

Workshop on Land Administration for Sustainable Development, Québec, Canada, October 2007

The Quebec Workshop on Land Administration was organised by the FIG Commission 7 (Cadastre and land administration) in collaboration with the Fédération des géomètres francophones (FGF), **as a pre-conference event for GeoConference Québec 2007** (www.Quebec2007.ca). The workshop attracted about 50 participants from 22 countries, half of them coming from developing or emerging countries, mainly officials responsible for land administration and cadastre, land surveyors, geomaticians, legal experts, academics and students involved in cooperation projects.

The need for land administration, cadastral systems, and good governance has increased in the last decade. In the past, many workshops, expert meetings and conferences have been organised to address land administration issues. As a result of these events, exchanges and discussions, in which FIG Commission 7, its land administration arm, and a common objective has emerged: *promote access to land and registration of rights to contribute to poverty reduction and economic development.*

The international geocommunity should define its role in achieving the MDGs and spell out the areas where they can make a significant contribution. Issues such as tenure security, pro-poor land management, and good governance in land administration are all key issues to be advocated in the process of reaching the goals. Measures such as capacity assessment, institutional development and human resource development, North-South cooperation and partnerships are all key tools. This geocommunity has to work closely with the UN agencies in merging the efforts to contribute to reach the MDGs.

The objective of the workshop was to propose concrete actions to contribute in the establishment of a global partnership for development, the 8th Millennium Development Goal. To start the workshop, speakers from international organisations presented various aspects related to land administration and sustainable development. Remy Sietchiping, from UN Habitat, Keith Bell from the World Bank and Stig Enemark from FIG were the speakers of this initial session. Then, representatives from Asia, Africa and South America presented projects, issues and actions in the area of land administration.

Summary of the discussions

Regarding the discussion item on how the international geocommunity can help to develop a Global Partnership for Development to improve secure land tenure a series of (combined) approaches has been discussed. It was agreed that political will is absolutely necessary to improve the security of land rights. To get it, the geocommunity and more specifically land surveyors have to learn how to talk to politicians. They have to demonstrate the social and economic benefits of land infrastructures. The North-South and South-South cooperation should be encouraged to develop win-win exchanges at a human level. Public/private partnerships should be further developed. In addition, the population should be informed about the importance of land rights infrastructure. Systems and laws that can manage customary and informal rights are needed. Land rights have to be public and the systems transparent.

The geocommunity has to find a way to improve and transform existing systems (land registry and cadastre) rather than throw it in the garbage. The security of land rights is essential when there is a conflict. African courts are submerged with land problems, namely caused by the weakness of geodetic infrastructure.

In relation to the question on how the geocommunity can help to better respond to the need for reconstruction and resettlement after a natural disaster again a broad range of issues and approaches was suggested: we should encourage the authorities to implement and secure cadastral system and land registry in the area presenting a risk of natural disaster. This land infrastructure is of high importance to facilitate reconstruction and resettlement after such a disaster. There is a need to develop emergency plans using the power of geomatics and the expertise of land surveyors. We have to develop a better knowledge of risks at a global level. The geocommunity may also help in the establishment of refugees camps, and: must have access to legal and spatial data in case of natural disaster.

Concerning the question on how the geocommunity can help to develop capacity building a series of key issues was discussed. The main need is about technical and professional training. An African school is missing. Many countries, especially in Africa, need help to create organised professional structures ensuring professional ethic. It is most relevant to implicate local communities in decision processes. We have to find ways to promote and facilitate the involvement of voluntary land surveyors or students cooperation to participate in capacity building.

Conclusion and perspectives

The outcome of this fruitful workshop will be very useful for both the Fédération des géomètres francophones and the International Federation of Surveyors and will, for sure, influence their work plans in the following years. Furthermore, it will contribute to continue and strengthening working relation between UN and FIG organisations and between surveyors and the broader geocommunity world wide.

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