

For a More Just World – the Surveyors' Role for Achieving Sustainable Development*

Klaus Töpfer

Herr Landtagspräsident, dear Alois Glück,
Staatsminister Miller,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends, Dear Colleagues

Let me add a little bit to the introduction given by your President: I crossed the Rhine by swimming. And indeed I survived. But to all younger people participating in this conference scheduled to go to politics, they should learn: don't do things like this. It's life threatening for politicians. I crossed the Rhine next to the nice city of Mainz, very well known in this country as a city for carnival. If you have to listen later in the year to those funny carnival speeches and somebody comes back and says: "Why did we have this dying fish catastrophe in the Rhine?" and all the room is crying: "Because Töpfer crossed the Rhine by swimming" – then you know it was not a good idea.

Mister Landtagspräsident Alois Glück, I have to apologise, I am not a Bavarian citizen. But luckily I can inform you, that I was allowed to enter the free state of Bavaria without a visa. So it was quite a good time yesterday and today. And it is a great chance to be with you in this outstanding meeting, this meeting concentrating on the facts and figures of our world.

President Magel, I congratulate you and those responsible for the organization of this conference and those responsible in the last four years for giving FIG a good way through the time. You know it is always demanding in a time with new and rapid changes to bring the results as you did it. Congratulations once more! It is indeed a great pleasure to see all of you in Munich again. In the past we had one or the other chance to exchange views. I learned in a very practical way how important the scientific and practical contributions of your profession are for the development of this world.

Measurement! President Magel mentioned this best seller in Germany "Measuring the world". I think an old dream all along the development of your profession. A dream, an ever young and an ever new dream, a challenge for all generations: measuring the world. What is the shape, what is the structure, what is the potential of this blue planet Earth in its regions, in its differentiations, in its position in the cosmos? Up to the Galileo fight, the Earth – a flat



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disc? The Earth – a globe? Today we smile but underline that measuring the world is far from being only something like a technical endeavour. It's linked with perceptions; it's linked with ideas, ideologies. Therefore we must see all this development in the past to create, to develop and to understand maps. The results of historical, of courageous expeditions of Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama and Magellan. All creating maps and drawing boundaries: boundaries of nature, boundaries of political responsibilities, boundaries as well of human knowledge. Maps measuring the world are always an integration of scientific knowledge, of art and interpretation.

Maps, measuring the world, drawing boundaries – always used and misused as a demonstration of power, as instruments in power struggles. I served more than eight years in the United Nations system and I learned this more than once: maps and boundaries, names for rivers, for seas: these are instruments misused for propaganda, even for manipulation. I can only recommend having an eye on this book by Jean Paul Bon "*Cartographie, géographie et propagande*". You will be immediately aware that what you are doing is far from merely technical activities. It is at the centre of mankind and the mass society. This sentence by Alexander von Humboldt, quoted in the book "Measuring the world": Let me translate this sentence from the German version: "*To measure, to survey the world is an outstanding art. To measure is a great responsibility. We are not allowed to take it easy.*" This quote is linked with the great Alexander von Humboldt in a discussion with Gauss in a very important dialogue. Then you are aware of the truth: only what is measured

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counts and we have to do a lot to prove that measurement is linked with values, but that measuring, that quantification of interrelations mirroring the world first and foremost has to be a scientific responsibility, combined with the societal connotation.

Measuring is important in this world in a time of unprecedented changes, changes in a variety of dimensions of course simply in the number of people living on this blue planet Earth. When I was born, nearly seventy years ago, on this planet Earth only 2.4 billion people were living. Now we have 6.5 billion global citizens. Dramatic changes in one generation. That is change, unprecedented, especially if you go a little bit more into detail. Two out of three newborn babies in this world right now are born in or for cities: two out of three! We have daily over 80,000 city dwellers more. We are discussing the challenges to organize mega-cities. We are aware of an extensive, nearly a cancerous growth of these conurbations. At the very same moment, ladies and gentlemen, in the other part of the world there is not the need to discuss a dynamic growth, not even growth of population at all. We are confronted with the decrease of population, the decrease of population in cities. We are confronted with totally new structures in cities because they are losing their traditional, historical profile. They are losing their history, their tradition in a time of deindustrialisation. More and more cities have to be reinvented. This is a visible example that the world we are living in is a world of separation, of two kinds of countries and regions. It was great to listen to Prime Minister Stoiber. He mentioned that the per capita income in this Free State of Bavaria is 32,000 Euros, that means something about 40,000 Dollars. President Magel underlined the indicator for poverty in our world, he mentioned two dollars a day. Indeed: It is only one dollar a day. So you have to compare in this world 32,000 Euros or 40,000 Dollars per capita with something between 350 and 500 US Dollar per capita. My simple question, friends and colleagues:

