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## **IAHR Presidents message**

Hydrolink

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# IAHR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

At the beginning of the New Year I would first like to send you my very best wishes for the coming year and I hope that the year ahead will be a peaceful, prosperous and healthy one for you and your family.

The past year has been my first full year in office and a time to continue to build on some of the previous initiatives, and develop new initiatives, to address some of the challenges our Association faces now and in the future. Some of these key initiatives are summarised below:



*Prof. Roger A. Falconer*  
CH2M HILL – Halcrow Professor, Cardiff University, UK  
IAHR President

## **New Website**

One of our key challenges has been to develop better communication between our members, our Madrid Secretariat, our committees etc. and by the time you receive this issue of Hydrolink our new website will have become live. This is the last major component of our new "Association Management System" which we have been developing behind the scenes over the past two years. The new accounts and back office systems were implemented early last year and have enabled us to improve significantly and streamline our membership management and accounting activities in the Madrid Secretariat.

The new website is the public-facing part of the new system and includes a wealth of new

features compared with our old website. We believe our new system will allow us to strengthen our community and facilitate the activities of our vital volunteer groups:

- All members can access and update their own personal records in their own private and secure on-line library – including adding information on expert fields, photographs and links to personal websites and other documents;
- We are creating a library for the Proceedings of IAHR Congresses and Symposia – accessible to all our members; and
- Committee (and Division and Working Group) leaders will be able to manage their activities within dedicated "Communities" via the website and share information and documents and collaborate on Wiki articles and Blogs.

More information on our new platform will be provided in upcoming issues of Hydrolink.

## **Connecting with Practitioners**

A major objective of my Presidency is to reconnect our current more science-based community with engineers in practice. In my view our current membership level is not sustainable and to increase our membership we need to engage more with practitioners and make our Association more attractive to consultants, government departments and the hydro-environmental industry. In the early years of IAHR, and when I joined in 1980, our members were both university teachers and researchers and at the same time were active in practice. As the world has become more global the two parts of our discipline have tended to

2013



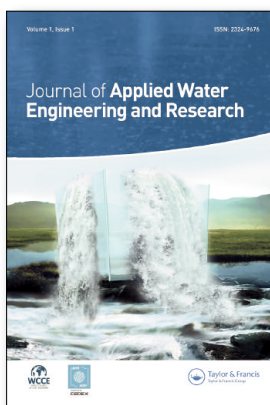
separate to such an extent that very few professional engineers now read our excellent flagship journal, namely the Journal of Hydraulic Research. At the same time I believe that engineers in practice need more help from our academic community so that they can be kept abreast of the rapid innovations taking place, especially in numerical modelling, sensor technology, renewable energy turbine technology, flood risk management etc.

To this end during the coming year I am delighted to welcome several new initiatives which are aimed at making our Association more attractive to practitioners and which, in due course, I hope will benefit all of us by providing the forum for practitioners to engage more with our current community. These include:

- *Launch of our new Journal of Applied Water Engineering and Research (JAWER) in partnership with the World Council of Civil Engineers and Taylor and Francis*

The first issue of our new peer-reviewed Journal will be published in June as an online publication. JAWER will specifically welcome papers on the application of research and practical case studies on all aspects of hydro-environment engineering and research.

Practice-oriented papers and case studies are particularly welcome. The Editor is Tobias Bleninger and the Deputy Editor is Ramiro Aurin Lopera. Our new journal JAWER will complement our research-oriented journal JHR and our specialist rivers journal JRBM.



- *Development of our Hydrolink members magazine*

We will continue to strive to make our members magazine into a vibrant forum for presenting innovation in research and practice in the format of short and easily-readable articles. As part of this effort we have established an Advisory Board comprising senior representatives of leading practitioners from IAHR Institute

Members, from around the world, to work with the Editor Michele Mossa in developing themes for the coming issues and with a more practice orientated focus. At the same time we will not forget the important value of Hydrolink as a forum for our members and we will further develop the non-themed part of Hydrolink as a place to present our Association's activities and member news and views etc.

