



**XXIV FIG Congress
Facing the Challenges, Building the Capacity**



The 2010 FIG Congress was the biggest FIG congress ever held, with more than 2,200 participants from over 100 countries in attendance, including 58 from the U.S [see sidebar]. The technical program included more than 800 papers presented in more than 150 technical and flash sessions, workshops, and special seminars.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre (SCEC) attracted close to 2,000 people. They were welcomed by representatives of the aborigines Cadigal tribe who performed “songlines,” traditional rituals believed to connect people and land and mark routes.

Jonathan Saxon of the Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute (SSSI) gave the welcome address on behalf of President Michael Giudici who was not able to attend the congress because of health problems. Other welcome greetings were presented by Tony Kelly, Minister of Lands, New South Wales, and Congress Director Paul Harcombe.

In his opening address, FIG president Stig Enemark stated that “the key challenges of the new millennium are climate change, food shortage, energy scarcity, urban growth, environmental degradation, and natural disasters.” All these issues relate to governance and management of land, which relates directly to each surveyor and each national surveying association. “Sustainable land administration systems provide clear identification of the individual land parcels and land rights attached to these parcels,” said Enemark. “This information on

The ACSM FIG Forum Delegation

Curt Sumner (Commission 1. Professional Standards and Practice); **Steve Frank** (Commission 2. Professional Education); **Robert Young** (Commission 3. Spatial Information Management); **Jerry Mills** (Commission 4. Hydrography); **Dave Doyle** (Commission 5. Positioning and Measurement); **John Hamilton** (Commission 6. Engineering Surveys); **Don Buhler** (Commission 7. Cadastre and Land Management); **Bob Foster** (Commission 9. Valuation and the Management of Real Estate); and **John Hohol** (ACSM FIG Head of Delegation). In addition, **Daniel Helmricks**, the winner of the ACSM FIG Forum FIG Congress Fellowship participated in the activities of the Young Surveyor Network and presented his paper at the Congress. [see photo on p. 48]

the relationship between people and land is crucial and plays a key role in adaptation to climate change and in preventing and managing natural disasters.” According to Enemark, “the land management perspective and the operational component of integrated and spatially enabled land administration systems need high-level political support and recognition. Surveyors—the land professionals—are in a core position.”

In her opening remarks, the Hon. Dr. Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales, said that she has been “increasingly interested in, and appreciative of, the contribution of surveyors—the



The ACSM FIG Forum Delegation to FIG Congress 2010
Inset: Daniel Helmricks

modest and often unsung heroes of civilization.” As part of the opening day festivities, Dr. Bashir also unveiled a full-size statue of James Meehan, one of the surveyor pioneers, which was on display at the exhibition during the congress.

Dr. Tim Flannery—one of Australia’s leading thinkers and writers, Australian of the year 2007, and chair of the Copenhagen Climate Council (a think tank on climate change)—delivered the keynote address. “Surveyors,” he said, “are the custodians of an enabling technology that is critically important to our future. Surveyors should take a leading role, not only in monitoring climate change, but in explaining it to the broader public. Surveyors operate well in harsh conditions.”

PLENARY SESSIONS

Four plenary sessions were held, focusing on: FIG achievements, 2007-2010; spatially enabled society; climate change, natural disasters, urban growth, and land governance; and Google Earth and internet approaches. Highlights from these sessions are given in the sidebar. The plenary sessions were complimented by very popular after lunch talks. Presentations were made by Johannes Schwarz (Leica Geosystems) and Brent Jones (ESRI) on how GIS and modern technology can respond to natural disasters such as the recent earthquake in Haiti. Prof. John McLaughlin, a legend in the surveying profession, spoke about the Fourth wave of property reform.

TECHNICAL SESSIONS AND COMMISSIONS

The technical program ran for four days with 10 to 12 parallel sessions. Because of the huge number of papers, some were presented in new a flash session series that worked quite well and had also a good attendance. Many sessions were standing room only. About ten per cent of the papers had gone through a peer review process. This allowed for more opportunities for academics to attend the congresses. The peer review option seems to also have raised the overall quality of the papers. In addition to regular technical sessions, invited paper session and commission plenary sessions were

Plenary Sessions

1. FIG Achievements. President Enemark presented a most impressive list of FIG events, events jointly held with the World Bank, FAO, and UN-HABITAT, and other partners, and projects and achievements described in the eight new FIG publications that were launched in Sydney.

2. Spatially enabled society. Dr. Abbas Rajabifard, President of the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association (GSDI), noted in his keynote that “in a spatially enabled society, a society manages information spatially by using a spatial component.” This requires data and services to be accessible and accurate, well-maintained and sufficiently reliable for use by the society, even by members who are not spatially aware. Mr. Santiago Borrero, President of Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), emphasized the need for strong links between politics and the numerous disciplines of the surveying profession to enable better land governance. He also challenged FIG to play a leading role in this endeavor. The session ended with a presentation by Surveyor General Warwick Watkins, NSW, on a world class best practice approach using the State of New South Wales as an example.

3. Challenges facing surveyors and society. Dr. Paul Munro-Faure from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) described the principles of good land governance, and Dr. Mohamed El-Sioufi from UN-HABITAT spoke about climate change and sustainable cities. Dr. Daniel Fitzpatrick (Australia) spoke on addressing land issues after natural disasters.

