

## **PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2010**

As I look back at 2010, I think it has been a really successful year for SACAC, with a number of significant achievements. It is also evident that the global financial woes, which led to a major downturn in the industrial automation world, are on the way out. The recovery has been slow, but it is clear that economic activity is on the increase, which bodes well for our members in the year ahead.

Even through the tough times, SACAC has maintained its presence internationally within IFAC, and successfully hosted a few events locally. Planning for the future continues, as we move towards very exciting times.

We have continued to consolidate the organisation, based on our primary objectives;

- Strengthening the relationship with IFAC
- Improving the co-operation between Industry and Institutions
- Developing capacity within the Automation Industry
- Providing Value for our members
- Developing a strong balance sheet to support the 2014 Congress preparations

In support of these objectives, a number of actions have been undertaken, and include;

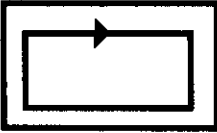
- Updating of the membership information database,
- Revision of the SACAC website, and providing access to EXCO members to easily update information.
- The workshops that were held also aimed at providing both educational and practical value to the attendees, and received positive feedback.
- Visibility of SACAC was increased in the South African environment through a number of publicity activities.
- As an ongoing effort to broaden our relationships with fellow Associations, SACAC EXCO member Kevin Brookes attended at the SAIEE Annual banquet celebration in October.

### **IFAC ISSUES**

Currently we are enjoying a strong relationship with IFAC, as several of our members are participating on various IFAC technical committees, and of course, Ian Craig is currently the IFAC President-Elect. We also have Dr Fernando Camisani on the Policy Committee, and Prof Xiaohua Xia as the Chairman of the TC on Non-linear Control Systems.

### **IFAC MMM 2010**

The Symposium on Automation in Mining, Mineral and Metal Industry took place in Cape Town from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> August. It was arranged and hosted by Prof Chris Aldrich of Stellenbosch University. The event was reasonably well attended considering the economic climate, with approximately 50 delegates from 11 different countries participating. There were 27 delegates from Industry and 23 from Academia including 11 students. Authors from 10 different countries presented 34 papers during 11 different sessions.



#### **IFAC WORLD CONGRESS IN 2014**

Planning for this is in full swing, and the selection of the Professional Conference Organiser to assist with the organisation of the World Congress was concluded mid 2010, and my thanks go to Dr Fernando Camisani and his NOC committee, for all the work already put into this huge task. Numerous NOC meetings have already been held, and the groundwork preparations covering a number of the Congress aspects have already begun. Going forward, I urge all our SACAC members to support the NOC in their ongoing preparations for the Congress.

#### **LOCAL WORKSHOPS**

In 2010, SACAC also organised a few very successful workshop events, which were well attended.

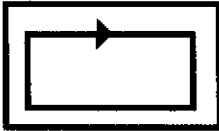
- The first of these events was presented in September by Alfred Schroder, on "Control System Functional Specifications". Alfred followed a novel approach, in making the workshop into a practical session, with attendees actually developing a spec during the course. Due to the very high demand for attendance, the workshop was repeated a month later.
- A successful "Workshop on Obsolescence Management of Control Systems" which was organised by myself, took place in November. This workshop was widely attended and covered many aspects related to the lifecycle and asset management of control systems.
- A successful Control Systems postgraduate day, which was hosted by Prof Ed Boje at University of KwaZulu-Natal in November, which was reasonably well-attended, and again provided an opportunity to see the wide variety of research interests across our tertiary institutions.

#### **FINANCES**

Under the watchful eye of our Honorary treasurer Kobus Oosthuizen, SACAC currently has a reasonably healthy balance sheet. However with only 3 years to go before the World Congress, we will need to significantly strengthen it, and realise that some extraordinary effort will be required from all our members. Obviously a large portion of the upfront and seed funding will need to come from sponsorships, and I urge all members to look at innovative ways to garner support for this very prestigious event. I am sure you will be contacted by the NOC in this regard in the near future.

#### **LOOKING FORWARD**

A very important activity in August will be the handover of Chairmanship of IFAC to Prof Ian Craig, as South Africa takes the reigns. We also start the 3 year run-up to the 19<sup>th</sup> World Congress in 2014. We will also unveil the Congress banner, as well as host a promotional function to kick start the period at the 18<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Milan from the 28<sup>th</sup> August to 2<sup>nd</sup> September. It would be wonderful to have as many SACAC members as possible represented at this event, so please start your planning already.



## South African Council for Automation and Control

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We also intend to hold a celebratory event to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of SACAC's establishment in August this year. This event will hopefully bring together a large number of previous SACAC representatives from over the last 50 years. It will also be a great opportunity to gather together some of the countries vastly experienced practitioners in the art of automation.

As usual we intend to hold a few workshops for our members during the year, and encourage you to both support these events, as well as provide suggestions for topics that are of specific interest to yourselves.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all my current Executive Committee members for their continued support during the year, and to Jean McKenzie and Reina Aviges for their dedicated and sometimes less visible behind the scenes secretarial and administration support.

To the new EXCO members taking over today, I wish you all the success in guiding SACAC forward during 2011.

To all the members of SACAC, I thank you all for your ongoing support of our organisation, and look forward to seeing SACAC continue to grow, and to host a successful three year IFAC tenure ship, leading up to a magnificent 19th IFAC World Congress in 2014.

John Viljoen  
11th March, 2011