

Graduation ceremony
MSc program Land Management and Land Tenure
Academic Year 2008 – 2010
March 22nd 2010

Speech by Willi Zimmermann on behalf of the **Steering Committee**

The steering committee is contributing to curricula development, relating the curricula to major new topics of global concern, contributing to the selection of candidates for the MSc program and stabilising the long term operation of the educational program.

Distinguished delegates, dear graduates' and dear guests

On behalf of the Steering Committee for the MSc program it is a great honour and pleasure being with you on this very memorable occasion: the graduation ceremony today.

Let me first congratulate you, the Masters of Land. You have good reason for being proud and for sharing the spirit of your great achievements with your friends, the family and the faculty staff.

Understanding the meaning of LAND in all its cultural, economic, environmental, social, legal and technical dimensions is of utmost importance and significance for development of any country. Understanding the fundamental role of the land sector in relation to climate change, food security, economics of natural resources and housing, energy crisis and population dynamics needs the people with professional capacities, you have generated through hard work and exchange of knowledge. Understanding the politics involved in land matters as well as having a profound knowledge about legal and technical land tools and methods is just what is needed all over the world. The scale of problems facing humankind has grown, so has our ability for positive change. Let me focus on two good practices: For example seeing competent women like the nine of you being involved in land governance in your country is already a strong wind of change. Gender responsive land tenure is not just giving women fair access to land but having competent women involved in leadership function. One more extraordinary example is the policy of the Centre of Land, Water and Environmental Risk Management in building operational partnerships with educational institutions in Cambodia, Palestine and other countries for strengthening professional capacities with a long term perspective.

On behalf of the steering committee please let me highlight **three lessons** (among others) all of us have learned in Munich (among many others):

- **The significance of commitment culture:** Prof. Magel, GTZ, DAAD, Prof. Kirk, Dr. Zülsdorf and Senator Hess have joint forces more than 10 years ago in getting the MSc program off the ground and have never since lost their commitment and motivation. This extraordinary partnership is still in place ten years after. It is first of all individuals and not institutions that generate the spirit of commitment culture.
- **The complexity of land issues requires alliance** among multiple stakeholders. What you might have learned in Munich is the potential of joining forces between government institutions, education, research, the private sector and professional organisations and by doing so overcoming egocentric organisational behaviour and stagnation.

- **Connectivity** is nowadays a driving principle for knowledge sharing and innovation. We are partners in a web of professionals for land matters contributing to global land governance. The concept of land governance, linking land matters with good governance, is relatively new but is discussed more and more in the international community as well as in your countries. Prof. Magel, Prof. Kirk, Dr. Zülsdorf and I are fully involved in making the concept operational. Connectivity in this regards means we want to have you as focal points and partner for land governance in your countries.

Please let me also highlight **three very specific expectations** I personally have regarding your future career:

- It is the biggest of all tasks in getting involved and contribute to modernising and reforming the land sector in your country based on the goals, principles and qualities promoted during the MSc program. Probably the most important of those qualities required from my point of view is **passionate professional ethics**.
- It consequently implies you will have to **build strong networks and partnerships** in your country in and outside government intuitions, education, research and the private sector. Alone you are lost in the land-related power struggles, together you might achieve promising results and impact.
- Building the professional capacities requires your strong support and commitment in **modernising the curricula of educational institutions** and training programs in your countries and strengthening applied research. Many educational institutions I come across in my work still act with totally outdated material and curricula. It is my dream in seeing you again in your places actively involved in improving professional capacities.

Go home and celebrate with your friends and family, go home and be happy, go home and get involved, go home but stay connected.

Please let me take the opportunity to thank the faculty staff for their never-ending engagement and support in making the MSc program such a success story. You are great. Thanks a lot.

Congratulation, bright future and happiness !!