

Surveyors and the Global Agenda

Welcome to the start of this new regular column about how surveyors in other countries view surveying and the latest international trends. Our first contributor is Dr. Stig Enemark, president of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) and a veteran surveyor from Denmark. Enemark discusses the surveyor's role in the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, which involve the increasingly important international issue of land tenure, the social aspects of owning and mapping land.

Do surveyors have a role to play in the global agenda? From a FIG point of view the answer to this question is clearly "Yes"!

FIG is an internationally recognized NGO representing the surveying profession throughout the world. My focus in this article is FIG's strong commitment to the global agenda as presented in the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Surveyors throughout the world play a key role in attaining the MDGs through their professional functions in support of an efficient land market and effective land-use management. These functions underpin development and innovation for social justice, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.

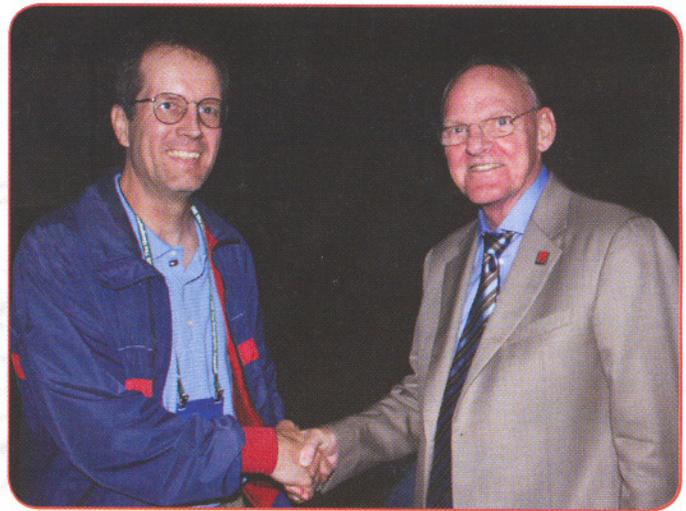
FIG is also committed to the agenda of UN-Habitat (the UN agency for human settlements) around the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN). The GLTN aims to facilitate the attainment of the MDGs through improved land management and tenure tools for poverty alleviation and the improvement of livelihoods for the poor.

The Global Agenda

The MDGs form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and the world's leading development institutions. The United Nations Millennium Summit, September 2000, established a deadline (2015) to attain the MDGs that are now placed at the heart of the global agenda.

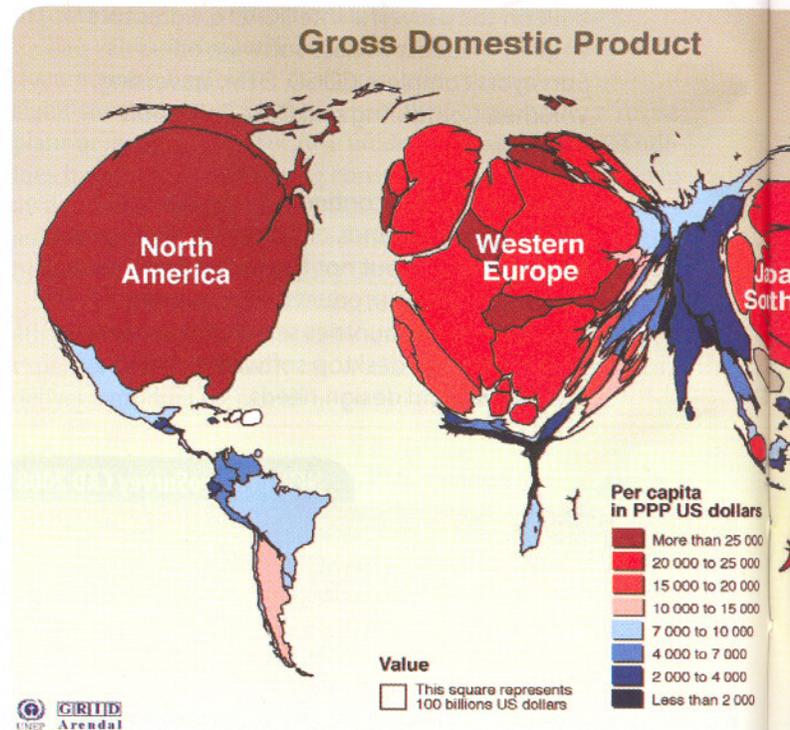
The Millennium Development Goals

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development



▲ Tom Gibson, editor of *Professional Surveyor Magazine*, with Dr. Stig Enemark at the ESRI survey summit

The MDGs represent a wider concept, a vision for the future, where the contribution of the surveying community is central and vital. This contribution includes providing relevant geographic information and databases of the built and natural environment for mapping; providing secure tenure systems; and providing systems for land valuation, land-use management, and land development. Surveyors' work forms a kind of backbone in society that supports social justice, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. These aspects are all key components within the MDGs.



