

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION SPEECH

by Prof. Dr. Holger Magel on 17th of April 2008

Dear Host, Honorable (Former) State Minister Dr. h.c. mult. Zehetmair,
Honorable (Former) Federal Minister Dr. Hauff,
Dear Mr. Bauer as Representative of Parliamentary State Secretary Kortmann,
Dear Dr. Vogel as Representative of State Minister Dr. Söder,
Dear Mr. Blok as Representative of EU Commissioner Michel,
Dear Mr. Engel and Mrs. von Behaim, as Representatives of GTZ,
Dear Prof. Dr. Konecny, as Chairman of BEV,
Dear FIG President Stig Enemark,
Dear Mr. Kertscher as Representative of DVW
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of our different organizers and the the two conference directors I would like to welcome you very cordially. I am happy that you have followed our invitation in such an impressive number.

In the year 2000, at the dawn of the new Millennium, the members of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Declaration. This declaration confirmed the responsibility of each and every country for contributing to a **more peaceful, prosperous and just world**. They declared that there are fundamental values which are essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. These are:

- **Freedom**
- **Equality**
- **Solidarity**
- **Tolerance**
- **Respect for Nature**
- **Shared responsibility**

These values, Ladies and Gentlemen, have an evident importance not only to the maintenance of healthy international relations, but to the very base of the global society that we are trying to construct nowadays. The question at that particular moment was, as it still is today: How do we embrace these values?

Just a few days ago, on 1st and 2nd April 2008, the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations Dr. Kerim convened a thematic debate on the topic “Recognising the achievements, addressing the challenges and getting back on track to achieve the MDGs by 2015”.

In this important meeting, H.E. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said:

“Clearly, we have made a real difference. Yet we are falling short of what I know we can do. Just past the halfway point of the race to achieve the MDGs, many countries remain off track. This is particularly true across large parts of Africa and for many of the Least Developed Countries. But even some of the fast growing countries of South Asia face serious challenges in improving nutrition and achieving certain other Goals. And some of the middle-income countries in Latin America have struggled to wipe out pockets of extreme poverty.

...The world's mixed record on the MDGs and emerging complications like climate change or a global economic slowdown underscores the urgent need for a strong and sustained push towards the Millennium Development Goals. That is why I have already called for 2008 to be a year devoted to addressing the needs of the poorest of the poor, and I have made the MDGs a central priority of my term as Secretary-General”.

Dear guests, I also believe that we are falling short of what I know we can do. Many countries remain off track, and I am sure that the responsibility for such situation does not fall only on those countries which have got off track; we are certainly all responsible for that.

Also a couple of days ago, a big discussion started in the German Government in the context of the negotiations for the federal budget for the year 2009 and the obligations that the Chancellor Merkel signed up for at the G8 Summit 2007 in Heiligendamm. There she promised that until 2010 Germany would heavily strengthen its international engagement by considerably increasing the amount of financial resources invested in poverty alleviation in developing countries. The intention on the side of the Minister of Finance Steinbrück of saving federal resources by reducing expenditure in ministries such as Economic Cooperation and Development was received of course not very well by Minister Wieczorek-Zeul, who was immediately supported by the secretary general of OECD.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this shows us how important and up-to-date our conference is and how important it is for us to take part in these discussions.

Against the background of the global demand of sustainability today we have come together to discuss, specifically from the point of view of the wider fields of Land Management, Land Policy, Geo Informatics and Geodesy in the contexts of development and cooperation, research and capacity building , and on how can we accept these responsibilities and react accordingly and promptly.

