

## Editorial

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The Congress is over and the general feeling is that it was an excellent event. Already plans are being made for the next four years with a new Council and new Technical Commission Presidents. I do not intend to dwell on these in this editorial. You will find my objectives set out in my speech to the closing ceremony of the Congress and the basis of the technical work is embodied within the resolutions which are also included in this issue of Highlights. The issue which I want to address is communication.

Those who attended the Congress have spent 10 – 12 days of intensive communication: we have presented and listened to technical papers; we have discussed the issues which have been raised and we have probably spent many enjoyable hours talking to old friends and new acquaintances around the Congress centre and at social events. This is one of the key pleasures of scientific conferences, and the quadrennial ISPRS Congress brings together some 2000 people from all over the world and allows them to communicate face to face. But what of those who were unable to come to Istanbul, and probably will not be able to attend any ISPRS event for the next four years? They also would like to know what is going on and to discuss with their peers the latest developments in digital camera technology or how remote sensing can contribute to the management of disasters. ISPRS provides some opportunities for this through the 'Journal' and through 'Highlights', and increasingly through the internet and the ISPRS website. But is this enough? In the developed countries we take access to scientific publications for granted, and through the subscriptions which are taken out by university libraries, can access and print out almost any publication at our desk top. We tend to forget that subscriptions to electronic journals cost money and that the internet is not as fast or as efficient in many parts of the world as it is in London or Tokyo. ISPRS receives requests for 'any' publications, from Africa, for example, and colleges there are grateful to receive 5 year old conference proceedings on any topic. The situation will no doubt slowly improve, but ISPRS must make it improve more quickly.

Those of us who have been in Istanbul know the importance of face to face discussion, being able to listen to

someone explain his own work, and to have discussion of the content. Thus, giving people in locations from which travel is difficult the opportunity to hear papers presented by experts at international workshops is highly desirable. There are problems to this of course, not the least being money. Language is another difficulty: the languages of South America, for example, are Spanish and Portuguese, not spoken by many academics in Europe, North America or Asia. We intend to tackle these problems and to look at how workshops can be organised in collaboration with national or regional organisations, we will also look at whether we can have some of the ISPRS website in languages other than English. A potential for a long term solution to funding such events should be the ISPRS Foundation. This was launched in Istanbul and has already attracted donations of around \$50 000, and has a target of \$500 000 in four years. This will allow us to fund workshops and travel grants to help people from the less developed areas to communicate more easily with those who have easy access to information.

A less scientific, but more accessible, vehicle is this bulletin, ISPRS Highlights. It is delivered free to ISPRS members, and one objective of Council is to make sure that it is distributed more widely and finds its way to the people who want to read it. A questionnaire was inserted into the June issue of Highlights, asking for your opinion of the Bulletin. That questionnaire is still available on the website and I urge you to complete it and return it to the Secretary General, so that your views and requirements can be taken into account.

Marshall McLuhan wrote in *Understanding Media* (1964) of the 'global village', and suggested that we are brought closer together by technology. This is probably true for many people and the photogrammetry and remote sensing community may be relatively small, akin to a village, and we may think we know many of the people living in our village, but if we think about who was not in Istanbul, we realise that this is a long way from actuality. Let us work together during the next four years to make our Congress in China truly representative of our global village.

Ian Dowman, President ISPRS

