IEEE R8 Technical Activities (TA) – Vice Chair Report

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The Vice-Chair (VC) for Technical Activities (TA) functions via several regional subcommittees and coordinators: (i) chapter coordination subcommittee (ChCSC), (ii) conference coordination subcommittee (CoCSC), (iii) industry relations subcommittee (IRSC), (iv) educational activities subcommittee (EASC), (v) standards coordinator, (vi) publications coordinator (ad hoc) and (vii) TAB committee liaison (ad hoc). Subcommittees carry out various operational tasks, with support of IEEE staff in Piscataway (New Jersey, USA), and strategic undertaking is frequently their own prerogative, but aligned to the overall vision of IEEE Region 8 - as in our approved operations manual. The VC, via referred subcommittees (SCs), provides overall leadership and oversight for all technical activities associated to our region.

This short report is intended as an "Executive Summary" for Section Chairs (Region 8).

The ChCSC takes lead towards supporting our chapters, and the SC has continued to reach out to various chapters in the region, in-concert, with the new "model" of the SC. As a reminder, the new constituency of the SC includes regional representatives of societies and councils. Over 20 new chapters were formed, and a few more split or extended towards a more inclusive service to members in a given locality. As the region develops, where new subsections were recently added, the SC provides support of a special nature to such entities aiming to develop *technical interests* of members towards society membership. It was agreed that the SC will further the role of society representatives with cohesion and engagement - the moment a new chapter is initiated. ChCSC will also avail a call for chapter awards (2012) electronically later this year.

At the previous region 8 meeting, the CoCSC presented a motion (approved) towards formalizing procedures for conference bids. The motion has now been implemented, and supporting documents (such as conference bid templates, budget templates, etc) placed on the Region 8 website for TA. The CoCSC works towards making conferences further "profitable" for Region 8, in the sense of technical co-sponsorship - a comparative of success: at the end of 2010 - some 17 technical co-sponsorship agreements were signed; the same number was already reached by the end of the second quarter (2011). The CoCSC has also kept an operational oversight (from the perspective of the region) on upcoming Region 8 flagship conferences, but has also finalized recommendations for conference bids (such as for Africon 2013). The CoCSC is working with IRSC and the Power & Energy Society (PES) towards a financial co-sponsorship for EnergyCon, the newest Region 8 flagship conference.

The IRSC undertook a workshop bringing together, amidst others, the role of the standards coordinator, with emphasis on the role of standards for industrial professionals. The IEEE Standards Association (IEEE-SA), a board level IEEE entity, took an active role with IRSC in London, and several key outcomes were undertaken. Included in such outcomes - a dialogue with IEEE's Educational Activities Division

(EAD), with a long-term aim of in-person training for some online products (such as the IEEE eLearning library). To leapfrog the approach, correspondence was initiated with the IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc) on the Wireless Certification (WCET) programme, where in-person training is being arranged; for such sponsorship from industry (Saudi Arabia's Aramco) has also been established. The Industry Continuing Education (ICED) programme is being actively promoted via the Region 8 website. IRSC plans to call for awards (2012) for industry leaders of our region – later this year.

The standards coordinator has worked with IRSC and the Educational Activities Board (EAB)'s Standards Education Committee (SEC) towards providing for training of the IEEE 802 suite – this is frequently coupled with Universities (such as in the London area) but also with our flagship conferences (for example, with the upcoming Africon 2011 in Livingstone, Zambia). The integration of IEEE-SA activities and the speaker's bureau (a programme of IEEE-SA) has also lead to individual section requests (for instance in Denmark) for deliveries of sessions on "Demystifying IEEE Standards."

The EASC, with support of EAB, continued to thrive - two major preuniversity initiatives – the Teacher In-Service Programme (TISP) were held in Scotland (March 2011) and Saudi Arabia (April 2011). A TISP presentation (March 2011) further "spun-off" from a TISP workshop held in Zambia (Sept. 2010) – co-hosted by Tunisia Section. Several engagements with Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS) continued in 2011 – active sections/countries in this regards include: Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Benelux (Belgium) and Uganda. Further dialogue is ongoing with the Iraq Section and Nigeria Section. For the first time, a continuing education (CE) website has been established, and engagement with the CE director at Section's congress is expected to further benefits for IEEE organizational units in our Region. Accreditation activities encompass the Gulf area and parts of Southern / Eastern Africa. The effort in these areas include long term visions of mobility of graduate engineers and improving the quality/credential of existing engineering, engineering technology or computing programmes. For the first time in years, IEEE Region 8 has received several EAB awards, but all to the South Africa Section; it is hoped that this will encourage other Sections to nominate deserving candidates for the future award call.

The ad hoc coordinator relating to publications continued his efforts towards coupling volunteers with IEEE staff (sales and marketing) towards brokering suitable deals for enabling accessing to the IEEE/IET Electronic Library (IEL), commonly known as IEEE Xplore. The particular coordinator is also working to enhance mutual relations between national societies and the IEEE, with a potential deal here towards national society members also furthering their own technical base, by a suitable subscription to IEL. A more challenging engagement includes the possibility of including journal outputs of national societies to IEL, and work around this is being handled by the VC for TA directly with the VP for IEEE Publication Services and Products Board (PSPB).

The ad hoc coordinator (TAB liaison) has developed a matrix showing the lack of "new directions" (such as life sciences) in our regional conference. The liaison aims to coordinate with CoCSC the possibility to include such new themes for future flagship conferences enabling our region to move along with the rest of IEEE as we embrace these new areas, which brings technology a step closer towards humanity. The coordinator also envisages bridging our region closer with TAB committees relating to cloud computing, IEEE Committee on Earth Observations (ICEO), and the works in this

regards is on-going, with hope for a strengthened cooperation with the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), via ICEO and the Group on Earth Observations (GEO).

As the work of various SCs continues, overlap between SCs is identified and synergy fostered. The VC for TA extends gratitude to the hard-work of all involved, and in particular the leadership shown by leads of standing and adhoc committees/coordinators associated to Region 8 TA. A complete listing of office bearers is provided on upcoming pages of this agenda booklet.