In this world of globalization, of global markets for goods and services, of global information available, of mobility: do we believe that this world is a stable world, a peaceful world? These huge differences between 40,000 Dollars per capita and 5,000 Dollars per capita, that means between Europe and the African coast is the Mediterranean Sea, is the distance between the coast of Mauretania and Senegal and the Canary Islands! We learned in Germany, combined with this wonderful gift of reunification, that there was a difference between the western part and the eastern part, a quite reasonable gap in welfare. For all the time before reunification this had been a stable situation because there was a wall between those two parts. It's like with a dam which is stabilizing different levels of water. We didn't really ask what will happen if this dam is removed. We were all more or less afraid that this division of our country will not end quite soon.

At the end of the day it changed in one night. The difference in this world is much higher. I can only underline that to work together for development of the developing countries, of the poor countries in this world, is not only charity, is not only an ethical obligation, it is an investment in our peaceful perspective in the life to come. Otherwise we will not live in a peaceful world.

In addition, ladies and gentlemen: We must be aware, that the externalization of costs of our well-being has negative consequences for the poor, the developing countries around the world. This was one of my main experiences living more than eight years in Nairobi, in Kenya, in Africa. This externalization of costs to the environment, to other people, to coming generations is a fact. That we are discussing climate change now has nothing to do with the emissions of CO₂ or other greenhouse gases from Africa or from the developing world altogether. In my lifetime the CO₂-content in the world, in the atmosphere, increased something about 30 percent. These 30 percent are coming from the now developed countries. And you can imagine, if you argue now: we, the developed countries, have unluckily fully used the assimilation capacity of the atmosphere for CO₂ free of charge, and therefore you in the developing countries are not allowed to add your CO₂ emission, because this would cause climate change – they will not be very happy about this message. They are convinced that it is unfair that the developed countries used the atmosphere free of charge and that they have to pay now for the same services of nature. Their question: What are you doing to change this? This is the situation in our world and we have to be aware of those topics. Our obligation to fight climate change is not charity but an investment for a peaceful world.

Finally: It happened that at the end of the last millennium, in the year 2000, the General Assembly of the UN asked for a special Millennium Assembly in New York. All Heads of State and Heads of Government participated, more than 180, and they agreed unanimously that we need something like a road map for the future, for our common responsibility in this world. They decided on eight Millennium Development Goals. I don't want to use this time of my speech to go through all those goals. They start with the goal to reduce poverty in this world to 50 percent in the year 2015. Nearly 1.5 billion people are living in our times below the poverty line of one dollar a day. This goal is linked with halving the number of people living under the condition of hunger. In this world of affluence nearly 800 million people are living under the condition of hunger, while the so-called rich developed world is throwing away daily more food than it is needed to feed those 800 million! Implementing this road map is also concentrated on improving the position of women, it is concentrated on education for young

people, to fight diseases, especially AIDS/HIV and malaria. It is concentrated to protect nature capital by giving the chance for people to have access to water. Finally these Millennium Development Goals are asking for a change in our global cooperation, what was started with the so-called Doha round. We know that this Doha round of the World Trade Organization unluckily collapsed. The expectation of developing countries couldn't be fulfilled. The developing world is still waiting for the implementation of the 0.7 percentage goal – to make 0.7 percent of GNP available for development cooperation.

We have the road map; we know the direction we have to go. I'm happy to say: There are lots of progresses to realize the MDG'S, no doubt. There is no reason for resignation; there is no reason for the conviction that it's impossible to reach these noble targets. There are quite a lot of pockets of remaining problems, mainly in Africa, but in other countries, too.

