

FIG WORKING WEEK, SOFIA, BULGARIA, MAY 2015

Creating a New Generation of Global Surveyors

The recent FIG Working Week, held at the National Congress Centre in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 17-21 May, was the first major FIG event for Prof Chryssy Potsiou in her new capacity as FIG president, but she rose to the occasion successfully. Her ambitions are clear: FIG has a long-term commitment to the global agenda. She underlined that FIG will work with its Member Associations to support the implementation of UN FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and UN-Habitat's Continuum of Land Rights at the country level. FIG will work with UN-GGIM in its mandate to include land administration activities in the domain of global information management.

Scalability of security of tenure solutions will involve the use of a network of grass-roots surveyors from the communities. FIG will embrace and manage the change to encourage the use of innovative, scalable approaches to recording and securing land rights, including informal and customary rights. This will include fit-for-purpose land administration and property valuation solutions. FIG also supports the development of a new generation of global surveyors working at the local level – surveyors who are aware of the global issues and contribute solutions to the global agenda, while also being able to identify, initiate and foster research and to develop a clear professional and scientific vision.

FIG HONORARY AMBASSADOR

Clarissa Augustinus, founder and lead of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), has worked closely with FIG for many years both since the establishment of the GLTN and through her position at UN-Habitat. The FIG Council acknowledged its long-standing cooperation with her by awarding her the title of FIG honorary ambassador. Clarissa Augustinus is standing down from UN-Habitat in June 2015.

HIGHLIGHTS

The theme 'From Wisdom of the Ages to Challenges of the Modern World' provided the framework for discussion of the latest innovations and developments. The Working Week took place just a short time after

the dramatic earthquake in Nepal. This truly brought home the potential impact of an earthquake and put the challenges for surveyors involved in measuring our planet into sharp focus. In situ scanners are achieving greater precision. Vertical and horizontal reference frames are developing to a global level as a foundation for global data infrastructures. At the local level, crowdsourcing and public involvement are subjects of debate: how will the role of the professional change in the future as easy-to-use and handheld measurement devices become increasingly available? There is no doubt that participation will rise and will significantly contribute to the advancement of land administration worldwide – including in the marine environment. 3D modelling for cadastre is under development. The topic of ethics in relation to our profession is also under continuous scrutiny.



▲ At the opening ceremony participants received a captivating insight into traditional Bulgarian dancing.

'FIG has a long-term commitment to support the global campaign for security of tenure for all and will endeavour to solve these land issues through partnerships. FIG, as a recognised NGO, will work closely with the global family of UN organisations to support solutions to the 21st-century global challenges of climate change, food security, social justice and urbanisation.' – Chryssy Potsiou, FIG president

NEPAL

The FIG Young Surveyors Network organised a 'Mapping Response – Contributions for Nepal' initiative. Participants used their laptops to join the existing Open Street Map (OSM) project to map for Nepal. The young surveyors organised hands-on sessions on the Social Tenure Domain Model – software which has previously been used in a disaster environment during the Ebola crisis. Disaster recovery is one of the key areas of attention within FIG.



▲ During the plenary session, Clarissa Augustinus was officially awarded special status as FIG honorary ambassador by FIG president Chryssy Potsiou.

BITCOINS

It became apparent that the young surveyors take a somewhat different and more natural view of the crowdsourcing developments than their older colleagues. The Young Surveyors Network organised its own event and some interesting workshops during the Working Week, including a debate on the use of blockchains (Bitcoin technology) for land administration: a completely transparent approach in which everyone can see all transactions. Just after the Working Week in Sofia, the cadastre of Honduras announced it would become the first country to make use of this technology.

APPEALING PROGRAMME

The colleagues from the Chamber of Graduated Surveyors in Bulgaria together with the FIG Council, ten FIG Commissions and the FIG Office organised an appealing programme with more than 350 presentations throughout the three conference days. The plenary sessions concentrated on 'The Surveyors' Response to Changing the City Management, to

Pro-Growth Land Management and to Global and Regional Professional and Institutional Reforms'. Around 900 participants from 70 countries joined the Working Week 2015, which was supported by FIG sponsors Esri, Trimble and Leica.

EXHIBITION

A lively exhibition was held alongside the conference as part of the Working Week, featuring the FIG sponsors Esri, Trimble and Leica as well many others, such as the Chinese companies ComNav and CHC. At lunchtime and during coffee breaks, the exhibition floor was bustling with delegates who seized the opportunity to gain updates on the latest techniques through short demos and discussions at the booths. Outside, on the square in front of the National Congress Centre, the organisers had designated a small area where companies could demonstrate their products in action in the open air. For many delegates, the exhibition perfectly bridged the gap between theory and practice, enabling them to see ideas such as crowdsourcing or 3D modelling, for example, put into practice. ◀

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www.tilintertec.com | contact us at trade@tilintertec.com