

THE FIG AGENDA 21

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BACKGROUND

The International Federation of Surveyors FIG decided at its Congress in Brighton in 1998 to form a Task Force to prepare an FIG statement on how the Federation will implement the concept of sustainable development.

It was agreed to title the statement “FIG Agenda 21”, referring to the report from the United Nations 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development which resulted in Agenda 21. The statement shall, however, not be limited only to reflect Agenda 21. It shall as well, inter alia, reflect the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) held in Istanbul in 1996 and its result the Habitat Agenda with the Global Plan of Action. Further it is, in part, implementation of the Memorandum of understanding between FIG and UNCHS(Habitat), the Bogor and Bathurst Declarations, and the existing 1991 FIG statement on sustainable development.

Dealing with surveying, planning and management of land and water resources, laws and systems needed for access to land and security of tenure, and with geographic information in all its aspects, the surveying profession is deeply involved in issues of profound importance for sustainable development. Surveyors' training and performance can have a significant impact on the implementation of sustainable development. The aim of the FIG Agenda 21 is to show that the Federation is committed to do its utmost to develop the surveying profession and the individual surveyor to act in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

FIG is further committed to collaborate with all relevant United Nations agencies and with other non-governmental organisations in developing a mutual understanding of how surveying in all its aspects, as well as related techniques, products and services, best can contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21 world-wide.

The FIG Agenda 21 has been prepared by a Task Force that was chaired by Helge Onsrud (Norway).

WHY FIG AGENDA 21?

FIG recognises that professions play an important role in implementing sustainable development. The surveying profession plays its part through, inter alia, the planning and management of land, sea and water resources; the surveying and registration of real property; and the handling of geographic information.

Even before Rio, the International Federation of Surveyors expressed its support for the concept of sustainability as a principle guideline for development. At its annual meeting in Beijing in 1991 the organisation unanimously adopted the "FIG Statement on Sustainable Development - a Challenge and a Responsibility for Surveyors".

During the following decade FIG translated its support into a number of actions. Surveying for sustainable development has been a focus of FIG congresses, annual meetings and commission gatherings. FIG's collaboration with the United Nations has been widened and deepened. During the UN Habitat II Conference in 1996 FIG organised, in collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the International Federation for real Estate (FIABCI), one of the ten Habitat II Dialogues for the 21st Century – the Dialogue on Land and Rural-Urban Linkages – which provided valuable input to the Habitat Agenda. A joint UN-FIG meeting was held in Indonesia in 1996, resulting in the Bogor Declaration on Cadastral Reform. The collaboration between UN and FIG in promoting sustainable development was further developed in a workshop in Australia in 1999 which prepared the Bathurst Declaration on Land Administration for Sustainable Development. Co-operation between FIG and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements UNCHS(Habitat) was crystallised into a Memorandum of Understanding in 1997 with a second extension, covering the period 2000–2003 being signed in May 2000.

These and other events have widened the understanding of the current and potential future contribution of the surveying profession to sustainable development, both inside the profession and within the relevant United Nations agencies. The aim of this statement is to present this understanding in a concentrated form to a wider circle of parties and persons, and to present a number of guiding principles for the implementation of sustainable development within both FIG itself and the entire surveying profession.

By adopting the FIG Agenda 21, FIG confirms its support for the concept of sustainable development, and renews its program for contributing to the implementation of sustainability in policies and actions on all levels of society.

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