

FIG Commission 8 – Spatial Planning and Development

FIG Congress, Sydney April 11th- 16th 2010

Chairs Report

1. Overview.

The 2010 congress included delegates and speakers from around the world with around 100 countries represented by an estimated 2700 participants. This was complemented by the largest trade show in FIG history with 5000m² and more than 100 exhibition booths.

The congress marks the culmination of the four year work plans (2006- 10) of the FIG council and 10 FIG commissions, with a handover meeting scheduled end of November.

Increased global recognition of the International Federation of Surveyors at the highest level is one of the key achievements of the past four years. The organisation has successfully promoted its global profile through partnerships with UN organisation including UN Habitat, FAO and the World Bank. Identifying surveyors critical role in the global agenda particularly with regard to the pressing issues of poverty eradication and urban population growth is “No development will take place without having a spatial dimension... and no development will happen without the footprint of the surveyor.”

Further, in his opening address FIG president said that addressing the land and development issues in small island developing states is of particular importance to this congress and will be the subject of a special seminar taking place during the week. Another feature of the congress were peer review papers; of the 110 papers submitted 80% were accepted (i.e. 73 papers).

2. Plenary Sessions.

Importantly these sessions underwrite the conference theme of not only “facing the challenge” but actually *having* to build the capacity. Reflecting in the theme the key words were: Achievements to date, Space, Challenges and in turn leading to the Future.

- FIG Achievements for 2007/2010

Achievements to date showcased a record 8 new FIG publications launched at the FIG Congress with more to come later this year. In addition, not advertised in the Congress week is the streamlining and reform of the FIG office. This involved significant work and leadership from the President Prof, Stig Enemark and latterly assisted by vice chair Iain Greenway (UK, RICS).

- Spatially Enabled Society

This session examined the accelerating trend towards more spatially enabled society and what that means for our profession covering themes such as spatial enablement improving the performance of government by providing better access to data information systems (Abbas Rajabifard, president of GSDI). Importantly co-operation is needed between all SDI organisations demonstrated by the recent earth quakes in Haiti and Chile and Santiago Borrero emphasised the need for strong links between politics and the numerous disciplines of the surveying profession to enable better land governance (Secretary General of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History)

- The Big Challenges

This developed the congress theme “Facing the challenges”, exploring in detail, three of the big challenges of the 21st century and their relevance to the profession namely climate change, disaster management and land governance.

Daniel Fitzpatrick discussed vulnerability moving to resilience: addressing land issues after natural disasters and outlined the new UN Habitat and FAO guidelines on addressing land issues after natural disasters. Land governance was discussed by Dr Paul Munroe Faure FRICS, (FAO) focussing on the current development of the “Voluntary guidelines on responsible governance of tenure of land and natural resources” in a range of International meetings, such as the Private Sector debate held in London at RICS January 2010. A discussion about climate change and sustainable cities and the major challenges facing urban settlements in the coming decades was discussed by Dr Mohammed El-Sioufi (UN Habitat).

- Technological Futures

The key message was that if an infrastructure SDI is not an easy system and interactive with the wider community it will fail. The young have a different view of the world, with differing approach to data, they are location and position orientated, So concluding that surveyors are moving towards a new descriptive terminology “Spatial Professionals”

3. Special seminar on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Commission 8 led on the seminar ‘SIDS and the Millennium Development Goals’. This occurred over a day and a half and brought Pacific Island nations together along with representatives from the Caribbean (Trinidad & Tobago) and East Africa (Zanzibar Tanzania). Decision makers and practitioners from island states with experts on many land governance issues drawn from the many areas of expertise available across the FIG membership discussed the challenges facing islands professionals and suggested solutions. The success of achieving such a broad representation from the islands was due to the sponsorship of AusAID, FAO and the Commonwealth Foundation providing funds for delegate attendance.

The outcome is an “Agenda for Action” developed during the workshop and will be followed by a FIG declaration currently being drafted with publication expected by 3rd Quarter of 2010. On closing the SIDS session it was announced that an MOU with the Pacific Regional umbrella organisation (Pacific Land Professionals Association) had been signed with the Australia member organisation SSSI, a great result.

4. Commission 8 Technical Sessions

As the chart below demonstrates, having heard about the big challenges in the plenary significantly these are reflected in Commission 8 headline sessions.

DEDICATED Technical Sessions	CROSS Commission Technical Sessions
1E Environment and Energy	FS3E Land Use Classification
2E Climate Change	FS21 coastal Zone Issues
3E Neighbourhood and Society	4E Coasts and Natural Resources
5E Planning Heritage	5J Spatial information and Natural Disasters Management
6E Planning and Urban Growth	7E SDI and Planning
8E Law and Planning	FS4E critical Infrastructure Development
9E Sustainable Planning	FS 4K Case Studies SIDS
INV4 Land Polices in Africa	10E Disaster Management

To start the week's deliberations, commission 8 presented the highlights and detail of Commission 8's achievement over the term (2007- 10) and outlined challenges and opportunities going forward. The knowledge presented reflects practioners and academics, policy and technical perspectives. All are available on the web and are not individually rehearsed here; but from the papers heard during the week, some thoughts and key words for the future are noted in this report.

With the commission focus on spatial planning and economic development ultimately to better the use the land and natural resource a recurring theme throughout was how our role is to **facilitate people relationships** and how people interact in their natural environment. Increasingly the commission debate has a social justice agenda combined with the necessary regulatory assistance to help communities plan ahead.

Two strands in our debates are noteworthy. On the one hand our commission activity is to manage people relationships, managing rights and managing resources; it is certainly about people's use of resources but also their perceptions. On the other hand people want to input, they actually want appropriate regulation and desire to influence their governments and their politicians.

Specifically the invited papers on Africa (INV4) were typified by the demonstration of surveyors as 'change agents' in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. It was clear in Kenya that the passion of the association ensured both flying high and feet on the ground. They managed to achieve public awareness of the land policy reform over a five year period and in a was highly politicised process holding an advocacy role.

Similarly in Nigeria where there are new challenges facing land reform and is currently ongoing the Nigerian Institution has engaged. It remains to be seen if they follow up with the public advocacy role undertaken by the Kenyans. In Ghana the customary sector was considered so that although many people rely on customary tenure to deliver access to land the degree to which it is brought into the ongoing reform remains questionable.

Conclusively surveyors need to communicate and mange the changes in this social agenda. Consequently the objective is to guide policy for better practice in land use planning.

The challenges land professionals face today are just as socially important as those tackled by surveyors 200 years ago. The challenges set out by the Commission week long deliberations could easily apply to all activities of the surveyor, that is:

- Ambassadors- to act as change agents,
- Youth- to encourage and engage young people to enter our profession,
- Space- to acknowledge our role in a world that increasingly communicates through spatial products, and
- Leadership- to assist society and teach communities to adapt to the global challenges.

4. Going forward.

Commission 8 looks forward to welcoming you at its future technical session and debates to be held at FIG Working Weeks in:

2011 in Marrakech, Morocco 18- 22 May: Theme “Bridging the Gap between Cultures”

2012 in Rome, Italy 6-11 May: Theme of “Knowing to”: Manage the territory, Protect the environment and Evaluate the cultural heritage.

2013 in Abuja, Nigeria May

And,

2014 the FIG Congress 2014 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Finally, Congratulations to Teo CheeHai (Malaysia) who at the FIG General Assembly was elected as the new FIG President for the period 2011-2014.

Dr Diane Dumashie
Chair Commission 8, Chair Africa Task Force
Chair UK RICS Delegation