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Report: Symposium on Land Registration in the Arab World  
"Challenges and Ambitions"  
1 – 3 September 2005  
Dead Sea, Jordan

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Task: Task 2: Improve Operation of Urban Registration in  
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KRA: 2.1.14 Overseas study tour for GOE senior level  
policy makers to assess best practice and  
institutional models

Activity: Comparative analysis of best practice in title  
registration, institutional models and technical  
approaches. Identified registration problems within  
Arab countries and how other countries have dealt  
with similar problems in modernizing registration.

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## Table of Contents

I. Introduction .....	1
II. Lessons Learned & Best Practice .....	2
1. National Vision: The Important Role of Property Registration as Effective Public Policy.	
2. Unified Administration.	
3. One Stop Process/On-line Application/Customer Tracking and Automation.	
4. Cadastral Survey, Unique Identifiers and 3D Mapping.	
5. Automation and Change Management.	

### List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Symposium Agenda .....	
Appendix 2: Symposium Committee Recommendations .....	
Appendix 3: Selected Papers .....	

- 3.1 Private ownership and mortgage finance in the Egyptian legal system and transfer from deed system to title system – Counselor Farouk Awad, Egypt.
- 3.2 Developing an automated cadastral information system in Egypt - Eng: M. Hisham Nasr & Eng: M. Mosaad Ibrahim, Egypt.
- 3.3 Types Of ownership, means of certifying ownership and physical rights burdening ownership as laid out in Egyptian law – Counselor Mamdouh Ragheb, Egypt.
- 3.4 The role and vision of MCIT in the establishment of a Land Information System in Egypt - Wael Kamel, Hesham ElDeeb, Hoda Baraka, MCIT, Egypt.
- 3.5 Real property registration and title registration in Tunisia – Moustafa Bou Afif, Tunisia.
- 3.6 Basic principles for real property system in Lebanon – Judge Mahmoud Adnan Mekya, Lebanon.
- 3.7 Condominium registration in the unified land registry in Hungary towards the 3d registration - András Osskó, Hungary 3.7.
- 3.8 Real property registration system in Libya.
- 3.9 The Core Cadastral Domain Model - Peter van Oosterom, Christiaan Lemmen, Tryggvi Ingvarsson, Paul van der Molen, Hendrik Ploeger, Wilko Quak, Jantien Stoter and Jaap Zevenbergen.

Appendix 4: Selected presentations .....	
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- 4.1 Ownership documentation projects in Jerusalem
- 4.2 Real property registration in Jordan (DLS)

## I. Introduction:

The Department of Lands & Survey (DLS) in Jordan with the collaboration of the Arab Federation of Survey and the International Federation of Surveyors FIG Commission 7 organized and hosted a regional symposium on **Land Registration in the Arab World “Challenges and Ambitions”** from 1 – 3 September 2005 at the Marriot Hotel, Dead Sea , Jordan.

Approximately 130 representatives attended the symposium from 19 Arab countries as well as international experts from Germany, The Netherlands, Greece, Hungary, Spain, China and the United Kingdom. The Egypt Financial Services Project (EFS) sponsored participation of a 9-member delegation representing Egypt. The Egyptian delegation was composed of key executives & senior management from government agencies involved in property registration. These were the Ministry of Justice, the Real Estate Publicity Department, the Egyptian Survey Authority, the Ministry of State for Administrative Development and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

The symposium served as a valuable platform to introduce best practices, institutional models, confirm the international trend toward title registration and the importance of the cadastre within title registration to the two “process owners” and principle EFS counterparts, namely the Ministry of Justice/Real Estate Publicity Department and the Egyptian Survey Authority. EFS also sponsored the participation of two other ministries that coordinate registration programs. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is addressing the development of the rural cadastre in agricultural land titling and the Ministry for State for Administrative Development recently completed an initial experimental project in urban registration targeting the district of Dokki in Giza. EFS Task 2 is working with MOJ/REPD and ESA to design and introduce a preparatory title registration system targeting two urban areas in Greater Cairo. Current timetable is to implement and make operational the system in 2006. The EFS initiative will introduce best practices, reengineered business processes and automated systems at these two offices. To ensure the initiatives success EFS is preparing a Training Development Laboratory at the Ministry of Justice that will train personnel in all aspects the model offices’ operations.

The delegates benefited greatly from EFS-organized informal discussion sessions held following the symposium sessions. These discussion groups allowed the group to share ideas and review how best to integrate workflows, exchange data, and improve customer service. The 9-member Egyptian delegation presented four papers on various land registration issues that were warmly received.

EFS sponsored participation of the following GOE officials:

1. Councilor Farouk Awad, Ministry of Justice (Chairman of the Delegation).
2. Chairman Hisham Nasr, Egyptian Survey Authority (Co-Chairman).
3. Councilor Mamdouh Ragheb, Ministry of Justice.
4. Mariam Metry Rezqalla, Egyptian Survey Authority.
5. Mohamed Zeinhom, Ministry of Justice, Real Estate Publicity Department.
6. Omar Ismail, Ministry of Justice, Real Estate Publicity Department.
7. Emad Hassan, Ministry of State for Administrative Development.
8. Dr. Hesham E. El Deeb, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

9. Mosaad Ibrahim, Senior Advisor, Egyptian Survey Authority.

The delegation was accompanied by the following 4 EFS Technical Escorts:

1. R. Dougal Menelaws, Senior Consultant and Task 2 Team Leader EFS Project.
2. Fatma Abdel Kader, Cadastral Systems IT Specialist, EFS Project.
3. Hassem Hemeda, Real Property Registry IT Specialist, EFS Project (Secretariat).
4. Samer Lotfy, Business Process Reengineering Specialist, EFS Project (Secretariat).

