



Conclusions of the 31st PIANC World Congress. Estoril, 18 May 2006

The 31st PIANC World Congress gathered in Estoril, Portugal from 14 till 18 May 2006.

The technical sessions with more than 220 papers dealt with a variety of topics going from River Information Services, growth in container transport and dredging to port development in Countries in Transition and navigation infrastructure projects.

The following main conclusions can be put forward:

- 1) In the beginning of the 21st century major waterborne infrastructure projects are in the design phase and will be constructed in the coming years, amongst them the Seine-Scheldt Canal in Europe, the extension of the Panama Canal in Central America and ongoing worldwide port development projects. PIANC guidelines and recommendations will play an important role in the planning and design of these projects as well as in the life cycle management. This also means that PIANC guidelines will have to be regularly updated in order to align with best practice and available principles.
- 2) The importance of Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) is worldwide recognised not only as the natural way of transport but also as THE alternative within the inter modal transport chain. The enhancing of IWT in this regard is strongly supported by national and international bodies also taking into account the environmental and safety benefits. New lock design and maintenance techniques, safe navigation, RIS and building the missing links can contribute to a highly performing inland waterway system for the benefit of the users and the surrounding environment. PIANC activities in this field are highly renown and industry leading.
- 3) The ever increasing concern for the environment in general and the potential for regional sediment management in particular are very important topics as well. Not only a very impressive number of land reclamation projects but also port extension projects actually need the removal of millions of m³ of dredged material. These constructions will continue in the coming decade with a permanent control and attention for the environment related consequences.

Again PIANC guidelines and recommendations and the contribution of a lot of PIANC experts/ volunteers therefore will be highly appreciated by all parties concerned. Consequently this also will stress the necessity of drafting continuous updates. Balancing the environmental and economic aspects will be the formula to follow.

- 4) In the new Strategic plan 2006-2010 the new industrialized countries and the Countries in Transition are especially targeted. Communication of technology, sharing know how, training and capacity building will be new topics to be dealt with by PIANC. Disseminating PIANC's guidelines all over the world and attracting new members will go hand in hand. Enhancing the cooperation with Sister associations in this regard has to be supported. Existing and new MOU's will focus on this topic. The active membership of countries such as PR China and India, representing more than 1/3 of the world's population, is highly recognized and appreciated. PIANC will develop action plans to reactivate the membership of the Russian Federation and to introduce new members on all continents.
- 5) The future of PIANC strongly depends on attracting the Young Professionals. The establishment of a YP-Com, the participation of Young Professionals in Commissions and Working Groups will be emphasized together with their participation in national, regional and international activities and events set up by PIANC and/or Sister associations. The yearly De Paepe-Willems Award and the Young Professionals Award at the occasion of the PIANC congresses will encourage these professionals to participate in PIANC's activities. Making use of the available PIANC technical and social networks is a major advantage for these Young Professionals.
- 6) The 2006 AGA Resolution titled "honouring the past, serving the future" is not only a slogan but a real fact as the navigation sector is potentially the most crucial component in the expansion of world trade and global economic development.

These were the main conclusions of the 31st PIANC World Congress.

Estoril, 18 May 2006

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