

Preview 2009



meeting in Genoa (Italy).<P>



Despite the many reports of challenges and difficulties in the global economy, 2009 promises to be a busy year for Commission 4. From 20th to 24th April, we will be represented by three of our delegates at the FIG/International Hydrographic Organization/International Cartographic Association International Advisory Board (IAB) on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors

Gordon Johnston, Adam Greenland and I are listed to be attending, as the IAB considers as many as 10 proposed hydrography courses at centres around the world. The large number sends strong, positive signals for the future of hydrographic surveying as a discipline.

Working Week 2009

From 3rd to 8th May, the commission will participate in the 2009 FIG Working Week in Eilat (Israel). Both the incumbent commission chair (Andrew Leyzack) and the chair-elect (Michael Sutherland) will attend and participate in the technical sessions and support the operational work of the FIG and its 10 commissions. Commission 4 will hold its annual meeting there and host two technical sessions: one on coastal zone management (joint with Commission 8) and the other on hydrographic surveying in practice. During these sessions, the very critical matter of FIG contribution to the practice of surveying will be discussed and formulated.

Hanoi

From 19th to 22nd October, the Regional Conference will be held in Hanoi (Vietnam). Commission 4 will work with Commissions 5 and 8 in co-hosting a special technical session on issues concerning sea level rise: a phenomenon that is important to the South-East Asian region, as well as many places in the rest of the world. Our delegates are encouraged to contribute by presenting a technical paper or poster. During this conference, a preparatory meeting for the FIG executive, commission chairs and chairs-elect for planning the 2010 congress in Sydney (Australia) will take place.

Promote Hydrographic Surveying

Our meetings and activities are about promoting the contribution of hydrographic surveying to the wider surveying profession. The technical sessions provide opportunities to consider the implications of what we do as surveyors. Recently, while on a hydrographic survey in Barbuda (West Indies), I encountered a chart of this small island. It was produced in 1813 by the Royal Navy Hydrographic Office (UK) and is reproduced here from a copy taken from the General State Archives in The Hague (The Netherlands). After nearly 200 years, the island still has only 1,500 inhabitants with strong links to the sea and a promising potential that can still be linked to the 1813 chart. My encounter with both the island and the chart made me wonder what the surveyor or cartographer would have to say at a modern-day technical session of the FIG, about what he thought of this map and what he felt it might achieve.

Today, we appear to be in much closer contact with the challenges that face people and development. By supporting the work of the FIG through participation in FIG meetings, conferences and Working Weeks, we demonstrate a professional commitment to the future and to our profession and the role it plays in the overall quality of life on Earth. Even if you are unable to attend a meeting, support the FIG by promoting the material that FIG has produced (see website).