

THE PAN OCEAN REMOTE SENSING CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION --- OUR GREETING TO THE FULL CONFERENCE ISRS2006PORSEC

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ABSTRACT This presentation delivers the Appreciation of the The Pan Ocean Remote Sensing Conference Association for the cooperation with the Korean Society of Remote Sensing in organizing a joint conference with the International Symposium of Remote Sensing. It includes a brief history of the PORSEC Association with its mission and aims and the system of governance of the organization. Our vision for the future, is presented from this president's point of view. It includes a discussion of building expert capacity to use remote sensing techniques in developing nations by the sharing of knowledge and our ability to promote predictability of natural hazards with our workshops and science sessions. The article ends with an appreciation of our many sponsors.

KEY WORDS: Pan Ocean Remote Sensing Conference Association, Mission and Vision, History of PORSEC

1. INTRODUCTION

It is with great pleasure that I address the attendees of the combined International Symposium of Remote Sensing (ISRS) and the Pan Ocean Remote Sensing Conference (PORSEC) as we meet jointly for the first time. It is also first time that PORSEC is held in Korea. On behalf of the PORSEC association, I thank the Korean Society of Remote Sensing (KSRS) and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) of ISRS2006PORSEC for inviting us to hold this meeting jointly in Busan and for their excellent preparation of the venue and the many festive activities that they have planned for us.

In this paper I wish to describe some of the work that has gone before the conference and acknowledge the people involved. In order to be acquainted with our Korean colleagues, who are not already members of the PORSEC Association, I will then present the PORSEC mission statement and our organization's structure with a section on our history, followed by our vision for the future. I will end with acknowledgement of our sponsors.

I am hoping that this presentation will induce many more remote sensing scientists to join our organization as members.

2. APPRECIATION

The program of 2006 PORSEC promises us three very interesting and stimulating days. The titles of proposed talks and the many Special Sessions beckon for our attention. Unfortunately, we must select among the many options, since we have had to schedule parallel sessions in both conferences. However, I trust that this will work out

satisfactorily for each person's special interests. These proceedings will provide content information of all talks given and contact information of the authors, so that fruitful exchanges can continue beyond the confines of the conferences' 3 days, even if you miss a talk.

The Program Committee and the LOC have certainly toiled diligently to solve the limitations of scheduling the many submitted talks into the 2 ½ days available to us. So, as we say in the West "Don't shoot the pianist"--"he does the best he can". Having followed and participated in this work, I know that it was a challenge and I wish heartily to thank the people involved. Dr. Naoto Ebuchi, took the lead as the "master program organizer" for PORSEC, similarly Dr. Kiwon Lee and Prof H. J. Yoon helped solve many issues. There were also many, many others of both associations, who worked on the preparation of Special Sessions. You can find them listed in the program.

Associated with this conference, PORSEC has co-sponsored two courses: one on Synthetic Aperture Radar, SAR and one, more general, covering many subjects of Remote Sensing for Oceanography. The organization of the courses was carried out by Drs. Pascal Lecomte and Werner Alpers of PORSEC Association together with scientists at the Korean Aerospace and Exploration Institute (KARI), which provided the venue. Some details about the 2006 courses will be reported on at the time of the conference in a plenary session of the PORSEC General Assembly. About ten non-Korean students from far-flung countries in Asia are participating in the courses. We welcome them at this conference together with the many Korean students. Please make a point to greet and talk with them.

3. MISSION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE PORSEC ASSOCIATION

3.1 Mission and Goals

The PORSEC Association *mission* is to promote the open exchange of knowledge about the oceans and related atmospheric sciences and the use of remote sensing technology in oceanic research.

The PORSEC Association supports the principle that the ultimate objective of this knowledge is to protect our oceans and atmosphere and promote sustainable use and development of oceanic and coastal resources.

A goal of the PORSEC Association is that its conferences through exchange of ideas and knowledge will further understanding of the Earth's environmental processes such as climate variability, the effects of the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO), oceanic hazards including tsunamis, tropical and extra-tropical cyclones, sea level rise, and other climate change effects and the effects of pollution.

The PORSEC Association aims to provide better opportunities for scientists, especially from developing countries, for learning and applying state of the art techniques related to ocean remote sensing, including space and underwater technologies, as well as associated data management and information technology.

