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The FIG - World Bank Conference “Land Governance in Support of the Millennium Development Goals: Responding to New Challenges” took place at the World Bank Headquarters in Washington DC, 9-10 March 2009. The conference was organized by the International Federation of Surveyors and the World Bank. The general aim was to emphasize the important role of Land Governance in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to show how FIG and the WB work in parallel in this regard.

The FIG-WB Conference was attended by about 200 invited international experts representing governments, UN agencies, development agencies, professionals, academia and the private sector. A total of 80 papers were presented in 20 sessions. Participating among the U.S. attendees were ACSM FIG Forum Delegates—Curt Sumner, ACSM Executive Director; Don Buhler, Bureau of Land Management; Dave Doyle, National Geodetic Survey; and Robert Foster, Past ACSM and FIG President and Honorary Member of FIG. I also participated as Head of the ACSM FIG Forum Delegation and FIG Foundation President.

The conference focused on six broad themes:

- Land governance for the 21st century;
- Building sustainable, well governed land administration systems;
- Securing social tenure for the poorest;
- Making land markets work for all;
- Improving access to land and shelter;
- Land governance for rapid urbanization



Keynote presentations included:

The importance of land policy in post-conflict situations: The case of Liberia—

Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia

Land governance for sustainable development—

Professor Stig Enemark, President, FIG

The keynotes were followed by five presentations on specific country experiences. They included:

Implementing a nation-wide land administration system—

M. Ratolojanahary, Minister of Land Reform and Administration, Government of Madagascar



Improving land administration in Ghana: Lessons and challenges in moving ahead—

C. Dauda, Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Government of Ghana

Moving towards clear land title in India: Potential benefits, a roadmap, and remaining challenges—

R. Sinha, Secretary of Land Resources, Government of India

The challenges of land administration in post-conflict Liberia: Status and next steps—

A. Sawyer, Head Governance Commission and Former President, Government of Liberia

Taking land policy & administration in Indonesia to the next stage: BPN's strategic plan—

J. Winoto, Head, BPN Indonesia (National Land Agency)

At the closing session of the conference Prof. Stig Enemark, FIG President concluded that “*land governance is a crucial issue in meeting the MDGs and should be high on the global agenda. New challenges in relation to this (climate change, food security, energy scarcity, natural disasters, urban growth, environmental degradation) have to be met. This is only possible in a multi disciplinary approach—which calls for partnership. It can be observed that the technology tools as available today are far ahead compared to legal and institutional tools. For application of sophisticated technology tools a good partnership is needed. Capacity building and learning is also most relevant and urgent. In the process of land administration the continuum of land rights as developed by UN-HABITAT provides a good basis since this approach is socially embedded. Finding evidence on the ground remains a key issue, this is where the land professionals come involved. This process is expensive—a better monitoring of the money that is spent is most relevant. There are reasons to be optimistic looking at the strong demand from the client countries to help addressing Land Administration.*”

The main outcomes of the conference and a joint FIG/World Bank declaration will be published shortly in the FIG publication series. Complete proceedings are available on the World Bank website: <http://econ.worldbank.org/>.

While in Washington, FIG officers met with several federal agency representatives including the Bureau of Land Management (Don Buhler, Chief Cadastral Surveyor), Minerals Management Service (Steve Kopach, Chief, Mapping and Boundary Branch), and the National Geodetic Survey (Juliana Blackwell, Director).