



FIG Regional Conference focuses on Good Governance in Tenure

The 7th FIG Regional Conference on “Spatial Data Serving People” was held in Hanoi, Vietnam, October 19-22, 2009. This was the second time that the FIG regional conference was held in Southeast Asia. The conference was organized jointly by FIG and the Vietnam Association of Geodesy, Cartography, and Remote Sensing (VGCR). Almost 400 participants from 54 countries gathered to discuss land and surveying issues, with 250 of the participants coming from Asia and overseas and 150 from Vietnam. Steve Frank, member of the ACSM FIG Forum and Chair-Elect of FIG Commission 2, attended.

The three themes of the conference were land governance; spatial data infrastructure (SDI) and the environment; and capacity building. The focus was on good governance in tenure. This theme was strongly supported by the Regional Consultation on Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and other Natural Resources which the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) organized for the Asian countries as a fully integrated part of the Hanoi conference. The two-day discussion of FAO voluntary guidelines attracted more than 80 people from 15 Asian countries.

Speaking at the opening of the regional conference, FIG President Prof. Stig Enemark said “the design and building of appropriate land administration systems is a big issue in most developing countries. Vietnam and many other countries in the South East Asian Region are currently working on projects to get these systems in place. I am very happy that we will have the opportunity during this conference to get an overview of what is going on in the region. As an outcome or the legacy of this conference we intend to develop a publication as part of the FIG conference series. The document will focus on Land Acquisition in Emerging Economies which has been identified as the key professional issue in the region requiring comprehensive guidelines.”

The other presenters were Dr. Dang Hung Vo, President of VGCR, who welcomed participants to Hanoi for the second FIG Regional Conference in the South-East Asia region; the first was held in October 2004 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Dr. Vo commented that the conference was very timely because



Honorable Mr. Pham Khoi Nguyen, Minister of the Environment.

of big land related projects in the country. He noted that the topic of land acquisition, selected as the theme of the Hanoi Declaration, is a crucial topic in Vietnam and in the region.

Dr. Mohamed El Sioufi, Head of Shelter Branch, UN-HABITAT, and Mr. Vu Ngoc Tien, Assistant FAO Representative for Vietnam, greeted the participants, expressing their pleasure that the conference was to include the FAO consultation on voluntary guidelines. The consultations were organized by FAO, with strong support from the Global Land Tools Network and UN-HABITAT. The formal opening address and keynote were given by Honorable Mr. Pham Khoi Nguyen, Vietnam’s Minister of the Environment.

In the first plenary session on land administration, Mr. Keith Bell from the World Bank discussed the key land issues in east Asia in relation to six World Bank funded

projects worth more than US\$180 million in 2009. Concluding his remarks, Mr. Bell noted that land sector reforms are cross-sectoral and complex, requiring broadly based development strategy that addresses the wider social, economic, natural resources and environmental agenda.

Land sector reforms require long-term engagement, but governments with a record of good governance and political will for reform are more likely to attract support. Responsible governance of tenure and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines featured prominently in the presentation by Dr. Paul Munro-Faure, Chief of the Land Tenure and Management Unit, FAO. Mr. Ton Gia Huyen, Former Director General, of the General Department of Land Administration, and Mrs. Tran Thi Minh Ha, Director, International Relations Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), addressed past, current, and future land administration in Vietnam.

In the second plenary session on infrastructures for sustainable environment, Ms. Jude Wallace from Australia challenged the participants to re-think the links between land acquisition policies and human rights, using the right tools. The session included a presentation on climate change and its implications in Vietnam, and the responses Vietnam has been creating. Vietnam and the southeast Asian region are being subjected to natural disasters more frequently than earlier. Participants endorsed the use of SDI as a tool for risk and vulnerability analysis, preparing action plans to prevent natural disasters as well as early warning and evacuation systems for reconstruction, and mapping access to shelter, water and food.

Prof. Chris Rizos, President Elect of the International Association of Geodesy (IAG), was the last speaker of the second plenary session, and his presentation addressed the Importance of Geodetic Infrastructure. It should be noted that FIG Commission 5 (Positioning and Measurement) had a strong participation in the conference program, with 11 of its own or joint sessions. One of the objectives of Commission 5 at this regional conference was to support the Permanent Committee for Asia-Pacific GIS Infrastructure (PCGIAP) initiative known as the Asia Pacific Reference Frame project or APREF. This was one of the focus areas of the conference addressed in preparation for the 2010 FIG Congress in Sydney next April.

The theme of the third plenary session was capacity building. Prof. Holger Magel, FIG Honorary President from Technical University Munich, challenged surveyors to establish a Global Academic Partnership (GAP) with six targets for sustainable development. FIG Vice President Teo CheeHai discussed the code of ethics and urged FIG to revisit its ethical guidelines in relation to the recent developments

in the world. The Vietnamese contribution on this topic focused on innovations in surveying and mapping training for an integrated world.

The technical program included 150 presentations in 50 technical sessions and workshops. All ten FIG commissions contributed. Much appreciated were the social events, particularly the visit to Ha Long Bay, which provided excellent opportunities for networking. The conference was made possible by the financial support from the platinum sponsor Trimble, gold sponsor MONRE, and silver sponsors ESRI and Integraph, and other exhibitors.

The conference concluded with a statement stressing that knowledge transfer has to involve all stakeholders, as demonstrated by GLTN and FAO. The Hanoi Declaration on land acquisition in emerging economies is expected to be published before the FIG Congress in Sydney in 2010. The Declaration will identify the problems and issues related to land acquisition in Vietnam and the southeast Asia region, analyze these problems in the context of best practice, and provide guidelines, recommendations, and tools for good governance and practice. The summary of the conference was presented in the closing address of President Stig Enemark.

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