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FIG Working Week 2011

Bridging the Gap between Cultures

Marrakech, Morocco, 18-22 May 2011



FIG Working Week 2011 - Bridging the Gap between Cultures

Biggest FIG Working Week strengthens links between cultures

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The FIG Working Week **Bridging the Gap between Cultures** and the **XXXIV General Assembly** was held in Marrakech, Morocco from 18 to 22 May 2011. The Working Week included also the 6th National Congress of ONIGT. The Ordre National des Ingénieurs Géomètres topographes (ONIGT) was at the same time the local host of this year's Working Week.

The FIG Working Week 2011 turned out to be the biggest FIG Working Week ever both in the size of the exhibition and the number of participants. More than 1,500 participants from 90 countries attended. The technical programme comprised of more than 90 technical sessions, workshops and special forums. Total number of presented papers was almost 450. The Working Week was held at the fully packed Palais des Congrès in Marrakech.

The Working Week was organised under the patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco. In the exotic city of Marrakech for sure cultures have been bridged. Meetings with young surveyors, a specific China forum, meetings with Moroccan, Mediterranean and Arab surveyors, and gathering of the 'francophone' world – and big participation from Africa – it was a big mix resulting in dynamic and multi-linguistic sessions - and acclaimed as a big success.



FIG Fanfare at the Opening Ceremony.

Opening ceremony and Plenary Sessions

The opening ceremony at the Palais des Congrès gathered about 1,200 people to listen to the opening speeches. The Working Week was opened by FIG President **CheeHai Teo** and ONIGT President **Aziz Hilali**. The opening address was given by Mr. **Karim Ghellab**, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport who addressed the conference on behalf of Prime Minister **Abas El Fassi**. Several ministers attended the Opening ceremony and Mr. **Aziz Akhennouch**, Minister of Agriculture and Marine Fishery co-sponsored the welcome reception the previous evening.

Welcome greetings were also presented by President **Sarkis Fadous**, Arab Union of Surveyors, President **François Mazuyer**, Fédération des Géomètres Francophones, FGF and Vice President **Fausto Savoldi**, Mediterranean Union of Surveyors, UMG that all organised their general meetings during the week. The FIG fanfare and the national anthem of Morocco brought festivity to the opening ceremony moderated by Prof. **Mohammed Ettarid**, Chair of the local organising committee.

The Working Week included three plenary sessions addressing different aspect of the conference theme on bridging cultural gaps.

The first session was titled "*Knowledge and Technology Bridging the Gap between Cultures*". This session and also the Working Week was kicked off by presentations from President Teo and President Hilali. In his opening remarks President Teo expressed optimism that together, "we can to be a Profession, armed with knowledge and best practices, extending the usefulness of surveying for the benefit of society, environment and economy, increasingly positioned in significance and relevance, next door to everywhere".



Moroccan ministers and President **CheeHai Teo**, FIG and President **Aziz Hilali**, ONIGT after the opening.



Ms. **Aida Opoku-Mensah**, ECA, **Othman Skiredj**, **Chris Gibson**, Trimble and session chair **Mohammed Ettarid** in the first plenary session.

The first keynote speaker was Ms. **Aida Opoku-Mensah**, Director of UN Economic Commission for Africa, Division of ICT. She spoke about "**Bridging the Gap: The Role of ICTs & Spatial Technologies in Empowering Communities**" focussing on concrete leverage of Information and Communication Technology: link "*where you are*" where ICT is concerned because there is ICT literacy. Her main message was that it is not only about the technology but also about acceptance of ICT and capacity building.

Chris Gibson, Vice President, Trimble Navigation spoke about the conference theme "**Bridging the Gap between Cultures**". His clarified clearly that where GPS is concerned there is no need to learn the conventional survey approaches but that you can now 'step in' directly. Still education on the GPS tools is needed of course. You can work in different context using the same technology. The final presentation was given by Dr. **Othman Skiredj** from Morocco who spoke about the **theory of the creation of the universes** and of spiritual inheritance.

The second plenary session "**Governance and Regionalization**" was at the same time announced as the 6th National Congress of ONIGT. The session moderated by **Houde Ait-Mik**, World Federation of Engineering Organizations and Vice President Dalal S. Alnaggar was opened by the keynote presentation of President Aziz Hilali, ONIGT. The second presentation was made by **Abdouh Abdellatif**, Secretariat of Consultant Board on the Moroccan perspective to governance and regionalization. The most interesting presentation was made by FIG Honorary President **Holger Magel**, Technische Universität München, Germany: "**Governance and Regionalization: New Paradigms for Transparent Politics and Accountable Civic Engagement**".

