

Address to “GIS 2002”
Istanbul, Turkey
September 23, 2002
by
Robert W. Foster, President, FIG

President Gulsun Saglamer,
President Kaya Guvenc,
President Huseyin Ulku,
Colleagues of the Turkish Chamber of Surveying Engineers,
Ladies and gentlemen:

I am pleased and honored to bring greetings from the International Federation of Surveyors - FIG - to this International GIS Symposium of 2002. I regret that the chairman of FIG Commission 5, Matt Higgins and the Chairman of FIG Commission 7, Paul van der Molen are unable to be here due to last-minute commitments at their offices. They both send their wishes to you for a highly successful meeting.

GIS is a concept unheard of and undreamed of during the first 25 years of my career. For instance, during my university years we performed our surveying computations with logarithms.

In the later 1950s we had access to mechanical calculators.

In the early 1960s I saw my first computer.

The 1970s brought more advanced computers and the new plotters.

By the 1980s we began to hear rumors of something called GPS and finally GPS and GIS became realities.

When the decade of the 1990s arrived and all forms of surveying became really interesting it was time for me to retire!

Those of you who are active in the profession today are the luckiest surveyors who ever lived - and you are living in the most exciting of times.

My compensation for missing out on the latest modernization of surveying has been my involvement in FIG. World events have opened doors I never thought I could pass through. Those same events:

- the growing democratization of nations;
- the privatization of lands in the formerly-Communist countries;
- the creation of free market economies around the world, and
- the possibility of a new era of peace and harmony -

these events mean that surveying and remote sensing services, and surveying and remote sensing

education are in a time of demand growth never seen before.

We in FIG are in a position to see and predict this growth. And it is the purpose of FIG to assist the profession in meeting this new demand for our services for the betterment of society everywhere.

One thing FIG can do that our individual members can not do is work closely with agencies of the United Nations. FIG has a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Commission on Human Settlements/Habitat. Last week in Rome I signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, UN/FAO, and we have similar working arrangements with the UN Environment Program.

I believe that this UN/FIG cooperation does two things: it assists the UN in its basic social and humanitarian efforts; and it gives to FIG an international stature and reputation for professionalism on the most important world stage.

Your program here in Istanbul further advances surveying in its service to society in the application of GIS, cadastre and land management, emergency monitoring and management, environment and natural resources study and monitoring, and the management of utilities and urban planning.

I congratulate you in putting together such an important and ambitious program while bringing together so many experts for this conference.

I also congratulate you on your choice of Istanbul for this Symposium. It is surely one of the greatest cities of the world, with I.T.U. a great university.

I wish you great success in your deliberations and exchange of ideas here. Meetings like this present a rare opportunity to everyone - presenters and participants alike - to learn and to grow. So I urge you to use the week well while enjoying the best of Istanbul.

Finally my special thanks to Chairman Muhittin Ipek and his organizing Committee for such gracious hospitality and fellowship extended to me.

Thank you.