



PASSING ON THE BATON

April this year will be the month for IEM to hold its Annual General Meeting and a change of guard when one-third of Council Members will retire and a new batch will take over. A moment when I can breathe a lot easier as I hand over the post to Y. Bhg. Dato' Paduka Engr. Hj. Keizrul bin Abdullah (FIEM) in whom I have the fullest confidence as well as his incoming deputy Y. Bhg. Dato' Engr. Prof. Dr Chuah Hean Teik (FIEM). I would like to appeal to all members and our 600 odd-volunteers to give them and the new Council their fullest support so that The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia can scale greater heights as the country moves towards 2020.

To recap, I started this column focusing on "Nurturing Future Leaders" followed by "Revisiting Benchmarks", "National and Regional Networking", "Spreading our Wings", "Past Presidents", "Post Seeks the Person", "Going Virtual and Re-branding", "IEM Branches", "The IEM Secretariat" and finally this message. In each of the column, I have attempted to give a summary of what happened at the Institution, the plans we have for the Institution, as well as current issues which we have addressed within and without. Of interest is the amount of work which the Institution shall face in the years ahead not only dealing with current professional issues but also changing design needs pending unforeseen events such as the recent flooding in Peninsula Malaysia and the effects of earthquakes in recent times. I am equally surprised to have met our Honourable Deputy Minister of Health Y. Bhg. Datuk Dr Abdul Latiff bin Ahmad and his team of 8 members at the ASHRAE Winter Meeting in Dallas, Texas, USA, in January 2007. Apparently the country needs very much to develop

codes and standards for healthcare facilities and equipment over the shortest possible period for obvious reasons. In this respect the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) is in a good position to assist and there being a Local Chapter with leadership consisting predominantly of the leadership from IEM's Building Services Technical Division, the IEM should therefore be able to assist in this respect. Soon after the meeting, the President of ASHRAE, Mr. Terry Townsend, moved a motion to the ASHRAE Board (of which I am also a voting member) to approve the release of relevant standards via their volunteers to assist our government's effort towards defining at least some prescriptive requirement for the country.

Which brings me to the point that time and tide does not wait for anybody including an Institution like ours. We need to be proactive all the time and to get our volunteers involved in all matters pertaining to engineering in prescribing for ourselves what needs to be done and benchmarking whatever practices that are needed within the country. Should we fail to do this then someone else will be telling us what to do not only in the traditional civil engineering discipline but also in the other engineering disciplines such as mechanical, chemical, computer, electrical and others disciplines as well. Numerous issues which require engineering solutions should be looked into by the Institution via our committees and expertise. Position statements should be revisited and reviewed from time to time and our leadership should be dynamic.

In January too, Past President Y. Bhg. Datuk Engr. Dr Hj. Ahmad Zaidee bin Laidin (FIEM) arranged for me to meet with En. Abdul Aziz bin Ismail, Head of Trademark Division at the office of Intellectual Property Corporation of

Malaysia, MYIPO, to discuss issues related to the use of certain acronyms which Council deliberated. As the institution undergoes a re-branding exercise, there is a need to consider all possible trademarks available for use by our Institution. The recent earthquake in a neighboring country which most of the western part of our peninsula also felt, brings up the discussion of whether the time is ripe for this issue to be tackled now or in the years to come. The hosting of the Engineers Week by our Institution would be an important event in March 2007 to be noted. Over seven days, a number of programmes have been arranged to enlighten both the parents and their children who are students in deciding on their future career and to encourage them to take up engineering as a first choice and what were the avenues available within and without the country.

Looking back at the strategic plan developed since the Council brainstorming in October 2004, a number of issues are still outstanding and remain unresolved. One of them is the proposal to form a Presidential Council (so that our past president's wisdom remains with us) and another for formation of a Nominating Committee or equivalent so that we can seek out future leaders for IEM to add to the volunteers already serving in their various capacities. The third issue is to define appropriate benchmarks for CPD programmes as well as for the Professional Interview Examinations which we cannot do in isolation but jointly with other stakeholders and the Board of Engineers as well. I am confident that the new leadership will encounter a lot more issues and I would like to thank the members for giving me this opportunity to serve the Institution. ■

CS Ow