The last plenary session focussed on environmental issues and sustainable development. It was co-chaired by **Mohammed Timoulali**, UN ECA and **John Hannah**, Chair of FIG Task Force on Surveyors and the Climate Change. The session started with presentation of **Mohammed Nbou**, Secretary of State, Energy Mines, Water and Environment "**Problematiques environnementales et developpement durable au Maroc** "**Operationalisation de la CNEED**". The FIG perspective for surveyors was given by Prof. **Stig Enemark**, who was appointed as FIG Honorary President in Marrakech. His address "**The Climate Change Challenge - The Role of Land Professionals**" provides a good background for the FIG agenda for the coming years. The third presentation was presented by **Kamel Ayadi** from Tunisia who in his paper "**Elargissement du Concept de la Durabilité: Gouvernance et Intégrité pour une Meilleure Durabilité du Développement**" discussed among other corruption.

The plenary sessions were very well attended. The interpretation at the key sessions and in two parallel technical sessions made it easier for the Moroccan and participants from Francophone Africa to attend the sessions.

Exhibition



The biggest exhibition in the history of FIG Working Weeks at the Palais des Congrès. Trimble Navigation and ESRI as the platinum sponsors were located in the centre of the Salle Royale.



In total 12 Chinese companies exhibited in the Chinese pavilion.

At the exhibition in FIG 2011 there were 50 exhibitors occupying all 60 booth available. The exhibition spread out to the Salle Royale and all foyers at the ground floor of the Palais des Congrès. This made the tradeshow the biggest at any FIG Working Week in the history. Location of the technical sessions and coffees served in the exhibition area allowed a continuous visitors flow to the booth over the three days that the exhibition continued.

The main exhibitors were the three platinum sponsors of the FIG Working Week: ESRI and Trimble as the platinum international sponsors and ANCFCC as the main local sponsor. Trimble Navigation was also the sponsor to the FIG Foundation Dinner: It also announced to become a Charter Foundation Partner to the FIG Foundation.

The other exhibitors included international companies and many Moroccan private companies and public institutions. For the first time there was also the Chinese Pavilion at the exhibition introducing 12 Chinese companies to the FIG audience.

The Chinese participation further included the China Forum and the reception hosted by Dr. Li Pengde, Deputy Director General, State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, on 20 May 2011. In the forum titled '*China Surveying and Mapping Serves the World*' there attention was given to the comprehensive set of contents of MapWord, the Chinese own website with geo spatial data. During the forum the latest survey instruments were also presented.

The preconference workshop for local surveyors was organised by Trimble and ESRI as part of their platinum sponsorship.

Technical sessions and forums

The technical programme with more than 90 session offered something for everyone - the difficulty was in selecting the right sessions. All papers are available in the [proceedings](#). Here are some of the key topics. Almost 70 papers were offered to peer review process. Out of the offered papers more than 30 were presented in the programme. To the technical programme in total 650 papers were offered and 450 included in the final programme.

A set of technical visits were offered to allow participants to visit local surveying and other institutions. all these tours were fully booked.

Future of Cadastres

During a [special forum](#) with international experts on the futures of cadastres (Towards Cadastre 2034) that was organised in co-operation with GIM International that also published a [special issue](#) on this topic. In the panel discussion it became very clear that there is a need for an open debate on this issue. Quality management is a very important task for surveyors, it is important to know how accurate the map is, but very accurate maps are not always needed. The discussion was based on an invited reply on a paper of **Rohan Bennett** et al from Australia in GIM International. This paper is also published as the [article of the month in June 2011](#). Some outcomes from the discussion: Cadastres are a sustainable basis for integrated

(land) information systems. Considering that for tax purposes or land market cadastres are indispensable, the cadastre will be the fundament. This requires changes in the business models: land registries and cadastres should cooperate in unison or even merge to provide a steady, predictable and sustainable business model underlying land administration and SDI's. Cadastres are the basis for integrating spatial information at large scales. In 2034 interoperability will be about processes, interests and organizations. Collaboration in chains and networks is the dominant way of working and sharing is the name of the game. Cadastre 2034 should be fit for purpose and that depends on the context you are operating in: organisations (still) will be in different stages of development.



Prof. **Ian Williamson** at the special session on future cadastres (Towards Cadastre 2034).



Prof. **Stig Enemark** discussing the role of land professionals in the climate change.

Africa

In the technical programme lot of attention was focussed to ongoing developments in Northern and Sub Saharan Africa. There were many representatives from the continent presenting papers and joining the discussions. The FIG Africa task force organised two round table sessions in Marrakech. The focus is on the African surveying profession and how it can best contribute to meet the key challenges of poverty alleviation, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. In Marrakech of the issues discussed was the development of a hand book on peri-urban planning, main theme is slum prevention.

UN Habitat gave an overview of the latest developments on the Social Tenure Domain Model – an OpenSource Pro Poor software tool for unconventional support in Land Administration. Attention for the needs and requirements of poor people was expressed in a more than clear way.

Disaster and Climate

Discussions on disaster management and climate change and the surveyors role in relation to this was also a hot topic. The recent earth quake in New Zealand with its terrible impact has also consequences for cadastral maps: a part of the earth surface disappeared but is still represented on the maps. There was a discussion on the situation in Haiti, the contribution of the profession is required for many years here – as in other post disaster area's. FIG has also established a task force on surveyors and the climate change that will also address these issues in the coming years. Prof. Stig Enemark in his [keynote presentation](#) presented the options and strategies in the road ahead.

