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IABSE in Lisbon, September 3 – 8, 1989

In September 1989, the Association met for the third time in Lisbon. Having organized the fifth Congress of IABSE in 1956, then the Symposium in 1973, the Portuguese Group of IABSE (GPPE) and the National Laboratory for Civil Engineering (LNEC) under the Honorary Chairmanship of Professor Júlio Ferry Borges, had invited the Association to have its annual meetings and Symposium in the first week of September 1989 in Lisbon. The Portuguese invitation was presented in late 1987 to IABSE and was meant for 1990 or later. However it suited the IABSE that this Symposium could be organized in 1989 already. Within two years the Organizing Committee managed the event very successfully. Mr. Ravara, Chairman of the Portuguese Group of IABSE and Director of LNEC, chaired a very efficient Organizing Committee, very well seconded by Mr. Monteiro, Co-Chairman and MM Almeida-Fernandez and Pompeu-Santos, Secretaries-Coordiators.

750 participants and 180 accompanying persons attended the meetings in Portugal. In this Bulletin, information is given on the events in Lisbon: the Annual meetings, the Symposium and the Short Course.

At the Opening Session of the Symposium, President von Gunten presented IABSE awards to Dr. Wittfoht, Vice President of IABSE and to Prof. Ferry Borges, Honorary Chairman of the Symposium (pages 38, 39).

The first part of the week was devoted to the **Annual Meetings** of the Association. Technical work was carried out in the Working Commissions and the Technical Committee, Executive Committee and Permanent Committee reviewed or discussed similar questions.

The President of IABSE was glad to state that the **finances** of the Association had come back to normal. The excess of revenue for the year 1988 amounted to 16 686 Swiss Francs for a turnover of 698 809 Swiss Francs. Per December 31, 1988, the Association's funds were 493 184 Swiss Francs. The accounts and the budget were accepted by the Permanent Committee.

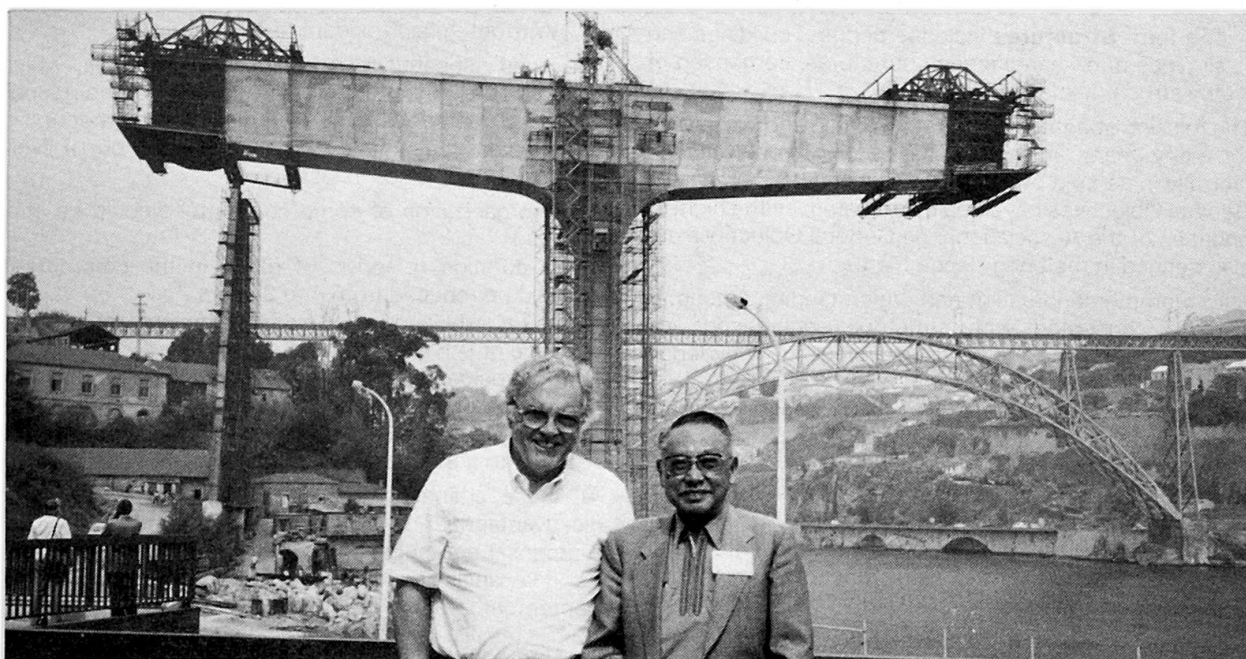
The different Committees proceeded to **elections** and reelections according to the by-laws, and the setting up of the committees after the meetings is presented on pages 41 to 45.

