

Graduation Ceremony 2008
Masters Programme Land Management and Land Tenure

Congratulation Speech
by
Dr. Thomas G. Aulig

Good morning, Honorary Senator Hess, Prof. Vogt, Prof. Magel, Mr. Schwiening

Dear Graduates, faculty, parents, family and friends,

Congratulations on your graduation, and thank you for the honour of allowing me to be a part of it. Dear Graduates, please close your eyes for a second and try to remember the opening ceremony of your Master Course one and a half year ago.

I am sure, you will remember the challenges and obstacles you faced personally and in terms of your professional qualification. Now, after seemingly endless hours of reading, listening to lectures, preparation of papers and presentations, you finally have reached your aim. You are a Master of Science accredited by the TU Munich. When I think back to my doctoral ceremony just two years ago, I can recall very well, how much personal freedom and satisfaction it brings, to reach such a milestone in life.

Since then I am working here in Munich for Hanns-Seidel-Foundation at the Institute for International Contact and Cooperation. Currently Hanns-Seidel-Foundation is managing over 90 co-operation projects in 50 countries world-wide. Through our projects we aim to achieve sustainable development on the basis of democracy, peace and social market economy. Through political consultancy, vocational and professional education, rural development, management training and the promotion of constitutions, the ICC offers methods for improving political frameworks and conditions in the project countries.

Please allow me, to take China as an example for the importance of land development, as it is there one of the key activities within the overall projects of Hanns-Seidel-Foundation. We started, under the advisory of Prof. Magel, in the early nineties our first village renewal and land consolidation project in a small village on Chinas east coast, named Nanzhanglou. The vision behind this project was, to bring to China the idea, that modernisation not only means economical growth at any cost, but also the improvement of “life quality”. At that time in China a really visionary idea.

Now, nearly two decades later, the fast economical growth has made the country one of the world’s largest national economies. But the income is not distributed equally, the gap between the fast growing urban centres and the rural areas, especially between east and west China is widening extremely fast. According to statistics of the UNDP, the number of migrants within the country has reached 160 million. These people are forced to leave their village because of unemployment, lack of education, environmental pollution and desertification of their farmland. The only way to stop this trend, is to develop the rural areas and make life there worthwhile.

So the need for an integrated land management concept, planned by highly qualified experts is bigger than ever. For this reason we appreciate it very much to cooperate with Prof. Magel and his faculty, as well as with the experts in the ministries of the Federal State of Bavaria. Their knowledge and expertise is the base for the Foundation’s high reputation in China. For this reason in 2004 we were able to set up with our partner, the Chinese Ministry for Land and Resources, a national Centre for Land Consolidation and Rural Development in the Bavarian partner province of Shandong.

The national centre's programme provides future strategies for land development, the organisation of conferences with experts on national and provincial level, as well as the completion of feasibility studies. In 2006 our partner in Beijing asked us, to start a new village renewal programme in the village of Zitong near the Chinese Megacity of Chongqing in western China. The project under the supervision of Prof. Magel is just starting to develop an overall concept for a village renewal programme in close co-operation with the local residents. Of course it is for a political foundation a very special concern, to establish a participation model, which integrates the different opinions and interests within the village.

To succeed in this endeavour, we need the best people working for us and our local partners. For this reason I want to thank Prof. Magel and his team on behalf of Hanns-Seidel-Foundation very much, to accept our students to join the Master Program of Land Management and Land Tenure.

Outstanding talent should be educated by the best teachers, at an elite university. Therefore the Master Course of Land Management and Land Tenure at TU Munich offers from our point of view the best premises. Dear Graduates, your Master of Science Degree has an excellent reputation world wide, proving high academic standard, combined with the practical experience you gained from working on real projects. All of you have worked very hard to establish a great basis for the opportunity to follow your own career path. I am sure, you have the knowledge and the personality to make a big contribution to the development of Land Management and Land Tenure in your home countries.

Thank you so much for being your guest, and congratulation on your graduation.