

FIG Commission 4 AGM

Rome, 6th May

The chair (Dr. Michael Sutherland) opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates to the AGM. He noted that the Young Surveyors had little knowledge of FIG and wished to recap and outline some of the key elements to the meeting. FIG is a recognised UN Non Government Organisation (NGO) and acts as the focal point for Geospatial information and land management issues – not forgetting the sea. It essentially works as an association of associations.

Commission 4 has many members throughout the countries but often members are not able to attend meetings and so attendance numbers are relatively small. Overall there is a continuing lack of awareness and so further marketing and outreach is required.

Dr. Sutherland then introduced the Chairs and vice chairs of Commission 4 and the work groups, to the delegates. Apologies had been received from Ms A Eutonovbe (chair elect), V Boder and J Li (WG chairs).

Work Group reports presented at the AGM

WG 4.1 Ellipsoidally Referenced Surveys

Jerry Mills presented the work of WG4.1 and described the questionnaire that was issued and that 232 responses had been received. Initial results were published at the US Hydro'11 event and subsequently in the International Hydrographic Review (IHR) in November 2011. This was Objective 1. the second objective is now under way to compile the various methods and develop a catalogue of these. Some recent finds have meant this objective is still active. The third objective to develop uncertainty models has yet to commence but should complete to enable a publication in 2014 and perhaps an entry into the IHO Manual of Hydrography.

WG4.2 Standards and Guidelines for Hydrography: report submitted & on FIG website

WG4.3 Multi-sensor Systems for Hydrographic Applications: report submitted & on FIG website

WG4.4 Maritime and Marine Spatial Information Management: report submitted & on FIG website

WG4,5 Hydrography in Africa

Innocent Egbuka reported on behalf of the chair of WG4.5. To date progress has been to raise awareness through a 3 day workshop in October 2011 entitled “Hydrography and National Development” which was attended by representatives of several countries. There is still a general lack of awareness and some countries have no national hydrographic focal point or organisation, In Africa at present there is no Category A course in all of Africa and only a Category B course in Tunisia, nowhere in sub Saharan Africa.

Future activity is planned to continue to raise awareness, likely with an event in Kenya and in Francophone countries.

Recommendations being developed include:

Stepping up efforts of promotion

Identifying possible funding

the need for survey directorates to establish formal hydrographic offices

the need for professional Associations to also be involved

improvement in the reference texts available to surveyors

WG 4.5 aims to develop these recommendations with a view to establish such capability that training can be routinely given.

Future Events with Commission 4 presence include:

Hydro '12 Rotterdam, November 2012

Ocean Business 2013

Canadian Hydrographic Conference, 15-17th May, Niagara Falls, Canada

US Hydro '13

Hydro International: The magazine is available as a free subscription to Commission delegates. Contact details (email addresses) will be supplied so that emails may be sent inviting members to subscribe. There is also an interest in papers for the magazine and authors are encouraged to consider submitting their papers.

IHO Liaison

Mr G Johnston reported on the continuing good relations between FIG and IHO.

In October 2011 he attended a joint meeting on Capacity Building attended by key representatives from IMO, IOC, WMO, IALA and IHO. Following an initiative from the IHB, the responsible officers for Capacity Building matters decided to hold annual meetings to consider matters such as the procedures established in each organization, their Work Programmes and Funding mechanisms, the experiences gained in the provision of CB, the experience with Funding Agencies and Organizations, the Status of joint co-operation projects and the areas of common interest. Meetings have been held up to date in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The 2011 meeting was the first attended by FIG.

As no formal terms of reference for the group exist there is no formal output or report. The organisations have, in some cases, dedicated groups and funds on Capacity Building. Although a millennium goal of FIG there is no current group dedicated to focus on this issue. However in terms of FIG Commission 4 participation in Capacity Building there is a vital role in the development and publication of technical and policy articles and booklets to promote Hydrography.

A possible future development will be a meeting or workshop jointly organised by several of the above groups, in which FIG could play a key role.

The XVIIth International Hydrographic Conference

This is the major IHO event, occurring every 5 years to review the work to date, agree the work for the future and appoint by election new directors. (G Johnston represented Commission 4).

