

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

This issue of *ISPRS Highlights* contains our 1998 Annual Report. This past year has been an active and productive year. In addition to six of the ISPRS Commissions successfully convening their mid-term Symposia in their respective countries - India, UK, USA, Germany, Japan, Hungary - several other significant accomplishments in the management and conduct of Society affairs have been achieved. I will comment briefly on a few of these.

It was recognized that for ISPRS to stay relevant to the needs of its Members, the Society's Mission and Activities must be evaluated, enhanced and modified. Thus in early May, Council convened a summit meeting to develop a Strategic Plan for the future of the Society. The meeting recognized the rapidly changing technologies and social conditions which affect ISPRS's role. It resulted in a comprehensive outline which emphasizes the following seven goals for the photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information sciences:

- Encourage and facilitate research and development
- Advance knowledge by scientific network creation
- Expand international cooperation and collaboration
- Promote inter-disciplinary integration
- Facilitate education and training
- Increase applications and uses
- Enhance recognition of ISPRS' role

A series of objectives (22) and action items (39) were developed to achieve these goals and their implementation. All subsequent activities and direction from Council have been positively influenced by the Strategic Plan. A document to articulate the issues and rationale for this ISPRS vision is under preparation.

ISPRS Membership continues to increase positively with the addition of El Salvador as the 100th nation to be represented by an Ordinary Member. Mail ballots are pending for Bangladesh and Benin to swell our ranks to 102. In 1998 we have welcomed nine new Sustaining Member organizations: Applanix, DIIAR-Politecnico di Milano, ESRI-Environmental Systems Research Institute, ETH Zurich Institute of Geodesy and Photogrammetry, Institute of Photogrammetry-Stuttgart, RACURS, StorageTek, UCL London Department of Geomatic Engineering, UNSW-School of Geomatic Engineering. In addition, Secretary General Trinder is currently processing applications for Regional Membership by AGRHYMET, and Associate Membership by the Indian Cartographic Association and by the Australian Department of Natural Resources, Queensland.

A request for proposals to publish *ISPRS Highlights* resulted in the selection of GITC bv. The new contract ensures timely editing and distribution, and by June 1999 *Highlights* will be published and distributed to ISPRS Members at no cost to ISPRS. Distribution includes multiple copies free (based on Membership category) to ISPRS Member Organizations and one free copy each to all officers (of WG's, etc.). I am

pleased to announce that *Highlights* will now be available from GITC (postage included) at \$28 US per year for individuals who belong to an ISPRS member organization, and for \$35 US per year for non-members. We welcome publisher Johan Boesjes, Editor-in-Chief Lucas Janssen, Reports Editor Bill Clark and Book Reviews Editor Ian Harley, who have been brought on-board this year. I want to thank our former publisher/editor, Prof. Mauricio Araya and his colleagues, for his major efforts in making *ISPRS Highlights* become a reality. He volunteered much of his personal time and we commend him for the attractive design and layout, including the pictorial credits which have become standard.

ISPRS will be involved in several major activities during 1999. During April 15-17, Commission VI "Education and Communications" will convene its mid-term Symposium in Bandung, Indonesia on "Sharing and Cooperation in Geo-Information Technology." We encourage a large international participation. Most WG's of the other Commissions have planned international Workshops or Conferences on their specialties. The new International Policies Studies group (recommended by the Strategic Plan) is being formed under the leadership of Dr. Ray Harris. It already has challenging issues for consideration such as: (a) the formation with CEOS of an industry forum for addressing issues relevant to commercial Earth observing satellites and value-adding industries; and (b) evaluation of international spatial data policies, covering copy and patent rights for the imagery community. For the July UNISPACE III Conference, ISPRS is co-organizing a Seminar with NASA, a Workshop with EARSeL, and an ISPRS Workshop.

Preparation of the Amsterdam 2000 Congress is progressing smoothly under the capable direction of Congress Director Klaas Beek. With support of the Commissions, the Congress is being designed to provide high quality scientific and technologic theme sessions complemented with special sessions on relevant issues and policies. To date, Council has received letters of intent to host the XXth ISPRS Congress in 2004 from both the Turkish National Society (Istanbul) and the Spanish Society (Barcelona).

In closing let me offer two suggestions for actions by our Members. First, I encourage all ISPRS Member Organizations to submit nominees for the ISPRS Awards which are presented at the Congress. And secondly, I encourage Member Organizations to report news of events and activities of interest for timely publication in *ISPRS Highlights*. Remember, each Ordinary Member and Regional Member is entitled to a free one-half page per year to promote one of its events, plus a free one-fourth page per year for promoting its activities.

Our Society is enhancing, expanding and redefining its activities and operating procedures to meet the demands of the future. Our outreach activities to coordinate and collaborate with other scientific and technologic activities in the 'Information from Imagery' community are meeting with success. This enhanced role depends on increased communication with you, our Members.

Yours sincerely,

Lawrence W. Fritz

ISPRS President