

# Greeting from the International Federation of Surveyors

As President of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG)<sup>1</sup>, it is my pleasure to contribute a few words to IHR's 100 year anniversary edition. One hundred years seems a long time for many of us and yet in our world there are important activities and challenges that will take a much longer time span to address. The FIG and IHO are familiar with this aspect of our profession.

Tackling the greatest challenges of our time often starts with water (ocean and terrestrial) and is reflected in the UN 2030 sustainable agenda. Water is key to future prosperity being fundamental to life; but this resource needs careful stewardship. The challenges of security of food and water supplies, climate pattern change, safe and clean seas, whilst sustaining a growing urban population on our coasts, are some of the key themes. These require the Hydrographers and Geodesists, together with other spatial domain experts and scientists, to lead and to influence through good survey practices, data governance and cooperation. IHO and FIG, through FIG Hydrography Commission IV, will play a part.

The discussion on climate actions at global level has too often neglected key aspects of the roles played by a broad range of surveyors. However, there is now a strong emerging interest in linking land use, land tenure, the blue economy and geospatial information more closely in a practical way and getting to grips with what happens on the ground, above and below the low water mark!

I've said many times before that Surveying is not only about serving the clients – our profession is just as well about serving society and their wellbeing. We are recognised experts in the areas of hydrography, geomatics, geospatial information management and connected survey disciplines. We have a responsibility to respond to this global agenda and to contribute to improving the living conditions in our societies. This is why the FIG strategy has the vision *"Surveyors serving society for the benefit of people, planet and to work in partnership"*. Over the next four years, FIG working with partners will be looking to tackle the global challenges in land, marine natural and built environment.

On the centenary year of the founding of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, in 1968, FIG first created a Hydrographic Surveying Commission, chaired by Rear Admiral Steve Ritchie of the United Kingdom. Then in 1971 the XIII Congress of FIG was hosted by the German Association of Surveyors (DWW), in the year of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of DWW's existence. It was at this event that a Working Group (WG) was formed by Commission IV (Hydrography) to develop International Standards of Competence within the profession of surveying at sea.

Collaborating with IHO and other partners on blue Surveying, Geodesy and Hydrography is timely as I believe the survey profession, in each of our country and local contexts works tirelessly for the benefit of the public good and we have a huge contribution to make. The surveyors at the inception of these institutions and the later members of FIG, understood the importance and benefits of collaboration and partnerships to achieve sustainable goals and objectives in their professional sectors and to the wider community and society. This collaboration continues today between FIG and various other bodies and organizations.



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<sup>1</sup> FIG more than 100 member associations throughout the world representing more than 300,000 professional surveyors. <https://www.fig.net/members/index.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> Standards of Competence for Category "A" Hydrographic Surveyors (Edition 1.0.2, June 2018), published by International Hydrographic Organization, 4b, Quai Antoine 1er, B.P. 445, Monaco, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> FIG Guide on the Development of a Vertical Reference Surface for Hydrography, Publication no. 37, The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) Lindevangs Allé 4 DK-2000 Frederiksberg DENMARK, ISBN 87-90907-57-4, 2006.

A strong and sustaining link with the international Hydrographic community can be evidenced through the joint FIG/IHO/ICA International Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers (IBSC)<sup>2</sup>; development and adoption of global geodetic reference frames and coordinate reference systems; the development of vertical reference surfaces for surveys<sup>3</sup> and numerous Blue Surveying related activities that support the international efforts to map our oceans, gain knowledge of our seas, their habitats and creatures and of course supporting modern digital navigation and maritime users.

Now in 2023 as we celebrate the centenary of the IHR, it is more important than ever for professional surveyors, geodesists and hydrographers to contribute, through collaboration and cooperation; by collecting information and advancing our understanding and knowledge of our seas and oceans. Publishing work, research, knowledge and learnings is critical to all our communities, the wider society and is a vital resource for the next generation.

Initiatives that elevate and promote our profession are surely common areas for our institutions. Attracting new generations of professionals, with a more diverse, equitable and inclusive demographic, into our community and showing the wider society the positive impact and roles that we have to offer must continue to develop. This is an area of recent focus for FIG with the establishment of a Task force on Diversity and Inclusion. And one that will surely develop and by FIG and IHO acting together, we empower and enable sustainability and resilience to be a core of the professional sphere and society space. FIG Commission IV and IHO can take action on the most important issues of our time and to lead, influence and to deliver together.

The IHR has played a key role in the promotion of and raising awareness of themes, trends and learnings. The good work of the IHR must continue and can complement, promote and inform on key trends and future challenges such as those outlined in the FIG strategy: Climate action and the SDGs; Digital transformation; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Future Workforce.

As global professional bodies, we need to respond to these challenges if we are going to ensure that our members deliver confidence in the years ahead and the IHR will play a key role. Reaching this 100 year anniversary marking the establishment of IHR, comes about due to hard work from many. On behalf of the FIG community, I applaud you and give my congratulations.

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FIG President