

Editorial

The compilation of an annual report gives an opportunity to reflect on past achievements, but also an opportunity to ask "How well did we do last year?", and "Can we do better next year?" At the Congress in Istanbul (Highlights, 9(3):10 – 12) I set out four objectives for the four year period. These were basically to maintain our high standards of scientific work and to expand out international activities in collaboration with other international organisations. I believe that we have done very well in working towards these aims.

The Working Groups have had a very rich programme of meetings which have ranged from specialised workshops on topics such as panoramic photogrammetry, to broad topics such as 'Spatial Data Integration for Emergency Services' which brought in specialists from many different disciplines to speak to a large audience. This programme will continue in 2006 with the Technical Commission Symposia, which should be an excellent opportunity to take stock of developments to date and to make plans for the coming 2 years and the Congress. I urge all the Working Group Chairs to develop activities which will involve photogrammetrists and remote sensors from ISPRS, as well as those whose work is tangential but closely related to the work of those involved in ISPRS, and to invite such people to their symposium. I hope to see many new faces at the symposia, and for these people to come back to the Congress.

We have made good progress on the international front this year. Apart from attending meetings organised by United Nations, ICSU and CEOS, we have participated in the establishment of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and will be giving input to the development of the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS). There are several important benefits which accrue from collaborating with other international organisations. Firstly it gives us credibility and exposure to the international community so that we are recognised and consulted when expertise in photogrammetry and remote sensing is needed. An example of this relates to the management of disasters: we have been invited by the United Nations Office of Outer (UNOOSA) Space Affairs to sit on the Ad Hoc Expert Study Group Meeting Defining the Terms of Reference 'Disaster Management International Space Coordination Organization' (DMISCO) and UNOOSA is supporting the Second International Symposium on Geo-information for Disaster Management to be held in Goa from September 25-26, before the Commission IV Symposium. Secondly it provides us with contacts with other organisations and the ability to collaborate in activities such as workshops. ISPRS organised a workshop on GEOSS with IEEE in conjunction with the Africa GIS2005 conference, and further similar workshops are planned. Members of Council have also attended meeting of our Regional Members and discussed more ISPRS involvement in their programmes. Thirdly, being members of international organisations gives us access to

funds for travel and research, which may be tapped to support project or workshops and to send our members to workshops of training courses.

Whilst I believe that we have made good progress in establishing links within the Earth observation and spatial data infrastructure communities, less has been done for photogrammetry. The Technical Commission Presidents have important contacts in some areas such as metrology and computer animation, but our links with other computer science societies is very limited. Is there more that can be done in this area? Are we missing out on having a voice in important fora which could advance photogrammetry and make its importance better understood to other disciplines?

I believe therefore that ISPRS is becoming well known and respected internationally, but more can be done, and any suggestions from readers will be welcomed.

On a different subject: this is the last issue of Highlights to be published in this form. In June, Highlights will be distributed as an electronic bulletin by email. Rising costs of running the Society, and the decisions of previous Councils not to raise the unit of subscription for 12 years, has forced Council to revise its expenditures priorities. Highlights is now costing the Society around SwFr30,000 per annum and Council considers that this money could be better used to support the scientific work of the Society. It has been decided that, in this age of the internet and efficient transmission of information electronically, the production of a printed colour bulletin is no longer justified. We have therefore decided to produce Highlights as an electronic bulletin, to be published 3 times a year. From June, ISPRS Highlights will be sent out as an email, formatted in a colour, with links to html documents available from our web site. To complement this e-bulletin, ISPRS will have a monthly page in GIM International, which will be mailed by GITC to all ISPRS contacts who currently receive Highlights. Naturally we need email addresses to ensure that the new eBulletin reaches a wide audience so please see the note on page 55 and respond to Secretary General Altan.

Finally I would like to remind you that we have the symposia of the eight Technical Commissions in 2006. Not only will these provide an opportunity to review the scientific work in the area of the Commissions, it will also provide an opportunity to discuss with members of Council issues affecting the direction and progress of the Society. I hope that you will take this opportunity, and look forward to meeting you in 2006.

Ian Dowman,
President ISPRS

