

**FIG Honorary President Professor Dr.-Ing. Holger Magel  
Director of Institute of Geodesy, GIS and Land Management  
Chair of Land Management  
Centre of Land and Environmental Risk Management  
Technische Universität München**

at the Opening Ceremony  
of Education Seminar on Land Management, Birzeit University  
on October 25, 2008

Excellencies, Honourable Minister of Planning Dr. Samir Abdullah and President of Birzeit University Prof. Dr. Nabeel Kassis, Ms. Nabila Assaf of World Bank, Distinguished Guests, Dear Colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to give some welcome words at the beginning of this seminar on behalf of the FIG, the International Federation of Surveyors, and on behalf of my university, the Technische Universität München and my Institute, the Institute of Geodesy, GIS and Land Management. I am happy that after an inspiring meeting with your Dean Dr. Faisal Awadallah and motivating discussions with Willy Zimmermann my Institute has decided for a cooperation with Birzeit University and thus with Palestine in the field of Land Management and Land Tenure.

We just came back a month ago from a first joint Summer School with the Royal University of Agriculture in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, which is a partner of TUM and which has sent a lot of post graduate Master Students to my Master's Programme in Munich. In Cambodia we have been strongly and very reliably supported mainly by GTZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft

für Technische Zusammenarbeit, and even much more important by the Cambodian Senior Minister for Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. That is the reason that meanwhile we have even started with additional land policy elements like crucial spatial planning as precondition for sustainable urban planning and village renewal workshops and discussions. I will explain more in the afternoon.

I hope that also in Palestine we face such stable framework conditions for our cooperation. It's all about institutions: Education and professional capacity building are not the work of one day or some months. Both need a long breath and continuous efforts like we have experienced ourselves in Munich. We have established our Master's Programme eight years before and we had to cope with a lot of financial, organisational and institutional problems or name it "challenges". Therefore, you need not only a powerful Director of Institute and a hard working Programme Manager, but also a supporting Dean and President and in terms of the whole issue the sympathy and political support of the relative Ministry and Minister. Minister and Ministry must be very eager to get well or even best educated experts in land management. Hernando de Soto, the world famous professor from Peru and advisor to many state presidents, has recently reported that more than four billion people are affected or even suffering by unsolved land issues. This demonstrates the global truth: "It's all about Land (and Water)!" I am sure that most Palestinians are amongst these four billion!

Therefore, it was totally right and I would like to congratulate your country and Birzeit University again that you have decided for the best investment a country can do, namely in education and in a well educated young generation!