

Editorial

It is with great pleasure, a great sense of responsibility and a few misgivings that I take on the job of secretary General of ISPRS for the next four years. One of my responsibilities is to work with the Editor in Chief, Lucas Janssen to ensure that *Highlights* is produced every three months and contains interesting, informative and lively material. *Highlights* is one of the big successes of the past four years and Lucas has played no small part in that success. I look forward to working with him and with GITC as publisher to continue the upward trajectory of *Highlights*.

What else do we all have to look forward to in the next four years? Already Council and the Technical Commission Presidents have formulated and almost finalised the technical working groups. You will find the draft list of working groups in this issue of *Highlights*. Full details will come in the next issue. There is an exciting time ahead as data acquisition not only becomes digital, but also expands beyond the limits of the image into airborne interferometric SAR and LIDAR from above, and to lasers and other non contact sensors measure objects at close range. The presentation of this data also becomes more crucial and several of the working groups will be concerned with visualisation: not only of the data and the information extracted from it, but also of the reliability and accuracy of the data. One key component of the programme is collaboration.

During the past four years Council has established links with many organisations and has signed Memoranda of Understanding with some. These links are important to the continued development of ISPRS. As the domain of spatial information expands, so the potential membership and influence of societies representing the community also expand. The Joint Board of Spatial Information Societies (ISPRS, ICA, FIG and IAG, IHO and IGU) is a core group but there are many others with whom we should collaborate. Many of these are specifically mentioned in the terms of reference of working groups, and for all cognate groups a Council member has been assigned responsibility for liaison. One area where we are particularly looking for new liaisons is in the area of computer vision. Professor Franz Leberl, President of Commission III has thrown out a challenge. He has written in his work plan:

'As the Commission's President, I suggest that we make an effort to more clearly position the field of photogrammetry vis-à-vis computer vision, resulting in the notion of a "Photogrammetric Computer Vision". The focus on geo-information is to be pushed into the background, resulting in a need to identify when computer vision is photogrammetry. The easy way out – when the goal is to model objects and scenes on the Earth's surface

– is not general enough. We need to think a little harder about this. Is it then photogrammetry when the goal of the vision task is to be 3D and accurate?

'I invite all interested persons to discuss this and to help in positioning photogrammetry clearly, both in the minds of people calling themselves "photogrammetrists" as well in the minds of the outsiders in computer vision.'

It is good to see our accepted perceptions challenged and readers should take up Professor Leberl's invitation to discuss this issue.

It is important that we collaborate, not only to be able to share new knowledge and make better progress by so doing, but also to avoid duplication. Collaboration means that joint meetings can be held to cover areas of common interest and we can not only meet people from a different community, but also save time in attending too many meetings. I hope that the Technical Commission Presidents and Working Group chairs will work hard to establish relevant links outside of ISPRS and to foster real collaboration during their period of office.

An example of an organisation that brings people and organisations together at many levels is CEOS (Committee for Earth Observing Satellites). The CEOS Plenary, of which ISPRS is an Associate Member, meets every year to discuss interagency strategy, and ways of working more efficiently with satellite data. The working groups advise plenary on policy relating to technical issues. The subgroups deal with real technical issues and the problems that are identified at this level can filter up to the Working Group and to Plenary, and hence influence policy. Elsewhere in this issue a report on a recent meeting of CEOS Working Group on Calibration and Validation is given and this shows where valuable collaboration can take place.

I look forward to an exciting and challenging four years in which participants in ISPRS activities work with each other and with other groups to create an inclusive community for the study and advancement of spatial information science.

Ian Dowman
Secretary General

