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FIG Working Week: Integrating Generations

Stockholm, Sweden, June 14-19, 2008



The FIG Working Week held in Stockholm, Sweden just before the Midsummer Night was the biggest Working Week ever held. During the event young surveyors were very much in evidence, and mentor sessions brought the generations together. FIG wants to mobilize the next generation of Land Professionals and continue to develop innovative and transitional solutions to address global inequality in land and property ownership and tenure.

The Working Week was hosted jointly by the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) and the Swedish Association of Chartered Surveyors (Sveriges Lantmätareförening, SLF), which also celebrated its 100th Anniversary. The theme of the Working Week “Integrating Generations” was in line with the overall theme of the current FIG Council: “Building the Capacity.” 950 participants from 90 nations attended the event and the exhibition. In addition to the plenary sessions there were over 70 technical sessions, with almost 350 presentations, and technical tours. The Working Week included the joint FIG/UN-HABITAT seminar on “Improving Slum Conditions through Innovative Financing.” The conference venue was the Stockholm City Conference Centre—Norra Latin and Folkets Hus—comfortably located within a walking distance to main attractions and venues.

ACSM FIG Forum Delegates attending were: Curt Sumner (delegate to FIG Commission 1), Steve Frank (Commission 2), Chuck Pearson (Commission 3), Dave Doyle (Commission 5), John Hamilton (Commission 6), Steve Kopach (Commission 7), and Bob Foster (Commission 9).

Integrating Generations

FIG is a global organization that aims to build bridges between ages, cultures and continents. Integrating the young generation is a key issue within FIG. This was demonstrated during the opening ceremony by the Swedish Minister for Environment Andreas Carlgren—who opened the conference together with Carl-Olof Temryd, Honorary President of FIG and President of the FIG Council in 1977, when the conference was last held in Sweden, and Cecilia Lindén, Chair of the FIG Working Group for Young Surveyors. In his speech Andreas Carlgren emphasized that in Sweden land and property underpin the economy. However, he said that in developing countries legal empowerment of the poor is required to support property ownership, and information systems are needed to stop us guessing. The Minister said: “You (FIG) have such an important key role to play, to combat environmental threat, to combat poverty and slums and to support the development of this globe and its cities.”

In his opening remarks Prof. Stig Enemark, FIG President said: “We tied the ribbon between the generation that changed the world from analogue to digital and takes digital media for granted—but work needs to be done in many countries.”

The cultural program of the opening ceremony included traditional folk music and dances from Sweden performed by the representatives from Skansen, the famous outdoor museum in Stockholm, and musical entertainment performed by the music corps of the Dragoon’s Battalion of the Royal Guards. They played both melodies from ABBA and a new arrangement of the FIG Fanfare that was also recorded for future use.

Cooperation with UN-HABITAT

At the opening ceremony the keynote address was given by Dr. Anna K. Tibaijuka, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-HABITAT. In her speech she reminded the audience that the world is becoming more urban: “Cities are not prepared to welcome and receive the new influx. The challenge, therefore, is to try to guide this urbanization process. The urban poor are potentially capable of contributing 20 billion US dollars per year to improve their own living conditions. This would leave approximately five billion US dollars per year to be mobilized from other sources—currently this is only two billion US dollar.”

According to Dr. Tibaijuka only some 10 percent of land parcels in the world are registered; in many areas, the poor’s land rights are based on customary rights that are not legally recognized, but are socially legitimate and only some 5 percent of registered land, is registered in a woman’s name. She noted that individual freehold titling is not always appropriate for a number of reasons including, the costs of adjudication, high technical standards, expensive registration and transfer fees, and literacy requirements. She observed that the development of new land tools, such as the FIG Land Administration Domain Model, will allow for the registration of customary forms of tenure and overlapping land rights and claims.

Dr. Tibaijuka announced that UN-HABITAT has a two-year agreement with Google to collaborate on new mapping tools using modern technologies. The FIG/UN-HABITAT Seminar “Slum Upgrading through Innovative Financing Mechanisms” discussed for two days the challenges and approaches that suit the poor; e.g. intermediate forms of title; gender sensitive title and incremental finance from group to project. Land markets should also work for the poor, using innovative planning instruments.

The Joint FIG/UN-HABITAT Seminar attracted new delegates to the FIG Working Week broadening discussions from surveyors to multi-discipline dialogue between land professionals and economists.

Plenary sessions

The first plenary session following the opening ceremony was titled “Sustainable Urban Development and the Millennium Development Goals.” The keynote addresses were given by Minister Carlgren

who talked about the environment and climate and the role of property and land administration institutions in society.

