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FIG Young Surveyors at World Urban Forum 2012

A football match fittingly kicked off the Sixth Session of the UN-Habitat World Urban Forum (WUF) which is held every two years to discuss urban development issues. Over 8,000 participants from more than 150 different countries attended the event in Naples, Italy, in September 2012. Focus areas were urban planning (institutions and regulations, including the improvement of quality of life), equity and prosperity (distribution of wealth and opportunities), productive cities (competitive and innovative cities), and urban mobility, energy & environment.

Currently, 50% of the world's population is living in towns and cities, and this figure is expected to increase to 70% over the course of the next generation. Estimates predict that as many as 60% of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 by 2030. Furthermore, studies have determined that whilst women are responsible for between 60 and 80 percent of food production in developing countries, they seldom have security of tenure or rights to, or control over, land. In his opening speech, UN-Habitat executive director Dr Joan Clos said that the Forum provided the agency with the perfect chance to listen to what stakeholders had to say, adding that the work of his organisation was to relay back to world governments what the participants wanted done.

Innovative tools included the use of the 'Minecraft' game to encourage youth involvement in urban planning in Sweden, a 'youthful cities' initiative to measure the youth-friendliness of cities, and the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) which particularly featured in the youth statement: "The UN-Habitat Global



FIG and GLTN representatives during a breakout session.

Land Tools Network already acknowledges the need for youth tools and training in relation to land. There is a role for youth to take part in communicating, piloting and upscaling the Social Tenure Domain Model, in particular enabling community input and feedback. Other models for managing and enforcing legitimate land relationships will also be important." Sessions at the Youth Assembly emphasised that young people have relationships with land, and do not wish to solely view and manage land as a commodity.

Uganda this week showcased a new land record system designed to ensure that land rights of the poor are enshrined and respected in towns and cities across the country. In a special presentation of a model case study at the Sixth Session of the WUF, Mr Daudi Migereko, Minister of Land, Housing and Urban Development of Uganda, explained how the country had used the STDM, which was piloted in the southwestern town of Mbale. The Ugandan authorities, the Ugandan

Slum Federation, Shack/Slum Dwellers International, and UN-Habitat explained how the system and its software can improve upon conventional land record systems. "Now the informal settlement residents in Mbale are able to capture the different claims to land, and have their relationship to land registered in order to improve their tenure security," said Jack Makau of Shack/Slum Dwellers International.

UN-Habitat deputy director Dr Aisa Kirabo Kacyira appealed to the delegates to go back to their respective countries and reinventorise the National Forums, saying they were the best avenues for addressing urbanisation issues. ◀

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www.glt.n.net
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