

## **Secretary-General's report**

This report presents an account of activities undertaken by the Secretary-General and some of the associated work of the Executive Committee during 2007-2011.

### **Executive and other committees**

The Secretary-General was honoured and pleased to be elected for a four year term at the General Assembly in Moscow in August 2007. The support of the UK National Committee for Cartography, and my employer, Newcastle University, in allowing the nomination to be tabled is acknowledged. I was well aware of the 'giants' of cartography who had previously acted as Secretary-General, and have been indebted throughout my term to one of them, my predecessor Ferjan Ormeling, who has explained and interpreted the procedures and possibilities to me throughout. I have also relied on the support of a friendly and effective Executive Committee (EC) 2007-2011, including Past President Milan Konecny, for advice and assistance. It is clear that the relationship between the President and the Secretary-General is crucial to the success of ICA, and I have benefitted from the input, direction and personal contact offered by the current President, Bill Cartwright. I extend my thanks to him for his input and advice, and my admiration for his dedication to ICA (and also to our respective wives for their forbearance when ICA matters call). The work of the other committees appointed by ICA – the Awards Committee under Ramon Lorenzo, the Statutes Committee under Bengt Rystedt, and the Publications Committee under Ferjan Ormeling – must also be acknowledged. The latter Committee has been responsible for negotiating a new publications agreement with Springer-Verlag, replacing the previous agreement with Elsevier: already new publications are 'in press' and the regular use of ISBN numbers will help in the promotion of our output.

### **Communication**

Much of the day-to-day work of the Secretary-General in fact relies on contacts with people other than those listed above. Maintaining communication and ensuring effective information flow with the members of ICA is clearly the priority of the Secretary-General, and I have been pleased to engage with helpful and interested members of the cartographic community from every continent. It has been a pleasure to receive messages from around the world in my Inbox each day: I apologise to those members who have not received immediate replies from me. The biggest problem I have had during my four year period has been finding the time to respond quickly to enquiries, and the number of e-mails received has increased steadily in recent years.

### **Commissions and Working Groups**

The other major correspondence for the Secretary-General has been with the Commissions and Working Groups of the Association. These organisations are the driving force behind ICA's commitment to advancing the discipline of cartography. They do a valuable job in ensuring that research and development in our subject are progressing to the benefit of society. I am grateful to the chairs of Commissions and Working Groups for their voluntary participation and valuable contribution to ICA, and for responding to requests from me for information when asked. The regular reports from Commissions and Working Groups to the EC form a useful summary of the progress of our discipline, and their websites (linked to the main ICA website) reflect this activity. I would like to particularly refer to the contribution of the co-chairs of the Cartography and Children

Commission, Jesus Reyes and Temenoujka Bandrova, who, along with Ferjan Ormeling and Peter van der Krogt have managed two Barbara Petchenik Childrens Map Competitions, a highlight of each ICC, in the 2007-2011 period. This is a complex operational job which I have been pleased to confidently leave to these experts.

### **Directory, web site and outreach**

An important initial task for the new Secretary-General in 2007 was the production of a new Directory, which records the Statutes, Terms of Reference, useful contacts, and other information of record. The Directory has been produced as a printed document for the past 4 terms, and continues to provide important day-to-day information to all those interested in ICA. Some of the content remains unchanged from one edition to the next, and I am grateful therefore to my predecessor for maintaining those portions which have been reproduced in the 2007-2011 edition. However, changes occur regularly to this document, and my advice to my successor is to retain the Directory as a digital-only copy, mounted on the ICA website.

It is through the ICA website that we advertise ourselves to the world, and ICA must be constantly indebted to our webmasters, Felix Ortag and Manuela Schmidt from the Technical University of Vienna who have, from 2007, re-designed, launched, managed and maintained an exemplary website of which ICA should be proud.

Other communication has been with sister societies in the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies, an organisation promoting, at the highest level, the supply and use of geospatial data. ICA has played, and will continue to play, a major role in this initiative and other projects at a global level. As Secretary-General, I have attended JBGIS meetings in Moscow (2007), Beijing (2008), Rotterdam (2009) and Paris (2011).

Of equal importance to the website is the regular publication of ICA News. ICA has been fortunate in retaining the services of Igor Drecki, University of Auckland, who has redesigned and edited a significant number of editions of ICA News, including an extraordinarily impressive issue for the ICA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Igor's skills in initiating, requesting and presenting material about ICA are exceptional and the end product of his efforts is a shining example of the creativity and attention to detail which is the hallmark of all cartographers. Along with the printing and dissemination team in Hong Kong, the burden of preparing a regular ICA bulletin has been taken off the shoulders of the Secretary-General, for which I am grateful.

As Secretary-General, however, I have been responsible for the regular, monthly, submission of the ICA page in the GIM International magazine. This opportunity to promote ICA in the leading international trade journal in geomatics has been useful, and although the majority of columns have been written by me, I am thankful to those who have contributed reports of their own – these are always welcome, and I encourage all who read this report to consider submitting an account of their activities through ICA to GIM International.

