

GIM INTERNATIONAL INTERVIEWS DR CLARISSA AUGUSTINUS AND TEO CHEEHAI

A Paradigm Shift

The 5th Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) Partnersâ€™ Meeting held in The Hague, The Netherlands, in November 2013 was the ideal occasion to interview Dr Clarissa Augustinus â€“ the key driver behind GLTN â€“ and Teo CheeHai, president of FIG. Here, they discuss what GLTN means for surveyors.

Clarissa, the Global Land Tool Network is already recognised throughout the world. Do you agree that it has achieved a lot?

Yes, there have been many achievements. When we started, we needed a more affordable alternative to the current land administration system which was also interoperable with the current systems. We developed the social tenure domain model (STDM). In one country, we have piloted STDM at municipal level and now the national government wants to scale it up. We started with a very small team; now, it has been popularised and is also being used by slum dweller federations such as SDI as well as by people working in customary areas. They know that this tool can give them information which allows them to plan, to form a constituency around their rights and to manage the land better.

Teo, why is the GLTN partnership important for surveyors?

The GLTN partnership allows us to actively engage in issues and challenges, particularly in the development, demonstration and deployment of appropriate practices and land tools that leverage on our sciences, technologies and knowledge we have acquired over the years. The partnership is also important in alerting, informing and educating the profession, particularly about the scale of the matter and the fact that billions of people are still in need of secure land and property rights.

Clarissa, I have noticed that all partners are equal but the surveyors seem to be particularly prominent.

Yes, when we identified the gaps in terms of land tools we found that many of them related to land administration and surveying. So when setting up the agenda of GLTN tools, which we are still working on, many of them are in the domain of surveyors. The development of pro-poor land tools for surveyors and barefoot surveyors is a natural linkage with GLTN. Having land administration organisations as key supporters of GLTN has been absolutely critical to the success of GLTN. And it has drawn other partners who want to engage with surveyors towards the multi-sided GLTN platform.

The continuum of land rights has brought about a paradigm shift. Clarissa, is it ready for implementation?

Essentially we can talk about 20 countries that have already moved away from freehold, individual parcels as the only solution for tenure security. The most robust continuum of land rights has been set up by the Namibian government; in 2012, it passed the Flexible Land Tenure Act which is now being implemented. This is the most robust version of the continuum because entails three tenure types – a starter title, a landhold and then a freehold – as a form of property ladder. This entails three tenure types with three subsystems within the same legal framework and institutional system, linking a local property office with the national deeds registry.

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