One of the prime joint collaborations is the joint FIG/IHO/ICA International Board for the Standards of Competence of Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers (IBSC) which was formally reported to the IHC. FIG intervened to support the work of the IBSC and thank IHO for providing secretarial support. At the end of the conference the election took place for the new IH Board directors. Nine candidates stood although one withdrew before the commencement of the event. The 3 directors elected are:

Rob Ward (Aus) President
Mustafa Iptes (Tur)
Gilles Bessaro (Fr)

A report is attached to the end of the AGM meeting notes.

IBSC

The joint FIG/IHO/ICA International Board for the Standards of Competence of Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers (IBSC) has had several changes of personnel over the last year. Sadly Dr. David Neale passed away in 2011. The current FIG representatives on the IBSC are:

Adam Greenland (NZ)
Gordon Johnston (UK)
Razali Mahmud (Malaysia)
Keith Miller (Trinidad & Tobago)

The main efforts of IBSC over the past year or so have been as follows:

Reduction from 10 to 6 years for the period of any Course recognition
The inclusion of fee for any submissions of courses. This is managed by FIG with a bank account to hold the funds of IBSC.
The Standards now also include the possibility of Professional Competency Schemes.

The next meeting of IBSC is May 2012 in Buenos Aires.

Task Forces

Currently Comm 4 is active in two task forces. The Africa Task Force and the Surveyors and Climate Change Task Force.

Young Surveyors

Previous events showed the potential for events incorporating Young Surveyors and the previous week's meeting was considered very good. It was disappointing to note that few young surveyors were in attendance at the main Working Week but progress continues.

A Commission 4 initiative to develop and promote Hydrography via a CD has proved difficult to fulfil due to a lack of final funds to create the CD and get it promoted. The work continues.

AOB

It was noted the initiative by the University of Plymouth to develop a distance learning course called the Hydrographic Academy has already received hundreds of registrations of interest. It is aiming to be a Category B recognised course in 2013..

With no further business the AGM closed at 1830.

G Johnston
Rome, April 2012

Report of the International Hydrographic Conference, Monaco, April 2012.

The 80+ members of IHO met to discuss and agree key issues of Hydrography.

The five day conference allowed its Member States to raise important technical items and to agree the 2012-2017 work plan.

Hydrographic Standards Sub Committee

The main technical effort has been undertaken by the HSSC group. Much of the work has involved considerable input and technical support from commercial and external groups to the IHO. This point was stressed several times as the various work groups reported their work, output and future challenges.

It was agreed that the work of HSSC should continue. In association with this it was proposed that the IHB should increase its technical resources.

Inter-Regional Cooperation Committee

IRCC reported on its work that encompasses Capacity Building and the cohesion of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions. Each Hydrographic Commission submitted its work report.

Capacity Building Committee

A brief overview was presented with the main debate surrounding the possible reduction in the funding from the IHB to the Capacity Building programme. The debate was more about the guarantee of the monies, as those from Member States could be withdrawn, but any committed from IHB fund would be held.

The IRCC report included the International Board for the Standards of Competence (IBSC) (the author is a member) and the main activities developed including:

Reduction from 10 to 6 years for the period of any Course recognition

The inclusion of fee for any submissions of courses

The Standards now include Professional Competency Schemes.

Member State Proposals

Various proposals had been submitted and were duly debated, commented and approved or withdrawn. These were almost all related to the mechanics of the IHO and IHB. One of these was to introduce into the candidature for Directors a requirement for each to make a short presentation to the conference.

Work Plan: This session was scheduled to last a whole morning but in the end was constrained to a shorter session. Essentially it covers the work of the IHB including developing a GIS web facility. Also the IHO through the IHB shall maintain strong links with other organisations (IMO, FIG, ICA, IALA etc). The technical efforts are to continue and the IRCC work is to continue. Also capacity Building is to be supported and the IBSC to develop its new Standards.

General

A serious political topic has developed with the publication of the Sea Names and Areas (S-23). It has been under revision for over 35 years but due to a sensitive area no possible completion has been possible. As a political issue the conference decided to attempt to use proposals but on voting insufficient support was gained. The consideration of S-23 continues.

At the end of the conference the election took place for the new IH Board directors. Nine candidates stood although one withdrew before the commencement of the event. The 3 directors elected are:

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IHC Exhibition

The 30 or so stands were spread around the reception, mezzanine floor and the entrance to the auditorium and appeared to benefit from the delegates all passing by.