

# FIG Christchurch Declaration on Small Island Developing States



Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face many distinct challenges in their pursuit of social and economic development, and these challenges are compounded by the adverse impacts of climate change. The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) has organised several regional forums on the role of land professionals in supporting SIDS. Again this year, during the FIG Working Week in Christchurch, New Zealand, a workshop was organised in cooperation with NZ-Aid, UN-Habitat/GLTN and FAO. The 'FIG Christchurch Declaration – Responding to Climate Change and Tenure Insecurity in Small Island Developing States – The Role of Land Professionals' has been prepared and published as a result of this workshop.

During the workshop, the participants acknowledged the inherent diversity between SIDS countries in governance, rate of urbanisation, population density, geomorphology, exposure to natural hazards and land tenure arrangements. They recognised that SIDS share many common characteristics, such as small population, their dispersed nature and physical isolation from markets, high levels of exposure to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards, and severe limitations in capacity. The significance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was reaffirmed. The 2015 United Nations Resolution on Global Geodetic Reference Frame establishes a clear framework for developing capacity in land governance within SIDS, and the roles and responsibilities for land professionals and practitioners.

The workshop participants acknowledged the unprecedented global momentum to improve

security of land and natural resources tenure and reaffirmed the importance of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGTs), the Continuum of Land Rights and the Global Land Tool Network's suite of pro-poor and gender-responsive land tools.

In summary, the 'FIG Christchurch Declaration on Responding to Climate Change and Tenure Insecurity in Small Island Developing States – The Role of Land Professionals' resolves to:

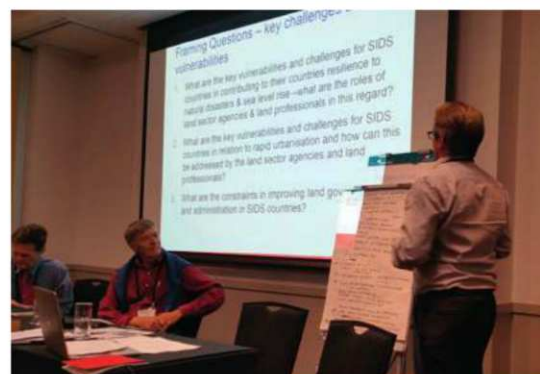
Address climate change, natural disaster and urbanisation challenges and vulnerabilities through:

- Advocating the adoption of relevant international instruments in national policy and legal frameworks
- Advocating land policy and legal frameworks informed by the VGGTs
- Emphasising the importance of robust and resilient geodetic networks
- Mainstreaming disaster risk and vulnerability assessment into all aspects of land and marine administration.

Address the challenges in land governance and administration through:

- Promoting the adoption by land professionals of the fit-for-purpose approach to land administration
- Promoting the principles of participation and inclusiveness in land use planning
- Promoting the importance of the development of valuation systems in legal and policy frameworks.

Build capacity in land governance and administration to address these challenges



▲ Small Islands Developing States workshop.

through:

- Encouraging the establishment of a Regional Capacity Development Network of experts in SIDS regions
- Advocating that international organisations and professional bodies should provide a coordinated approach
- Emphasising the importance of capacity development to support spatial data infrastructures.

Enhance professional and organisational collaboration to address these challenges through:

- Encouraging strong, genuine and durable partnerships
- Encouraging and supporting the development of regional coordination mechanisms in the land sector. ◀

David Mitchell, Australia

**More information**  
[www.fig.net](http://www.fig.net)

# Synergy between EO and SDI Communities



Recognising the importance of synergy between the Earth observation (EO) and spatial data infrastructure (SDI) communities, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) has welcomed the GSDI Association (GSDI) as a 'Participating Organisation'. GSDI has contributed to all GEO plenaries organised in conjunction with summits in Cape Town,

Beijing, Geneva and Mexico City. From 2007 onwards, core members of the GSDI community have actively taken part in the GEO Work Programme, in particular in the design of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) architecture, data and user interface, and later in the GEO Common Infrastructure and GEO Portal.

A new decade of GEO is now in progress. The Strategic Plan for 2016-2025 was approved by the GEO-X Plenary and Summit held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2014. From 2-4 May 2016, the details of GEO's 2017-2019 Work Programme were addressed at a symposium in Geneva, with the goal of making recommendations for the further