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 quadrenni-
al 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 pro-
grammes 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 refer-
ence 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 XXth 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. 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 dis-
cussed 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 cur-
rent 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 dur-
ing 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 ses-
sions 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