

Dear students,

Welcome to our master's program land management and land tenure!

Mrs. Vice-President, Dean of Faculty, estimated sponsors, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for joining this year's opening ceremony and to welcome our freshmen.

"Peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment." For this reason, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided only 3 days ago to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2004 to Wangari Maathai from Kenya for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace. Maathai once said: "Only if nature is intact and we live together in an equitable way, peace can be achieved." Maathai who was the first female professor in Kenya and then became Deputy Minister for the Environment knows about this close link between a healthy environment and peace from her own experience. Over decades, influential people (friends of Arab Moi) have cleared the forests while poor people had to cut down trees to get wood for heating and cooking. Today's consequence is an alternation of droughts and floods which already led to many conflicts over land: range land, agricultural land and settlement areas. Sustainable natural resource management integrated in a long term rural and urban development accompanied by human rights, equity, democracy and good governance is the only way not only to protect the environment but also to ensure a peaceful living together between different ethnic groups within one country as well as between all nations on earth.

By acknowledging this interrelationship between peace and sustainable development, the Nobel Committee recognized the importance of land and natural resource management embedded in an integrated development approach. This is exactly what we teach in our master's program. And most of you will not only be involved in land issues after your return. The higher your position, the more you will have to deal with politics, assuring equity, transparency, accountability etc. to assure good governance and sustainability. As without this general frame, there will be no ground for a fair land management. And without a fair land policy and access to land for all people, there will probably be no peace.

There are many people involved in our master's program which aims to give you all the knowledge and tools to accomplish your important tasks. Apart from more than 50 lectures whom I want to thank for their tireless commitment, the most important supporters are our sponsors. I would like to thank DAAD, Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung and GTZ, Mr. Naser, Mr. Bromme, Mr. Sieben, Mr. Spitthöver, Mr. Hess, Mr. Auweck and Mrs. Kötter for their or

their companies' financial support to our program. I would also like to thank all those people who became members of our foundation "Förderkreis Bodenordnung und Landentwicklung München", thereby also contributing to scholarships for our students. My final thanks goes to our university council and our faculty who have been supporting the master's program right from the beginning.

Our master's program is by now embedded in a world wide network. Apart from 37 former students in 17 countries, we have contacts via FIG, GTZ, UN-Habitat, FAO and World Bank to international experts and key players in land policy and land management. During the last years, we have also established university partnerships in Ghana and Cambodia are now working on two additional ones in Georgia and Mongolia and are actively contributing to an already existing partnership with Chile. Our graduated students do also contribute to the growing network: there are now co-operations between the Bavarian State Cadastral and Mapping Agency and the Ministry for Surveying in Jordan as well as between the Thuringia land development corporation LEG Thüringen and the Georgian State Department for Land Management to set up the first land development corporation in Georgia. Let me welcome you once again into this international group of land managers!

Today, we have the pleasure to enjoy two welcome speeches by our Vice President Dr. Keidel and our Dean of Faculty Prof. Rummel. Program Director Prof. Magel will then introduce our freshmen to you and one of our graduated students who is also our first PhD student will share her insights with you followed by greetings from our senior students. Afterwards, Mr. Graefen from the German Development Cooperation GTZ will give you an overview on current issues and challenges concerning land management and land tenure in development cooperation. Before we will invite you to our reception, we would like to ask all of you to come outside for a group picture. Please enjoy our opening ceremony.

I now would like to ask Mrs. Vice President Dr. Keidel to give her welcome speech.