

Building the Capacity The FIG Agenda and Achievements 2007-2010



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FIG President

A turning point

Honorary Presidents, Presidents, Directors, Distinguished Guests, Dear Colleagues and Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen

Standing here today is a turning point in the history of FIG. And why is that? First of all because this is the day of handing over the Chain of Office to a new President of FIG and handing over the responsibility of governance to a new council...But also because this will end the term of office for the first directly elected council in the history of FIG. Since 1878 FIG has been used to having a council (or a Bureau as it was called) appointed by the country or national member association elected to host the upcoming FIG congress. Over the last decade we have talked about the UK council, the US council and latest the German council. But this council – my council I am proud to say – has been the **FIG** council 2007-10, and it is now about to leave the stage.

An elected council means that the President and the council members hold a mandate from the General Assembly. I and my fellow council members have felt that as both an honour and a great responsibility. But such a mandate is also a strong platform for setting goals and achieving the vision - while still maintaining FIG as a vital and sustainable organisation responding to our members' needs.

I am very much aware that we are standing on the shoulders of giants - Presidents with strong integrity, and council members and commission chairs with a strong agenda for developing our profession and our professional fields. FIG has come a long way – just think of about 10 years ago or even 20 years back. Yes, we have come a long way – FIG has achieved a lot.

Building the capacity

I presented the motto of “flying high and keeping the feet on the ground” at the presidential election at the FIG Congress in Munich, October 2006. It emphasises the need of having a big vision in relation to the global agenda and, at the same time, supporting the member associations and the individual surveyors in their everyday tasks. The big vision is about contributing to solving the global challenges such as poverty alleviation, climate change, and disaster risk management. As the leading international NGO on land issues, FIG must be able to interact with the key players in the field such as the UN agencies, the World Bank, and also our sister organisations.

FIG adopted the theme “Building the Capacity” as an overarching direction for the current term of office 2007-2010. This relates to “flying high” by facing the global agenda in terms of contributing to meeting the Millennium Development Goals. But it also relates to “keeping the feet on the ground” by contributing to building the necessary capacity for dealing with professional, organisational and technology development at national and local level, and thereby improve and promote the basic conditions for our services and role in society.

A range of achievements - the FIG Work Plan 2007-10

The work plan of the current council was set out as ambitious – by purpose. We wanted to achieve a range of goals – standing on the shoulders of our predecessors and taking the organisation forward. I am happy to say that we did achieve what we wanted. A full evaluation of the work plan will be posted on the FIG web site and presented to the General Assembly at in Marrakech, May 2011. Allow me here to list some of the key achievements:

- *Focus on the global agenda:* FIG has developed the recognition of the surveying profession, at the UN agency level, as the key professionals in dealing with land issue in relation to the global agenda such as the Millennium Development Goals. This includes activities such as the joint FIG/UN-HABITAT seminar on "Improving Slum Conditions through Innovative Financing" in Stockholm in June 2008 and the joint FIG/World Bank conference on “Land Governance in Support of the Millennium Development Goals” in Washington in March 2009. This focus is also underpinned by FIG’s engagement in technological development and standards.
- *Focus on projects:* FIG is committed to the agenda of UN-Habitat Global Land Tool Network and has undertaken a range a projects in relation to gender equity, informal development, and security of social tenure in slums and customary tenure areas. FIG has also worked closely with FAO in relation to developing the “Voluntary guidelines for security of tenure to land and other natural resources”.
- *Focus on Young Surveyors:* FIG has initiated and established a Network for Young Surveyors to enhance activities and interactions between “experienced” and “younger” surveyors including surveying students. This network provides a very vital platform for

young surveyors to better engage in the work of FIG through a range of activities towards bridging the gap between generations and building the capacity for meeting the challenges of the future.

