IEEE Canada Humanitarian Initiatives Committee (HIC) Activities

by Ferial El-Hawary

The IEEE Canada Humanitarian Initiatives Committee (HIC) was established to promote IEEE's core value of service to humanity. Towards this goal it: raises awareness of how IEEE Canada can best use its strengths and relevant technologies to address societal problems; provides leadership, encouragement, and support to Sections and Chapters and members who are interested in conducting humanitarian initiatives; identifies humanitarian activities across Canada; and coordinates activities with IEEE world-wide humanitarian committees and initiatives. Supporting the objectives of this committee, numerous activities took place in 2015, many of which will continue in 2016.

1 Our major initiative over the period 2014 -2015 was to gain the support of Region 7 sections and the Region to be co-sponsors and host the International Humanitarian Technology Conference (IHTC) 2015, held in Ottawa, running May 31 to June 4.

2 During 2015, we have been successful in implementing some of our new initiatives such as a Student Paper competition and conducting a panel discussion during IHTC.Thanks to the IEEE Canadian Foundation who supported this project, covering some of the students' expenses and awards for the winners.

3 Working on establishing section-level HIC groups where humanitarian activities would take place through Special Interest Group on Humanitarian Technology (SIGHT) Chapters. A new SIGHT Chapter has been established in the Toronto Section, joining established ones in Montreal and Ottawa Sections. More are in the process of approval (Northern Canada and Vancouver Sections.)

4 Progress has been made towards updating the HIC Web Site; some work has been done by an HIC volunteer. Visit: http://www. hic.ieee.ca/. Continuous maintenance work is still needed (a student may be engaged to complete the work).

5 Continue to implement some of the recommendations that came out of IHTC'2014. The two major ones of interest to IEEE Region 7 (R7) for implementation are:
• An MOU between UNICEF and R7 indicating areas of collaboration (leaders are: Amir Aghdam, Witold Kinsner, Alfredo Herrera, and Ferial El-Hawary and other volunteers).
• HAM Radio Course (leaders are: Witold Kinsner and volunteers from various IEEE Sections).

6 Continue cooperation with IEEE Region 6 in participating at the annual Global Humanitarian Technology Conference.

7 Many new initiatives resulted out of IHTC 2015 held in Ottawa. I would like to express my gratitude for all the hard work of Maria Rey and her team for the major accomplishments, and for facilitating strong cooperation with the IEEE Humanitarian Activities Committee through a new subcommittee (TIGER Team). The Tiger Team's mission is to leverage Government, Industry, Academia, NGOs and IEEE Canada capability to deliver tangible effects on the ground in recipient communities.

The very successful IHTC conference held this past May in Ottawa built on the achievements of IHTC 2014 in Montreal. My thanks to all the volunteers from both conferences.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the University of Ottawa and other sponsors including TELUS for their generosity.

Photo: Glenn McKnight

◀ TIGER Team Members, Left to Right: Amir Aghdam (IEEE Canada 2014-15 President), Rabiz Foda (IHTC 2015), Maria Ray (IHTC 2015 Chair), Ferial El-Hawary (IHTC 2014 Chair and IEEE Canada HIC Chair) and Mike Lightner (IEEE Humanitarian Activities Committee Chair)