

## A 20-year FIG Governance Perspective

### FIG Handover Ceremony

20 October 2022 at InterGeo, Essen, Germany.

Address by Honorary President Stig Enemark, Denmark

FIG President Rudolf Staiger, DVW President Hansjörg Kutterer, Incoming FIG President Diane Dumashie, dear colleagues and friends, ladies, and gentlemen.

President Staiger asked me to give a short speech at this handover ceremony and draw some lines of the FIG evolution over the last 20 years ... leading up to this special event. I was happy to accept that .. as it will also give me the opportunity to thank the President and his council and commission chairs for their excellent steering of FIG over the recent difficult times.

As you will all be aware, this is the ending of the fourth term office under the new governance structure that was introduced early 2000 and enforced 2007. This change represented the threshold to a new era of FIG by introducing direct personal election of the FIG leadership in terms of the President and the council members. The vision was to ensure that FIG became a truly democratic and globally based NGO.

This change was not a criticism of the former FIG structure that created great country-based leaders. It was more like a natural evolution. The former country-based leadership was rooted in the tradition of hosting the next four-year Congress, while the directly elected leadership is based on the demand for providing leadership in an increasing complex and globalised world.

This new governance structure has now been in place for almost 20 years. The transition started during the German term of office 2003-2006 under my good friend President Holger Magel, and it was enforced in 2007, where I was honoured to become the first democratically elected President of FIG. So, I guess this is why President Staiger suggested for me to provide a kind of assessment .... "Did this quite dramatic change really work seen in a 20-year perspective?"

Addressing this question, it is probably fair to say that the transition of the governance structure went very well and provided some new opportunities and perspectives for FIG, and for its stewardship of the global surveying community. There are three main reasons for this:

*Firstly*, the change ensured that the FIG leadership is constituted by the people and representation trusted within the global surveying community through direct election at the FIG General Assembly. This is a truly democratic process that has created a kind of ownership by the FIG member associations. As in all democratic systems this kind of direct election approach includes some risks – but it is safe to say that these risks are well outweighed by the benefits.

*Secondly*, the change pushed FIG to become a truly global organisation also in terms of the governance structure by the opportunity of having a variety of countries represented in the council. It also enabled the opportunity of better addressing the overall global agenda issues more directly with the UN organisations as well as addressing regional and country specific concerns. This balanced approach is then held to account by the GA at the yearly Working Weeks and the four-year congress.

*Thirdly*, by establishing the Permanent Secretariat, known as the FIG Office, the President, the council, and the ten commissions could be better supported in their endeavours. The FIG Office was established in 1999 in Copenhagen, Denmark, and has evolved to become a highly professional entity in support of all political, professional, and administrative activities of FIG. The FIG Director Louise Friis-Hansen is present here today. In fact, the evolution of the FIG Office is a story in itself. It started, as many of you will recall, with Markku Villikka as the Director setting a high professional standard for the role of the Office.

Now, this kind of overall assessment can of course be carried out in much more detail. But let me end up with a proof of the strength of this new governance structure. Over the last four-year term of office, we have faced difficult times especially in terms of the Covid pandemic and the lack of ability to meet in person. The current council headed by President Staiger – strongly supported by the Council and the FIG Office – has managed this situation highly professionally and enabled to maintain the full integrity of FIG in difficult times. Well done President Staiger ... and, also, welcome to the President Elect Diane Dumashie who has been part of the council leadership for the last two terms of office and has been engaged in FIG for almost the last 20 years.

Let me end with this .... FIG has been ... and I do know it will continue to be ... in very good hands.

Thank you very much.