

FIG Working Week 2009

FIG Working Week 2009, the Annual Conference of the International Federation of Surveyors, took place in Eilat, Israel from 3rd to 8th May 2009. The theme this year was 'Surveyors' Key Role in Accelerated Development', an internationally hot topic, but especially in Israel, one of the world's most densely populated countries.

The conference attracted more than five hundred delegates. Including exhibitors and accompanying persons, about

keynote at the opening ceremony Dr Isaac Ben Israel, chairman of the Israel Space Agency, discussed the Israeli

space programme, explaining how a small nation with limited resources could achieve much in technological terms by focusing on some key area, such as space.

Three hot topics were tackled during plenary sessions: the management respectively of geo-information, emergency

and natural-resource, and measurement. The main consensus of the first plenary was that geography had really gone mobile. Lawrie E. Jordan, director of imagery enterprise solutions at ESRI, addressed the current central role of imagery in GIS and the importance of integrating these. Vanessa Lawrence, CEO of Ordnance Survey (UK) focused on national mapping agencies in geo-information management.

At the second plenary FIG president Stig Enemark placed the work of surveyors within the broad perspective of land governance; FIG was dedicated to supporting the profession adequately on this forward trajectory. The final plenary session was addressed by Dr Ze'ev Begin from the Israel Geological Survey and current Minister in the newly appointed Israeli government. Prof. Rudolf Staiger, chair of



(From left to right) Moshe Fogel from the organising committee, FIG president Stig Enemark and ALSI president Joseph Kraus.

650 participants from 65 countries came to Eilat, the southernmost edge of Israel on the Red Sea. The technical programme included almost 250 presentations in about sixty technical sessions and workshops. The conference was hosted jointly by the Association of Licensed Surveyors in Israel, ALSI and FIG, in co-operation with the Survey of Israel.

ALSI president Joseph Kraus in his welcoming address expressed the enthusiasm of Israeli surveyors in hosting this major FIG conference after many years' preparation. In his



Congress director and General Manager of Survey of Israel Dr Haim Srebro (right), Stig Enemark and Minister Ze'ev Begin meet Survey of Israel staff.



Oscar Custers of Bentley presents new innovations to visitors from Nigeria.

FIG Commission 5, argued that 'pushing the button' of modern survey instruments must be supplemented by improved capability in mastering the entire measurement process.

Other highlights of the conference included a forum for director-generals of national mapping and cadastre agencies that also functioned to prepare ground for the bigger gathering at the FIG Congress in Sydney in April 2010.

FIG general assembly made clear that FIG is becoming a truly international organisation; Wafula Nabutola (Kenya) was made the first Commission chair-elect from a developing African country, and FIG Working Week 2013 was admitted to Abuja, Nigeria.

Markku Villikka, FIG Director, Denmark

MORE INFORMATION

▶ www.fig.net

▶ www.fig.net/pub/fig2009 (conference proceedings)

SPEEDING UP DEVELOPMENT

YOUNG GEO

It is apparent to me as a resident of a developing country that Geomatics and other related studies are recent. Upon completing my matric I knew what kind of job I wanted, but did not know what I had to study or where to study it. After consultations I realised that what I wanted to do was called 'Geo-information Studies' and the profession I wanted to pursue was in the field of 'Land Management'. I therefore enrolled at the Polytechnic of Namibia. As practice progressed, I became one of the best students in Geographic/Land Information Systems.

That was when I realised that if most young people in developing countries like Namibia knew about geomatics we could help speed up the development of our countries. Land-use patterns or planning, for instance, allows us to study the social life of the northern towns of Namibia. In Namibia, most communal land was allocated by kings/chiefs without clear boundaries; now there are many cases of boundary disputes. Currently software such as a GPS is used to mark the boundaries of allocated portions of land.

The use of software such as Arc-View, Geo-Media Professional, Auto-CAD, GPS, and Microsoft Access could make our day-to-day activities (such as land management) easier, if only more people knew how they are operated.

In most developing countries geomatics experts are a scarce commodity. I got my job as a land-use planner even before I graduated, and as such I render procedural advice on land disputes, register land rights and keep land records. A career in geomatics is interesting because you have the opportunity to explore and keep up with the latest technologies, educate others and work in a dynamic environment.

▶ More on www.younggeopro.com



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