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ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

THE 2013 INTERNATIONAL FIG WORKING WEEK WAS HELD MAY 6-10 IN ABUJA, NIGERIA. JOHN HOHOL REPORTS ON THE DISCUSSIONS

Over 2,000 people from over 40 countries attended and over 180 presentations were made during the 2013 International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) Working Week, which was held May 6-10 in Abuja, Nigeria, under the theme 'Environment for Sustainability'.

Governance and approaches

During the working week three well-attended plenary sessions were presented.

The first session concentrated on 'Governance and Approaches' and Remy Sietchiping, project leader of the UN-Habitat Global Land Tools Network (GLTN), discussed innovative tools and solutions to land challenges and asked five questions related to these challenges: Why, What, For whom and by whom, How and Where.

He then explained why innovation matters and that "business as usual" is not sustainable, and asked if existing tools, governance and solutions matched the current land challenges. He also explained GLTN's approach to these challenges and showed how using GLTN's values

and principles can lead to the improvement of land and property rights.

Professor Peter O Adeniyi, chairman of the Presidential Technical Committee on Land Reform (PTCLR) in Nigeria, discussed the Nigerian PTCLR's role in working towards establishing good governance in land administration in the country. In his presentation, he outlined the land governance situation in Nigeria and the mandate and activities of PTCLR in improving and implementing its land governance.

Dr Hubert Ouedraogo, Land Policy Initiative (LPI) lead land expert at the UN Economic Commission for Africa, talked about the LPI and implementing the African Union declaration on land issues and challenges in Africa. He discussed the crucial role of land in Africa's development and reviewed the pan-African programme on land policy initiated jointly by the African Union Commission, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank. He reviewed the vision, mission and objectives of the LPI. Prominent in his presentation was the importance of engaging the professional community of surveyors.

Technologies and systems

The second plenary session concentrated on technologies and systems. Dr Hussein Omar Farah, director general of the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) in Nairobi, Kenya, began the session with a talk on 'Geoinformation (GI) for societal benefit and national development'. He reviewed the technology and applications

of GI, illustrating its importance in the key areas of land management, agriculture, biodiversity, climate, disasters, ecosystem, energy, health, water, transport and infrastructure among others. He also explained the importance of global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) and observations resulting from them, illustrating how analysis, modelling and visualisation create an effective GIS. He also discussed the critical importance and role of the sharing and exchange of data and information.

Surveyor (Professor) Peter C Nwilo, surveyor general of the Office of the Surveyor General of the Federation in Nigeria, then spoke on the evolution and use of technologies in surveying and mapping in Nigeria. He showed that although Nigeria was receptive to new innovations, their maintenance has been faulty due to a shortage of funds and low capacity. He emphasised that sustained development can only happen by focusing more on building capacity and creating environments conducive to the handling and sustaining of these technologies.

Peter O Large, vice president of Trimble Navigation, concluded by giving 'a broad view of geospatial technology and systems'. He began by showing how far we have advanced since the early discoveries and works of such notables as Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei and Thomas Jefferson. Since their times, our ability to generate GI has grown exponentially and has evolved from paper maps to GIS and 3D virtual models of the world accessible to billions of people. GNSS infrastructure and GI are transforming how work is done, resulting in the evolution of the role of the profession from measurement and data collection to interpretation and quality control, resulting in analysis, modelling and applications by providing answers and solving problems.

Professional and capacity development

The third and final plenary session dealt with professional and capacity development. Jean du Plessis, a capacity building expert (land) at UN-Habitat GLTN, spoke on developing capacity for sustainable land tenure security (LTS). He explained the importance of LTS, emphasising that it is critical and fundamental to access to adequate shelter, livelihoods and food security, the realisation of human rights, and sustainable development and economic prosperity. He described how UN-Habitat GLTN was formed to reduce poverty and contribute to sustainable development by promoting secure land and property rights for all.

Professor Jide Kufoniyi, former director of the Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys (RECTAS) in Nigeria, discussed the building of GI capacity for sustainable development in Africa. He provided an overview of GI activities, and discussed the challenges of their use and development. He also reviewed education and training, and ways to implement them.

Frank FK Byamugisha, operations adviser and lead land specialist in the Africa Region of the World Bank, concluded the session with a discussion of how to improve the land governance in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). He outlined the important elements: why we should improve land governance in SSA, the challenges and opportunities, whether Africa is ready, which areas should be scaled up and the key guiding principles.

Challenges and opportunities

During the working week much was discussed regarding the current challenges and opportunities on the Africa region. The World Bank and FIG held two sessions on land administration and reform in SSA. UN-Habitat GLTN presented the proposed Africa LPI capacity development initiative. In addition, the FIG Africa Task Force explored the future for land professionals in the continent, while 10 FIG commissions also presented many technical papers on Africa.

In conjunction with the Working Week, a special training session for young land professionals was co-hosted by FIG and the UN-Habitat GLTN from May 4-6. This saw 17 young surveyors from around the world come together to learn more about and become future trainers for the social tenure domain model (STDM).

The three-day training had three core components. The first explored the need for a STDM, and the role of surveyors in implementing and embedding such a concept within existing land governance structures.

The second looked at the process of recording and managing data



At the Opening Ceremony. From left: Stephen Olubode Adeaga, President NIS (left), Minister of Works, Arc. Mike Onolememe representing the Nigerian President Goodwill Jonathan, who had sent his apologies, CheeHai Teo, President FIG, Rudolf Staiger, Vice President FIG, Chryssy Potsiou, Vice President FIG and Pengfei Cheng, Vice President FIG



All the plenary sessions were very well attended



Participants at the UN-Habitat Global Land Tools Network/Director General Forum during FIG Working Week

associated with the data model. Ensuring the sustainability and integrity of data and infrastructure were critical concerns of participants.

The final component of the training required participants to review the theory learnt, in terms of how it could be applied in the participants' home countries.

Ultimately, participants were challenged to redefine the surveying profession to meet the challenging needs of communities now and in the future. The STDM is just one of many 'fit for purpose' tools that need to be developed to meet this challenge.

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John Hohol is president of the FIG Foundation (www.fig.net)

RESOURCES

More information on the 2013 FIG Working Week is available at: www.fig.net/fig2013/