

The Program Director, Prof. Holger Magel,  
Scholarship Foundations' Representatives  
And Other Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am happy to deliver a speech at yet another opening ceremony which signifies the continuation but more importantly, the progress of the Land Management and Land Tenure Program. In the same line I am happy to represent the community of the alumni currently scattered in different countries. Ladies and Gentlemen, the strategy to counter the uncertainties posed by deliberate or ignorant mismanagement of our golden land resources has made the Land Management Program receive our love, support and appreciation. True, we have been through the program but more importantly we have come to understand issues surrounding land resources and are living to design solutions to that effect.

As we live our present we stand in the borders of our past and the future to which we hold our fears. We are tasked with the responsibility to solve land issues of the past and act to defend our image before the future generations whether we are alive or dead.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I can mention that we have witnessed international conferences, workshops, and declarations all through and land issues have directly and indirectly topped the lists. Goals and targets have been set but all been washed away by dangerous assumptions that problems shift with the future which seems ever moving away very fast as we struggle to approach it until the realities of global warming proved us wrong.

Where we have acted, we have significantly fragmented our efforts. Before I joined this institution, as an environmentalist I always attributed environmental problems to industrialization and inappropriate agricultural practices. But this was simply a tip of an iceberg. We have always approached issues in isolated cases just like the blind men from the Indian fable approached an elephant; The one who touched a leg thought it was a tree, the one who got hold of a tail thought it was a rope and never did they know what the whole creature was. We shall not be different from the blind men unless we tackle land problems under which all other issues have emerged irrespective of different geographical setups.

Today, we celebrate the achievement and yet an opening of the Master Program 2008/2010. Internationally this is a proof that the Center of Environment and Risk Management has chosen to walk the long international talk at a global level. We understand the unfortunate political, institutional, and financial blockades along the way to the complete achievement of our goals. But we also are certain that we shall not rest until the significant fruits of proper land management are visibly achieved.

As we welcome the new students, I can perhaps offer a word of caution. Land management is not a swift walk through. It is rather an important but complicated aspect where you will choose to be different and yet simple for the sake of protecting the treasure of creation, the basis of life, which is indeed the very essence of this program.

**You are warmly welcome to the world of finding important solutions.**

May God bless you and Thanks a lot for your attention.  
Rukundo Bruce