3.2 Organization

The Association is lead by a Scientific Organizing Committee, SOC, which meets at each PORSEC. This committee is drawn from the general membership and votes on proposals, which are presented to the General Assembly in a plenary meeting held during the biennial conferences.

The Executive Board of the PORSEC Association consists of the President, the Vice-President, the Treasurer and an Executive Secretary. All these are volunteer positions. Elections take place every 4 years. The in-coming President and Vice-President as well as past presidents and Vice-Presidents are ex officio members of the Board and continue to contribute to the management of the association. The PORSEC Association has many committees that carry out much of the work of the association with the chairs of these committees being responsible for many initiatives and as you will note many of the chairs have organized sessions at this meeting. In addition to the conventional committees for election, finance, awards, scientific program and publication, the PORSEC Association may institute committees on particular hazards, such as tsunamis, climate change and more. Please go to our web site for more details: <http://porsec.nwra.com/>. The text of the Statues and By-laws, which guide the democratic governance of the Association, can be found there.

4. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PORSEC ASSOCIATION

I would like to share some of the PORSEC Association history for the benefit of the colleagues from the International Symposium of Remote Sensing and the Korean Society of Remote Sensing, who are sharing this conference with us. There are also new members of the PORSEC Association, who may be interested to know where we come from. The history of the Pan Ocean Remote Sensing Conferences (earlier known as the Pacific Ocean Remote Sensing Conferences) is rich in exceptionally fruitful and enjoyable conferences, where international connections between scientists in a region have been fostered. Exchanges of students and development of cooperative research programs have had their roots in some of these PORSEC's.

The Association owes its inception in 1990 to Prof. Yasuhiro Sugimori of Japan. He organized the first conference in 1992. At that time, he convinced Dr. Robert W. Stewart of the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences in British Columbia, Canada, to become its first president. "Big Bob", as he was affectionately called, had many important offices in Canada and soon handed over the presidency to Prof. Sugimori, who led the association from 1994 through 2004. President Sugimori led with "abandon" and a great ability to obtain much work from his colleagues, which is the reason for the success of the PORSECs over the years. I was elected president in 2004, so, even though I have been a member of the PORSEC Association for a long time, I am new in this job. However, I have learned from my predecessor and have managed to get much help and hard work from the Executive Committee, which, since 2004 include: Vice-president, Anthony Liu, Treasurer, W. Timothy Liu, and Executive Secretary, Gad Levy.

The chairs and the members of several committees are very much needed for us to function. The Association and I owe much gratitude to all of these colleagues, but the PORSEC Association would welcome more members to be active in the governance of their society, which depends so much on the time and energy of volunteers.

During the first decade and a half, the PORSEC met in Guam, Japan; Melbourne, Australia; Victoria, British Columbia, Canada; QingDao, China; Goa, India; Bali, Indonesia; and Concepcion, Chile. These were wonderful, relatively small, well-focused meetings on oceanography and remote sensing. Those of us, who have attended some of these, know the special feeling — not least of which is due to the opportunity to get to know another society, their scientists and special issues of concern. At each conference, many scientists of the host country can participate in an international meeting, which is an advantage for that country. It is especially important that

junior scientists and students get this opportunity, since otherwise it may take some time in their careers before that occurs..

The accomplishments of the PORSEC Association between our conferences are limited by our dependence on space agencies for support, which has mostly been available for the conferences and for the associated courses (see section 6 below). Recently, we have established the PORSEC Association as a non-profit organization in the U.S.A., which means we can approach foundations for some financial support. We hope to have something to report on this issue in coming years.

5. VISION OF THE FUTURE OF THE PORSEC ASSOCIATION

The times have changed since the PORSEC Association was formed. The idea was then, that the developed nations with active space agencies would contribute through capacity building in the conferences and courses to the development of space science and space agencies in regions where such were not yet present or only just beginning. This has certainly been happening, even though the PORSEC Association cannot take much credit by itself for most of it. Economics and the general awareness of the practical importance of these fields of oceanography and remote sensing have been responsible, of course.) Many more countries now have their space agencies that launch satellites and have remote sensing societies. However, many smaller countries have not yet, and realistically may never, be able to have their own agencies. In order that all people on our small planet shall benefit from the scientific data and knowledge that we are gaining at a rapid rate, we must cooperate and share our knowledge and our data. This is not a magnanimous attitude, but actually a necessity. Since we inhabit this little planet in the universe together, we have to join with each other in being its good stewards.

