



International Federation of Surveyors
Fédération Internationale des Géomètres
Internationale Vereinigung der Vermessungsingenieure
FIG COMMISSION 4
Hydrography

*Dr. Michael Sutherland (Canada, and Trinidad and Tobago)
Chair (2011-2014), Commission 4, International Federation of Surveyors (FIG)
March 16, 2012*

**COMMISSION 4 PARTICIPATES IN UNRCC – PCGIAP INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON
SPATIALLY ENABLED GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY
14th - 16th February 2012, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

The International Symposium on Spatially Enabled Government and Society, hosted by the Department of Survey and Mapping, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia was recently held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia over the period February 14 – 16, 2012. The Symposium was sponsored by the Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific (PCGIAP) with support from the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association (GSDI), The International Cartographic Association (ICA) and the International Society for Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing (ISPRS). The main symposium (15th and 16th February) was preceded by an Expert Group Meeting on Spatially Enabled Government & Society held on 14th February and in which FIG representatives played active roles. FIG was represented at the expert meeting and main symposium by CheeHai TEO (President), Professor Ing. Rudolf Staiger (Vice President), Dr Michael Sutherland (Chair, Commission 4), Dr Daniel Steudler (Chair, FIG Task Force on Spatially Enabled Society), Peter Laarakker (Dutch Kadaster), Enrico Rispoli (CNGGeL Italy) and Brent Jones (ESRI).

The symposium sought to emphasise the importance of spatial information to governance decision making processes that support the pursuit of economic, social, political and environmental objectives. Many countries including Malaysia, Japan, Korea, The Netherlands, Singapore, Brunei, Trinidad and Tobago, Iran, Australia, Switzerland, and Hong Kong made presentations. Representatives from institutions and organizations such as FIG, ICA, Trimble, ESRI and the World Bank also made presentations. Commission 4 Chair, Dr. Michael Sutherland presented on *Spatially Enabled Governance* and underscored a number of important points:

- The historic divisionist view of the world is the root cause for the development of silo institutions that struggle to share information needed to make better governance decisions;
- Governance is best approached from a holistic point of view;

- A change of mentality from tessellations of reality to systems thinking is vital in designing information systems to support holistic governance;
- Spatial information is a key contributor to the governance decision making process;
- The need for spatial enablement of government and society has been recognised for decades, especially among geomatics professionals;
- Spatial enablement also relates to the marine environment.



Many other symposium speakers presented various local institutional, technological and social barriers to spatial enablement that had to be overcome, but the foci of their presentations were mostly land-related. Hydrographic and other marine and maritime spatial information are very important components of the spatial enablement of government and society, and Commission 4 must rise to the challenge.