### Congresses

Over the years the IAHR World Congress, our flagship meeting point every two years, has been steadily growing with a high point being the 1500 delegates attending the IAHR Vancouver Congress in 2009. Of course success is not measured only in numbers – but the attendance at our Congresses does indicate that our domain of interest is important. I was also delighted to note that the organisers of the Brisbane Congress managed to attract so many practitioners to their meeting. I am also highly optimistic that the Chengdu Congress, which will take place this September, will maintain this success. Certainly the location of Chengdu in Sichuan Province with its world-famous Dujiangyan Irrigation system (a UNESCO heritage site) and the famous Panda Sanctuary will add to the attraction of the Congress.

The current IAHR strategy is to increase support for our regional congresses in the even years and I had the honour last year of being the first IAHR President in many years to attend all three of our regional congresses – in Munich, Germany, in June; in Jeju, Korea, in August; and in San Jose, Costa Rica, in September. I was delighted and honoured to deliver keynote addresses at the first two congresses and jointly open the Latin-America Division Congress and sign a national agreement with the Costa Rica Engineers Association.

In addition to our World and Regional Congresses, I also had the privilege of giving keynote addresses at IAHR sponsored conferences, including our own 10th Hydroinformatics conference in Hamburg, Germany, in July; and the International Conference on HydroScience and Engineering in Orlando, USA, in November; I also attended the closing ceremony of our Rivers 2012 conference in San Jose. At these events I was encouraged to see



some of the vibrant communities within our Association at work and to realise the opportunities for closer collaboration between our speciality conferences and others and am keen to encourage closer collaboration between our Hydroinformatics community and the ICHE community.

Our Executive Director, Chris George, and myself have also had preliminary discussions with a number of other water associations about how we can work together more closely in the future, including: IWA, IAHS, IWRA, EWRI and CIWEM, and at the Chengdu Congress we are hosting a meeting of the Presidents of a number of water associations to establish a framework as to how we might be able to take forward a joint global initiative on Water Security. We hope this will be just the start of a closer working relationship with other water associations and that we can develop stronger partnerships with other such associations in the future.

These activities and initiatives are just a small part of all the activities which our various technical committees have organised during the year. The world faces ever increasing water related challenges, as I realised when preparing my keynote on extreme flood events for the ICHE conference just a week after Hurricane Sandy. For this disaster I noted that: over 140 people lost their lives, 6.2 million were without power, 1 million residents were ordered to leave their homes, 32 cm of rainfall fell over Maryland, 29 hospitals lost power in New Jersey, 10,000 flights were grounded globally, a 4 m tidal surge sent seawater into large parts of New York's subway, Oyster Creek nuclear power station was offline for maintenance, but officials said Sandy's storm surge was 15 cm off damaging its cooling system. This tragic disaster – like so many in recent years - highlights the crucial need for our Association; that is a global network of high level expertise covering all aspects of hydro-environmental engineering and research. However, it also highlights the need for us to ensure that all our technical committees and working groups etc. are covering the key relevant topics of today. With this in mind I am currently working with the Executive Committee and Secretariat to try and ensure that we are more visible in key areas such as: Water Security, Flood Risk Management, Renewable Energy, and Climate Change. If you have any other thoughts on key high profile topics which we should be addressing then please feel free to advise me through the Secretariat or directly.



Signing an agreement with the Costa Rica Engineers Association.

In the meantime, I would like to conclude this message by again extending to you my very best wishes for 2013 and on behalf of IAHR I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those members who have contributed so much of their time to the committees, workshops, journal editorships, books, monographs etc.

and to all the Staff in Madrid who do such an excellent job with limited resources. Finally, I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to CEDEX, who provide us with considerable support in terms of monetary and in-kind resources; without their support our fees would have to rise considerably.



Flooded tunnel in New York City (Photo from Wikipedia).