- *Focus on regional development and cultural diversity:* FIG has increased the interaction with surveying organisations sharing common values with FIG. Strong liaison has been established with regional organisations such as CLGE, ASEAN Flag, Arab Union of Surveyors, and also the Francophone Group of Surveyors ensuring that regional and cultural diversity is recognised. A regional structure is now also established in Latin America (Costa Rica, Sept. 2010) with the strong support and long standing preparations of FIG.
- *Focus on Africa:* A recent Africa Task Force has been established for 2009-2014. The key purpose is to enable the surveying profession in Sub Saharan Africa to deal with social responsibility in terms of contributing to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Key areas to be addressed will be peri-urban development, environmental resilience, and the involvement of young surveyors and women.
- *Focus on professional development:* FIG has looked at enhancing the high level interaction with the global surveying community through annual and regional conferences. This also includes a focus on quality by introducing peer review papers for the annual conferences to improve quality and better enable the academic sector to participate
- *Focus on publications and communication:* FIG has strived to document new knowledge as an outcome of the work of the council, task forces, and the commissions. This may be in terms of policy documents, guidelines, or reports. In total 20 publications have been published during this term of office. They are all available on line through the FIG website.



The work of the commissions

While the general FIG agenda has a global and very wide perspective the commissions provide the platform also for in-depth professional discussions and development. I have said this often but I am happy repeat it at this occasion: the commissions are the very heart and engine of FIG and they provide the opportunity for in principle everyone to participate in the FIG activities. The commission work plans and their working groups allow the national delegates to participate and contribute actively to professional development in the various fields - and then implement new developments in their home country through the member association and personal professional networks. This is a very powerful concept.

The commissions have not only delivered their work plans but have also documented this professional development in terms of publications. I am grateful and proud of the work of the commission over this term of office.



Yaacoub Saade (Comm. 1, standing on the left), Belá Markus (Comm. 2), Chryssy Potsiou (Comm. 3), Andrew Leyzack (Comm. 4), Rudolf Staiger (Comm. 5), Alojz Kopacik (Comm. 6), András Osskó (Comm. 7, sitting on the left), Diane Dumashie (Comm. 8), Kauko Viitanen (Comm. 9) Andrew Morley (Comm. 10).

The commissions also hold the key responsibly for the technical programme at the FIG conferences. Just think about the FIG working weeks first in Hong Kong April 2007 with about 500 participants, in Stockholm June 2008 with 900 participants and in Eilat Israel with 500 participants. Or think about the regional conferences in Costa Rica, November 2007 and Hanoi October 2009 with each their specific professional focus on the key problems of the region. Or think about the FIG Congress in Sydney, April 2010 with more than 2000 participants and 800 presentations – the biggest FIG congress ever. Yes the commissions have certainly delivered and provided a strong platform for building the capacity through professional development.

A time of change – the big swing

Looking to the future – where are we heading? Let me briefly present three directions:

- From measurement to management

The role of the surveyors is changing. In a global perspective there is a big swing that could be entitled “From Measurement to Management”. This does not imply that measurement is no longer a relevant discipline to surveying. The change is mainly in response to technology development. Collection of data is now easier, while assessment, interpretation and management of data still require highly skilled professionals. The role is changing into managing the measurements. There is wisdom in the saying that “All good coordination begins with good coordinates” and the surveyors are the key providers.

The change from measurement to management also means that surveyors increasingly contribute to building sustainable societies as experts in managing land and properties. The surveyors play a key role in supporting an efficient land market and also effective land-use management. These functions underpin development and innovation for social justice, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. This big swing implies a change from land surveyors to land professionals.

- From cadastre to land governance

The international development in the area of Cadastre and Land Administration has been remarkable with FIG taking a leading role. Throughout the last 10-15 years a number of initiatives have been taken with a focus to explain the importance of sound land administration systems as a basis for achieving “the triple bottom line” of economic, social and environmental sustainability. International organizations such as UN, FAO, UN-HABITAT and especially the World Bank have been key partners in this process.

Land governance is about the policies, processes and institutions by which land, property and natural resources are managed. This includes decisions on access to land, land rights, land use, and land development.

FIG intends to play a strong role in improving the capacity to design, build and manage surveying and land management systems that incorporate sustainable land policies and efficient spatial data infrastructures. These systems should also respond to the global agenda in terms of the Millennium Development Goals and the new key challenges in terms of climate change, natural disasters, and urban growth. FIG is building the capacity for taking the land policy agenda forward in a partnership with the UN agencies and the World Bank

- From local to global

Do surveyors have a role to play in the global agenda? From a FIG point of view, the answer to this question is clearly “Yes”! Just think about it: No development will take place without a spatial dimension – and no development will happen without the footprint of the surveyor. Yes, the Surveyors, the Land Professionals do have a key role to play

Partnership with UN-agencies has been developed by FIG over the last two decades or more. It has proved to be vital in any sense and especially in terms of contributing to the global agenda such as achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This partnership is a driving engine and should also enable a better understanding of the everyday work of the surveying profession in contributing to society.