Twenty-four (24) papers were presented during the two-day symposium. Egypt had a high presence in this symposium through presenting four papers by its delegates. The speakers and topics of the papers presented by the Egyptian delegation were as follows:

<b><i>Speakers</i></b>	<b><i>Paper topic</i></b>
Counselor Farouk Awad	Private ownership and mortgage finance in the Egyptian legal system; transfer from deed to title system.
Chairman Hisham Nasr & Mosaad Ibrahim	Developing an automated cadastral information system in Egypt.
Counselor Mamdouh Ragheb	Types of ownership, means of certifying ownership and physical rights burdening ownership as laid out in Egyptian Law.
Dr. Hesham El Deeb	The role and vision of MCIT in the establishment of a Land Information System in Egypt.

## **II. Lessons Learned & Best Practice:**

### **1. National Vision: The Important Role of Property Registration as Effective Public Policy**

In the modern world of large anonymous societies, high demand on land availability and open market trading of real estate opportunities, a property registration system is essential for stability and security of titles and interests. An effective and efficient registration program can serve the essential goal of providing certainty in ownership and a basis for trading and credit security.

A system for recording property ownership and transactions is an indispensable tool for a market economy in real estate to emerge and work well. To achieve this goal GOE must develop a national vision for property registration for the next decade, establish firm policy goals and invest in the development of a national registration system.

International and regional experience shows that to ensure success and mobilize public support government action is required in the formulation of clear policy, often passage of new laws, deregulation and privatization of ancillary services

related to registration. ITC solutions to modernize registration require careful planning and implementation; and public confidence in any new system requires extensive and targeted public outreach and awareness campaigns to educate the public/users/beneficiaries on the benefits of registration. In countries where transition to title registration has succeeded (Spain, Jordan and Hong Kong) realistic timeframes and sustained government support, both policy and budgetary, have been essential

## **2. Unified Administration**

Before implementing title registration in Jordan, the cadastral survey and mapping component required to identify and define real estate property objects was integrated with the legal verification and recordation of legal/ownership rights component under one agency named the Department of Lands and Survey (DLS). This organizational restructuring enabled the registration process to be unified, simplified, streamlined, automated and implemented efficiently. The international trend is to have one administrative agency responsible for all functions pertaining to real property registration.

## **3. One Stop Process/On-line Application/Customer Tracking and Automation**

Almost all successful innovation in introducing title registration has involved one stop processing for customers, as well as simplification and automation of business procedures. Several countries allow customers to apply on line using e-signature verification protocols (Spain), and several allow customers to track the status of their application (Jordan). All new systems use customized automated software applications.

## **4. Cadastral Survey, Unique Identifiers and 3D Mapping**

All countries went through a process of updating and digitizing maps. This requires significant investment in upgrading the geodetic network and introduction of GPS technology. In most cases, privatization of survey services accompanied this change. An emerging trend in cadastral survey is the introduction of 3D maps in which not only planar information is recorded (parcel and building footprint) but also vertical objects in space in which apartments and common space are defined and mapped.

It was agreed that one major challenge facing most Arab countries is the updating and digitizing of maps. Another problem is the condition of old paper based analog records and how these can be converted to digital.

Most current cadastral registration systems consist of a 2D geo-Data Base Management System (DBMS) for maintaining the geometry and topology of parcels and buildings for reference purposes.

The vertical dimension and its legal status, which is important, is not typically reflected in the spatial information system and can therefore, only, be registered administratively.

With a growing interest in identifying land use and space under and above the surface, the vertical dimension becomes relevant in cadastral registration. The 3D space (universe) is partitioned into volumes (or 3D parcels) without overlaps or gaps. With this, the concept of property rights in 3D space is introduced. The

legal basis, real estate transaction protocols, and the cadastral registration should support the establishment and conveyance of 3D rights. Several countries are developing/defining unique identifier numbering systems for 3D mapping of property objects (see Hungary and the Netherlands papers).

## **5. Automation and Change Management**

Several participating countries succeeded in shortening registration time through automation of registration processes. In addition, electronic connection between registration offices enabled customers to perform their transaction from any registration office around the country. Spain has designed an on-line electronic application system for customers using e-signature protocols. Improved customer service lies at the heart of any reengineered system.

Egypt has passed Law 15/2004 concerning electronic signature but the law is not in effect yet as no companies are licensed to work under this law.

Several speakers discussed the pit-falls that can occur with poorly designed and implemented IT "solutions". Any proposed IT solution must be accompanied by a change management strategy in which retraining and staffing adjustments are fully addressed. It is important that the true process owners (e.g. MOJ/REPD and ESA) drive and sign off on any IT solution and timetable for implementation. For example, introduction of IT and automation often flattens the structure of organizations, introduces new skills and displaces existing clerical functions in a paper based processing system. Redirection and retraining of displaced staff in new work such as adjudication and customer service is essential if any IT or automated system is to be accepted and made effective. In general, it is recommended that IT and automation be introduced carefully and systematically through prototypes and a timetable supported by a change management program of capacity building and training of human resources. The timetable for migration from existing manual to automated systems is best established by the process owners and not by external fiat.