Dear Colleagues,

At the XVII Congress in Vienna, a Council proposal for establishing a timely news bulletin was briefed to the ISPRS General Assembly delegates. The Council has been discussing for some time how ISPRS can better serve its Member’s interests and those of relevant international organizations who can benefit from ISPRS activities. I am pleased to welcome you to our first issue. Allow me to provide some background on where we are, how we got here and where we intend to be.

In early September 1996, the Council of ISPRS formally selected ISPRS Highlights Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Mauricio Araya-Figueroa of Chile. His selection was based on his vast experience in producing publications in photogrammetry, remote sensing and GIS, especially since 1986 as Editor-in-Chief of the SELPER Journal. Through his voluntary efforts and sage recommendations, and with the distribution of this first issue, Council has achieved its objective of providing a timely news publication which is free for all individuals that are members of ISPRS Member Organizations. We want ISPRS Highlights to complement our ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. We want the ISPRS Journal to continue to provide high-quality, peer-reviewed scientific and technical articles, whereas we want ISPRS Highlights to provide current information about activities of our membership and news about where our spatial and imaging sciences and technologies are heading.

ISPRS Highlights is intended to enhance communication of Society objectives and activities. We will be providing it on a complimentary basis to those interested organizations which are relevant to the aims of ISPRS. It is our intent for ISPRS Highlights to become self-supporting through the generation of sufficient advertising and donation revenues. ISPRS Highlights will also be published on the World-Wide-Web (WWW) through our ISPRS Home Page (http://www.geod.ethz.ch/isprs). Our eventual goal is to migrate all, including image-intensive, portions of ISPRS Highlights to the WWW as access to that technology matures.

Our plan is for ISPRS Highlights to contain the following types of ISPRS information: Annual Reports, News, Event Reports, Calendar of Events, Commission and Working Group Newsletters, Terms of Reference, Book Reports, Project Reports, Officer lists, Advertisements, invited keynote speeches and technology review articles, Minutes of Council Meetings, publicity of fellowship opportunities and awards, announcements and Calls for Papers of ISPRS sponsored conferences, Annual Sustaining Member summaries, reviews of activities with other organizations, etc. and other items which our readership may suggest.

As you can see in this issue, we plan to provide at least 15 pages of color in each issue and abundant photographs of activities as available. We encourage you to submit news and good color images for publication.

The ISPRS is a non-profit, volunteer based, international Society which has very limited finances for operations. Our objectives are to promote communication about our activities and the benefits which our spatial information science disciplines can provide for humanity. Multiple copies of this ISPRS Highlights have been air mail distributed to our Ordinary Member Organizations located in 97 countries worldwide. We are requesting our Ordinary Members to support the distribution of ISPRS Highlights by delivering copies to their individual members and to ISPRS Member organizations in their country, be they Associate Members, Sustaining Members, Honorary Members or ISPRS officers.

Initially we are distributing five copies free per ISPRS Member category, e.g. 5 to 40 for categories 1 to 8 respectively. We encourage wide circulation by asking our Ordinary Members to request copies for all of their individual members which wish to receive a free copy. As circulation grows, we may need to request a nominal fee from our Ordinary Members to defray shipping costs, but not to make a profit!

We seek your encouragement and support of this endeavor. Please let us know your interests and send us your news for publication.

Sincerely,

Lawrence W. Fritz
ISPRS President
10. A great many of the Austrian users and scientists are engaged successfully throughout the world in photogrammetry and remote sensing.

Many of them are here in this festival hall today. Thank you for your promotion of the Vienna Congress. Regarding Austrian scientists I will mention one personally. My predecessor as head of the Institute for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing at the Vienna University of Technology, Prof. Karl Neumaier is attending this opening ceremony. This is very extraordinary, but I add that he is 96 years old, you understand, why I mention his name with great respect. We should give him a special applause. He told me many stories about Eduard Dolezel.

This was my opening address. Thank you again for coming to Vienna. I wish you pleasant days at our Congress. Let me now repeat this speech in German.

WELCOME ADDRESS OF ISPRS PRESIDENT

SHUNJI MURAI, President, ISPRS
9 July 1996, Vienna, Austria

Mr. President, Austrian Society for Surveying and Geoinformation, Professor August Hochwarter, Mr. Congress Director, Professor Karl Kraus, Distinguished Delegates, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, I extend a cordial welcome to the 18th International Congress of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing to all of you. Since our society was founded in 1910 and the first Congress was held in 1913, here in Vienna, Austria, under the strong leadership of Professor Eduard Dolezel, we are very pleased to return to the original starting point. We owe our presence here to Professor Karl Kraus, our Congress Director and his team who have prepared this Congress. On behalf of all participants, I would like to thank this team and the many organizations in Austria who dedicated great efforts to make this Congress possible in this beautiful and historical city of Vienna. For this we thank our Austrian hosts.

My first duty as the President was to keep the ISPRS tradition that has been inherited by the past presidents, particularly Dr. Fred Doyle, Professor Gotfrid Kupecy and Professor Kenneth Forshaw since the Society has changed the name from ISP to ISPRS in 1980. The ISPRS's tradition is a democratic spirit and open attitude.

It is very sad for me to report to you that two Honorary Members have passed away in the past four years. Mr. Jean Cressey, Honorary Member as well as the last President in the age of ISP, 1976-1980, and Professor Placido Sanz Machado Freguinde, the past Congress Director at Rio Congress in 1984 passed away. In addition, a former Council Member, Professor W. Bachmann, who served as Secretary General (1964-1968) and Vice President (1968-1972) passed away.

In their memory, I ask you to rise for a moment of silence. Thank you.

My second duty was to restructure the Society to meet the requirements of the age. The present is called "computer age", "information age", "space age", "multimedia age" and so on. In these past four years, the population has increased by more than four hundred millions, several tens of millions computers were installed, several hundreds of thousands of satellite scenes were taken and several million maps were digitized in the world. The question is how to recognize the requirements of our profession.

We have to recognize and accept the following changes:
- from analog to digital form
- from air survey to space remote sensing
- from paper to electronic media
- from static to dynamic measurements
- from single to multiple disciplines
- from centralization to distributed systems
- from manual to automatic operations
- from closed to open data policy

These changes have strongly influenced the restructuring of our institutions and profession. In this sense, the ISPRS is trying to propose to amend the Statutes and Bylaws at General Assemblies to be held during this Congress. I sincerely request the delegates to support the proposal. Otherwise the Society will not be able to survive.

My third duty was to activate all Technical Commissions and Working Groups for the benefit of the Society. I am very proud to report to you that the activities of 7 Technical Commissions and 46 Working Groups were the most exciting and fruitful in terms of technical progress, compared with the past. In this respect, I thank all of Technical Commission Presidents and Working Group Chairmen for their great contribution to our Society. I believe that all these achievements will be reflected in the technical sessions with high quality paper presentations in this Congress.

You will share information about most advanced technologies such as high resolution satellite imagery, synthetic aperture radar (SAR) interferometry, laser scanners with GPS/INS, image understanding to extract spatial information from images, etc., through technical sessions and exhibitions of this Congress.

My fourth duty was to determine how to communicate more effectively with ISPRS Members. The Council has decided to offer a better information service to our Members. I believe that the information flow was much improved in the past four years. Particularly I thank Mr. Lawrence W. Fritz, our Secretary General for his tremendous efforts to publish the new ISPRS Annual Report.

Finally I appreciate fully the excellent preparation that Professor Karl Kraus and his team have accomplished. I believe that the Vienna Congress would be the most exciting and successful one, full of excellent papers and exciting exhibitions.

Thank you.