So, how does the PORSEC Association fit into this scheme in the future?

The need for well-educated professionals and informed citizens is now greater than ever. The so-called developed nations are now feeling some budget restraints, perhaps because other nations are reaching higher standards. This is a good thing. However, we must then involve these newly developed nations in supporting organizations such as the PORSEC Association both financially and with man-(woman-) power. I would say our hosts here in Korea are the shining example of how to participate in the international community.

Our association with its emphasis on oceanography (with some aspects of meteorology: surface winds, precipitation, air-sea fluxes, storms) has a role to fill in this new world. It is my vision and that of the Executive Committee, and

the SOC, that PORSEC will continue to be a gateway for exchange of ideas — away from the formal, large international gatherings, where scientific leaders from government agencies, the academic and business worlds can meet to discuss innovative ideas and projects and can breach obstacles to fruitful communication and cooperation.

The capacity building role that the PORSEC Association has promoted through the courses at several of our conferences is another very valuable contribution that we intend to continue — financial support permitting. Through fund-raising for the non-profit organization, we hope to establish the possibility to provide scholarships for a few students and support for extended scientific visits between PORSEC Association members, which could be the seed-money for development of long-term government supported projects.

One of the important aspects of this “modernity” that hi-tech remote sensing and scientific endeavours represent, is the ability to monitor our environment, create some order to our knowledge and understanding, and from these results of science be able to *predict* natural hazards with increased safety for the inhabitants in a region.

Frequently, I am buoyed and personally supported, when I see evidence of dedication to scientific progress and the willingness to share this expertise with peers. I sense that this is a tremendous joy for many of the fine colleagues I have had the pleasure to work with through the PORSEC Association and especially at our conferences. There is also a strong sense of responsibility and an urge to spread as widely as possible the knowledge, insights and high-performance techniques that we acquire through our science

I want to end on an optimistic note about predictability, which is implied in our mission statement in our emphasis on oceanic hazards. Associated with this conference we are holding a Workshop on Tsunami observations, November 1, organized by Dr. Tom Allan of the U.K. The workshop explores the use of satellite data for detecting tsunamis in conjunction with other observational techniques and modelling. If ever we could at least catch the first signals from these dangerous events in order to warn people of their imminent attack — what pride and joy! We will report on the Workshop discussions during the conference session on tsunamis.

Future workshops at PORSECs in 2008, 2010, could address important issues, such as coastal pollution, storm impacts on sea life and on the coasts, climate change and more. It will be decided by the PORSEC Association members who take the lead in organizing such workshops and conference sessions.

In summary, the vision for the PORSEC Association is that it can only grow in its service to the international scientific community and that there are numerous avenues where this Association with its focus on the ocean has a special role to fill.

6. SPONSORS

This year's PORSEC would not have been possible without the generous support of our Korean host institutions lead by the Korean Society of Remote Sensing, and including the University of Pukyong in Busan and the Korean Aerospace and Exploration Institute, KARI in Daejeon. Funding contributions have been provided by two U.S. agencies: the National Aeronautic and Space Administration, NASA, and the Office of Naval Research,, ONR, which is very much appreciated. In addition, other agencies are contributing by sending their representatives to the ISRS 2006PORSEC 2006. These include the Japan Aerospace and Exploration Agency, The Indian Space Application Center and the Canadian Space Agency.

The capacity building courses, October 25-27, are sponsored by the Korean Aerospace Research Institute, KARI, and the European Space Agency, ESA. The International Oceanographic Commission, IOC, of UNESCO is supporting several non-Korean students for their travel and the PORSEC Association contributes to the cost of their participation in the ISRS2006PORSEC.

Acknowledgement. The content of this article has benefited from discussions with colleagues within the PORSEC Association., but it has not been vetted through the general membership, so I am solely responsible for its content and expect some of the ideas to be modified at the meeting of the Scientific Organizing Committee of the PORSEC Association on November 1.

Reference: For more information about the PORSEC Association, the reader is encouraged to explore the web-site: <http://porsec.nwra.com/>