

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “POLICY MEETS LAND MANAGEMENT: CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MDGs”

"We will have time to reach the Millennium Development Goals – worldwide and in most, or even all, individual countries – but only if we break with business as usual...

... So we must start now. And we must more than double global development assistance over the next few years. Nothing less will help to achieve the Goals."

United Nations Secretary-General

“Munich Declaration on Land Management and Land Policy 2008”

Introduction

All countries around the world and all the world's leading development institutions have agreed on eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be reached by the year 2015. These goals include eradication of poverty and hunger, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, environmental sustainability and the establishment of global development partnerships. Sound land policies, accompanied by proper land management and land administration strategies, without doubt substantially contribute to the achievement and implementation of these goals. Considerable progress in improving the situation for the world's poorest has been made so far, but still the way to achieving the above goals until 2015 is paved with an enormous workload requiring a particular commitment of politicians. Land management is a very important component and needs the particular attention of all stakeholders working at national and international level.

This huge challenge has brought together here in Munich different bodies of the United Nations, representatives of international development organisations, NGOs and professional bodies, as well as German policy makers and institutions involved in the various fields of land management in order to discuss feasible ideas for international collaboration and a better approach to the four MDGs highlighted above – with a special focus on the perspective of the German development assistance.

The implementation of good land policies in countries without appropriate land management and related activities is the basic instrument for initiating economic growth and thus helping to overcome hunger and poverty through enabling security of tenure and introducing formal land ownership structures. This includes basic land administration measures, such as initial registration of properties or the establishment and maintenance of real estate cadastres.

Gender issues form an important part of land policies. In some countries around the globe, women, vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities have no equal access or even no access at all to land. It is thus vital to introduce land policies in those countries in a way that guarantees gender equality also for land rights as well as security of tenure for all different population groups and to substantially reduce poverty this way.

There is an increasing awareness around the world that environmental issues and the sustainability of environmental protection are key factors for preservation of the world's heritage for future generations. Sustainable management of water and natural resources is of particular importance. Spatial planning, land use planning and other related instruments based on reliable and updated spatial datasets from official cadastre or topographical mapping are a

pre-condition for effective and suitable integration of environmental concerns into land management efforts.

Complex land-related problems do not come to a halt at the borders of countries and pragmatic strategies and solutions therefore often need a multi-lateral or even global approach to land management. This can only be achieved through fostering global partnerships between governments, international organisations dealing with land management and donor organisations as basis for joint efforts.

The German development assistance in land management has been very successful so far. However, it is necessary to make best use of the results and experiences of already completed projects in this field and combine them with other international experiences in order to streamline further efforts and the contributions of Germany to the achievement of the MDGs.

The way ahead

In seeking to address these matters, the participants in the Conference 'Policy meets Land Management' acknowledge the high political importance of achieving the MDGs and conclude:

- 1. Land management, geoinformatics and geodesy have to play a crucial role for implementation of strategies for reaching the United Nations MDGs - including eradication of poverty, the empowerment of women and gender equality, environmental sustainability and the creation of world-embracing partnerships. The land sector needs its own specific development agenda and performance indicators closely linked to the MDGs and sustainable development.**
- 2. International collaboration in the field of experience exchange amongst professionals in land management is a necessary step towards harmonisation of national land, water and natural resources management strategies and good governance, taking into account each country's individual circumstances.**
- 3. The establishment of spatial data infrastructures is a key element for providing the required spatial reference and reliable and current geoinformation for spatial planning and monitoring of environmental impacts.**
- 4. Development assistance in this field should be efficiently coordinated amongst all donor countries and international donor organisations in order to reach the maximum benefit for the poor and for those countries in need of support.**
- 5. All development projects need to come along with the appropriate education and capacity building components required to implement land management strategies in a sustainable way.**
- 6. We should also look into possibilities for furtherance of networking and coordinating mechanisms linking all stakeholders in land management, geodesy and neighbouring disciplines, including the private sector, for the overall benefit of countries in need of support and for better efficiency of the development assistance.**
- 7. The joint expertise of the national and international development assistance in land management should be brought into a global partnership addressing land-related issues in order to conduct assistance more efficiently and maximise the benefit for those countries and people in need of support.**