

## **FIG WORKING WEEK - MARRAKECH, MOROCCO,**

### **COMMISSION 9 - DR. FRANCES PLIMMER**

#### **WORKING GROUPS**

This was the first time that Commission 9 delegates had had a chance to meet face to face to discuss the proposed Commission 9 Working Plan. Much discussion was held in Sydney 2010, and email communication in advance of the Marrakech meeting meant that most people were well informed about the Plan. However, some attendees had not received earlier communication and an effort has been made to add new names to the Commission 9 circulation list.

It was unfortunate that three out of the five Working / Study Group chairs were unable to attend, but two were ably represented by their vice-chairs and the discussion (in advance of the Technical Sessions) demonstrated the continued support for the topics chosen.

#### **WORKING GROUP 9.1 PROPERTY TAXATION**

It should be explained that Working Group was developed largely from discussions in Sydney to comprise three separate strands within the overarching heading of Property Taxation. Following discussions with the FIG Bureau, it has been agreed that this one working group will have three Study Groups – each of which were represented at Marrakech. This working group is important because it reflects the interest of UN-HABITAT on “Appraisal (and ratings) from participatory enumeration and surveys” and it is our intention to work towards supporting our sister organisation on this topic.

##### **Study Group 9.1.1 Tax Bases**

This group is led by Professor Dr Dirk Lohr, (Germany) and vice chair, Dr Fabian Thiel (Cambodia). Dr Thiel attended the Working Week and presented a paper on ‘Education, Property Valuation and Taxation Capacity in Developing Countries: The example of Cambodia’. (This was presented in a Commission 2 session.)

##### **Study Group 9.1.2 Mass Appraisal Systems**

This group is led by Varnavas Pachoulis (Cyprus) who has yet to identify a vice-chair). He attended the working week and, together with Dr. Thiel demonstrated the breadth of coverage of these two Study Groups. He presented a paper on the work of his employer, the Land Surveys Department in Cyprus and was a main contributor to the debates subsequent to the Commission 9 meetings.

##### **Study Group 9.1.3 Successful and Efficient Taxation Systems for Emerging Economies**

This group is led by Steven Nystom (USA), who has yet to identify a vice-chair. Steven attended the working week and was a main contributor to the debates subsequent to the Commission 9 meetings.

#### **Working Group 9.2 Large Scale Land Acquisition for Agriculture.**

This working group is led by Dr Ibimena Kakulu (Nigeria), who was not able to attend. However, Dr Nuhu (Nigeria) attended many of the sessions on her behalf. This is an important Working Group

because the topic is of key interest to FAO “Responsible International Investment in Agriculture” and we will be working with the FAO to ensure that the outcome of this group is of relevance to them.

### **Working Group 9.3 Management of Public Property Assets in Developing Countries.**

This working group is led by Dr.-Ing Ingolf Burstedde (Germany) who was unable to attend. However, his interests and those of his working group were represented by the Chair of Commission 9 and, again, this topic links in with wider interest. Commission 7 has a working group covering a similar area and both working group chairs are liaising on this. Also FAO have a declared interest in the *Management of State (or Public) Lands* on its agenda and we will be working closely to ensure that we support their work.

### **TECHNICAL SESSIONS**

Commission 9 had seven Technical Sessions (of which one was a joint session with Commission 7), with some 23 papers presented in total. In one session, there was only one paper presented (the remainder scheduled were “no shows”), but in other sessions, up to five papers were presented, one of which was a flash presentation.

The Technical Sessions were well attended, but there was disappointment (and some exodus) from those sessions where papers were presented in French or Arabic with no translation, although in some cases speakers were persuaded to deal with the subsequent discussion in English.

None of the papers in the last session were presented in English and, while this seemed to be popular with some attendees, it was clear that some key Commission 9 people either did not attend, or did not stay long in the room.

Specifically, papers (and therefore Technical Sessions) focused on Valuation, Mass Appraisals, Property Taxation, Compulsory Purchase and Compensation and Property Management – covering all of the areas of the working groups.

### **Commission 9 comments**

The debate with the participants both at the Commission 9 meeting and subsequent to the paper contributions provide a good start to the 2011- 14 programme. It was clear that many Commission 9 attendees are not yet included in the Commission circulation list and this is being addressed as a matter of urgency. Similarly, clarifying the needs of our sister organisations on the topic which the Commission has identified for its working groups is a priority to ensure that (a) we do not reinvent the proverbial wheel; and (b) provide useful and complementary outcomes during the next four years.

Working / Study group chairs and vice-chairs need support and a communications network to be able to develop their work further, as well as a Commission programme of annual events. It has been proposed that Cyprus will host such an event in 2012, which should help ensure a structured progression of our work.

Thanks to Henning Elstrøm, Commission 9 has recruited three “young” secretaries to support the work and, identifying their strengths, interests and medium- to long-term ambitions will help to develop their involvement in the Commission. Their profiles will be available on the Commission’s web page and they will be encouraged to get more involved in the wider FIG work.

Dr. F. Plimmer, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011.