

Land Governance: Supporting the Global Agenda and Serving Society

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Abstract

All countries have to deal with the management of land. They have to deal with the four functions of land tenure, land value, land use, and land development in some way or another. A country's capacity may be advanced and combine all the activities in one conceptual framework supported by sophisticated ICT models. More likely, however, capacity will involve very fragmented and basically analogue approaches. Land Administration Systems are the basis for conceptualizing rights, restrictions and responsibilities related to people, policies and places. Property rights are normally concerned with ownership and tenure, whereas restrictions usually control use and activities on land. Responsibilities relate more to a social, ethical commitment or attitude to environmental sustainability and good husbandry. This paper provides an overall understanding of the concept of land administration systems for dealing with rights, restrictions, and responsibilities towards spatially enabled society. The paper also looks at the linkage between land governance, land reform, and climate change adaptation. Measures for adaptation to climate change and disaster risk management must be integrated into strategies for poverty reduction to ensure sustainable development and for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The land management perspective and the operational component of land administration systems therefore need high-level political support and recognition.

1.0 The Global Agenda

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are placed at the heart of the global agenda. They form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and the world's leading development institutions. The first seven goals are mutually reinforcing and are directed at reducing poverty in all its forms. The last goal - global partnership for development - is about the means to achieve the first seven. To track the progress in achieving the MDGs a framework of targets and indicators is developed. This framework includes 18 targets and 48 indicators enabling the ongoing monitoring of the progress that is reported on annually (UN, 2000).

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- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and power woman**
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health**
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**
- Goal 8: 1223 Develop a Global Partnership for Development**

Fig. 1: The Eight Millennium Development Goals.

The MDGs represent a wider concept or a vision for the future, where the contribution of the global surveying community is central and vital. This relates to the areas of providing the relevant geographic information in terms of mapping and databases of the built and natural environment, and also providing secure tenure systems, systems for land valuation, land use management and land development. The work of the surveyors forms a kind of “backbone” in society that supports social justice, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. These aspects are all key components within the MDGs.

The global challenge can be displayed through a map of the world (figure 2) where the territory size shows the proportion of worldwide wealth based on the Gross Domestic Product. In surveying terms, the real challenge of the global agenda is about bringing this map back to scale.

In a global perspective the areas of surveying and land administration are basically about *people*, *politics*, and *places*. It is about *people* in terms of human rights, engagement and dignity; it is about *politics* in terms of land policies and good government; and it is about *places* in terms of shelter, land and natural resources (Enemark, 2006).

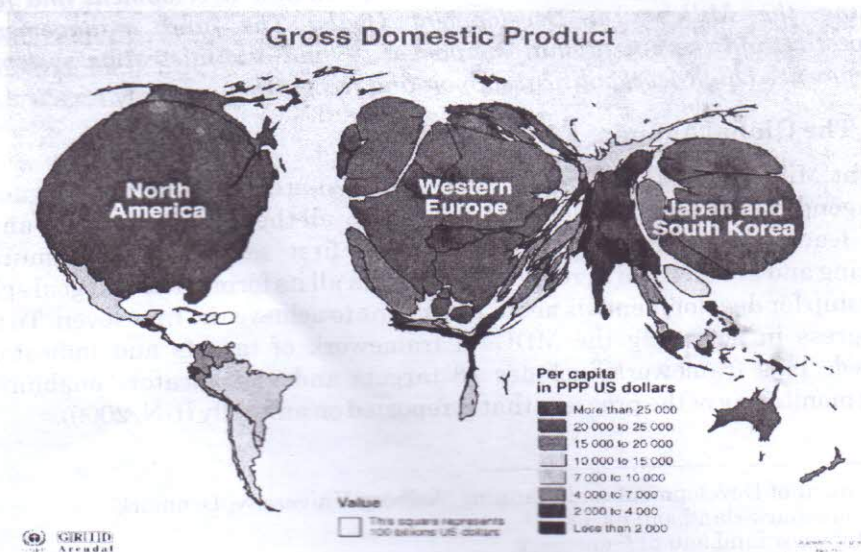


Fig. 2: Map of the world where the territory size is shown based on the GDP (Source: UNEP).

2.0 From Measurement to Management

“Do surveyors have a role to play in the global agenda?” From a FIG (International Federation of Surveyors) point of view the answer to this question is clearly a “Yes”! Simply put, no development will take place without having a spatial dimension, and no development will happen without the footprint of surveyors – the land professionals.

The role of the surveyors is changing at a global scale. There is a big swing that could be named “From Measurement to Management”. This does not imply that measurement is no longer a relevant discipline to surveying. The change is mainly in response to technology development. Collection of data is now easier, while assessment, interpretation and management of data still require highly skilled professionals. The role is changing into managing the measurements.

