

## Welcoming Remarks, Opening Ceremony, FIG Congress 2002

**Robert W. FOSTER, President of FIG**

Executive Director Tibaijuka,  
President Dangermond,  
Congress Director Clawson,  
Friends and colleagues:

I welcome you to this twenty-second FIG International Congress. Twenty-two quadrennial congresses suggests that FIG is eighty-eight years old; in fact we are closer to a century and a quarter in age having been founded in 1878. The founders of FIG were the national surveying associations of (7) Western European nations. They would be surprised and gratified to learn that today FIG represents the surveying profession in nearly 100 nations, with 88 member associations from 75 countries, (11) affiliate members in countries where the surveying profession is just beginning to organize itself, (20) corporate members, (49) academic members from (31) countries and (16) correspondent members from countries where no national association exists. All told, FIG represents and serves the interests of a quarter million surveyors around the world.

Those quarter-million surveyors describe their profession differently in different parts of the world. It is surveying, geodesy, and geomatics. It is also valuation and planning. We are geospatial data specialists and land administration professionals, surveying engineers and engineering surveyors. We are all that and more. But whatever we call ourselves, it is the land and its attributes and resources that bring our disciplines together.

Some of us concentrate on defining the individual parcel of land; some study the shape of the earth and whole land masses; some are concerned with position, others with ownership and still others with value. We use a wide variety of tools, instruments and systems to make available the results of our work so that others of us may plan for the best use of the land and its resources.

Where land is used well there may be peace and prosperity. Where land and its resources are wasted there follows unrest, starvation and migration. Where there is conflict and unrest in the world, land is always a central issue. The 19th century philosopher Thomas Malthus was one of the first to argue that the world's ecosystems have a direct impact on politics. Now at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century politicians are beginning to pay attention to ozone depletion and global warming, over-population and urban sprawl, pollution and resource shortages. World leaders are searching for ways to address these issues through international cooperation and foreign policies. FIG and our sister organizations the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) and the International Cartographic Association (ICA) have

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Opening Ceremony

Robert W. Foster

Welcome Address to the XXII Congress of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG),  
Washington, D.C., U.S.A., 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2002

FIG XXII International Congress

Washington, D.C. USA, April 19-26 2002

participated in recent years in several United Nations-led conferences convened to address these issues.

Civilizations are learning to use the land to *advantage* but the world has yet to learn to use land *well*. Sustainable development has been proposed as a goal for the 21<sup>st</sup> century if we are to balance our growing populations to the potentials of our earth. Sustainable development means using the land and its biophysical resources to meet the needs of *this* generation without inhibiting future generations from meeting *their* needs. Only purposeful governments and committed peoples can achieve the sustainable development goal. In the meantime, someone must define and quantify the land and its resources. There must be a common language to describe and transmit attributes of the land. There must be a system of information delivery to enable logical planning. Land has value; in order for land markets to be administered justly and equitably there must be a common method of valuation.

A standardization of geographic data is the basis for a common language to describe attributes of the land. Geo-spatial information will be collected, processed, archived and delivered more efficiently through regional, national and global spatial data infrastructures (“SDIs”) being developed now in over 40 nations. Government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and the private sector are all working toward a new Global SDI. Tomorrow morning at this Congress a special Plenary Session will discuss the implementation of local, national and regional compatible Spatial Data Infrastructures and its contribution to a Global Spatial Data Infrastructure. On following days in the FIG Technical Program at this Congress there will be technical sessions on developing trends in SDI, SDI in support of sustainable development, and national and regional examples of spatial data infrastructures.

Land valuation is not often thought of as a component of surveying here in the United States but valuation is included in the international definition of surveying. The US Appraisal Institute is a member of FIG, along with the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping. A past president of the Appraisal Institute, Brian Glanville, will participate in a Wednesday Plenary Session on Housing Policy in the New Millennium. Technical sessions on trends and issues in RE valuation, valuation methodologies, education, standards, and special valuation problems will be presented this week by FIG Commission 9 on Valuation and Management of Real Estate.

A third Plenary Session, Thursday morning, on Sustainable Development and Property Management will be addressed by Gershon Feder, Research Manager from the Development Research Group of the World Bank. Mr. Feder will present the World Bank perspective on property in sustainable development. Technical sessions on sustainability and land tenure in the context of sustainable development will continue the discussion through this week of Congress.

Sustainable development may be one of the most critical objectives for civilization in our time. As professionals, whether we call our activity surveying, geomatics, photogrammetry and remote

sensing, cartography, valuation or the more all-inclusive *land administration*, we have a vital role in the movement toward sustainable development. Participants of this 22<sup>nd</sup> FIG Congress and ACSM-ASPRS Conference and Technology Exhibition 2002 will find a rich mixture of presentations on these grand and sweeping subjects. But the more utilitarian subjects of education, technical standards, instrumentation, cadastre, legal aspects, the history of surveying, gender issues in surveying, hydrography, height determination and deformation measurement and so on, are also included in the hundreds of presentations here this week.

I am often confronted with the question, what is the future of surveying now that GPS makes it possible for anybody to do what we do? My answer is that the future of surveying is full, complex and demanding - as the program here at Congress 2002 demonstrates.

If land is at the center of all the world's concerns, surveying is at the center of the solution to one of the world's greatest challenges: providing the opportunity for future generations to live and prosper as well as we do here in the West. An immediate and pressing problem concerns the living conditions of peoples in the developing countries. FIG has brought the expertise of our members to a collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT in several recent projects. The Executive Director of UN-HABITAT has graciously consented to bring a keynote address to this Congress this morning.

Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka was appointed Executive Director of the UN-HABITAT in July, 2000. Prior to this she had been the special coordinator for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked and Small Island Countries for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In this role Ms. Tibaijuka was responsible for strengthening the capacity of least developed countries in trade negotiations with the World Trade Organization.

A Tanzanian national, Ms. Tibaijuka holds a doctorate of Science in Agricultural Economics from the Swedish University of Agriculture in Uppsala. From 1993 to 1998, when she joined UNCTAD, she was associate professor of economics at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. During this period she was also a member of the Tanzanian government delegation to several United Nations summits including the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul, 1996); the World Food Summit (Rome 1996); the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995) and the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995). At these summits Ms. Tibaijuka was an active member of the Civil Society and NGO Forums.

It is an honor for me to introduce Dr. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT.