

A 2023-26 Global Agenda for Cadastre and Land Management

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SUMMARY

Through the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), Commission 7 on Cadastre and Land Administration, cadastral land surveyors have long recognised the value of a global perspective on land administration – for building technical consensus amongst practitioners; supporting advocacy of the domain at both national and global levels; and advancing the domain more generally. Building on this tradition, and recognising the impending 2023-26 FIG working period, this paper invites a discussion on the immediate challenges and opportunities facing Commission 7, seeking input from the land administration community to participate and drive the agenda moving forward.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Through the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), Commission 7 on Cadastre and Land Administration, cadastral land surveyors have long recognised the value of a global perspective on land administration – for building technical consensus amongst practitioners; supporting advocacy of the domain at both national and global levels; and advancing the domain more generally. Building on this tradition, and recognising the upcoming commencement of the 2023-26 FIG working period, this paper explores the immediate challenges and opportunities facing Commission 7, inviting the land administration community to participate and drive the 2023-26 agenda.

2. BACKGROUND

Land administration systems are inherently (and rightly) national, state, or local institutions. They can also be community driven. They are essential to ideas of sovereignty, history, and identity: the systems reflect local norms, beliefs, and over time, changes thereof.

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Recent decades proved particularly fruitful seeing the development and scaled uptake of various global-level policy guides, standards, and tools: the FIG Statement on Cadastre (FIG, 1995); Bogor Declaration (FIG, 1996); Cadastre 2014 (FIG, 1998); Bathurst Declaration (UN-FIG, 1999); STDM/LADM data model and software (FIG-GLTN, 2010); ISO 19152 Land Administration Domain Model (LADM) (ISO, 2012); UN-Habitat Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure (VGGTs) (UN-FAO, 2012), Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration (FFP-LA) (FIG, 2014); 3D Cadastres; crowdsourced cadastres; and most recently the UN-GGIM Framework for Effective Land Administration (FELA) (UN-GGIM, 2020).

All these initiatives, guides, reports and statements helped to improve awareness and/or functioning of national or state land administration systems – particularly with regards to how

they can support responsible land governance and achievement of sustainability objectives. There were many other examples, too numerous to include here. What is important to say, is that all of the above initiatives found some antecedence or connection in FIG Commission 7.

3. CONTEMPORARY ERA

The above cross-cutting developments, and the uptake thereof, have perhaps been doubled edged for the domain of land administration. Whilst land administration gained renewed recognition in other land-related domains and international policy development circles – to the point where land-related indicators featured prominently in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015)– this ‘mainstreaming’ of land tenure recordation ultimately resulted in no standalone land administration goal.

The abovementioned developments resulted in new actors joining the land administration arena: technology development and standardisation removed barriers to entry; and sustainable development philosophy demanded an increased focus on the non-technical aspects of land administration. These can be seen as positive developments – and often led by the increasingly progressive leaders of the land administration domain: land administration must not exist as a means in itself, it should always be contributing to broader societal goals.

However, mainstreaming can result in lack of broader recognition and awareness, and a general funnelling away of resources to a domain. In many country contexts, land administration and cadastre struggles to find and train the next generation. Moreover, conventional land surveyors can no longer lay claim to the overarching mandate to build and maintain land administration systems. Indeed, the role of the land surveyor could be argued to have become obscured, or diminished. Yet, evidence from project work, and local levels, shows that the skills of the land surveyor are arguably more essential, and more in demand than ever before.

4. WAY FORWARD

This land administration paradox is arguably the key internal challenge for the domain moving forward; namely – continuing to contribute to the significant international cross-domain developments on the one hand, whilst shoring up the technical capacity (and relevance!) of land administration more locally.

Be sure! This paper is not arguing for a rebuilding of institutional and professional barriers. Rather, it is asking the question, how should the field of land administration best contribute to the sustainable development agenda, whilst ensuring the knowledge, skills, and capacity in the profession is maintained and enhanced?

Therefore, this paper is intended as an invitation to be involved and contribute views and positions on this important topic. What is the for cadastre and land management in the global agenda 2023-26? What are the key topics and themes of importance – both within the domain, but, also without? How can FIG Commission 7 best utilise its network, knowledge and advocacy abilities to support the agenda?

Your contributions and ideas are eagerly sought!

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Rohan Bennett is in-coming Chair of FIG Commission 7 (2023-26). He holds degrees in Geomatic Engineering, Information Systems, and a PhD in Land Administration, from the University of Melbourne. He has held academic and professional consulting roles with the University of Melbourne, University of Twente, Swinburne University of Technology and Kadaster Netherlands. He is widely published in the areas of land administration, cadastre and land management, with specific focus areas being application of emerging technologies and developing contexts. Recent country-level experiences include engagements with Armenia Cadastre Committee, Indonesia's ATR/BPN, NLA in Rwanda, and key government agencies in Chad.

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