Dear participants, it is my belief that land management and all what this “vision” implies, allows us to embrace the fundamental values I have mentioned and can show us the path to follow to actually achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

Our responsibility as experts, practitioners, academics and citizens of this global society is of course not limited by the boundaries neither of our respective disciplines nor our countries. Issues such as environmental risk management help us to cope with the rising risks of having massive numbers of migrants and even refugees as a consequence of climate change. Instruments such as tenure security allow us to deal with gender inequality, poverty, and lack of legal safety. Topics as land administration and cadastre allow us to secure housing and land use rights and promote international investment and sound economic development. Methodologies of land readjustment enable us to mobilize land to cover the high demands for infrastructure development and to solve land use conflicts. Urban as well as rural development as complementary strategies within a functioning system of land policy, land markets, and good governance, constitute crucial preconditions for creating an enabling environment, to realise the targets of poverty alleviation, improved health standards and environmental sustainability. I am therefore very happy that the chairperson of the German Council for Sustainable Development Dr. Hauff has accepted our invitation to give a keynote speech on this topic. It is my deepest conviction that it is not enough to only go back to small holders and to support financially farmers and citizens to mitigate the current problems of food shortage and higher costs by giving some millions of dollars as it is happening now after the warning of IMF and WB at the last weekend. On the contrary, it is essential to improve the whole picture, i.e. to start integrated i.e. sustainable rural development based on good real time land information and secure land policy framework and instruments.

Land experts are therefore not really surprised that worldwide land- and resource related crises explode nowadays because there is a lack of solid rural (and urban) development programmes, a continuous misuse of land and because there are malfunctioning land policies and land markets in place, and because e.g. insecurity of property and land use rights are not solved. We agree with World Bank, IMF and Federal Minister Wieczorek-Zeul that scarcity of food as well as the intense increase of prices worldwide represent a major

threat to economic and political stability. But we should look at the real reasons and unsolved problems.

The Millennium declaration, Ladies and Gentlemen, contained eight remarkably important goals which are supposed to be achieved by the year 2015 through the work of each and every country, not only each one for itself, but as a global initiative towards the achievement of concrete sustainability.

Today we have come together to discuss about what we have achieved in the land and water related goals of MDG in the first half of this timeframe, and which are the steps we need to undertake as the global society that this effort requires.

The way ahead us is still very long. The work of internationally engaged institutions such as World Bank, FAO, UN-Habitat, FIG, GTZ, HSS, among many others, as well this group of significant international professionals from more than 30 countries which is gathered here today, gives me the impression that remarkable progress has been achieved, but more important, that also outstanding progress towards the achievement of these goals will be attained in the years to come.

I believe that we, the German and international professionals, have made considerable contributions. Some examples of these contributions will be presented tomorrow in our very interesting sessions on “Good Practice Examples” and on “Education, Research and Capacity Development”, where our German experts have cooperated with international and especially local partners with the goal of contributing to the improvement of the particular situations of different countries around the world.

Another key example is our *Master's Programme Land Management and Land Tenure*, strongly supported by GTZ, BMZ and other German institutions, where already more than 70 professionals from more than 30 countries – most of them developing countries – have successfully achieved their degrees of Master of Science in Land Management. Most of these professionals are now working on very responsible positions in their respective countries. Some of them have come back to Munich just to attend to this conference and give their statements.

Then again, for us Germans, just as for all other citizens of this global society, there is still a big gap between what we do and what we are actually capable of. As I mentioned, there are more than 30 countries represented in this room today, my wish is that we carry out a successful and meaningful discussion and that we together take another step towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the speakers and the people who have submitted their extremely interesting posters, and of course to each and every participant of this conference for your presence here today at the Conference Centre of the Hanns Seidel Foundation in Munich. Special thanks go to the HSS and its Chairperson H.E. former State Minister Dr. mult. Hans Zehetmair for a wonderful hospitality.

Dear colleagues, I would like to finish my welcome address with the words of Mr. Kofi Annan at St. Paul's Cathedral event on the MDGs in London in 2005:

*“Fifty years ago, I was growing up in Ghana at a time when the struggle for independence was at its peak. I was able to witness the success of that endeavour; to see peaceful transition take place; to see my countrymen take charge of their own destiny. **I grew up with a feeling that change is possible. I have that feeling again today**”.*

Dear participants, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for your attention.

This conference is hereby opened.