

## OPENING SPEECH OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HANNS SEIDEL FOUNDATION

by Former Bavarian State Minister Dr h.c. mult. Hans Zehetmair

Conference Participants from Germany and other Countries,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to extend a warm welcome to you all here in the Conference Centre of the Hanns Seidel Foundation.

A particular welcome and thank you go to the initiators and organisers of this significant international conference on “Policy meets Land Management: Contributions to the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals”, to:

**Mr Michael Bauer**, Representative of the BMZ

**Professor Stig Enemark**, President of the FIG

**Professor Dr Gottfried Konecny**, Member of the Board (Chairperson) of the BEV

experts from the GTZ

as well as from the DVW.

I welcome and thank you.

prominent personalities in politics and public life, and above all experts from all the institutions and expert bodies from at home and abroad who are represented here. You will, I am sure, agree with me, Ladies and Gentlemen, that these persons constitute the core of this international conference. Their expert contributions and discussions will undoubtedly ensure its lasting success.

State Minister **Dr Markus Söder**, as well as **Mr Jozias Blok** from the European Commission, both of whom I warmly welcome, together with State Secretary **Mrs Karin Kortmann**, will conduct this morning's proceedings.

We thank them for their active participation!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over 180 participants from more than 30 countries have come to this conference. The strong response to this conference is a visible and significant indicator of the brisance of its themes. The participants want to inform themselves, through the presentations and discussions, about current issues concerning land development in the context of the millennium goals.

The initiator and organiser of this Conference is **Professor Dr Holger Magel** of the Technical University Munich. He was for many years President of the FIG, with which he is still closely associated as Honorary President. The Hanns Seidel Foundation has worked with him for almost 20 years and has come to value his expert knowledge and experience as well as his international contacts in connection with issues concerning the “Development of Rural Areas”.

For the Hanns Seidel Foundation it is both a pleasure and, at the same time, a recognition of its international work to be actively involved in this conference. We are confident that the conference will give us valuable insights and stimuli for our international work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sustainable development of urban and rural areas, and future oriented policies directed to this end, are of central importance for the social, economic and ecological development of most of the regions and countries of this world.

Questions of land rights and of land ownership, of land usage and access to land, are becoming ever more important. They include, however, an increased potential for conflict, particularly in the light of demographic change as well as of global climatic and ecological changes.

It is generally acknowledged today that matters such as:

- Security of land rights and land possession
- Good governance
- Reduction of poverty
- Social justice
- Sustainable economic growth
- Environmental protection

are fundamental requirements for sustainable development, particularly of rural areas.

The discussion of issues concerning future oriented and sustainable rural development, and putting them into the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), such as:

- Poverty reduction
- Ensuring ecological sustainability, as well as
- Sustainable environmental protection

give this conference a broad spectrum.

The theme of “Development of Rural Areas” has a special significance for the Hanns Seidel Foundation. We seek to make a contribution to the solution of problems in rural areas by a bundle of measures such as

- Publications on the subject
- International symposia and conferences such as “The Development of Rural Areas in Bavaria and China” in the summer of 2007 in Munich
- and in a very practical manner in the context of our world-wide development activities we want to contribute to resolving the problems in rural areas.

I should like by way of example to refer here to our engagement over many years in the People’s Republic of China.

We can undoubtedly regard ourselves as pioneers where it is a question of rural development in the People’s Republic of China. A project for “Land Consolidation and Village Renewal” in Shandong Province, in Nan Zhang Lou, a community of about 4,400 inhabitants, was instituted as early as 1990 in close cooperation with Professor Magel and the Bavarian State Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

The broad aim was a sustainable improvement in the quality of life and work of the citizens, both male and female, of all social and age groups.

All our efforts also had in view a further major concern, namely to hinder the migration, not to say noticeable flight, of the village population from their traditional roots to the overcrowded urban conurbations, which had already begun. Young people in particular were oriented outside the village and their departure deprived the village community bit by bit of valuable human resources and thus of further chances in the future.

It was possible in the community of Nan Zhang Lou to achieve with gratifying efficiency the goals identified by means of dialogue. This was done with a bundle of measures which had proved themselves over several decades at home here in Bavaria in the context of structural change, from agriculture to industry and further to become a centre for technology and science.

Our bundle of measures included for example:

- Development of local education and medical services
- Creation of new jobs by the establishment of small and medium sized businesses
- Improvement of the infrastructure in the village and in the countryside
- Development of and connection to the energy, utility and communication networks
- Substantial improvement in quality of living by building modern single family houses which take account of traditional building methods, and, what is talked about today by everybody and fills us with concern, and was and is a major theme, namely
- Environmental and natural resource protection.

These were the principal components which contributed to a sustainable improvement in the quality of life and work, and in family incomes in the community. And as concerns the further goal of stopping migration from the village, a gratifying reversal of the trend set in.

Today, as the result of people returning to the village and of new arrivals, the community has more citizens than at the start of our land consolidation and village renewal activities. One thing which the joint activities in the context of land consolidation and village renewal have noticeably promoted is the feeling of solidarity among the citizens, both male and female. From the beginning they were involved in the decision making processes in the framework of the project. It was thus the citizens, both male and female, who were ultimately responsible for making their village, their living space, fit for the future by their active participation and actions. In carrying out our advisory and monitoring functions we together with our experts were always careful not to impose anything on our clients, the citizens.

The results of this small, manageably sized project led to an expanded and fruitful cooperation at the national level in China.

The Hanns Seidel Foundation has entered into a close working relationship with the Ministry of Land and Resources as well as with political decision makers in the Offices for Land Administration. In 2004 an Education and Research Centre for Land Consolidation and Rural Development in Qingzhou, Shandong Province, was officially opened. A vision already conceived in 1990 was thus fulfilled for the Hanns Seidel Foundation.

The functions of this Centre can be broadly described as follows:

- Support of partner organisations, of political and expert decision making levels in the development of strategies and concepts for regional development
- Continuation and further training of broadly based target groups
- Public relations work and
- Promotion of international cooperation

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to give you a brief indication of the dimensions which face us in China when it is a matter of shaping rural areas so that they can offer future perspectives for more than 750 million people.

It is estimated that about 80 to 100 million citizens live under the poverty line, that according to official statements 180 to 200 million are on the move as migrant workers.

China, Ladies and Gentlemen, is experiencing an asymmetrical development.

In the Eastern Regions we see:

- High economic growth of between 8 and 14%, sometimes even higher, the political aim is to achieve a qualitative economic growth
- Relatively high per capita income
- Relatively low unemployment
- Developed infrastructure
- A well developed educational system, although there is here need of reform, and education policy is working continuously on this. We, the Hanns Seidel Foundation, have supported these reforms over many years.

As against this, the 12 regions which have been designated by the Central Government as structurally weak, and which have about 650 million inhabitants, present another, sometimes distressing picture.

When we speak about China and its development, we should not let ourselves be dazzled by the glittering world of the metropolises of Peking, Shanghai, Nanking etc. China, Ladies and Gentlemen, faces immense challenges in the coming years, particularly in building up and developing the social and protective systems (health service, social and pension insurance, environmental fields and climate protection and many others).

I come back to the Western Region!

In one region which we looked at, 56% of the husbands/fathers are migrant workers, who see their families only every 10 months during the spring festival. All domestic burdens, such as bringing up the children, agricultural production under the most difficult conditions, with a low average yearly income of 500-900 €, rest on the shoulders of the women.

It is naturally hardly possible to speak of quality of life and work in these conditions and financial situation. Discontent is ever present in these families. Social tension between town and country is building up, and this social tension can also lead to the internal destabilisation of China with all the negative consequences that this would entail.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am myself no established expert on the themes which will be addressed and discussed in the next days. Nevertheless, I was for many years politically active and intimately involved in the structural changes in Bavaria at various levels of the State as Regional Administrator, Local Government politician, and finally for 17 years as Minister for Education and Science.

In my understanding and experience, the development of rural areas, supported by politically determined framework measures, is not merely the implementation of technical procedures to improve infrastructures, whether in field of education and science, in the transportation, economic, social and health fields, in environment and natural resource protection etc. It is also a task of social structuring.

In this connection I should like to make the point that it is of enormous importance to involve the citizens, both men and women, in the regional, communal, and village decision making processes if sustainable development for rural areas is to be achieved. Civic participation is the keyword! In this way human resources will also be mobilised which have a goal oriented and thus positive effect on the realisation of measures, e.g. by intensified efforts by those concerned. Moreover, living together in the community will be positively influenced by transparency and active co-responsibility, as will be the attachment to the home region. Citizens should be able to articulate the ideas about the development of their region, of their home area.

In Nan Zhang Lou, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have gone along this road in cooperation and interaction between German and Chinese experts and with communal political and expert decision makers. This experience showed us that it was particularly the citizens, men and women, who ultimately with their engagement ensured and will ensure on a sustainable basis the success of the model project which had been the aim from the beginning.

The international conference, which I mentioned at the beginning, on “Sustainable Development of Rural Areas in Bavaria and Shandong” concluded among other matters and expressed in a Munich Declaration that:

- The development of rural areas faces big challenges in the future
- Rural areas must be strengthened
- Rural areas are of substantial significance for the development and prosperity of a country as a whole
- Rural development must be based on an integrated approach in order to ensure its sustainability and future viability

I would like to add a further consideration to the foregoing:

- The development of rural areas cannot be sustainable without legal security. If this is lacking, the development is in my view condemned to failure.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish the conference an interesting time with fruitful results and hope that insights will emerge from the expert contributions and discussions which can be of assistance to you in your daily work.

May the results of the conference provide lasting components for a healthy development of rural areas which will harmonise in a sensible symbiosis with urban conurbations, and which will indeed supplement each other. The beneficiaries of our exertions should be the citizens, men and women who regardless of where they live, have an entitlement to quality of life and future perspectives.

I thank you for your attention.