

A New Role for IAAO: Partnership with the World Bank

Margie Cusack



As reported in the April edition of *Fair and Equitable* (“IAAO Is a Partner with the World Bank at Land and Poverty Conference,” p. 42), the 18th Annual Land and Poverty Conference of the World Bank was held at the bank’s headquarters March 20–24, 2017, in Washington, D.C. IAAO had the honor of being named a partner by the World Bank for the conference.

Almost an Overwhelming Experience

IAAO President Randy Ripperger, CAE, and I were both first-time attendees. I asked President Ripperger to describe his participation; his response sums up and encapsulates the conference for all of us:

I think regarding my experience at the World Bank, I can relate to the following quote from Albert Einstein: “The more I learn, the more I realize how much I don’t know.”

The first thing a new attendee must conquer is figuring out what sessions to focus on because the conference program is huge. Conference content includes hundreds of speakers from all over the world so multiple concurrent sessions were constantly going on. The conference theme was, “Responsible Land Governance—Toward an Evidence Based Approach.” Sixty-minute sessions usually comprised four rapidly talking speakers, so the entire conference was fast-paced and energizing.

Government officials described the trials and experiences of their countries as they diligently work to create land administration systems. The ultimate goal for participants was universal—the creation of efficient and effective property tax systems to help in economic development and a wide variety of planned public programs.

Identifying Land Ownership

Several countries are just starting to identify property lines by using a variety of creative property measurement methods and solutions. Numerous geographic information system (GIS) technologies, from electronic mapping tools to handheld measurement tools, have played a huge role in enabling cost-effective solutions for creating electronic land records.

Identifying land ownership is also a big challenge in countries where informal land transfer methods have been the historical practice. We learned about the hurdles facing developing countries in their efforts to increase citizen trust in public land recording and their ingenious methods to ensure progress. Creating efficient land administration systems is a very difficult process that can only be achieved over time through

sound tax policy, long-range strategic planning, and public support.

Countries that are working to establish land administration systems were very curious to learn more about IAAO. After every IAAO presentation or meeting held with representatives from various countries, strong interest was shown in IAAO ethics, standards, educational and technical assistance offerings, and the international library, as many countries are moving forward and thinking about the next phases of advanced property tax system development. It was the strong hope of attendees that the establishment of good governance through sound property tax policy will improve local property collection rates to further develop their countries.



Charlie Colatruglio presents “Mass Appraisal of Land Values: Where Do We Begin?”

IAAO Presenters

IAAO presented a total of seven sessions at this event:

- President Ripperger, CAE, moderated sessions on experience with land valuation.
- Larry Clark, CAE, IAAO Director of Strategic Initiatives, presented “Body of Knowledge.”
- Charley Colatruglio, CAE, IAAO Technical Assistance Manager, participated in a roundtable discussion, “Valuation of Unregistered Land,” moderated by Christopher Barlow (Thomson Reuters).



James Kavanagh, Director of RICS Land Group presents “Standards for Land Administration: Ensuring Interoperability.”

- Mr. Clark and Mr. Colatruglio also presented an overview of the cost approach to value in “Mass Appraisal of Land Values: Where Do We Begin?”
- Mr. Clark presented a third time with Brent Jones (ESRI) on “Low Cost Valuation Methodologies with Excel and ArcGIS Online.”
- I presented both “Practical Applications of IAAO Standards for Land Administration and Property Tax Systems” and “Workable Solutions for Property Tax Reform” with Richard Almy (Almy, Gloudemans, Jacobs and Denne).
- In addition, Paul Bidanset, City of Norfolk, Virginia, Chair of the IAAO U40 Leadership Lab, copresented with Peadar Davis, Michael McCord, and William McCluskey, “Improving Land Valuation Models in Sparse Markets: A Comparison of Spatial Interpolation Techniques used in Mass Appraisal.”

IAAO Takeaways

IAAO World Bank conference veterans Mr. Clark and Mr. Colatruglio had similar takeaways from this year’s experience.

Mr. Clark commented,

Considering this was only the second year IAAO has participated in the conference, I was very pleased with our reception and the interest shown in IAAO programs. The possibilities for future work with member countries are enormous.

Mr. Colatruglio seconded this thought by adding,

The World Bank Land and Poverty Conference is a tremendous opportunity for IAAO to share its mass appraisal expertise with many countries in the developing world. The developing world is looking for innovations to their existing taxation and property valuation systems to improve their ability to provide local services to their communities that we sometimes take for granted. IAAO can also learn from these countries by finding new ways



IAAO Research Manager Margie Cusack presents “Practical Applications of IAAO Standards for Land Administration and Property Tax Systems.”

to adapt mass appraisal principles, methodologies, and best practices to the realities of the developing world.

During the conference, President Ripperger, CAE, and Executive Director Ron Worth, CAE, met with representatives from numerous international organizations, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development and World Bank project participants, as they strive to expand IAAO’s presence world-wide. IAAO will continue to cultivate its partnership with the World Bank to advance our common mission and the goals of promoting good governance and achieving sound tax policy reform.

Margie Cusack is Research Manager at IAAO. She has 30 years of experience in management, property tax administration, GIS system development, and valuation in Cook County, Illinois. She has master’s degrees in public policy and political science from the University of Chicago. She has served on the IAAO Executive Board and numerous IAAO committees.



(l to r) Richard Almy, Kauko Jussi Viitanen, Ruud M. Kathmann, and Paul Bidanset preparing presentation segments for the session, “Approaches to Implementing Property Tax Reform.”