



*Welcome
to the Foreign Students
of the
Chair of Land Readjustment and
Land Development
at the Technical University Munich
at the beginning of their studies*

Professor Dr. Reiner Rummel,
Dear Professor Dr. Magel
Students
Honoured Guest,

It is a particular pleasure for me to have this opportunity of welcoming you, both on behalf of the Hanns Seidel Foundation and on my own behalf, at the beginning of your three semester course of studies for a Master's degree in "Land Management and Land Tenure".

From my point of view you have chosen an excellent university for your course of studies. I speak from experience, as I have myself studied agricultural science at this university, as well as at Weihenstephan. Above all you will have the benefit at your Chair of Land Readjustment and Land Development of university teachers who are not only academics but who also know the practice.

Knowing the practice means that your teachers and academic staff not only have many years of experience in conceiving programmes for the development of rural areas, but have also over the years played a decisive part in putting these concepts into effect in predominantly rural regions in a pragmatic and lasting manner.

Permit me, ladies and gentlemen, my dear students, to give you an idea of the development programmes with which you will become acquainted during your stay in Bavaria, some of which have been concluded and some of which are ongoing.

You will see in practice, in the villages and districts, that, as a result of the development programmes which have been planned and implemented in Bavaria, lasting infrastructures have been established in all those fields which ensure a high quality of life for the population, such as education, transport and road networks, industry etc.

The programmes on the development of rural areas which have been implemented in Bavaria, and indeed elsewhere, both on the national and international levels, bear the hall mark of your Professor, Dr Holger Magel. For his work in this field, Professor Magel has received many honours, including the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you constitute in the framework of your studies an international community. You come from different continents: Asia, Africa and Europe - continents in which I myself have worked for 14 years in the development of the agricultural sectors. Most of your countries I also know personally through my work since 1969 in international aid and development.

You have already completed a course of study at university, and I assume that most of you will already be in a responsible position. You thus bring with you experience which is relevant for and will enrich your further studies.

You will, I am sure, agree with me that, for the overall development of your countries in social, economic and educational respects, it is of decisive importance to remove the existing discrepancies between rural areas and urban conglomerations. People, citizens of both sexes, also have a right to work, to an income and thus to an adequate and to a large extent assured quality of life.

With the establishment of regional development concepts and their implementation, and by means of appropriate instruments and measures on a state or regional basis, it has been possible to achieve the aim of "Improvement of the Quality of Life in Rural Areas".

I should here like to give a concrete example.

The Hanns Seidel Foundation, which is engaged in 60 projects on a world wide basis, began a model project in China in 1990 with Professor Dr Magel which was more or less completed in 2000. The working name of the pilot project was “Village Renewal and Land Development”.

What instruments were adopted and what measures were carried out in order to bring about lasting changes in the model project in the community Nam Zhang Lou with about 4,500 inhabitants in the Province of Shandong in the People’s Republic of China?

Let me select and explain briefly by way of example some of the instruments and measures which were adopted.

1. The qualitative and quantitative development of the education system, open to all social groups in addition to the target groups subject to compulsory education. Education is a matter which cuts across every development programme, and for this reason I put it first.
2. The development of the road infrastructure, i.e. the construction and development of a road network in the village and the countryside to meet actual requirements. There were here important concerns: the connection of the village with the district town about 25 km distant, the development and improvement of utilities and waste disposal, e.g. the provision of good drinking water, effluent and waste disposal, provision of adequate energy, connection of the community to the electricity network, etc.
3. Providing the inhabitants with means of communication which are to-day regarded as a matter of course, such as telephone connections, internet, etc.
4. Another important aspect was medical care for the village population, provision for which was made for example by the construction of a hospital and by training for the medical staff.
5. Improvement of working conditions, particularly in the framework of agricultural production processes, moving away from archaic methods of work towards e.g. partial mechanisation, taking account of economic considerations, improvement of the agricultural family income by crop diversification, among other matters.
6. Encouragement of small and medium sized industry, particularly of handicrafts, in order to create new and as far as possible future oriented jobs by training of personnel, access to capital, establishment of businesses etc.
7. Land readjustment taking account of re-afforestation programmes. The latter serve on the one hand as protection against erosion and on the other hand increase the attractiveness of the area, of the environment.
8. Finally I should like to mention the construction of new housing to high living standards, whereby account was taken, to the greatest extent possible, of traditional Chinese building methods and styles

These instruments and measures have resulted in a quite substantial improvement in the living, working and housing conditions of the inhabitants of the community concerned.

Where at the beginning we had a strong migratory trend of the inhabitants to the district town, it is gratifying now to see a trend to move to the village. This among other factors is a reliable indication of the success of the project as a whole.

All these concepts, instruments and measures would not however be effective if those in authority do not succeed right from the beginning in involving the inhabitants responsibly and creatively in the planning and implementation of the development programme. It is of decisive importance in the context of such development programmes that political and social framework conditions are established which encourage and facilitate a systematic help to self-help.

This small pilot project at the village level in China was so successful in its outcome that there is now a desire to transfer the working results and experiences with the proven instruments and implementing measures to the national working level. In order to realise this, the Hanns Seidel Foundation has submitted a project application for the People's Republic of China to the European Union. It is in the light of this background that my Chinese colleagues are involved in this Master course.

Students, ladies and gentlemen, the substance of a ten year programme for the development of rural areas cannot be conveyed to you in a few words of welcome.

You have after all come to the Technical University in Munich for the purpose of learning about these concepts and their practical implementation, and to be able to take back with you our Bavarian experiences.

As I said at the beginning, you could not have chosen a better place than the Technical University of Munich for your complex subject “Development of Rural Areas”. Many years of academic study and experience are here joined happily together. Munich is also an attractive city with exceptional cultural facilities and a beautiful countryside.

I hope that you will enjoy your post-graduate studies and that you will be able to take back the knowledge and experience which you acquire here to your home countries, whereby I am aware that a 1 to 1 transfer will never be entirely possible.

You will, I am sure, agree with me that the development of rural areas in your countries, which I am experiencing at the present time in China, is of great political importance. The prevention of the widening of the gap between the poor and the rich, the reduction of social and economic discrepancies, and preferably their harmonisation, are after all overriding aims

The development of rural areas is not only a question of:

- ◆ Increase in income,
- ◆ Improvement in living and working conditions,

but

more fundamentally is also a question of the internal stability of a country. Social and economic harmony is a major factor in the peaceful development of every society.

I should like to thank you, Professor Dr Reiner Rummel, as well as my friend Professor Dr Magel, for this opportunity to say a few words of welcome on the occasion of the official opening of the course of the study for the Master's degree in Land Management and Land Tenure.

I hope that you, the students, will have much pleasure in your studies and that, with your further knowledge and experience, you will be able, at the end of your studies, to make a contribution to the development of your respective countries.

The next one and a half years will undoubtedly not be easy for you. Separation from your families, living in what is probably for you a somewhat strange cultural environment, coupled no doubt with language difficulties, these are undoubtedly obstacles which you must, and I am confident will, overcome.

We, and the Foundation, want to help you as much as we can. Our door is at all times open for you. And finally, I do hope we will meet again or keep in touch, we are prepared to invite you to our Head Office also in conjunction with Lunch or Dinner on certain Occasions.

I thank you for your attention and wish you, especially the students, much success and joy!