Preparation of **future conferences** of IABSE was pursued. The Scientific Committee for the 1990 Symposium in Brussels, chaired by Prof. Vandepitte, Belgium, had a challenging job in selecting the abstracts for the Symposium (refer to page 40).

A Scientific Committee was set up (Chairman: R.A. Dorton, Canada) and met for the first time in view of preparing the programme for the 1991 Symposium in Leningrad. The theme will be: "Bridges – Interaction between Construction Technology and Design".

A number of IABSE Colloquia and Workshops are under preparation for the years 1990 and 1991. They are listed on the calendar of events, detailed information will also be sent to the members later on.

The next IABSE Congress will take place in New Delhi, March 1 – 6, 1992. The Scientific Committee, chaired by Dr Subba Rao, India, discussed possible themes of interest for the IABSE membership and the structural engineering profession.



Two friends, active officers and longstanding members of IABSE, posing at the foot of the New Douro Railway Bridge during the Post-Symposium Tour: MM Gerry Fox, Honorary Member of IABSE, New York and Yukio Maeda, Chairman of the Technical Committee of IABSE, Osaka



Long Range Planning

A four page document had been mailed in July 1989 to all Committee members, presenting the first Long Range Plan of the Association. This document – discussed at the Committee meetings in Lisbon – had been prepared by the Executive Committee during the period 1987 – 1989. Committee members and National Groups had the opportunity to give their input into this document. A survey had been conducted to serve as a basis for the Plan; it was published in the IABSE PERIODICA, February 1989 (P-134/89).

Long Range Planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide the Association: what it is, what it does and why it does it. It results in a set of concepts, procedures and tools designed to assist leaders, members and staff in fulfilling the Association's mission under changing circumstances. Long Range Planning is an on-going process. After the establishment of this first Plan, it will be necessary to improve, monitor, review and update the Plan, process which will be carried out on a three-years cycle.

One of the fundamental steps in preparing the Long Range Plan has been to reassess the field of activities of IABSE. This results in a few fundamental definitions:

- The **Mission of IABSE** is to exchange knowledge and advance the practice of Structural Engineering worldwide, in the service of the Profession and Society.
- **Structural Engineering** is the science and art of planning, design, construction, operation, monitoring and inspection, maintenance, rehabilitation and preservation, demolishing and dismantling of structures, taking into consideration technical, economic, environmental, aesthetic and social aspects.
- The term **Structures** includes bridges, buildings and all types of civil engineering structures, composed of any structural material.

The mission statement is quite broad and should be valid for many years, unless the Association would change radically in its field of activities. To achieve the mission, General Objectives have been elaborated, as the highest priorities of the Association. The General Objectives are also defined in the Long Range Plan:

- to promote cooperation and understanding among all those concerned with structural engineering and related fields by worldwide exchange of knowledge and experience
- to encourage awareness and responsibility of structural engineers towards the needs of society
- to identify research and development needs to encourage actions necessary for progress in structural engineering
- to improve cooperation and relationship with other organizations concerned with structural engineering and related interests.

The General Objectives are also broad and need to be further detailed. To give an example on how the first General Objective could be achieved through Specific Objectives, the Long Range Plan proposes

- developing better cooperation and understanding
- introducing fields not yet considered or new fields of IABSE activities
- planning conferences
- improving publications
- establishing education and training programmes.

Again these are but titles of chapters: detailed topics or concrete actions need to be further considered, studied, checked from the financial and human resources points of view, and actually implemented. An example of such an action is the "Short Courses" that were introduced in Lisbon in September 1989 as well as in Bergamo in October 1989.

New topics have arisen from the considerations of the Long Range Plan and might be important programmes in the future. **Continuing education** programmes for practicing engineers could be a contribution that IABSE offers to the international community of structural engineers. This programme is being studied by a subgroup chaired by Mr. J. Brozzetti, France, Vice-Chairman of the Technical Committee.

