

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

UK Bureau to US Bureau

The handover from the United Kingdom Bureau to the United States Bureau took place on November 8, 1999, in Washington, DC. The event was hosted by the National Geographic Society and was addressed by an Under Secretary for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the US Department of Commerce, by the President of the National Geographic Society, the Vice President of the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping, FIG Past President William Radlinski and out-going FIG President Peter Dale. For the new US Bureau it was gratifying to have the support of institutions like NOAA and the National Geographic Society, providing a positive and optimistic beginning for our term of office.

Work Plan 2000 - 2003

In the first four months of our term of office the US Bureau met twice and has finalized the Bureau Work Plan for 2000 - 2003, "Advancing the Global Role of Surveying". The Bureau has identified more than 40 specific goals and responsibilities in the work plan, assigning them to specific individuals with target dates for completion.

The Bureau Work Plan 2000 - 2003 recognizes that the member organizations are the heart of FIG. A major focus of the plan is to be: "Implementing mechanisms for increasing participation by member organizations in FIG activities and informing member organizations of FIG and other international surveying activities." As President I intend to concentrate on this effort and request the active participation of all delegates in the effort to involve their member organizations in the workings of FIG. I will continue Past President Peter Dale's custom of meeting with the leadership of our member organizations during Working Weeks and the Congress; it will be helpful if every delegate would encourage the leaders of their organizations to attend. Between the time of the handover of the Bureau last November until the Working Week in Prague I will have visited Norway, Finland, Estonia, Sweden, Malaysia and China. It is the intention of our Bureau to visit as many member organizations as possible as well as national associations who are potential members of FIG.

Another major objective of our Work Plan involves the financial condition of FIG. Now that FIG has been established as a legal entity it is no longer necessary to close the financial books at the end of every Bureau, only to begin the next Bureau with no available funds. We have identified as specific tasks "to develop a long-term financial strategy for FIG and present the strategy to the General Assembly in Washington 2002", and "to initiate and fund a reserve account." The future vitality of FIG depends on a sound financial footing; it is the intention of this Bureau to achieve that condition.

A third major objective of the 2000 - 2003 Work Plan is to "increase membership within under-represented regions; especially the Caribbean and Central and South America". While the profession in some of these countries may not be organized sufficiently to qualify for FIG membership we intend to encourage organization at the national level and FIG membership where possible. It is also our intention to increase sponsor membership.

Copenhagen Office

The creation of a permanent office in Copenhagen and the appointment of Markku Villikka as Director of Administration has provided for an exceptionally smooth transition of the Bureau

from the UK to the US. It has also changed the role of at least two of the Bureau members. We have agreed that the Bureau officers called for in the Statutes, the Secretary General and the Treasurer, will carry the informal title of Vice President during our term of office. We will recommend that the statutes be revised accordingly.

Governance

At our Bureau meeting in January we received the draft report of the Task Force on 'Future Governance and Management of FIG', presented by Tom Kennie, Vice President and chair of the Task Force. The Bureau is in full support of the Task Force recommendation being brought to the general Assembly even though it limits the term of our Bureau. We urge careful study of the report and the support of the General Assembly for its recommendations, which we believe will provide for a more democratic method of organization for FIG.

Bathurst Declaration

The Bathurst Workshop on Land Tenure and Cadastral Infrastructure for Sustainable Development was held in Bathurst, Australia in October, 1999. The product from that workshop is the "Bathurst Declaration" (The UN/FIG Declaration on Land Administration for Sustainable Development), a document that will be presented to the General Assembly by Ian Williamson, Director FIG-UN Liaison, one of the workshop coordinators (with Don Grant Australian delegate to FIG Commission 7). Following the Bathurst Workshop another meeting, the FIG/UN Roundtable, was held in Melbourne. The Roundtable produced the document "Co-operation Between FIG and UN Agencies 2000-2003". Both documents chart the course for this Bureau with United Nations agencies and others and provide an excellent basis for these high level activities. The Bureau is in full support of the Bathurst Declaration and urges similar support by the General Assembly.

Congress 2002

The XXII International FIG Congress will be held in Washington DC from April 20 through April 26, 2002, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. The Exhibition and all meetings and technical sessions will be held in the hotel. Congress 2002 will be held in conjunction with the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM) and the American Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS), for the first time in five years that ACSM and ASPRS have met jointly.

Conclusion

My thanks and congratulations to Peter Dale and the UK Bureau for their work with the United Nations and other international organizations, and the start-up of the office in Copenhagen. These efforts have made it easy for us to begin our term of office, and to concentrate our attentions on the FIG membership.

Robert W. Foster
President of FIG