

7th South East Asian Survey Congress Hong Kong, SAR China, November 2003

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Introduction

The South East Asian Survey Congress (SEASC) occurs every four years. This report covers the Congress in Hong Kong in November 2003. The Congress involved over 250 delegates from 25 countries.

Technical Program

All technical papers are available free of charge on the Web Site. See: <http://www.seasc2003hk.org>. The proceedings CD will also be lodged in the Department's library.

Keynote and Plenary Sessions

In the broader program there were plenary sessions each morning with papers on many "big picture" issues for the region.

Shih Wing Ching (Chairman of Centaline Group) spoke on "Business Opportunities in Mainland China for Surveying Professionals". It should be noted that the term "surveying" in Hong Kong is broad as it is in the UK. It includes real estate, property development, valuations, quantity surveying etc. The Centaline Group decided to expand from its Hong Kong base into Mainland China in 1992. Today, Centaline has become one of the biggest property developers in Mainland China. This presentation outlined the current boom economic conditions in China, the opportunities for foreign professionals and the approach to conducting and building business there. An interesting observation was that his group decided to just jump in because they did not think they had time for strategic plans and the like. Shih Wing Ching quoted Mao who said: "If you want to know what a pear tastes like – take a bite." An important factor for success has been a willingness to be flexible and to keep adapting the way they do business. The paper is good background reading for anyone considering business in Mainland China.

Andreas Drees (FIG Deputy President from Germany) gave a keynote address on "Shaping the Change – FIG Policy for the Challenges of Today's World". He outlined the importance of the United Nations Millennium Declaration with examples of issues where surveyors can contribute. He outlined FIG contributions to such issues. Andreas also spoke of how surveyors have an outer responsibility to society in general along with an inner responsibility to profession itself. Many of the associations involved in the SEASC are also member associations of FIG. Andreas also pointed out that FIG has 9 academic members in SE Asia. He indicated that FIG intends to continue to strengthen its relationship with UN bodies and to also strengthen its information policy (public relations). Andreas also outlined FIG's new initiative of holding regional conferences in association relevant UN bodies and mentioned Morocco (December 2003) and Jakarta (October 2004).

Bill Robertson (Past Surveyor General of New Zealand) gave a plenary keynote entitled "Surveying! Preparing for Change and Opportunities Into The Future". One point that struck a chord with me was the need to realise that when you get to a fully digital environment you need to transform how you do things. He pointed out that studies are now showing that incremental change will no longer deliver sufficient innovation and growth, the curve is too flat. The evidence is that a sea change is needed to get new growth in a digital world.



Earl James (Past President of FIG based in Darwin) gave a plenary keynote on “A Review of the SEASC 1979-2003”. He outlined his belief that there could be better participation by grass root surveyors. He summarised his views by outlining what he believed were two shortcomings of the Congresses to date:

- Not doing enough to involve the less developed countries of the region.
- Not acting on resolutions and taking those resolutions to relevant government organisations such as ASEAN.

Prof Yang Kai gave a keynote on “The Strategy and Policies for Development of Geo-spatial Information Infrastructure (GSII) in China”. He is President of the Chinese Society of Geodesy, Photogrammetry and Cartography and former Deputy Director General of the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping (SBSM) for the PRC. He spoke about Al Gore’s concept of Digital Earth and how they are applying that to strategies for a Digital China, for Digital Provinces and for Digital Cities such as “Digital Beijing”. He outlined the GSII (equivalent of our term SDI) for China including its four parts and seven fundamental datasets. His excellent PowerPoint presentation included several slides with graphics neatly depicting different aspects of the GSII for China. Prof Yang Kai also spoke of “3S integration” which is the integration of Remote Sensing (RS) plus GPS and GIS. The end of his presentation included many fly-through depictions as examples of how GSII is being applied to planning and decision-making in China. Prof Yang Kai gave me a copy of his presentation.

Dr. Khoo Boo Khean (President of the ASEAN Federation of Land Surveying and Geomatics – ASEAN FLAG) gave a plenary keynote entitled “Pacing The Times”. The paper examined the changing marketplace and preferences of consumers, the role of technology and progression toward a knowledge economy. He then outlined the role of Surveyors in that context and the need to constantly work to maintain relevance to society. His presentation finished with some observations on the work of ASEAN FLAG and its role in the larger Asia-Pacific region and on the international stage.

General Technical Sessions

After the plenary sessions each morning, the day was split into 2 parallel sessions. In the proceedings the papers are grouped in the following categories:

- Cadastral Surveying
- Satellite Positioning and Geodetic Surveying
- Engineering Surveying
- Hydrographic Surveying
- Photogrammetric Surveying and Remote Sensing
- GIS and Spatial Information Management
- Valuation and Land Management
- Project, Cost and Contract Management
- Survey Instruments
- History of Surveying



My FIG Commission 5 on Positioning and Measurement sponsored two of the technical sessions. Esmond Mok (Hong Kong National Delegate to Com 5) chaired one session and I Chaired the other. I will not detail all the papers here as readers of this report will have different interests and should explore the proceedings themselves.

