



Editorial



Dear Colleagues,

This is my last opportunity to call your attention to and to invite you to attend the XIXth ISPRS Congress in Amsterdam, 16-23 July 2000! By the time you read this editorial most of you will already have registered, or you may find this issue of Highlights in your Congress bag upon arrival in Amsterdam, with the detailed Congress programme.

I am sure that you will enjoy this opportunity to increase your knowledge, to meet and to renew your friendship with many colleagues, exchange scientific ideas and gain further insight into the real world problems and opportunities presented by representatives of the user community, industry, policy and decision-makers.

Considering the enthusiastic response to our call for abstracts, almost 1,400 abstracts resulting in about one thousand full papers, and also to our exhibitors call, around 90 exhibitors occupying over 2,000 m² netto floor space, our new model for the Congress seems to have been well received. Everything is focussed and compact, everything concentrated in one week. Fortunately we had the benefits of your good advice over the past four years, first during the Congress in Vienna when we made our bid, and later during the ISPRS Workshops and Technical Commission Symposia in 1998, when we met personally with most of you. The Symposia also gave us the opportunity to work with the Commission Presidents and the Working Group Chairpersons in formulating the focus and a relevant content for the Technical Commission and Inter-Commission sessions.

The ISPRS has a long tradition and therefore during Congress there will be several social and ceremonial events, which have proven to be of great significance for a scientific society. These include recognition of excellence through the presentation of awards, most of which will take place during the plenary sessions, in particular the Opening and Closing Sessions.

Another tradition is the keynote address at the Opening Ceremony, which this time will be presented by Ismail Serageldin, Vice president for special programmes of the World Bank. Serageldin chairs the Consultative Group of Agricultural research (CGIAR) and is also a key person in the World Water Forum, concerned with the looming global water crisis. Based on his long-standing record as a leader in international research and its impact on a wide range of development situations, Serageldin will provide us with his vision concerning how our sciences can contribute to create a better world during the decades ahead.

This Council has been very active in making ISPRS more

visible in the international scientific arena, and has further elaborated the ISPRS mission and goals by formulating a vision for the future. This means the future for our society but even more importantly for our profession, or should I say professions, since the process of obtaining information from images nowadays requires a chain of operations involving a growing number of disciplines and specialisations, from data capture to image processing, image analysis, database development and management to information extraction, processing, dissemination and application.

During the plenary opening session, a panel of colleagues will discuss our challenges for the future in terms of constraints and conditions to achieving the overall goal "geo-information for all" which is the theme of our Congress. J. Dangermond (ESRI), He Changchui (FAO), K. Kasturirangan (ISRO), M. Othman (UN-OOSA) and D. Schell (OGC) have agreed to participate in this panel, interacting with the audience through an electronic voting system, to obtain the immediate response of the audience to a number of challenging questions.

A serie of special sessions, organised by the individual Council members will deepen the discussion on the issues raised during the subsequent days.

Also in parallel there will be sessions organised by sister societies, UN agencies and other specialised groups taking advantage of your presence in Amsterdam. The exhibitors will present their new products and latest developments in a series of exciting exhibitor showcases.

I believe that during the past four years, Council, ISPRS officers and our Local Organising Committee together have done a marvellous job in preparing this XIXth Congress in such a way that it can indeed be a trend-setting event, as might be expected of a Congress that takes place at the turn of the millennium. I hope and expect that everyone will enjoy the excitement of the scientific programme, with contributions from many young authors, as well as the charm and warmth of the social programme which should reflect the hospitality of the Dutch people as well the cosmopolitan and liberal atmosphere of Amsterdam.

With your presence we can make the XIXth ISPRS Congress 2000 a really memorable event. We now look forward to welcoming you all, with your partners, to Amsterdam in July 2000 with the expectation that everyone who during the past four years has shown an active participatory interest in our Society will join in!

Yours Sincerely,

Klaas Jan Beek
Congress Director