4. Google Earth and the Internet. Apart from key speakers in this session, Dr. Mary O’Kane and Ed Parsons, FIG Vice President Matt Higgins addressed the increasing role of positioning techniques. In Australia, positioning infrastructure is expected to deliver productivity gains with potential cumulative benefit of \$67 to \$124 billion over the next 20 years in agriculture, construction, and mining alone.

arranged. These included presentations by Keith Bell from the World Bank and Dr. Clarissa Augustinus from UN-HABITAT.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Fifty-four member associations participated in the first session of the assembly and sixty-seven took part in the second session which included the elections for president and vice president (66 members were able to vote). Three strong candidates, all current FIG vice presidents, ran for the post of FIG president. Teo CheeHai from Malaysia, who received 27 votes in the first



round and 33 in the second, was elected to be the next FIG president. He is the first FIG president from Asia, and his term is for four years beginning January 1, 2011. In addition, two new vice presidents were elected; their terms of office expire on December 31, 2014. They are Dr. Chryssy Potsiou from Greece, who prevailed in the second round, and Prof. Rudolf Staiger (Germany), who received most votes overall. The term of office of the third vice president, Dr. Dalal S. Alnaggar from Egypt, will expire on December 31, 2012. The General Assembly also appointed new chairs for the ten FIG Commissions, to serve from 2011 to 2014. They are:

- Commission 1: Leonie Newnham, SSSI, Australia
- Commission 2: Prof. Steven Frank, ACSM, USA
- Commission 3: Prof. Yerach Doytsher, ALSI, Israel
- Commission 4: Dr. Michael Sutherland, CIG, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago
- Commission 5: Mikael Lilje, ASPECT, Sweden
- Commission 6: Dr. Gethin Wyn Roberts, ICES, United Kingdom
- Commission 7: Daniel Roberge, CIG, Canada
- Commission 8: Wafula Nabutola, ISK, Kenya
- Commission 9: Prof. Frances Plimmer, RICS, United Kingdom
- Commission 10: Robert Šinkner, CUSC, Czech Republic

Other new appointments were: Christiaan Lemmen from The Netherlands becomes the new chair of OICRF; Kate Fairlie from Australia will chair the Young Surveyors Network; and David Martin from France will chair the Standards Network.

The next FIG Congress will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This marks the first time that the FIG Congress will be organized in Asia. The FIG currently has 103 member associations, including five joining this year: Albania Association of Geodesy, Ordre des Géomètres Experts du Benin, Geodetic Association of Herceg-Bosnia (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Cyprus Association of Valuers and Property Consultants, and Nepal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The ten new affiliate members approved in Sydney. The new affiliate members are:

- Afghan Land Consulting Organization, ALCO, Afghanistan
- Italian Society of Photogrammetry and Topography, SIFET, Italy
- Swiss Federal Office of Topography, Swisstopo, Switzerland
- National Cartographic Center, Iran
- Afghanistan Information Management Services (AIMS), Afghanistan
- Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Survey, USA
- State Geodetic Administration of Republic of Croatia (DGU), Croatia
- Survey of Israel, Israel
- Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, Fiji
- Agency for Land Administration and Cadastre of Republic of Moldova

Three corporate members were admitted to FIG membership: Geotrilho Topografia Engenharia e Projecto Ida, Portugal, Geoweb S.p.A., Italy, and Coordinates Magazine, India. FIG now has 89 academic members, including:

- The National Research Institute of Astronomy & Geophysics, Geodynamics Department, Egypt
- The College of Estate Management, United Kingdom
- Brno University of Technology, Czech Republic
- College of Technology, University of Houston, USA
- Center for Soil Protection and Land Use Policy (Zentrum für Bodenschutz und Flächenhaushaltspolitik am Umwelt), (ZBF-UCB), Germany
- School of Rural Estate and Planning, Reading University, United Kingdom.

New memoranda of understanding were signed between FIG and the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association (GSDI) and the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH). The General Assembly agreed to establish the FIG members' database by the end of 2010. This web-based database will offer information on surveying and the profession in each FIG member country. Eight major publications were launched in Sydney, with eight more expected to be launched by the end of 2010. The declaration of the outcome of FIG Congress 2010 will be published after June 14, the deadline set for comments on the draft Sydney Declaration presented by President Enemark at the second General Assembly.



Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales, and Warwick Watkins, Surveyor General, NSW, welcome guests to Government House

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Director Generals Forum: This first ever event was attended by director generals from 50 national mapping and cadastral agencies. On the agenda were issues facing national mapping and cadastral agencies.

Workshop on UN millennium development goals challenges in the South Pacific region: 50 representatives from small island states attended. The outcome of the seminar will be published as a report of this Congress.

Workshop on the history of surveying; attendees learned about legendary surveyors saw historical places of interest to surveyors in Australia.

Technical tours were organized to enable participants learn about surveying in Australia, especially in Sydney and New South Wales.

FIG 2010 Exhibition: Sponsored by 50 companies, the exhibition showcased a number of the latest technologies.

Social events: Several impressive events were organized, including the welcome reception which was held at the recently renovated Sydney Town Hall; a reception hosted by Governor Marie Bashir in Government House; the FIG Foundation Dinner organized as part of a Sydney Harbor cruise; a Gala Dinner in Darling Harbor; and visit to the homes of Australian colleagues.



CLOSING REMARKS

In his closing remarks, President Enemark, whose term ends this year, emphasized that “land professionals need to increase their role in developing sustainable cities. They need to take a more engaging and leadership role in the area of climate change. The partnership with UN agencies is the key to recognition and enhancing the status of the global surveying community—leading to more effective solutions to global land issues.”

The next FIG conference will be the FIG Working Week in Marrakech, Morocco, May 18-22, 2011.