The second speaker was Dr. Ashraf Ghani, Chairman of the Institute for State Effectiveness (Afghanistan), who spoke about the legal empowerment in a globalizing world. The Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor published its report: "Making the Law Work for Everyone" with a four pillar approach on empowerment of the poor: access to justice and the rule of law, property rights, labor rights and business rights. Dr. Ghani stated: "The Land Professional can bring Information, Knowledge and Wisdom into Harmony."

President Enemark made his major contribution to the conference program in this plenary session summarizing and focusing on the partnership between FIG and the UN agencies in support of the Millennium Development Goals. He emphasized in his presentation that "the UN agencies have access to national governments and to setting a global agenda, but they will often depend on interest groups and NGOs for implementing this agenda. FIG as an international NGO on the other hand has access to national associations and individual professionals, but at the same time as other NGOs will often depend on the UN agencies to determine the global agenda. global partnership is needed to establish the link that drives development for achieving the global agenda such as the MDGs."

The second plenary session "Land Administration and Finance Systems" was also organized jointly with the FIG/UN-HABITAT seminar. This session was chaired by Lars Magnusson and Ann Jennervik. Speakers included Michael Mutter, from UN-HABITAT Slum Upgrading Facility, speaking about expanding the outreach of housing finance for the urban poor from co-operational point of view and Renu Sud Karnad, Joint Managing Director of the Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited—India telling about concepts of channeling financial flows for adequate and affordable housing. Dan Ericsson, State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Sweden explained the Swedish engagement in land administration and housing finance. Dr. Malcolm Childress, Sr. Land Administration Specialist from the World Bank brought the World Bank vision to the discussion "Land Finance through Land Governance—Expanding the Discussion of Land Policy during Food Crisis, Climate Change and Rapid Urbanization."

Professional highlights

David Zilkoski, NGS Director NOAA, USA identified in his presentation at the third plenary session that the new customers for our professional services are: emergency managers, planners and developers, insurance industry, agricultural industry, construction industry, environmental engineers, coastal managers, local governments, tribal governments, international organizations, academia, professional organizations and foreign counterparts.

In this plenary session, chaired by Vice President Matt Higgins, focused on technical and organizational innovations, the other speakers were Frank Udnaes from the Galileo Unit of the European Commission giving an overview on the status of the European EGNOS and Galileo Programs and Stig Jönsson, Director General of Lantmäteriet (National Land Survey of Sweden), discussing about building integrated land information systems and about development of NSDI by using Sweden as an example.

Sweden has taken the initiative for the construction of a national satellite imagery database for measurements over Sweden—

Success. Another interesting piece of information was that Nokia will increase the production of GPS supported mobiles to 35 million this year and within two-to-four years may be the biggest GNSS device producer.

Approximately 40 of the presented papers have been peer reviewed. Peer review was introduced because of the growing requirement for university staff to concentrate their submission of papers on conferences that offer a peer review process. Given that a significant number of papers presented at FIG events are submitted by people from universities, it was decided that FIG needed to make that possibility available or risk losing a significant number of high quality authors. It was also recognized that many similar associations and professions are offering peer review of papers and that FIG needed to keep up with accepted normal practice. It was considered that the concept worked well in Stockholm and that the option for peer reviewed papers will be offered also at the incoming working weeks and congresses.

Professional development

In providing solutions to worldwide challenges the surveyors and land professionals can contribute from a broad perspective—this can easily be demonstrated by the focus of attention of FIG's 10 Commissions: Professional Practice; Professional Education; Spatial Information Management; Hydrography; Positioning and Measurement; Engineering Surveys; Cadastre and Land Management; Spatial Planning and Development; Valuation and the Management of Real Estate; and Construction Economics and Management.

Land Governance is the core area for surveyors and land professionals—land rights are political. Advocating pro poor systems requires cooperation with governments and politicians to develop the governmental side of land management. The profession has a key role to play here.

General Assembly

During the FIG 31st General Assembly, held at June 15th and 19th 2008 in Stockholm two new Vice Presidents and new Commission Chairs Elect were elected. The two new Vice Presidents are Iain Greenway from United Kingdom and Teo CheeHai from Malaysia. Both Vice Presidents are well known within the Federation. Their term of office is 2009-2012. Vice Presidents Paul van der Molen and Ken Allred will leave the Council at the end of 2008.