Survey Accuracy

Commission 5 had a very well planned programme in co-operation with IAG, IGS and AFREF on CORS infrastructures.

It should be recognised in relation to the accuracy of surveys that (very) high accuracy is in many cases not required nor demanded for. In many countries it is most important to get the cadastral map finalised and accessible. It can be a very good approach to start with a lower accuracy and even impreciseness and to perform quality upgrades later. Approaches with high accurate results (e.g. 10 cm) do in many cases not result in complete cadastral coverage.

New Infrastructures

During the Working Week there was also some first, slightly reluctant, attention on possible future options of using infrastructures as Google Earth, Open Street Map, Facebook, Wikipedia etc for our work. Can people built for example their own land administration with participatory and community based input? Will people determine the boundaries of their lands with their neighbours – “user dominance”? This already is happening at the demand side, but in the future many processes will be initiated an enriched by the processes and information provided by the users. Also relevant is the access to so called ‘free data’... And: an early warning system for financial crises after the experiences with mortgages in the US. The development of so-called authentic or key registers – without data duplications remains an issue. Global Navigation Satellite Systems will be used more and more – there are more and more infrastructures with permanent reference stations.

FIG Forums

During the week the already traditional Director General Forum was organised to discuss the key issues on the agenda of the national mapping and cadastre agencies. The lively and fruitful discussion was attended by about 20 leaders from national institutions.

The first Academic Members Forum was attended by 22 universities to develop the agenda for further co-operation between universities and within the FIG academic network.

The FIG Corporate members meeting was attended by one third of the corporate members.

The FIG Young Surveyors Network and Standards Networks continued their active contribution to the Working Week programme.

Social events

The welcome reception was held at the Mansour Eddahbi Hotel that also worked as the main conference hotel.

The FIG Foundation Dinner that at the same time was the Moroccan cultural evening was sponsored by Trimble Navigation. The venue Palais des Jbilates offered a nice Arabic surrounding for the evening that included Arabic music and dance.

The conference dinner sponsored by His Majesty King Mohammed VI attracted thousand participants to Le Pacha Restaurant with international entertainment and a nice meal.

The additional events included the ONIGT dinner and more information Commission dinners.



Moroccan music entertained participants at the welcome reception.



FIG Foundation Dinner that was sponsored by Trimble Navigation in traditional Moroccan style.

Conclusion

The General Assembly and its decisions are described in [a separate report](#).

The Working Week ended with two closing ceremonies one for the 6th National Congress of ONIGT and the formal Closing Ceremony of the Working Week after the second General Assembly. In his closing remarks President Teo trusted that everyone will leave the hospitable city of Marrakech with memorable moments. But at the same time *"we must continue and strive to bridge the gaps that exist, that will ensure that the profession continues to enhance its role and relevance to ensure a sustainable future."*

At the closing ceremony President Teo acknowledged for the successful Working Week the local organising committee, especially President and Congress Director Aziz Hilali, Chair of the LOC **Mohammed Ettarid** and Prof. **Moha ElAyachi** who carried out a big part of the logistics with FIG. Special thanks were also recorded to the big group of volunteers, young professionals and students that made the conference memorable.

The next FIG Working Week will be the FIG Working Week 2012 in Rome, Italy, 6-11 May 2012 including the first FIG Young Surveyors Conference 4-5 May 2012.

More to Read:

Links to documents and reports of the FIG Working Week 2011 and the XXXIV General Assembly in Marrakech, Morocco

- **Report from FIG 2011**
- **Report from the General Assembly**
- **Picture Galleries**
 - **Picture Gallery 1** - General Assembly I - Wednesday 18 May 2011
 - **Picture Gallery 2** - General Assembly II - Sunday 22 May 2011
 - **Picture Gallery 3** - Opening Ceremony - Thursday 19 May 2011
 - **Picture Gallery 4** - Plenary Sessions
 - **Picture Gallery 5** - Technical sessions, China Forum, other Forums and special workshops
 - **Picture Gallery 6** - Exhibition
 - **Picture Gallery 7** - Administrative Meetings - Presidents' Meeting, Council, Commissions, partners, members and administration
 - **Picture Gallery 8** - Social Events - Welcome Reception, ONIGT Dinner and Commission Dinners
 - **Picture Gallery 9** - Social Events - FIG Foundation Dinner and Gala Dinner
 - **Picture Gallery 10** - FIG Closing Ceremony, Closing of 6th ONIGT Congress and Farewell Reception
 - **Picture Gallery 11** - Registration, venue and Marrakech
- **Minutes** - FIG General Assembly 2011, Marrakech, Morocco, 18 and 22 May 2011
- **List of participants**
- **Conference Proceedings**
- **Technical Programme** as a .pdf file - hard copy version (6 May 2011)
- **Program Book** as a .pdf file
- **Conference web site** and in **French/Arabic**
- **Congress in media**

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