The global agenda is basically about People, Politics, and Places. It is about People in terms of human rights, engagement and dignity; it is about Politics in terms of land policies and good government; and it is about Places in terms of shelter, land and natural resources. And it is of course about Power in terms of decentralisation, equity and empowerment of the poor. Yes, the surveyors do have a key role to play in the global agenda. And FIG will act as a proud icon for the worldwide surveying community in facing this agenda.

Final remarks

The motto of Flying high and keeping the feet on the ground has served FIG well over the current term office 2007 – 10. And it will continue to be relevant. The big challenges ahead such as climate change; natural disasters, urban growth, poverty reduction; and environmental degradation will require continuous attention. The contribution of the global surveying profession to meet these challenges must be spelled out loud and clear. This is the key to professional recognition at global level that in turn will impact on recognition at national and local level. FIG should still fly high.

And FIG should still keep its feet on the ground by dealing with professional and institutional development to improve and promote the basic conditions for our services and role in society. This includes a focus on technology development that is both exciting and challenging, and will impact on all daily duties of the surveyors. Technology development provides a whole range of opportunities that we should look at and benefit from in a partnership with our corporate members. Developments within positioning infrastructures, laser scanning, and web enablement have a great potential but will also challenge many daily routines.

Finally, there is a need for an increased focus on explaining the relevance of the FIG activities to the wider membership. This is a big challenge that can only be met through increased cooperation or kind of partnership between FIG and the national member associations. Meeting this challenge should be a key focus for the years ahead.

An exciting journey – a wonderful experience

Can I take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and good co-operation over many years and also thanks to all of you who have been hosting me during my visits throughout my presidency.

It has been a great honour to serve as your President – and personally it has been an exciting and very rewarding experience.

And when handing over the chain of office, I am proud to say: FIG is in good shape and stronger than ever...

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

A joint effort - thanks to Council, Chairs, Officers, and Administration

The time has come to say farewell from the Presidency of the FIG – but first I would like to convey my appreciation and thanks to my fellow council members for their cooperation and successful contribution to the FIG Agenda:

My fellow council members: Matt Higgins, Dalal Alnaggar, and Chryssy Potsiou for your four year service 2007-2010; Ken Allred and Paul van der Molen for 2007-2008, and Ian Greenway and Chee Hai Teo for 2008-2010 with Chee Hai Teo becoming the new President of FIG 2011-2014. It has been great working with you...



FIG Council 2007-2008: Paul van der Molen, Netherlands; Chryssy Potsiou, Greece (ACCO representative); Ken Allred, Canada; Dalal Alnaggar, Egypt; Stig Enemark, Denmark, and Matt Higgins, Australia.



FIG Council 2009-2010. Chryssy Potsiou, Greece (ACCO representative), Matt Higgins, Stig Enemark, Denmark; Dalal Alnaggar, Egypt; Iain Greenway, UK; and CheeHai Teo, Malaysia.

And my sincere thanks to the Commission Chairs – The real engine of the organisation: Yaacoub Saade (Comm. 1, Professional Standards and Practice), Bela Markus (Comm. 2, professional Education), Chryssy Potsiou (Comm. 3, Spatial Information Management), Andrew Leyzack (Comm. 4, Hydrography), Rudolf Staiger (Comm. 5, Positioning and Measurement), Alojz Kopacik (Comm. 6, Engineering surveys), András Oskó (Comm. 7, cadastre and Land Management), Diane Dumashie (Comm. 8, Spatial Planning and Development), Kauko Viitanen (Comm. 9, Valuation and Management of Real Estate), and Andrew Morley (Comm. 10, Construction Economics and Management).

And to all Vice-Chairs and FIG Officers, Task Forces, and Permanent Institutions, for their excellent work.

Finally, my appreciation and deep respect goes to the FIG Administration, the FIG Director Markku Villikka and Office Manager Louise Friis Hansen for their support and highly professional management.