

About the Future Role of FIG in a Vulnerable World

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Key words:

1. INTRODUCTION

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The themes of our anniversary session today cover a long period of time.

We walked with Jan de Graeve through the long history of FIG - our organisation with an honourable experience what now amounts to 125 years.

But President Holger Magel also pointed out in his opening speech that we cannot rest on our laurels.

We have to transport this story of success into the future.

Like every organisation which lays claim to respect - whether company, political party, religious organisation, professional association or whatever – we have the difficult task of generating ideas for the future.

But who can say what the future will be like?

Experts like Michel Godet research on prospective strategies.

But we all can only work on assumptions about the future.

What we can do is, to have a look at past and present and decide, against the background of our own experiences and ideas and those of others as well, what should be preserved and what should be changed.

And it is obvious for us all: it is not enough just to react on the permanent changes – proactive initiatives to shape the change are requested. And you might have recognised: this is the motto for our just started term of responsibility.

At the dawn of the new millennium the United Nations have elaborated answers to crucial questions for the future of mankind in our vulnerable world.

I will show you some of them and you will recognise that surveyors and FIG, the surveyors' global federation, can make great contributions in this context.

Against this background I want to show you on behalf of the FIG Council what we identify as the future role of FIG.

2. UN MILLENNIUM DECLARATION

The Millennium Declaration is the framework for what all nations and international and national organisations should aim for.

The declaration, signed by all nations of the world, recognises that, in addition to the separate responsibility of each individual society, we all have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level.

Both the leaders of the world's nations and the leaders of global NGOs like FIG have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children, to whom the future belongs.

The Declaration structures the guidelines for the 3rd Millennium under the following headings

- peace, security, disarmament
- development and poverty eradication
- protecting our common environment
- human rights, democracy and good governance
- protecting the vulnerable

In the details we find many links to surveyors' work:

- management of land, natural resources and living species in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development
- creating an environment – at the national and global levels alike - which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty.
- support of good governance as a precondition for success
- access to land
- secure tenure
- improvement in the lives of about 100 million slum dwellers
- development of strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil organisations
- ensuring the benefits of new technologies and especially making information and communication technologies available for all
- support for the principles of sustainable development (Agenda 21)
- developing water management strategies
- reducing the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters
- reducing migration
- bringing Africa into the main stream of the world economy
- encouraging and sustaining regional and sub-regional initiatives.

We can be proud to have already elaborated remarkable contributions like

- the Bathurst Declaration on Land Administration for Sustainable Development
- the FIG Agenda 21
- the Nairobi Statement on Spatial Information for Sustainable Development
- Statements on Women's Access to Land

- Best Practice Guidelines in City wide Land Information Management

Bear in mind, too, the different Memoranda of Understanding with UN-Habitat and UN-FAO.

Thanks are due to the former FIG Councils for having oriented FIG to the relevant aims of society so successfully.

The UN Millennium Declaration is the basis for us to carry this on into the future.

3. FUTURE ROLE OF FIG

How can we now orientate FIG accordingly?

1. As new chair of ACCO it will be my task to encourage all commissions to give stronger focus to the issues mentioned.
To give the commissions as much support as possible, the Council has already decided to distribute the responsibility for the commission work among all Vice Presidents.
2. For further support and to prepare resolutions relating to important items, we have the opportunity to set up additional task forces.
3. But it is only one side of the job to work out good proposals.
It is as important to bring these proposals to public attention and above all to the attention of politicians.
Their decisions bring our proposals to life.
We have to strengthen these contacts for example by inviting them to our events more.
4. On the global level our main partner is the UN, which we already have intensive contacts with.
As an NGO without any economic interest and with a strong relation to main tasks of the UN, we have a good approach.
To give this relationship even more strength, the Council decided to make this a matter of the top level of FIG's President.
5. The next step in this context will be a Memorandum of Understanding with the environmental department of UN (UNEP) about which Holger Magel and the chair of UNEP Klaus Töpfer have already had preliminary discussions.
6. To give results like this more publicity we want to strengthen FIG's information policy.
The strong support by the FIG office and modern information technology enable us to disseminate our results to the decision makers on a broad basis.
7. But internal information is important as well.
Nowadays we are used to getting detailed information from all around the world, as for example the NIKKEI index on breakfast TV.
We have to increase the exchange of professional information, for it is one of FIG's main aims to learn from each other.
The Good Practice Report, planned as a web-based database, will give common access to our work.
It will be a benefit especially for the individual surveyor.
8. As not all items of the UN Millennium Declaration are of the same relevance for every nation, surveyors' work and contributions are not everywhere the same.

With respect to the mostly regionally related issues and tasks FIG has started to organise regional conferences.

This year's will be in Morocco, in 2004 it will be in South-East-Asia.

9. Besides the informational aspect of these conferences, it is our aim to fill up blank areas on the map of FIG membership.

Mostly this concerns countries for whom the items of the UN Declaration have a particularly high relevance.

So there is a strong intention to include colleagues from there in the FIG family. Especially in these countries we expect effective co-operation.

10. With new and changing aims and tasks the definition of our profession has to be continually oriented new – as the British Council's motto was.

Developing the profession in a developing world is a never-ending goal we have to follow.

If we can't keep up with the world's development, our profession runs the risk of becoming unnecessary.

Only when we follow the demands of society, can we and upcoming generations – and I say that as father of a student of geodesy in his 2nd semester – look confidently into the future being sure to celebrate FIG's 150th anniversary -somewhere on the globe.

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