

## Editorial

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ISPRS activities are constrained by a four year cycle, but one cycle merges into another to ensure continuity. 2004 is an important year because, not only will the quadrennial congress present a review of work done during the past four years and of the current state of the art, but a new Council and Technical Commission Presidents (TCPs) will be elected. The TCPs will be setting up new scientific programmes and appointing working groups to carry out the programme. Continuity must be assured by a smooth transfer from old TCP to new TCP, but also by continuing successful working groups. Recently new terms of reference for the Technical Commissions have been approved and these changes include the addition of an eighth Commission so that remote sensing is now covered by 2 Commissions covering Thematic Processing, Modelling and Analyses of Remotely Sensed Data and Remote Sensing Applications and Policies. This change must also be successfully implemented.

The changes taking place at the Congress create many opportunities for scientists to take part in, and benefit from ISPRS activities. Of course you can attend the Congress and benefit from the scientific and technical papers and exhibits. In the longer term you can help to plan future activities by leading or participating in working groups. Commission Presidents will be setting up working groups at the Congress and will need new people who have an established record in particular fields to run them. If you have an interest in participating in this way, make sure that the nominees for Commission President are aware of your activities, and offer your services.

The XX<sup>th</sup> ISPRS Congress will be held in the brand new Congress Center, Istanbul Convention and Exhibition Center during 12 – 23 July 2004. It is expected that about 2,500 participants will attend the Congress. A record number of abstracts (1,762) have been received. This is a tremendous effort by all involved and bodes well for the success of the Congress. It is very much to be hoped that the current unstable situation in the Middle East, which could reach out to any part of the globe, will not deter participants from coming to Istanbul. Istanbul is as safe as New York, London, Tokyo, and most other major cities; the efforts of our Turkish hosts should not be wasted because of unfounded concerns about being affected terrorist activity.

The Congress will highlight applications of geo-spatial technologies for mapping, managing and monitoring land, water and natural resources, leading to sustainability of

development. The WSSD in Johannesburg recognised that images of the Earth and its environment, which are the primary source of geo-information to experts in ISPRS, enable assessment and monitoring of: food and water security; environment and habitat; hazards and disasters; renewable resources; deforestation and land degradation; quality of ocean and coastal areas; the atmosphere; and diseases. This Congress will address many of these issues. As these issues are technical issues, which should be discussed among the scientists, there is also a great interest from the politicians and NGOs as some of them already showed great interest in participating in the congress.

Two other aspects of the Congress programme deserve special mention. The first is the three Plenary Sessions, where prominent invited speakers will deal with the current topics of interest, putting the interests of the experts within ISPRS into a wider context. The other is the "Youth Forum". Youth Sessions will be held for the first time during the ISPRS 2004 Congress, and are considered as important by the ISPRS Technical Commissions. On Saturday, 17 July 2004, there will be oral and poster sessions organised by the young attendees. We place great importance on this event, which will be a pointer to the future of our profession. If a sufficient number of requests are received, a summer camp will be organised after the congress as part of the social program of ISPRS 2004 with a special nominal fee.

A major new initiative by Council is the establishment of The ISPRS Foundation. Full details of this are published elsewhere in Highlights. We urge all readers of Highlights to appreciate the potential benefits of The Foundation and to consider how they can help. If sufficient money is donated early in 2004, The ISPRS Foundation can be used to help deserving people attend the Congress.

So 2004 is a year of change and a year of consolidation. We look forward to many individuals and organisations coming together in Istanbul and working together within ISPRS to further the main objective of the Society which is the development of international co-operation for the advancement of photogrammetry and remote sensing and their applications. A successful Congress in 2004 will demonstrate the strength of ISPRS and that we are achieving this objective.

Ian Dowman,  
ISPRS Secretary General

