

A 2023-26 Global Agenda for Cadastre and Land Management

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SUMMARY

Land administration systems are inherently (and rightly) national, state, or local. They are essential to ideas of sovereignty, history, and identity: the systems reflect local norms, beliefs, and over time, changes thereof. Meanwhile, through the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), Commission 7 on Cadastre and Land Administration, 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. 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; Bathurst Declaration; Bogor Declaration; Cadastre 2014; ISO 19152 Land Administration Domain Model (LADM); STDM/LADM software; UN-Habitat Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration (FFP-LA); 3D Cadastres; crowdsourced cadastres; and most recently the UN-GGIM Framework for Effective Land Administration (FELA), all helped to improve awareness and/or functioning of national or state land administration systems. All of these initiatives found some antecedence in FIG Commission 7. However, from another perspective, these cross-cutting developments, and the uptake thereof, have perhaps been doubled edged for the domain itself. For example, 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) – this ‘mainstreaming’ of land tenure recordation ultimately resulted in no standalone land administration goal. The developments also resulted in new actors joining the land administration arena: technology development and standardisation removed barriers to entry; and sustainable development philosophy demanded an increased in 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. However, as a result, 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, if not diminished. Yet, evidence from the local level shows that the skills of the land surveyor are arguably more essential, and more in demand than ever before. 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. Starting from this basis, this paper explores the immediate challenges and opportunities facing Commission 7, inviting the land administration community to participate and drive the 2023-26 work agenda.

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