### **Visits and meetings**

The Commissions and Working Groups of ICA each have a liaison member of the Executive Committee to ensure that their activities are being undertaken effectively. ICA is grateful that Commissions and Working Groups have invited EC liaison members to their meetings, and many

such visits have been made by colleagues. I have visited symposia of the Commission of Digital Technologies for Cartographic Heritage (in 2009, Italy; in 2011, Netherlands), the Commission on History of Cartography (in 2008, UK), the Commission on Use and User Issues (in 2010, UK), and the Working Group on OpenSource Geospatial Technologies (in 2009, UK). In addition, I have represented the Commission on Education and Training, and presented a paper jointly authored with the Chair of that Commission, at the ISPRS Commission VI workshop on Geomatics Education, in the Netherlands in 2010.

I have been privileged to represent ICA at several events of significance in the related community: at the retirement of ISPRS President Ian Dowman, in London in June 2010; at the ISPRS Commission V meeting, in Newcastle, also in June 2010; at a celebration of the research and publication activity of Prof Evangelos Livieratos in Athens in December 2009; and at the ceremony to bestow a knighthood on Prof Ferjan Ormeling in Amsterdam in November 2007. Liaison with events in member nations has been more limited, but I have been pleased to accept invitations to the biannual meeting of the Hellenic Cartographic Society in Ioannina (November 2008), the British Cartographic Society annual symposium near Manchester (June 2011), and a special event organised by BCS in London in November 2010, along with regular attendance at the meetings of the UK Cartographic Committee.

A major event was the celebration of the ICA's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in Bern in June 2009. This event required significant organisation, but the majority of the local support was provided by swisstopo who generously provided the venue, a building in which ICA was officially 'born' in 1959. This occasion was a major landmark in the history of ICA and we were pleased to see a large number of cartographers from around the world celebrating the successful history of our Association.

A meeting specifically devoted to the Strategic Plan 2011-2019 was held in Newcastle in November 2010, attended by me, past-presidents Wood and Rystedt and past-secretary-general Ormeling. This developed a draft Strategic Plan which has been ratified by the Executive Committee and is intended for approval at the General Assembly this week.

Finally, preparation work for Paris ICC has been undertaken in conjunction with the Local Organising Committee at both of the Paris EC meetings (July 2010, July 2011) and at meetings attended by me and the President in Paris in January 2011 and in Vienna in June 2011. I would like to record my thanks to Anne Ruas and her team in Paris, and also the entire IGM team in Chile (including Juan Vidal and Edwin Hunt), who have ensured that the conferences of ICA during the 2007-2011 period have been organised so well.

### **Strategic work**

The work of the ICA Secretary-General is often channelled through the Executive Committee. EC members have taken responsibility for and reported on the working 'environments' of cartography – Science, Society, Education, Professional Practice, and Art – and regular overviews of these generic areas have informed EC discussion. The draft Strategic Plan and the Research Agenda, in particular, have benefitted from the understanding of these environments which EC members have brought. The new EC should maintain this approach to keep the Plan and the Agenda up-to-date, and to help in the formulation of an Operational Plan for its next term of office (2011-2015).

In many other ways, the 2007-2011 EC worked effectively on behalf of the Association. Diverse tasks such as refereeing conference papers, promoting ICA in specialist meetings (including United Nations), undertaking outreach in workshops, and liaising with national and regional mapping agencies are further evidence of the role of the EC members. As a committee we have fine-tuned the draft Strategic Plan, approved revised Guidelines and operating conventions, promoted the Research Agenda, agreed to set up a new Advisory Committee drawn from the previous experienced office holders in ICA, and thoroughly discussed the structure of Commissions in ICA. We have advised conference organisers on issues from exhibitions and trade shows to development of the scientific programme, we have initiated and approved successful Regional Cartographic Symposia, we have signed Memoranda of Understanding with sister organisations, and we have agreed to promote cartography through a wider use of the Solidarity fund – maintaining Travel Award winners attendance at international conferences, but also setting aside funds to support outreach workshops to Third World countries. Although the EC meets together infrequently (eight times in four years) we have been able to correspond regularly by electronic means: the geographical distribution of EC members has spanned all continents, and ICA benefits from that diversity. The use of Skype, e-mail and the web have ensured efficient management of ICA business.

### **Future**

My intention has always been to seek re-election for a second term as Secretary-General, and a nomination was made by the UK national representative in January 2011. Unfortunately, since then, work pressures have resulted in my nomination having to be withdrawn at a very late stage. I am extremely disappointed by this, and realise that the appointment of a successor will therefore take place under unusual circumstances. Nominations were re-opened for this post during June 2011, and I am grateful to member nations of ICA for considering this position. I am confident that the ICA community will find an appropriate successor: no individual is bigger than the Association and I feel sure that continuity will be maintained. I wish my successor well – he or she will inherit a position which is occasionally demanding, usually enjoyable, and always interesting, and will be working with an excellent group of dedicated cartographers, determined to help develop ICA further.

*Floreat ICA!*

David Fairbairn, June 2011