

KEYNOTE BY CLARISSA AUGUSTINUS, GLTN, AT UN-GGIM HIGH LEVEL FORUM

Let's Solve the Problem in Our Generation!

The Third High Level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM), held from 22-24 October 2014 in Beijing, PR China, was hosted by the Chinese government through the National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation (NASG) with the theme 'Sustainable Development with Geospatial Information'. The Forum was organised based on the mandate from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to convene global forums to promote comprehensive dialogue on global geospatial information management with all relevant governments, non-governmental organisations (such as FIG) and the private sector.

The Forum was attended by 261 delegates from 44 countries, nine United Nations representatives and 27 representatives from international organisations and the private sector. FIG was represented by vice-president Pengfei Cheng and president CheeHai Teo. A total of five sessions were programmed: 'Geospatial information for the post-2015 development agenda'; 'Sustainable cities and human settlements'; 'Climate change and disaster mitigation'; 'Science, technology, and innovation to measure and monitor progress'; and 'Working together across borders and regions'.

The second session, on 'Sustainable cities and human settlements', was moderated by the FIG president. One of the keynotes in this session was on 'Sustainable Land Administration and Management'. This keynote, presented by Dr Clarissa Augustinus (UN-Habitat/GLTN), highlighted rapid population growth, urbanisation (and slums) and food insecurity. Cities are dysfunctional because of improper planning and manipulation with legal tools. The private sector is capturing urban space – plot by plot, partial plan by partial plan; there are many illegal subdivisions and parcel boundary 're-definitions' (for example, roads becoming increasingly narrow). Any value of growth is captured exclusively by the private sector. Conventional land administration (LA) systems including the geospatial information framework are not delivering at scale. There is no security of tenure for the citizens in the majority of cities, and there is no information for city management. Areas with no LA are susceptible to illegal crops, rebel movements and Ebola. Most urban lands are outside the land register and conventional LA is not affordable. In her keynote, Dr Augustinus said that 'business as usual' is not possible in combination with sustainability of our planet. There is an urgent need to build affordable and sustainable systems to identify the way land is occupied and used. For coverage, currency and affordability, a fit-for-purpose approach to land administration can be adopted. This is flexible and pragmatic; it is not imposed through rigid regulations, demands for spatial accuracy and systems that are unsustainable for less-developed countries. Fit-for-purpose land administration can lead to incremental improvements over time, and is a game-changer. She mentioned the Social Tenure Domain Model as one of the new tools related to a new way of thinking to get currency and coverage. The land issue and especially land administration lies in the critical path of sustainability of our planet. Dr Augustinus concluded her keynote with the words: "Let's solve this problem in our generation!"

The Beijing Declaration published by GGIM after the event in China includes explicit reference to fit-for-purpose land administration: "Affirm the importance of good land administration and management to address the challenges for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, specifically supporting the development of fit-for-purpose land administration and geospatial information approaches in developing countries."

This is an important recognition of FIG's contribution to the global agenda and very relevant for the profession.

<https://www.gim-international.com/content/article/let-s-solve-the-problem-in-our-generation>
