

Holger Magel attends 5th Map Asia 2006

Co-sponsored by FIG, the 5th Map Asia 2006 took place in Bangkok, Thailand from 29th August to 1st September 2006. FIG president Professor Holger Magel attended the event, organised by FIG corporate member GIS Development in co-operation with Thai Survey and GIS authorities. GIS Development President Dr M. P. Narayanan welcomed about one thousand delegates from more than thirty countries to the conference, the overarching theme of which was "GeoICT for Good Governance". Prof. Magel, in his keynote speech entitled "Geographic Information: Global trends and perspectives for sustainable development", pointed out that Geographic Information, GIS or GeoICT were not ends in themselves, but must all contribute to a better life and more sustainability. He underlined the need for good governance as a means of reducing poverty and corruption, and the interrelationship between good governance and sound land information, land policy, land administration/land management and land use, as postulated in the famous Bathurst Declaration. At the invitation of the Royal Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative and the Bavarian development foundation Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, Prof. Magel visited projects focused on land reform, legalising informal settlement by landless people in coastal zones.

Andreas Drees attends CNG and FAO in Italy

FIG vice-president Dr Andreas Drees, and FIG director Markku Villikka visited Rome from 11th to 13th September 2006 to attend the first international "Professional Enhancement Course for Surveyors" organised by the Consiglio Nazionale Geometri (CNG) in co-operation with the University of Parma. There were about 25 participants representing most regions of Italy, and invited students from several European and Mediterranean countries (Greece, Germany, Malta, Israel and Jordan). The teachers were professors and experts from Italy, Greece and Turkey. A special feature of this course was its three-week format covering all aspects of surveying. CNG plans to develop the course as a tradition. Vice-president Drees emphasised the importance of such courses in a globalising world. He also encouraged other member associations to consider the concept of CNG in organising their CPD (Continuous Professional Development) programmes from two aspects: bringing participants from other countries to increase international networking among surveyors, and giving these courses in foreign languages. Other opening addresses were given by CNG president Piero Panunzi, Professor Casella, leader of the course from the University of Pavia, and Kurt Rieder, president of the European Group of Surveyors (EGoS). During his visit to Rome, vice-president Drees and the FIG director also visited the headquarters of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). A FAO Land Tenure Service meeting provided the opportunity for them to meet Dr Paul Munro-Faure, head of the Land Tenure Service, Dr Mika TÄ¶rhÄ¶nen and Dr David Palmer. The mid-term programme in land-tenure services focuses on following normative activities: land tenure in emergency work, compulsory purchase of land and compensation, state land management, low-cost land tenure security, good governance in land administration, designing post-emergency land-tenure institutions, and making land information accessible to the poor. The current field activities of FAO tenure services include more than twenty projects, ranging from technical support in project preparation and implementation to supervision of the FAO field programme and those of the World Bank and other international finance institutions. Projects include land consolidation, land administration and land taxation, and common property resource management.

FIG President in Morocco

Professor Holger Magel visited Morocco and the headquarters and regional offices of FIG member association ONIGT in Rabat and Casablanca from 9th to 17th September. At the invitation of FIG academic member the Institut Agronomique et VÄ©tÄ©rinaire Hassan II, Prof. Magel gave a lecture on the "Challenges and chances for the profession of surveyors". Once again Magel expressed the need to better attract and integrate students and young professionals into the activities and delegations of FIG and FIG members. Answering questions put to him by geodetic students of this famous university Magel encouraged ONIGT president and university institutes to give grants to students to enable them to attend FIG conferences. With regard to university education, Prof. Magel requested very comprehensive curricula covering items and disciplines exceeding traditional surveying disciplines. Given the background of challenges in urban and rural areas facing Morocco now and in the long-term, something of which Prof. Magel had learned in discussions with mayors and experts during a technical tour of the country, he said the education of surveyors should focus on urban and rural planning, development and land administration. Another focus should be management based on sound education in the GIS field and on soft skills like rhetoric and presentation, conflict resolution abilities, and communication with politicians, decision-makers and citizens!