

Capacity Building

FIG president Stig Enemark and vice-president Paul van der Molen attended the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on "Transparency in Land Administration" a Capacity Building Programme for Africa™, held at UN-HABITAT in Nairobi, Kenya, from 29th to 31st January 2007. This meeting was organised by UN-HABITAT and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), in co-operation with the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), Enschede, The Netherlands. The GLTN is facilitated by UN-HABITAT to promote the development of innovative tools and to adopt a more multidisciplinary approach to land. It also exemplifies an increased focus on land and tenure security.

Transparency is a crucial component of any functioning land administration, in particular in view of the scarcity of clear and credible information on land availability and transactions and poor dissemination of public information on land rights and policies. The risk of corruption and inequalities are very real in land allocation and management. Consequences for the poor often take the form of difficult access to land assets, unawareness of land policies and legal frameworks, ignorance concerning land transactions and prices, misallocation of land rights, land grabbing and abuse. When in place, transparency can encourage civic engagement and stakeholder accountability by rendering the public decision-making arena more accessible. This in turn strengthens confidence in government and public agencies and has a positive economic impact.

The EGM brought together approximately 35 participants from Sub-Saharan Africa and internationally, identifying issues and priorities for exploration of the area of land-administration transparency and a road map for the way forward. Participants presented their experiences in land, governance and training and capacity building, drawing on international academic and professional expertise while focusing specifically on the realities of Sub-Saharan Africa. President Enemark and vice-president van der Molen were invited to present their own views on the subject of transparency in relation to capacity building. They participated in a workshop developing the basis for a capacity programme.

From the perspective of capacity building it was concluded that there was a need for unconventional approaches and for changes of mindset. We were taking rules "as given"™ rather than finding innovative ways to reflect on land. Two issues were relevant: updating of curricula in all land-related professions, and training of trainers (including re-training lecturers). Knowledge could be "taught"™. People could be trained in skills. In terms of attitudes, a positive environment was needed to create confidence and where there was room for reflection on behaviour, and support was required to sustain new behaviour. Short training courses could provide awareness, guidance and encouragement. To increase the impact of training we needed people to be ready to implement outcomes. People needed to work on specific cases where they could directly implement ideas and discuss these with others within a mutual support network. This would require some combination of workshop and training based on own needs.

It was necessary systematically to address lack of transparency; for example, at what point do land administrators get corrupted? We watch one set of corrupt practises being replaced by another, and this "cascades up"™. There is usually evidence for prosecution, but other social/cultural conditions apply in Africa. Embedded understanding of "corruption"™ as a concept meant a need to reorient all role layers and allow the results to cascade down. Lack of transparency was not restricted to Africa. The next phase would be joint execution of courses, together with regional training and capacity-building institutions targeted mainly at policy-makers during 2007 and 2008.

Mentoring

FIG Commission 2 together with Lund University has started a Mentorship Programme Network. This initiative began during the FIG Congress held in Munich in October 2006. The aim is to create a worldwide network for student mentorship programmes and has now started at Lund University (Sweden) for final-year students on the MSc course in Land Surveying and Management. The student has one professional land surveyor as his/her personal mentor during the final year of studies and thesis work. The mentorship programme is based at Lund University but integrated into activities of the Swedish Association of Chartered Surveyors and the Swedish Society of Real Estate Economics. In its second phase the Network is now interested in getting other universities involved. The leading idea is to create a network of membership programmes and thus provide students with contacts with others abroad. These are likely to develop the network, such as via a student forum, personal blogs, wikipedia and other network links. The mentors could also join the network, but we believe that the students might be the first enthusiasts in developing it. For more information: <http://fig-forum.student.lth.se/index.php>.