

Recovery from Disaster

Over the past decades, there has been a rise in the number and magnitude of natural and man-made disasters worldwide. Many inhabitants face various kinds of events such as earthquakes, flooding, storms, tsunamis, drought and the after-effects of conflicts. The various disasters and their consequences are a global challenge, especially when the effects of climate change are taken into consideration. In particular, surveying and spatial professionals play an essential role through their work related to land, sea, air and space in terms of preventive action, post-disaster activities and the long-term rebuilding and planning of areas.

Surveying and spatial professionals make an important contribution to improving, simplifying and shortening the disaster mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction phase through their capabilities in land management, geodetic engineering, geoinformation, satellite technology, remote sensing, etc. In addition to these engineering skills and knowledge, good governance and capacity development are central components.

FIG, in cooperation with New Zealand Institute of Surveyors (NZIS), is hosting the FIG Working Week in Christchurch, New Zealand, from 2-6 May 2016, the overall theme of which will be 'Recovery from Disaster'. The FIG Working Week is an exciting week-long conference that brings together the international community of surveying professionals to share innovative science with policymakers and stakeholders. Scientists, policymakers, decision-makers, students and stakeholders are invited to join the discussions on risk management as well as other issues affecting the international surveying and spatial community today and in the future.



New Zealand, and Christchurch in particular, is an ideal location from which to consider this theme. New Zealand is a relatively geologically active country with a history of seismic events. In 2010 and 2011 the Canterbury region experienced two major earthquakes, one at magnitude 7.1 on the Richter scale which was followed by thousands of aftershocks, causing major structural damage to the city. The local surveying and spatial communities were actively engaged in the Christchurch recovery immediately after this event and were at the forefront of the efforts to rebuild a new and vibrant city. Despite the earthquakes, Christchurch is now fully functional again and repairs to the essential service infrastructure have largely been completed.

In the recovery and rebuilding of Christchurch and its environs, critical lessons have been learned that can be applied to any global disaster. These various experiences will provide the platform for the FIG Working Week 2016, which will take place at the inspiring Horncastle Arena. Apart from an interesting mix of high-level plenary sessions, content-driven technical sessions, attractive technical tours and a dynamic exhibition, the FIG Working Week offers a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity to visit New Zealand and enjoy the 'New Zealand experience': a welcome by Maoris (the indigenous people of New Zealand); visits to the best aspects of



▲ The 2010 and 2011 earthquakes caused major structural damage to Christchurch.

Christchurch and the surrounding area with a mix of stunning landscapes, unique flora and fauna and unspoiled countryside; a cultural New Zealand Evening as well as the Gala Dinner; the chance to join a haka or learn how to swing a poi; and the possibility to cheer on the All Blacks in a rugby stadium. ◀

More information
www.fig.net/fig2016



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