing culture for authoritative spatial information published on the web, a culture that changes the concept of administration.

The question is how much change can governments afford? Using data derived from various providers can help to satisfy such great demand. Authoritative data can be provided and assured by government agencies but also by crowdsourcing and the engagement of surveyors.

Surveyors today are recognised for their provision of reliable

geospatial data to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), enabling a real difference in people's lives. As the MDGs are to be concluded by the end of this year, it is the purpose of government to build on the generated momentum and carry on with an ambitious post-2015 sustainable development agenda. This agenda should tackle many issues relevant to the surveying profession, including ending poverty and hunger, making cities more sustainable, combating climate change, and protecting oceans and forests.

Contributing to change

FIG and its member surveyors are the specialists who contribute to this change. We must develop a prosperous and sustainable profession that will translate the post-2015 sustainable development agenda into action and direct benefits to FIG member associations' respective nation states.

Professional associations should cooperate closely with FIG and be more customer-oriented. They should think ahead, predict changes, foresee the requirements of the next generation of the public and structure the way. They should communicate to their members the FIG message that although problems may remain the same, radical technological developments mean there are no more single solutions – traditional tools and methods in surveying and mapping have changed and there are new ways to think about those problems. Associations should support the use of mobile devices and apps, the development of open standards and the new solutions provided by the industry that may support sustainable systems reliably, more easily and at significantly less cost.

They should also cooperate with FIG to increase their members' awareness of global issues, so as to create more 'global' surveyors. In the era of urbanisation and globalisation, a globalisation of science is also taking place, so surveyors should be prepared to cooperate with other disciplines and allied professions. In some cases, there may be severe competition from neighbouring disciplines, as well – this is a challenge surveyors need to face through development of their own skills. They should be prepared to deal with data inflation and conduct in-depth research. Cooperation with other professionals surveyors will increase their skills in providing functionality reliably and affordably for a complex and rapidly changing world – a dynamic world that cannot wait.

WE MUST DEVELOP A PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE PROFESSION

***Chryssy Potsiou is the president of FIG
(www.fig.net)***

