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SURVEYORS PLAY A FUNDAMENTAL ROLE IN LAND TENURE AND FIG IS WORKING WITH THE UN'S FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION TO IMPROVE ITS GOVERNANCE IN COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD. PAUL MUNRO-FAURE, LEILA SHAMSAIFAR AND LOUISE FRIIS-HANSEN LOOK AT THE LATEST RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENTS

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has worked with the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) for many years, focusing on how land professionals can help to improve governance of tenure. Both organisations recognise that land and other natural resources provide the basis for everyone's food and shelter, economic production, and social, cultural and religious practices. Rights of access and of tenure are increasingly affected by climate change, natural disasters, population growth, urbanisation and the growing demands for land for agriculture and bio-energy initiatives. Responsible governance of tenure of land and other natural resources can help to reduce undernourishment, hunger and poverty, and create opportunities in support of social and economic development. Weak governance hinders sustainable use of the environment, hinders economic growth, and can condemn people to hunger, poverty and loss of life through violent conflict.

Land governance has become a global development priority and with it the work of land professionals – on 25 September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new Sustainable Development Agenda 2015-2030. The targets to be achieved by the 193 member countries include tenure and thereby provide unprecedented global importance and responsibilities to the work of land professionals.

The inclusion of tenure targets in the new agenda reflects the progressive recognition of the core importance of tenure in the

preceding years. Land professionals have been at the heart of these developments, particularly the framework of the development process of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT).

The VGGT were the comprehensive global consensus on what constitute internationally accepted principles and practices for tenure and its administration. Negotiations included the governments of more than 130 countries from all regions of the world, as well civil society organisations, farmers' associations, private sector representatives, professional associations and research institutions. The VGGT were officially endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security, the United Nations' forum for policies concerning world food security, on 11 May 2012.

A renewed impetus

The VGGT have since received an extraordinary amount of global recognition and take-up by all stakeholder groups. In several countries, their endorsement has resulted in a renewed impetus to address tenure issues and pick up discussions where they had ended, sometimes more than 10 years previously. The director-general of the FAO called their endorsement an historic moment, and the G8, G20, Rio+20 and the UN General Assembly have encouraged their implementation. Governments, property professionals, developers, investors, civil society, private sector companies (such as Coca-Cola



The Committee on World Food Security endorsing the VGGT at FAO headquarters in Rome, May 2012. ©FAO/Alessia Pierdomenico



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Land professionals and universities should not just adopt a narrow technical role in implementing the VGGT, but should also contribute to the wider policy topics being addressed by the VGGT. © FAO



UN-FAO is developing a capacity development suite consisting of technical guides, e-learning and structured learning programmes. FIG encourages its members to use these products. © FAO/Chiara Nicodemi



National platforms are being created in many countries to make VGGT recommendations of change at the country level. FIG is encouraging land professionals of member organisations to participate, influence and add value to their VGGT national platforms. © FAO

Enterprises, PepsiCo, Nestlé and Unilever), professional associations (such as FIG and the International Union of Notaries) and citizens are using them as the reference on how to improve governance of tenure.

Within the context of the FIG Work Plan for 2015-2018, the FIG Council has a vision of a “modern and sustainable surveying profession in support of society, environment and economy by providing innovative, reliable and best practice solutions to our rapidly changing and complex world, acting with integrity and confidence about the usefulness of surveying, and translating these words into action”. At the 2016 FIG Working Week, several important aspects of the VGGT framework were debated in various technical sessions, including a special session under the Council and the Academic Members Forum.

How to support implementation

Improving the governance of tenure requires contributions by all, including ensuring synergies with similar initiatives, as different actors and stakeholder groups can make their own contributions. Surveyors, whether in their everyday work or in their contribution to national, regional and global processes, play a fundamental role.

At the FIG Working Week special session, a roundtable of panellists together with experts, assessed these issues in depth, to inform an agenda for concerted efforts. The result was a set of actions for FIG and its members to improve governance of tenure in the context of the VGGT (see box). These actions will be used on a range of platforms to continue the debate and build new ways to implement good governance in land.

The Academic Members’ Forum concentrated on how to take stock of actions taken in implementing the VGGT and on identifying additional requirements to support the inclusion of the VGGT in curricula and research. The VGGT are already part of the curricula in different university courses from undergraduate to PhD level in domains including geomatics, geo-informatics, land administration, land management, real estate and land governance. A range of teaching methods is used, fitting several learning levels and aims.

One of the main conclusions of the discussion was the centrality of the relationship between national associations and academic members to the successful application of the VGGT. Participants found it particularly important to define professional needs and skillsets in close collaboration with national associations: on the one hand, national associations inform academic and training institutions about the need to include the VGGT in curricula and accredit programmes; on the other, academic institutions play a role in informing national associations about the need to adhere to the VGGT in their work and define the

FIG ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE VGGT

1. FIG members should not just adopt a narrow technical role in implementing the VGGT, but should also contribute to the wider policy topics being addressed by the VGGT.
2. A wide range of professions are actively implementing the VGGT. FIG should engage with them and learn from their experiences in promoting, disseminating and implementing the VGGT.
3. FIG needs to help with the use of the VGGT in the day-to-day operations of members, as there is a clear need. It should therefore:
 - Encourage the promotion and dissemination of the VGGT in a form that land professionals can easily interpret and implement.
 - Raise awareness of the VGGT technical guides that can be used by members at the operational level.
 - Encourage FIG participation in the drafting and reviewing of future VGGT technical guides.
4. National platforms are being created in many countries to implement VGGT recommendations. These are multi-stakeholder platforms and FIG should encourage land professionals to contribute to implementing the VGGT in their countries.
5. UN-FAO is developing a capacity development suite consisting of technical guides, e-learning and structured learning programmes. FIG should ensure links to the VGGT e-learning packages for land professionals are featured on its website.
6. The VGGT have a significant impact on the education and training for land professions and should be reflected in the corresponding curricula. FIG academic forum and commission 2 should therefore continue their work to influence courses of land professional to adopt and embed the VGGT into the corresponding curricula.
7. A response to the VGGT from FIG and land professionals is long overdue. FIG needs to consider a statement about the adoption and implementation of the VGGT by land professionals and release it during the FIG Working Week in Helsinki.

professional needs and skillsets required by professionals for them to operate within the framework of the VGGT.

The forum decided to form a working group. This group is now researching the impact of the VGGT on the surveying profession and the way in which surveying curricula around the world present the VGGT. The group plans to present its results at the next FIG Working Week, which will be held between 29 May 2 June in Helsinki, Finland, this year.

ONE OF THE MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE DISCUSSION WAS THE CENTRALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ACADEMIC MEMBERS TO THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION OF THE VGGT

Paul Munro-Faure is deputy director and Leila Shamsaifar is land tenure officer at FAO (www.fao.org). Louise Friis-Hansen is director of FIG (www.fig.net). You can download the VGGT from www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/

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