

We, the participants of the **Fédération Internationale des Géomètres (FIG) Pacific Small Island Developing States Symposium** with the theme “Policies and Practices for Responsible Governance” held at the Novotel Lami Bay Conference Centre, Suva, Fiji on 18th – 20th September 2013, having met in the context to share knowledge, promote understanding and to enhance cooperation for the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forest, of geospatial infrastructure and information, hereby issue this

Suva Statement on Spatially Responsible Governance

Recognizing Small Island Developing States in the Pacific are unique in their situation and with particular vulnerabilities, remain a special case for sustainable development.

Recognize that Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests outline the principles and practices that governments can refer to when making laws and administering land, fisheries and forest rights, particularly in the administration of tenure and specifically in areas such as the recording of tenure rights, valuation, taxation, spatial planning as well as issues and responses that is required in the recognition and protection of access and rights.

Recognize that the United Nations initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management provides an inter-governmental consultative mechanism on place, locality and geography and plays a leading role in setting the agenda for the development of global geospatial information, infrastructure and its management.

Recognize that key partners of the Global Land Tool Network supported by the Secretariat in UN-Habitat are actively developing pro-poor gender sensitive and scalable land tools in support of the Continuum of Land Rights and alternative forms of secure tenure that include the administering of customary rights.

Recognize that all activities have a geographical and temporal context, and where communities and governments make decisions and organize their affairs through the effective and efficient use of geospatial data, information and services.

Agree that information on geography, custodianship and ownership is foundational for informed decision-making, resilience and sustainability. It is therefore essential that such foundational data and information has authority, currency and is comprehensive, freely available, accessible and usable.

Agree that weak governance hinders sustainable use of the environment, hinders economic growth, can condemn people to hunger and poverty and the loss of lives through violent conflicts.

Agree that responsible governance of tenure systems, of geospatial infrastructure and information management, of human resources and capacities can help reduce undernourishment and hunger, poverty and create opportunities to support social and economic development.

Agree that rights to land as lying on a continuum where tenure can take a variety of forms and may overlap with one another, and the more appropriate form depends on the particular situation and where customary rights, for example, may be preferred in certain situations;

Resolve to fully support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests; the initiative of the United Nations to implement global mechanisms to foster geospatial information management and the development of pro-poor gender sensitive scalable land tools in support of the Continuum of Land Rights and alternative forms of secure tenure including customary tenures.

Confirm the role of national professional organizations, individual professionals and the importance for continuing professional development for responsible inputs and contributions towards the preparedness of the surveying profession to respond and address the challenges in the region including coastal zones management, marine and climate related issues.

Confirm the importance of and the need for strengthening and modernizing the geodetic reference framework, and national spatial information infrastructure for the sharing and delivery of reliable geospatial information towards improved geospatial information management for social, environmental and economic development;

Confirm the importance of legislation, institutions, common standards and frameworks to improve coordination and ensure interoperability, improved governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests as well as secure tenure rights for all;

Confirm the need for partnership, to share and collaborate to reduce duplication in these efforts; and

Confirm the need for capacity and professional development including the strengthening of teaching and training institutions.

Suva, Fiji
20th September 2013