

A New Era, But...

In 2006, at the end of my FIG presidency, I tried to point out the main efforts and results of the 'German period' which had run its term under the motto 'Shaping the Change'. It was without doubt hallmarked by successful change in FIG structures and working procedures, the broadening of surveyors' activities, and raised awareness regarding FIG among politicians and the general public.

To look now towards the FIG General Assembly in Sydney is to watch the approach of a new era in FIG's history. There will be elected a new president who will bring with him new ideas and goals, but he will be starting from a very comfortable situation as one of the vice-presidents and member of a successful FIG board.

The presidency of Stig Enemark will be reviewed at a later date, but I can already say that it was extremely successful and resulted in great outcomes. His presidency, in line with the FIG motto of 2006-2010, was dominated by the topic of 'Capacity Building'. We need capacity building for surveyors and geodata experts in order to cope with increasing global and regional challenges and threats, like climate change, environmental and natural disasters, urban and rural poverty, food crises and land grabbing.

The heritage of Stig Enemark is that he made clear to everybody that without permanent and systematic capacity building the surveying profession could not survive! One important step towards comprehensive and professional capacity building within FIG and the whole survey and geodata-related community will therefore be the establishment of a Global Academic Partnership of universities, professionals and other related institutions, as suggested in my keynote to the FIG Regional Conference in Hanoi last October.

I am very happy that GIM International has picked up my idea and decided to initiate a series of articles with the presidents of FIG, ICA and ISPRS on this topic. I hope that all three associations will together jointly enhance the concept of 'Capacity Building' to support and even better prepare land and geodata experts for future challenges.

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