

Welcome,

My name is Matt Turner. I am the Director of the Land Tenure Center here at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. On behalf of the Land Tenure Center and the University in general, I welcome you all to Madison. We are honored to be part of the first North American meeting of Commission 7 and are excited about the topic of this symposium on new technologies for land administration. The University of Wisconsin Madison is renowned for its research and teaching in the areas of environmental management and monitoring. It is quite appropriate that you have chosen to hold your meetings and symposium here.

Secure access to land is a fundamental economic development, environmental, and social justice issue around the world. The work of this Commission of the FIG represents a crucial part of achieving these goals. These goals cannot be achieved simply through the application of technology and management principles. To be effective, such applications must be adapted to the particular institutional, social and economic contexts around the world. This is why we see the work of Commission 7 within the FIG as so important.

The concerns of Commission 7 overlap with those of the research center I direct here at the University of Wisconsin – the Land Tenure Center. Our work generally revolves around applied research and training centered on addressing problems of poverty, conflict, and land degradation related to land tenure and natural resource management. Since its establishment in 1962, the Land Tenure Center or LTC has evolved into the leading university-based institution on land policy in the world. We are especially known for our applied research on key issues of land tenure and land use, agrarian reform, land markets, legislative drafting, land registration and titling, institutional dimensions of rural development, and environmental/natural resource management.

The LTC emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach and collaboration with host-country institutions and individuals in policy analysis, research, training, and implementation. We also have always worked closely with

university students – consistent with the educational mission of the university. Through our work with students we hope to have an influence on subsequent generations of experts and creators of knowledge.

LTC continues to evolve. Our broad mission is the same as it was in the 1960s, but we now are part of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin. The Institute for Environmental Studies is one of the most important centers for environmental research and graduate training in North America. Our close ties with the Institute give us a great opportunity to perform more interdisciplinary work on the relationship between environment and land tenure. Research topics of current interest in the Center include:

how different land tenure regimes impact the sustainability of natural resource management,

land retention among minority communities throughout North America,

land registration and administration, and

the socio-economic impacts of recognizing women's rights to land and property.

The topic of this Symposium, Innovative Technology for Land Administration, is a very important and timely one. As you are all very aware, rapid technological change has led to rapidly expanding capabilities in land monitoring, registration, and administration over the past two decades. Increased computing power and storage and continuing innovations in database management have greatly improved the potential for accurate and efficient systems of land registration and monitoring. Accelerating innovations in the realms of geodesy, GPS and GIS have fundamentally changed the work that surveyors do. Increased availability of remotely-sensed data and improvements in computer-aided image classification and spatial analysis has greatly improved our ability to monitor land-use and landcover change.

These are all exciting developments which greatly increase our abilities in land administration. Land administration agencies need to make sensible choices about incorporating these technologies into their land management systems. Land managers also need to be aware of the new opportunities, constraints, and demands on land management institutions. Just the huge increase in data availability places new demands on land administrative agencies. Institutional and technological change are highly inter-linked. It is important for land managers to develop flexible management structures that are able to adapt to changing technologies. It is also important for managers to be able to evaluate the appropriateness of certain technologies given the capabilities and goals of their agencies.

Commission 7 represents a body of professionals that is very well placed to provide guidance and training in these matters. The organizers of this symposium have assembled a series of highly-qualified speakers to address a range of pertinent topics. I wish you all a pleasant stay here in Madison and am hopeful that this symposium will stimulate your thinking on these issues to the benefit of your home institutions and countries.

Thank you for your time..