In the more technical and natural science area of surveying, this move can be illustrated by the evolution from the concept of Geodetic Datum to Positioning Infrastructure. A geodetic datum is a (multi-level) geodetic reference framework describing positions in three dimensions. It supports the traditional functions of surveying and mapping and underpins all of what we now call geo-spatial information. The concept of a Positioning Infrastructure widens the functions to enable the monitoring of global processes such as those associated with climate change and disaster risk management and also real time positioning for e.g. agricultural farming purposes. It can be argued that GNSS could be considered one of the only true global infrastructure, in that the base level of quality and accessibility is constant across the globe (Higgins, 2009). Such a Positioning Infrastructure moves the focus from measurement of framework points to management of the data received from the positioning system.

The change from measurement to management also means that surveyors increasingly contribute to building sustainable societies as experts in managing land and properties. The surveyors play a key role in supporting an efficient land market and also effective land-use management. These functions underpin development and innovation for social justice, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. Land Administration Systems are the basis for conceptualizing rights, restrictions and responsibilities related to people, policies and places.

3.0 Land Governance

All countries have to deal with the management of land. They have to deal with the four functions of land tenure, land value, land use, and land development in some way or another. A country's capacity may be advanced and combine all the activities in one conceptual framework supported by sophisticated ICT models. More likely, however, capacity will involve very fragmented and basically analogue approaches.

Arguably, sound land governance is the key to achieving sustainable development and to support the global agenda set by adoption of the Millennium Development

Goals (MDGs). Land governance is about the policies, processes and institutions by which land, property and natural resources are managed. These include decisions on access to land, land rights, land use, and land development. Land governance is basically about determining and implementing sustainable land policies. Figure 1 provides such a global perspective.

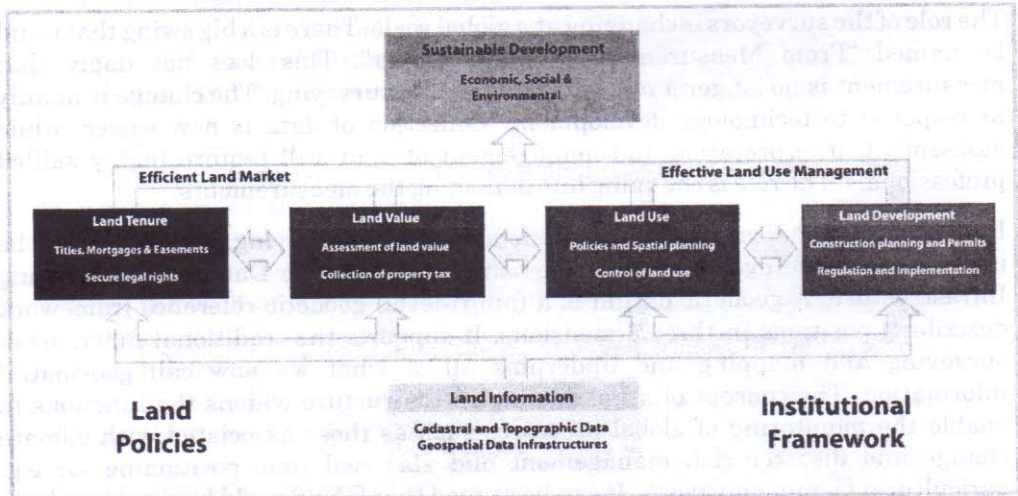


Fig. 3: A Global Land Management Perspective (Enemark, 2004).

Land governance covers all activities associated with the management of land and natural resources that are required to fulfil political and social objectives and achieve sustainable development. The operational component of the concept is the range of land administration functions that include the areas of land tenure (securing and transferring rights in land and natural resources); land value (valuation and taxation of land and properties); land use (planning and control of the use of land and natural resources); and land development (implementing utilities, infrastructure, construction planning, and schemes for renewal and change of existing land use).

3.1 Land Reform

Land reform is concerned with changing the institutional structure governing man's relationship with the land, involving intervention in the prevailing pattern of land ownership, control and usage in order to change the structure of holdings, improve land productivity and broaden distribution of benefits (World Bank, 1996).

The term has a variety of meaning such as (i) restoration of land rights to previous owners, known as land restitution, as was the case in Eastern Europe in the 1990s following the change from centrally planned to market based economies; (ii) redistribution of land rights such as giving state land to landless people or taking land from the owners of large estates to redistribute to others, as has been the case in many countries in Sub Saharan Africa; and (iii) land consolidation, in which all landowners within the area surrender their land and receive new parcels of comparable value but in a pattern that encourages the more efficient and productive use of land (UNECE, 2005).