The General Assembly elected and appointed Commission Chairs-Elect for 2009-2010 are:

Commission 1 Leonie Newnham, Australia

Commission 2 Dr. Steven Frank, USA

Commission 3 Prof. Yerach Doytsher, Israel

Commission 4 Dr. Michael Sutherland, Canada

Commission 5 Mikael Lilje, Sweden

Commission 6 Dr. Gethin Wyn Roberts, UK

Commission 7 Daniel Roberge, Canada

Commission 9 Dr. Frances Plimmer, UK

The Commission Chairs Elect will become automatically Commission Chairs 2011–2014. Other major decisions of the General Assembly include the adoption of the new Statutes and Internal Rules of the Federation. The assembly also endorsed four new other publications:

- The FIG Work Plan 2007-2010. This includes the Council and Commission work plans for 2007-2010;
- Informal Settlements—the Road towards More Sustainable Places. The aim of this report is to explore how surveyors can be better prepared to work with international agencies, national and local governments in the area;
- FIG Guidelines on Capacity Assessment in Land Administration. This Guide, developed in cooperation with FAO, is offered as a tool for improving existing Land Administration Systems through in-county self assessment of the capacity needs, especially in developing and transition countries where the financial resources are limited;
- Costa Rica Declaration on Pro-Poor Coastal Zone Management. The coastal zones are fragile and include a range of rights and interests. FIG supports the right of poor coastal communities to thrive, and retain ongoing access to coastal resources.

The General Assembly adopted two new member associations at its meeting:

- Geodetic Engineers of the Philippines, Inc
 - Chamber of Graduate Surveyors from Bulgaria
- Nine new affiliate members were endorsed:
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, United States Department of Commerce, USA
 - Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency (Kadaster), the Netherlands
 - Surveying Department, Dubai Municipality, United Arab Emirates
 - National Land Survey of Finland (Maanmittauslaitos, MML), Finland
 - National Survey and Cadastre (Kort og Matrikelstyrelse, KMS), Denmark
 - National Land Survey of Sweden (Lantmäteriet, LM), Sweden
 - General Directorate for Surveying, Ministry of Water Resources, Republic of Iraq
 - Lao National Geographic Department, Lao PDR
 - Siberian State Academy of Geodesy, Russian Federation

The co-operation with national mapping and cadastre organizations was also strengthened by organizing the Forum for chief executives of these organizations. These meetings will continue at the next FIG conferences.

In addition two new corporate members were endorsed: Derinsu Underwater Engineering Ltd., Turkey; and Al-Mutakamilad Real Estate (Cityplex), Jordan and one academic member admitted to membership: University of Novi Sad from Republic of Serbia.

Exhibition and technical tours

The Working Week was supported by several FIG corporate members both as sponsors and as exhibitors in the exhibition. The gold sponsors were ESRI and Trimble that also sponsored the FIG Foundation Dinner at the Vasa Museum. Technical tours included a full-day visit to Gävle to learn from the National Land Survey and Swedesurvey. The other tours included an overview on planning

in Stockholm waterfronts and visit to Trimble in Danderyd as well as to the Stockholm City Survey Department and to the Swedish Maritime Administration.

Social events

The social functions of the working week started with a welcome reception at the famous Stockholm City Hall hosted by the City of Stockholm and its Lord Mayor Bo Bladholm. The venue of the Nobel Prize Winner Dinner was also an excellent place to start the FIG Working Week.

The FIG Foundation Dinner gathered 300 participants to the Vasa Museum to see the royal flagship that sank on its maiden voyage in 1628 and that was raised from the depths of Stockholm harbor in 1961.

The Nordic speciality “hemma hos” gave a unique opportunity for international participants to go for a home visit and to get to know the Swedish surveyors and their way of living in different locations in Stockholm.

The gala dinner was arranged at the Vintergarden at the Grand Hotel, the hotel in Stockholm with a great music performances by the student choir of technological students.

The farewell reception was hosted by the FIG 2010 organizing committee in the foyer of Norra Latin under the well-known Swedish paintings.

Summary statement

In his Closing Address Prof Stig Enemark spoke about the success of the conference. He recalled a Native American saying, used by Dr. Ashraf Ghani: “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” President Enemark repeated that FIG is strongly committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the UN-HABITAT agenda on the Global Land Tool Network. This agenda includes the big challenges of the new millennium: climate change, food shortage, energy scarcity, urban growth, environmental degradation and natural disasters. All these issues relate to governance and management of land. Land governance and management is a core area for surveyors—the Land Professionals. It will require:

- High level geodesy models to predict future change
- Modern surveying and mapping tools to support management and implementation
- Spatial data infrastructures to support decision making on the natural and built environment
- Secure tenure systems
- Sustainable systems for land valuation, land use management and land development
- Systems for transparency and good governance

President Enemark concluded that we must mobilize the next generation of Land Professionals. “We must continue to develop innovative and transitional solutions to address global inequality in land and property ownership and tenure. We can act as Professional Facilitators—we can ‘Fly High’ and we are providing the underlying data to enable monitoring and support decision making for sustainable development.” In conclusion President Enemark thanked our Swedish colleagues for hosting a successful meeting. The next FIG Working Week will be held in Eilat, Israel-May 3-8, 2009 (www.fig.net/fig2009). ■