An important topic which came again in Lisbon and which was underlined in every Committee concerns the **cooperation** with other international associations in the field of structural engineering. This question has been raised in previous IABSE BULLETINS and we are convinced that all associations have to better cooperate, join with others for the benefit of the profession. Our Committees and leaders are very much aware of this challenge, and there is a will to respond to it. A subgroup "cooperation" was set up under the Chairmanship of Dr. Wittfoht, Vice President of IABSE.

The need appeared to **review IABSE by-laws**, which should better reflect the present situation of the Association and open new doors for future developments. No decision has been taken on the by-laws, but a lively discussion took place in Lisbon:

- the organization of some committees could be simplified
- the duration of terms of office in the committees could be reduced from 4 to 3 years
- the English language could be the only official language of IABSE
- the Presidentship of IABSE could be open to any member of the Association and not be restricted – as is was decided years ago by the Permanent Committee – to a Swiss President residing in Switzerland.

All these changes would bring advantages and also disadvantages. The Executive Committee will work out a proposal and submit it to the Permanent Committee for final decision at its next meeting in Brussels, in September 1990.

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)

By the time this Bulletin is delivered to our members, the General Assembly of the United Nations, in New York, should have officially declared the 1990's as the "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction". As any Non Governmental Organization, any private or public institution, any Government or any Group of Citizens concerned, IABSE will be invited to contribute to the Decade.

What is it all about?

The following is a summary of the presentation of Prof. Maeda, Chairman of the Technical Committee on the subject:

In December 1987, the UN General Assembly had decided to designate the 1990's as a decade for international cooperation in the field of natural disaster reduction, with the objective "to reduce through concerted international actions, especially in developing countries, loss of life, property damage and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, windstorms (cyclones, hurricanes, tornadoes, typhoons), tsunamis, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, wildfires and other calamities of natural origin, such as grasshopper and locust infestations".

The goals for the IDNDR were established as follows:

- to improve the capacity to mitigate the effects of natural disasters
- to devise appropriate guidelines and strategies for applying existing knowledge
- to foster scientific and engineering endeavours aimed at closing critical gaps in knowledge
- to disseminate existing and new information related to measures for the assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters
- to develop programmes of technical assistance and technology transfer, demonstration projects, and education and training.

In addition to IABSE's Technical Committee and Working Commissions, IABSE members were already concerned with the IDNDR programme:

- Mr. Silman, who is IABSE representative at the UN in New York, in particular for the IDNDR
- Mr. Brainov, who chairs the Bulgarian Committee for the Decade
- Mr. Subba Rao, Chairman of the Scientific Committee, who would consider some of the IDNDR topics for the 14th IABSE Congress in New Delhi 1992.

In addition to a UN Steering Committee, with 23 UN Organizations - chaired by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation - a temporary secretariat has been set up by UNDRO, in Geneva. An International Ad Hoc Group of 24 Experts

was set up, chaired by Dr. Frank Press, National Academy of Sciences, USA. Also national committees were organized in 28 countries. Different international federations were already involved in the IDNDR such as ICSU (International Council of Scientific Unions), UATI (Union of International Technical Associations) and WFEO (World Federation of Engineering Organizations).

As an international technical association, IABSE could contribute to the Decade and

- create awareness of and interest in the Decade through its international meetings
- encourage its membership to promote and participate in national activities
- suggest criteria for selection of projects and other Decade activities
- support the development and/or enhancement and standardisation of scientific and technological data bases that will ensure a common foundation for future activities
- participate in planning pilot projects that could provide visibility to the Decade while providing a measure for accomplishment
- undertake pilot projects that, if successful, would be broadly replicable, and
- develop international and regional cooperative research project and training courses to close the knowledge gaps directly related to the Decade objectives.

The International Ad Hoc Group of Experts proposes a number of illustrative projects:

- National Disaster Planning
- Fundamental Research on Earthquakes
- Landslide Hazard Mitigation
- Protecting Concrete and Masonry Structures against Earthquakes
- Reduction of Windstorm Hazards
- Mobile Satellite Communications
- Vulnerability of Mega-Cities
- Casualties versus Structural Damage
- A Forum for Communication among Scientists, Engineers, and Decision Makers
- Architectural Modifications of Native Structures.
- ...

Among the many IDNDR opportunities described hereabove and proposed to IABSE, it seems that including some of the programmes in the activities of Working Commissions and at conferences might prove the most constructive contribution of our Association.

We look forward to many comments and suggestions from our members and readers.

Alain Golay
Executive Director