

Offshore Surveying Awareness Seminar 2003

The Offshore Surveying Awareness Seminar 2003 (OSAS 2003) was held at the Federal Hotel at Jalan Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 24 and 25 April 2003. This seminar was the first of its kind to be organised by the Land Surveying Division of The Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (ISM).

About one hundred excited participants attended this seminar. In fact, ISM had been somewhat sceptical about this seminar idea, mainly due to the fact that there are very few members who are hydrographic surveyors and hydrographers and most of these are not active within the ISM. However, with sheer hard work and full of determination, the Land Surveying Division's organising committee lead by Mr Razali Ahmad (FISM) finally managed to make this seminar a success.

The seminar received good support not only from The Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia (JUPEM) and the Hydrographic Branch of the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) but also from organisations in the offshore surveying industries, who contributed papers and generous sponsorship.

The primary objective of OSAS 2003 was to create awareness in offshore and near-shore surveying, especially amongst new players in this field in Malaysia and Brunei. The seminar focused on technical requirements, methodologies and instrumentation involved in offshore and near-shore survey data acquisition and management.

Twelve papers covering fundamental aspects of offshore surveying were presented during the two-day seminar. The papers presented outlines of the methodology and instrumentation generally used in the industry, the presenters themselves being no strangers to the industry and having several years of field experience.

Malaysia is considered a maritime country as it consists of over four thousand kilometres of coastline. Malaysian offshore waters have been blessed with economic resources such as oil and gas, fishing, treasure, etc. It was reported that more than US\$ 1 billion worth of treasure might be recovered from approximately a hundred wrecked ships in Malaysian waters (including rusty cannons and anchors). The quest for oil and gas has pushed out further and further away from our coastlines. With recent global needs for oil and gas, and at a higher price, we will be even pushed further into new uncharted frontiers to explore for new reserves.

The importance of maritime boundary delimitation, such as the previous experience in handling the issue of Sipidan and Ligitan islands and ongoing issues with Pulau Batu Putih, was also discussed. The same applies for the national base points in Labuan.

OSAS 2003 is the testimony to Malaysian achievement in the field of offshore surveying. The presenters and sponsors were all Malaysians, except one from Brunei. The sponsors are the industry's main source of expertise. Whilst actually competitors in the field, during this seminar they gathered and put together their expertise and experience to be shared by other Malaysians.