

Foreword of the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Mrs. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul*

At the United Nation's Millennium Summit in the year 2000, the Heads of State of the 189 countries approved the Millennium Declaration and the eight Millennium Development Goals.

Since then, these goals are the reference framework and the measurement instrument of the German development policy. The German Federal Government contributes actively and with great dedication at all levels to the implementation of this agenda and thus to the achievement of the objectives of eradicating poverty and hunger and of halving by the year 2015 the number of people who suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

Although considerable progress in numerous subjects and regions has been made, there is still a lot to do. Great efforts are needed from all stakeholders in order to achieve these internationally accepted development goals. In this context the rural areas and their sustainable management play a crucial role.

The current food crisis has shown clearly that the global demand for food increases rapidly, for example through population growth and the related changes in food habits, in particular in big emerging countries like the case of China.

Climate change hinders the satisfaction of food demand: increase of climatic extremes and natural disasters can destroy the harvests and thus diminish the existence basis of small farmers for years. Furthermore, the increasing demand for bio fuels worsens the problem.

According to current estimations, more than two thirds of the world's population living in absolute poverty live in rural areas. In addition, the greater proportion of the approx. 850 million people who suffer from hunger and malnutrition around the world, particularly in the case of small farmers whose lands are not big enough for securing their nutrition needs and also landless workers who don't even have a parcel to profit from, live in rural areas. Women and children are, in numerous communities, part of the most vulnerable groups and suffer the most from these misfortunes.

Farming is in many countries one of the most important pillars of economic development and food security. Secured access to farmland, grassland and forest is one of the most important basic prerequisites to achieve a secured income in development and emerging countries in particular for the poor and poorest social strata.

Nevertheless, fertile land is often distributed unequally. Climate change, ground sealing and erosion are growing threats for productive soils. Competing land uses such as food production, energy generation or tourism further aggravate the situation.

* **Unauthorized translation prepared by the Chair of Land Management of the Technische Universität München for English speaking readers.**

The existence of a transparent land law and corresponding land adjustment and land management system has a significant impact in the development opportunities of a country. In many development and emerging nations, in which such a land law does not exist, economic growth is hindered, the attainment of social equality is hampered, and the participation of the people is not guaranteed. The countries concerned must take responsibility for the complex issues of land law and land management. Industrialized countries –and among them Germany- are in the context of the global partnership of the Millennium Agenda committed to providing their support. A close cooperation among governments, development organisations, and research and education institutions is crucial. The conference “Policy meets Land Management: Contributions to the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals” in Munich, which results are documented in the present work, represents a good example of this. It compiled numerous suggestions and recommendations for research and practice through which Land Management could contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

I would like to express my gratitude to all participants of the conference for their cooperation, contributions and their commitment to the fight against poverty and hunger around the world.

Sincerely yours,

Heidmarie Wieczorek-Zeul

Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development