▲ Fig 1 Map of the world where the territory size is shown based on the Gross Domestic Product—Source: UNEP

The global challenge can be displayed through a world map using the Gross Domestic Product as the scale showing the territory size (Fig 1). In surveying terms, the real challenge of the global agenda is about bringing this map back to scale.

The Role of FIG

The role of FIG in this regard is threefold:

1. To explain the role of the surveying profession and the surveying disciplines in terms of their contribution to the MDGs.
2. To develop and disseminate knowledge, policies, and methods towards achieving and implementing the MDGs. A number of FIG publications have already made significant contributions in this regard are available online at the FIG website: www.fig.net/publications.
3. To work closely with the UN agencies and the World Bank in merging our efforts of contributing to the implementation of the MDGs.

Pro-Poor Land Tenure Systems

Today there are about one billion slum dwellers in the world. UN-Habitat estimates that the slum population will reach 1.4 billion by 2020 if no remedial action is taken. City authorities view most people living in slums as illegal. Because of this, cities do not plan for or manage slums, and the people in them are overlooked and excluded. Conventional cadastral and land registration systems cannot supply security of tenure to the vast majority of the low-income groups and/or deal quickly enough with the scale of urban problems.

A solution to this problem may be found in the so-called Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM), originally developed as the Core Cadastral Domain Model (CCDM). The key issue here is that in traditional cadastral systems there is often an insufficient focus on pro-poor technical and legal tools. For that purpose FIG will facilitate development and testing of a prototype for an STDM as a tool to deal with the kind of social tenure that exist in informal settlements (and also in areas based on customary tenure) that cannot be accommodated in traditional cadastral systems.

Traditional cadastral and land registration systems deal with identification of properties and land parcels as a basis for securing legal rights such as title, leasehold, and easements. The STDM attempts to be able to deal more generally with the relation between objects (a parcel, construction work, or a natural asset), subjects (a person, group of people, or groups of groups), and the social tenure (including all kind of rights, restrictions, and responsibilities). Such a system, provided as open source software, should be available as a tool for managing the range of tenures found in informal settlements and should be manageable for the local communities as well as public authorities.

The MDGs serve as a visionary challenge to help garner new energies and resources for the development agenda, with a focus on outcomes. The agenda includes the basic elements for a new global partnership.

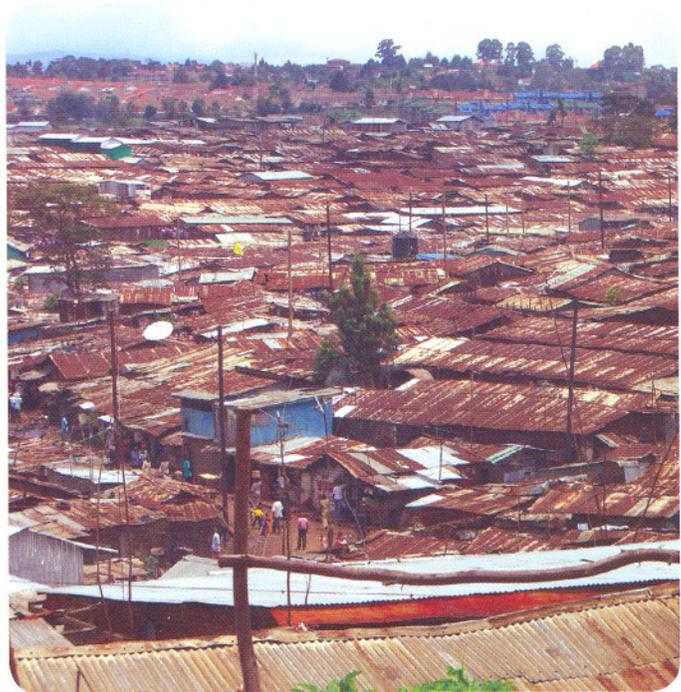
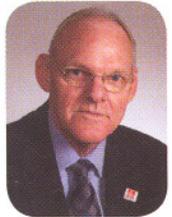
FIG already shares this global responsibility and has now established a focused partnership with both the World Bank and UN-Habitat to deal with these challenges. An outcome in support of the UN-Habitat Global Land Tools Network should be ready by the second half of 2008 to be presented at the World Urban Forum in Nanjing, October 2008. This will include a special focus on developing a model for providing secure social tenure for the poorest. Another outcome will be in the areas of capacity building and good governance in land administration in support of the MDGs. This outcome will be presented at a joint FIG/WB high profile conference in Washington DC in November 2008. ▽

This article is an extract of a presentation made by the author at the ESRI Survey Summit in San Diego, 16 June 2007.

References are at:

http://www.profsurv.com/200709_atg_refs.php

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▲ The informal settlement of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya covers 371 acres (150 hectares) and houses one million-plus slum dwellers

