

**FIG Working Week 2004, Athens, Greece**  
**Report by Matt Higgins, Chair of FIG Commission 5 and**  
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**Introduction**

The FIG annual Working Week (WW) was held in Athens, Greece (22-27 May 2004). I attended as Chair of Commission 5 (Positioning and Measurement) and I was ably assisted by my Vice Chair for Administration, Rob Sarib from the Northern Territory.

More than 400 delegates from 67 countries attended. There were also 250 participants in the Greek speaking sessions run by the local Surveyors Association. Given that, the Athens Working Week was among the biggest ever outside the four-yearly congresses. A general report on the Working Week and some photos are available on the FIG web site at:

[www.fig.net/news/news\\_2004/athens\\_ww.htm](http://www.fig.net/news/news_2004/athens_ww.htm)



**General Assembly**

The Member Organisations of the Federation meet in General Assembly. As usual, there were General Assemblies at the start and end of the week. Four new member associations joined FIG from Algeria, Cuba, Togo and Tunisia. There were also three new affiliate members from Saudi Arabia, Belgium and Hungary. There were also 9 new academic members and 2 new corporate members.

The management and running of FIG continued its transition from a Bureau run by a single country to a fully elected Council. Two new Vice Presidents joined TN Wong from Hong Kong, who was the first elected Vice President. Stig Enemark from Denmark and Ken Allred from Canada were elected as Vice Presidents for 2005-2008. Both of these new Vice Presidents are past Commission Chairs and bring a wealth of experience to the FIG Council.

The General Assembly also chose the new Commission Chairs Elect for 2006-2010:

Commission 1 – Professional Standards & Practice: Yaacoub Saade, Lebanon

Commission 2 – Professional Education : Bela Markus, Hungary

Commission 3 – Spatial Information Management : Chryssy Potsiou, Greece

Commission 5 – Position & Measurement : Rudolf Staiger, Germany

Commission 6 – Engineering Surveys : Alojz Kopacik, Slovak Republic

Commission 7 – Cadastre & Land Management : András Osskó, Hungary

Commission 8 – Spatial Planning & Development : Spike Boydell, (UK RICS Member based in Fiji)

Commission 9 – Valuation & Management of Real Estate : Kauko Viitanen, Finland

Commission 10 – Construction Economics & Management : Andrew Morley, United Kingdom

Prof. Jean-Marie Becker (the immediate past Chair of Commission 5) was appointed as a new Honorary Member of the Federation. I served as Jean-Marie's Vice Chair and spoke on behalf of all Commissions in strong support for this recognition of Jean-Marie's long and excellent contribution to FIG.

For the first time ever, there was a session in the second General Assembly where the Commission Chairs were able to interact directly with the Member Association delegates. This enabled open and frank discussion of many issues about the workings of FIG. This was seen as a very useful session that will hopefully be repeated at future General Assemblies.

Other important issues decided by the General Assembly were the revised definition of the term surveyor and the FIG information policy document.



Calendar for the future FIG Working Weeks, Regional Events and Congress:

- FIG Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, 3-7 October 2004, Jakarta, Indonesia
  - FIG Working Week and XXVIII General Assembly: 16-21 April 2005, Cairo, Egypt  
(This will be in conjunction with GSDI 8)
  - FIG Regional Conference for South and Latin America, Sep-Nov 2005, venue to be decided
  - FIG XXIII Congress and XXIX General Assembly Congress, 15-20 October 2006, Munich, Germany
  - FIG Working Week and XXX General Assembly, 2-6 July 2007, Hong Kong SAR, China
  - FIG Working Week and XXXI General Assembly, 14-19 June 2008, Stockholm, Sweden
- (For more information see [www.fig.net/events/events.htm](http://www.fig.net/events/events.htm))

### **Technical Program in Athens**

There were 29 technical sessions and four workshops with a total of more than 200 papers presented and published in the conference proceedings. All technical papers from the Working Week are available for free on the FIG Web Site. (See [www.fig.net/pub/athens/](http://www.fig.net/pub/athens/))

At the opening ceremony, FIG President, Holger Magel linked the conference slogan of “The Olympic Spirit in Surveying” to Athens’ slogan for its coming Olympic Games, “Where there is noble competition, there is victory”, which comes from Aristotle. Holger spoke about how modern society has leaned toward “ruthless” competition and he spoke about the need for making competition “noble” once more. He went on to examine how such noble competition can encourage the most innovative ideas, the most sustainable strategies and the socially fairest measures to be implemented for society. He challenged our professional to pursue such noble competition.

Commission 5 was involved in 7 sessions with 42 presentations during the technical programme.

The first plenary session was centred on topics of interest to Commission 5. Professor Gerhard Beutler, the President of the International Association of Geodesy (IAG) presented a very well received keynote outlining the development of Geodesy and Surveying and their revolution during the space age. He paid special attention to the major effect of the emergence of Global Navigation Satellite Systems. His keynote went on to explore possible areas of cooperation between FIG and IAG.