Future SE Asian Survey Congresses

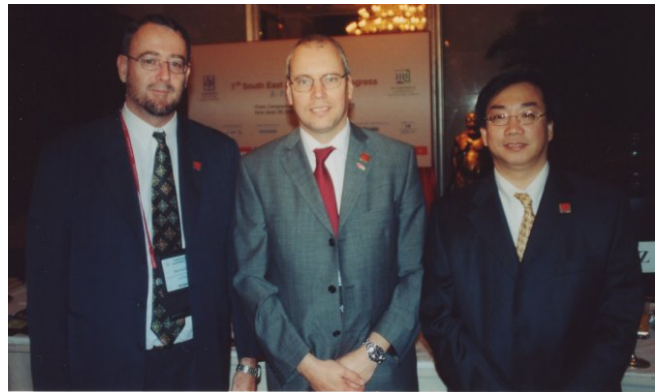
The SEASC in 2005 will be held in Brunei and the 2007 SEASC will be held in New Zealand. This is a good result for FIG in that the FIG Working Week in 2007 will be in Hong Kong and the SEASC being in New Zealand minimises the possibility of splitting the conference audiences in the region.

FIG Meetings

Present in Hong Kong were Deputy President of FIG, Andreas Drees (Germany), FIG Vice President TN Wong (Hong Kong) and three FIG Commission Chairs: Adam Greenland (from UK - Com 4 – Hydrographic), Stephen Yip (from Hong Kong - Com 9 - Valuation and the Management of Real Estate) and myself (Com 5 - Positioning and Measurement). Rob Sarib (from Northern Territory and also Vice Chair of Administration for my Com 5) was also present. The presence of 6 FIG Officers enabled us to have 2 meetings to discuss various aspects of FIG business. A major focus was a discussion paper seeking to have all Commissions contribute to a FIG Good Practice Report (GPR). The GPR will be published at the next 4-yearly FIG Congress in Munich in 2006, which is the culmination of the term and work cycle for the current Commission Chairs. We were also able to discuss planning for upcoming events such as the FIG Regional Conference in Morocco in December 2003, the FIG Annual Working Week in Athens in May 2004 and the Regional Conference in Jakarta in October 2004. Other issues included an analysis of the issues raised in the open forum (see below) and the need for a mechanism at Working Weeks to allow Commissions to liaise better and more directly with Member Associations.

During the SEASC we also convened an open forum on FIG matters, which was attended by delegates from 10 countries. Vice President TN Wong convened the forum. Adam Greenland and I outlined the FIG in general and the work of the Commissions, including details on our particular Commissions. We then had a panel discussion. Issues discussed included participation by national delegates in the work of FIG Commissions, how to increase involvement in FIG by less developed countries, and liaison with FIG international sister associations.

I attended a reception at the New Zealand Consulate in Hong Kong. Part of the reason was for promotion of the bid by the NZ Institute of Surveyors to host the SEASC in 2007. Another reason was for Brian Coutts to outline New Zealand's renewal of interest in the Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy (CASLE). Later Brian and I discussed the need for better cooperation between FIG and CASLE.



TN Wong, Robert Sarib and I also discussed how FIG could function better in the UN's Asia Pacific Region. Part of the problem is that Asia-Pacific is so huge and also has several countries such as China and India, which are huge in their own right.

Robert and I also made contact with the organising committee for the Jakarta conference. I pointed out that Chris Rizos and myself had already discussed involving the International Association of Geodesy (IAG) in the Jakarta conference. I was also able to discuss with Rudolf Matindas, (Director General of Indonesia's Surveying and Mapping Agency, Bakosurtanal) the possibility of involving the UN Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific (PCGIAP).

Robert and I also met with Wendy Chapman, the publisher of Position Magazine in Australia to discuss their new Internet based newsletter publication entitled "Asia Surveying and Mapping". We discussed how it could be promoted to FIG National Delegates as a useful source of information and news from the region.

Other Issues

As with any major conference some of the most valuable work is done through meetings and informal networking. Some examples from Hong Kong include:

- Following a technical session, which included papers on permanent GPS networks delivering real time corrections, I was able to liaise with colleagues from Hong Kong and Mainland China who are running such networks, which are of interest for our Virtual Reference Station service in Queensland.
- I spoke to Subhankar Mitra (GIS Development Magazine in Singapore) and to Srinivasan Venkattappan (Autodesk Singapore) about the situation with spatial sciences in India. I was able to get a better understanding of the “Map India” and “Map Asia” organisations.
- I was also able to discuss with Australian colleagues the latest developments with the Spatial Sciences Institute, including the roles of the Commissions.

Further Information

Further information on SEASC 2003 is available at the web site (<http://www.seasc2003hk.org>).