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FIG Regional Conference, Montevideo, Uruguay: Youth Responsiveness in the Land Sector

The 8th FIG Regional Conference was recently held in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 26 to 29 November, in collaboration with Asociación de Agrimensores del Uruguay (AAU), the FIG Member Association in Uruguay. The conference theme 'Surveying towards Sustainable Development' emphasised the importance of future sustainability in the region, not just in the physical sense, but also professionally.

The Joint UN-Habitat/FIG Session on Youth Responsiveness in the Land Sector specifically discussed the role of youth in sustaining the profession. The first half identified the changing needs of youth, their evolving relationships with land and the role of young surveyors in linking communities to land professionals. The second half then identified key projects that required greater input from youth and land professionals, as well as a broad overview of young surveyor challenges in Latin America.

Kate Fairlie from the FIG Young Surveyors Network introduced previous events and actions undertaken by the UN-Habitat Global Land Tools Network and the FIG Young Surveyors Network. These included an 'Expert Group Meeting' that scoped out the key issues youth generally face in relation to land, and a youth forum at the UN-HABITAT World Urban Forum 6 that highlighted youth needs are heterogeneous – i.e. young people are tenants, land professionals, citizens, children and often parents, and all of these have different needs. Toril Iren Pederson, of UN-HABITAT Global Land Tools Network, presented key project



Young surveyors and the FIG president: Kate Fairlie, Melissa Robert, president CheeHai Teo, Genique Kemp, Eva-Maria Unger, Thobias Furlanetti.

examples from Ethiopia, Uganda, India and Australia. In each of these cases, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other community groups are coordinating activities relating to land rights *without the knowledge or engagement from surveyors and land professionals.*

Both speakers clearly identified that youth are likely to require new land management paradigms in the future – especially with a prediction that 60% of urban dwellers will be aged under 18 by 2030. With 1.2 billion young people in the world – more than ever before – youth are also a considerable resource to tap into.

Solomon Abebe Haile, also from UN-Habitat, presented 'The Role of Youth in the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) Pilot in Uganda'. Solomon demonstrated that the youth in this example played a vital role in implementing and gaining community acceptance of new tools and technologies. Eva-Maria Unger, from the FIG Young Surveyors Network, then described the youth contribution to disaster

management and particularly disaster recovery efforts. In her examples, youth played a key role in starting action where other parties were restricted due to politics, or a lack of initiative or creativity.

A key outcome was thus simply: youth are present, and youth are active. The session finished with local young surveyors presenting their experiences as youth and young professionals in Latin America and the Caribbean, many now enthused to take part and contribute to change.

The FIG Young Surveyors Network would like to thank the FIG Foundation for kindly sponsoring three young Latin American surveyors to attend the FIG Regional Conference in Uruguay. ◀

*Kate Fairly, Australia
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