

Welcome Address

Professor Stig ENEMARK, FIG Vice President, Denmark.

Deputy Minister Hurtardo-Lopez, dear chairman and friend John Parker; distinguished guests, dear colleagues.

It is a great honour for me to address such a distinguished audience on behalf of FIG, its council and commissions, and its almost 100 member associations throughout the world representing around 250,000 surveyors world wide. Firstly I would like to thank our hosts of INEGI for their hospitality and commitment to arrange this Special Forum. A special thank must go to professor John Parker for his tireless efforts on behalf of FIG to organise this conference that is based on the terms of reference adopted at the UN Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas held in New York January 2001. However, in spite of all the efforts the final goal was never achieved without the commitment and contributions of our main funding sponsors namely the government of Canada, the government of USA, and the World Bank.

We should all appreciate that this important event is now commencing with a focus that may be one of the most important issues on the political agenda today. The focus is on property rights and on developing appropriate institutional, legal and technical processes to integrate land administration and topographic mapping programs within the context of a wider national land policy. This is the key message in the UN resolution adopted 2001, and this is the focus we will deal during the next two days through case studies and intensive discussions.

This agenda is of course political. Insecure property rights hinder good governance and the emergence of engaged civil society. It is as simple as that. Without effective access to property, economies are unable to progress and the goal of sustainable development cannot be realised. However, the creation and implementation of sound land administration is not as simple as that.

First there is the need to address the **policy issues** associated with building sound land administration. Land policy is a part of the national policy on promoting objectives such as economic development, social justice and equity, and political stability. Land policies may be associated with issues such as: access to land; security of tenure; land transactions and access to credit; sustainable management and control of natural resources and the environment. Every effort should be made to encourage the full and active participation of local communities in formulating and implementing the political agenda.

Secondly there is the need to establish sound **land administration institutions** that effectively address the constantly evolving requirements of the community. In this context, institutions mean the legal and social framework, that includes the property concept as such as well as the laws and regulations and organisations necessary for implementing sound land administration policies serving the community needs. This framework must of course be responsive to local requirements and conditions and they must be open and transparent.

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Thirdly there is the need for designing and implementing the relevant **land administration functions** in the areas of land tenure, land value, land use and land development; and also the infrastructure for the data sets presenting information on the natural and built environment. I will come back to that in more details in my presentation later today.

The Land administration issues were also addressed in the so-called Bathurst Declaration that was a joint effort of FIG and UN in 1999 focusing on Land Administration for Sustainable Development. The workshop in Bathurst, Australia, was composed to include invited experts in Land Administration from throughout the world. This weeks special forum, however, is designed to establish political awareness and to bridge the gap between the experts and the policy decision-makers responsible for the political and financial consequences.

In this respect FIG is committed to work with the international organisations such as the UN, including UN-Habitat, UNFAO, UNEP, UNDP, and the World Bank. We are of course very happy, that FIG is recognised as formal partner of UN. The result of this partnership has been fruitful and very impressive over the latest years and has resulted in a number of projects, publications and declarations. This event will add an important step in this process, focusing on the American region and especially on the emerging economies where the integration of land administration and topographic mapping programs will make a substantial contribution to economic growth, social stability and environmental balance.

FIG and the international surveying community therefore strongly support this special forum and we wish all the best for the outcome to be a great success.

Thanks very much.