

**Report for the 23rd General Assembly
FIG Working Week in Prague, 22-26 May 2000**

COMMISSION 4 – HYDROGRAPHY

6th South East Asian Surveying Conference

The Commission sponsored a one-day workshop at the 6th SE Asian Hydrographic Conference that was held in Freemantle, Australia from Nov 1-5, 1999. Tom McCulloch, past chairman of Commission 4, was a keynote speaker at the Conference and gave an interesting and informative presentation entitled "From Cook and Dampier to Y2K".

The workshop presented a broad range of papers covering topics from airborne laser mapping to using GPS for maintaining tidal datums. The latter resulted in a resolution to the Plenary of the Conference to accelerate activities to establish an integrated network of tide gauges and GPS stations for absolute sea-level determination in South East Asia.

Following the workshop, the Port of Freemantle provided Conference delegates with an excellent tour of the Port facilities which was highlighted by a presentation by port officials on the modelling software used to determine under keel clearance in the Port. The tour was then followed by the Annual meeting of the Commission.

FIG Working Week in Sun City, South Africa

The Commission executive attended the FIG working week in Sun City, South Africa and organized a technical workshop that featured an excellent presentation by Neil Guy, Director of the International Hydrographic Bureau. The Commission also held a Commission meeting during the Working week.

FIG/IHO International Advisory Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors

The XXIInd Meeting of the FIG/IHO International Advisory Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors was held in New Delhi from April 7-13, 1999. This Board has two primary responsibilities: the development and updating of the Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and the recognition of courses given by educational institutions that meet these Standards. The Board also produces a publication of the standards, which is currently in its 8th edition.

At the meeting in New Delhi, the following courses received Category A recognition: the Long Course in Hydrography of the U.K. Royal Navy Hydrographic School and the Advanced Course in Hydrography of the Japanese Maritime Safety Agency. Category B recognition was awarded to the Free Course in Hydrography of the National Hydrographic School in Goa, India and the International Hydrographic Management and Engineering Program of the Naval Oceanographic Office (USA). Lastly, the course in Hydrography of the St. Petersburg Naval Academy (former Frunze Naval Academy) was given Category A recognition against the 7th edition of the standards provided that some minor corrections are considered.

The next meeting of the Board will be held in Valparaiso, Chile from April, 12 to 18, 2000.

FIG/IHO Technical Assistance Co-ordinating Committee

The Committee held its XIIIth at the United States Hydrographic Conference in Mobile Alabama in June of 1999. The major topic of discussion at the meeting was the development of a Workplan for the Committee. The workplan consists of three sub-committees tasked to carry out the following objectives:

- 1.1 Assess continuously the hydrographic surveying, bathymetric maps, nautical charting and nautical information status of nations and regions where hydrography is developing and provide guidelines for the development of local hydrographic capabilities.
- 1.2. Actively promote the correct perception of the importance of proper hydrographic surveying, bathymetric maps, nautical charting and nautical information to all coastal states. Encourage the coordinated provision of technical and financial assistance to hydrographic development projects by establishing close relationships with national agencies and relevant international organizations that may provide funding or other support.
- 1.3. Encourage and subsequently follow the development of bilateral or multi-lateral arrangements between countries having well established Hydrographic Offices, and hydrographic survey organizations, and those desiring to establish or expand their hydrographic capabilities.

Each subcommittee will report on progress at the next meeting of the Committee.

In addition, Dennis St. Jacques was appointed Chairman of the Committee.

Sustainable Development

In 1991, the FIG produced publication No. 3 entitled "Sustainable Development: a challenge and a responsibility for surveyors". Since then, there has been significant progress and awareness related to the requirements for Sustainable Development. As a result, the 21st General Assembly endorsed the creation of a Task Force to revisit the issue of Sustainable Development as it pertains to the surveying profession. Commission 4 has responded to this initiative by creating its own Working Group, chaired by Dennis St. Jacques, Canada to look into issues relating to sustainable development in the coastal zone and the offshore.

Standards Task Force

At the 21st General Assembly, FIG created a Task Force on Standards. The following excerpt from an internal report of the task force gives some background information:

"The development of standards is a long process and currently involved few survey practitioners. This often results in impractical or outdated standards. FIG believes that it can assist in the creation of workable standards covering survey activities by being involved in the work of the standards bodies (including but not limited to ISO). FIG can also assist in publicising and explaining the implications of standards for surveyors; as an international NGO, FIG is one of the few bodies through which surveyors can formally be represented in international standards activity. The Standards Task Force will co-ordinate this activity on behalf of FIG."

Commission 4 has nominated Rob Hare of the Canadian Hydrographic Service to serve on the Task Force.

Dennis St. Jacques
Chair, FIG Commission 4, Hydrography
E-mail stjacquesd@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

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