Subsequently, a meeting between IAG President Beutler and FIG Commission 5 officers allowed detailed discussion of areas for further cooperation. A document I compiled on FIG/IAG Liaison will now be further enhanced:

- To cover the establishment of a joint committee of key officers from FIG and IAG that will oversee liaison and implementation of the MoU between the two organisations;
- To reflect the latest structure of the IAG (for the benefit of FIG officers);
- To outline the Commission structure of FIG (for the benefit of IAG officers);
- To identify the relevant officers in FIG and IAG who need to liaise on specific topics, (eg which FIG Working Group Chairs need to liaise with which IAG Sub-Commission Chairs);
- To ensure closer cooperation at future events such as the FIG Regional Conference in Jakarta in October 2004 and the IAG Scientific Assembly in Cairns, Australia in August 2005.

The second keynote in the first plenary session was by Ms Takemi Chiku from the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UN OOSA). She gave a presentation entitled “Building Capacity of Developing Countries in Using Space Technology for Sustainable Development”. The presentation highlighted three main areas for cooperation between FIG and UN OOSA;

- Capacity Building
  - Through the UN Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education
  - Through UN workshops, training courses and seminars and their follow-up projects
- Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)
  - Establishment of the International Committee on GNSS
  - Defining the role of user community
  - Implementation of pilot projects
- Disaster Management
  - Articulating user requirements in developing countries (mapping, urban planning, management of land and water resources)

The Presentation also outlined the role of various other UN Action Teams related to the use of Space Technology, which may be of interest to the Commissions of FIG. Following her presentation, Ms Chiku met with the FIG President, the Director of the FIG Office and myself and we agreed on the wording for a Memorandum of Understanding between FIG and UN OOSA.

Another highlight for me was the Workshop on Vertical Reference Frame for Hydrography, which was a joint session involving Commission 4 (Hydrography) and my Commission 5. The workshop presented the issues identified to date by our Joint Working Group on the topic. The issues were presented by Ruth Adams from UK Hydrographic Office and Steve Shipman from the International Hydrographic Office (IHO in Monaco). Their presentations came from a Hydrographic point of view and were based around the white paper drafted by the Joint Working Group and consideration of the issues by the IHO. There was then excellent and wide ranging discussion, including some of the geodetic concepts drawing on the knowledge of Commission 5 people present. The level of interest can be measured by the discussion, which ran 20 minutes over the scheduled time. The Workshop was an excellent example of how joint Commission activities can enable strong multi-disciplinary examination of practical problems. Ruth Adams will take feedback from the workshop and revise the white paper accordingly.

In the broader programme there were plenary sessions on issues such as Risk and Disaster Prevention and Management and on Land Administration and Land Management. There were, of

course, many other sessions covering topics of interest to all 10 FIG Commissions. Interested readers should check the programme and proceedings on the web site (address given above).

### **Advisory Committee of Commission Officers.**

The Advisory Committee of Commission Officers (ACCO) has all the Chairs of Commissions and is seen as the engine room of FIG. ACCO is Chaired by a Senior Vice President of FIG.

One of the major issues discussed in ACCO was the creation of the Surveyors Reference Library (SRL). This will be a library of all papers from FIG conferences and selected papers from other conferences. Especially useful papers will also be identified by recommendations from Commission Chairs and highlighted in the SRL. It will be fully searchable by terms such as keyword, author and event.

As agreed in Marrakech a first draft of FIG Surveyors Reference Library (SRL) was running as a pilot on the FIG web site prior to the ACCO meeting in Athens. It includes those papers from the Regional Conference in Marrakech that the Commission Chairs have approved to be included. It has also been agreed that some Commission 4 and 5 papers from SEASC 2003 in Hong Kong will be included in the SRL. All authors for Athens were asked to fill in forms in which they agreed that their paper could be included in the SRL and to highlight keywords describing their paper. It is hoped that the SRL will become a useful asset for the profession globally.

### **FIG Commission 5 Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting**

Commission 5 had three meetings during the week; an open Commission meeting and two Steering Committee meetings. The open Commission meeting was attended by 17 people and enabled good discussion of the Work Plan and future FIG events.



For the Steering Committee meetings, all Vice Chairs, except Naser El-Sheimy, were present in Athens (picture above from left to right Schnurr, Lilje, Sarib, Higgins, Staiger and Kasser). Georgia Fotopolous substituted for Naser. Details of the Steering Committee meetings will be available on the Commission 5 web site, but highlights include:

- A review of the progress in all of the Working Groups, given the half way point in the 2002 to 2006 Work Plan.
- Planning for Commission 5 involvement in coming events, especially the FIG Regional Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia in October 2004, the next FIG Working Week in Cairo, Egypt in April 2005 and the cooperation with IAG at its Scientific Assembly in Cairns, Australia in August 2005.

- Preliminary discussion of issues to be considered during Rudolf Staiger's term as Commission Chair from 2006 to 2010.

### **Further Information**

Further information on FIG and its Commissions is available at [www.fig.net](http://www.fig.net).

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the continued support of my employer, the Queensland Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy without which my FIG activities would not be possible. I also receive financial support from FIG and the Institution of Surveyors Australia.