To put this road map in concrete terms, Secretary General Kofi Annan prepared for the 60th anniversary of the United Nation's system in the year 2005, a paper under the headline: "In Larger Freedom". His main challenge: What can we do to live in freedom and peace in the future of this world? Kofi Annan differentiated three parts: We need freedom from want, we need freedom from fear, and we need freedom to live in human dignity. He underlined that those three contributions to larger freedom are very intensely interrelated. One cannot be reached without backing from the others. Freedom from want, meaning that we have to give the people the perspective of a reasonable life for themselves and their families, their children, to overcome poverty, mainly concentrated on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Freedom from fear, to fight against conflicts, wars, terrorism, knowing that we can reach sustainable development only in a world of peace and cooperation. War is and will ever be the most risky, dangerous and destructive development for the people in need and for all of us on this globe.

And freedom to live in human dignity! That means respect for human rights, all around the world, in all cultural situations, in all regions, in all spiritual values and religious structures. Respect to good governance, to the rule of law. If you combine the one with the other contribution to larger freedom then you can come back very concretely to what you have on your agenda. I don't believe that we will come to a freedom from want if we cannot have a rule-based system of property rights and secure tenure. It is a clear condition for this. We learned it again and again, you can say it in one word: If you want to create conflicts, even wars, then destroy cadastres. We saw it again and again, we saw it for example in Kosovo. In those days I was the Head of "UN-Habitat". We started

a new cadastre system in Kosovo, backed by governments, for example by Norway and by others, simply to make the cadastre a basis for freedom in the society, a basis for investment. By the way, we learned the importance of property rights in Germany as well. The question how to handle the property rights after reunification was one of the most severe discussions we had in this country. Reconstitution of property rights from the time before, knowing that lots of those properties changed to become other people's property, "Volkseigentum", difficult to translate. If you go now to the new Bundesländer, if you go to the eastern part of Berlin, and you see a building which is not yet renovated, not restructured, you can say with 99 percent certainty this is linked with the fact that there are no clear property rights. What you are doing in your professional work is at the center of peace, at the center of solving conflicts and problems in this world.

Let me make a little footnote: Once I learned as a student from my professor at the university: if you speak a little bit longer, don't hesitate to make a little attention stop. Therefore my "attention stop" is coming now, please be aware of this.

In this city of Munich, quite a time ago, a well-known cabaret artist, Carl Valentin, mentioned an idea, which I loved very much, being the 6th speaker in the morning session: "*Everything has already been said, but not yet by everybody*". Therefore I have to apologize that I repeat one or the other information from previous speakers!

The challenge of secure tenure – I can only stimulate governments to invest more in this field. It has the highest return on investment in the development agenda. I'm happy that you have a lot of positive developments. Your prize winner of this morning is one of the wonderful examples. Congratulations! Capacity building in your field of activities is urgently needed. And it is a pity, and let me mention this, with those eight years of experience in Africa: You can make money available in economic cooperation, if you invest in hardware. To make money available for the construction of a dam, a highway or a sewage water treatment plan is not very easy, but it is possible. All other hardware is relatively easy to finance, but if you want to finance software, capacity building, training courses, good governance, reliable planning data – you will have a problem to finance these activities. We must go together and inform governments, private business and all those working in those countries: investments in this kind of software are of highest importance for the stability of these countries. We need this stability and this development for peace for us as well. This is the interrelation. I'm happy, for example, to quote Norway once more, that they invested quite some money

in Tanzania, to make cadastral systems available for nine cities. Multiplying this in Tanzania is a clear signal of the importance of your activities in this field. This is the consequence: secure tenure, precondition for peace in the society, precondition for investment, especially also for direct investment. Therefore your work is the basis for development, is the centre of the peace agenda.

This goes further. I'm happy to inform you that it was possible to create this "Professional Forum for Habitat". Thank you, President Magel, and numbers of other colleagues for this initiative. Many of you invested at the very beginning in this Professional Forum – in hope, in money, in ideas, in projects. At the beginning it was a little flower, it was not yet really blossoming in those days. It is now developing quite nicely. I learned that my good friend and colleague later in Nairobi, that Anna Tibaijuka, the Executive Director of Habitat, is doing exactly the same for development in slum upgrading. We know and learn again and again: As long as we cannot come to secure tenure a slum upgrading will not be successful. You can be aware that those who have some assets to invest in their houses in slums will never do it without secure tenure, without some property rights because otherwise they are increasing the risk of forced conflicts of interests if they invest in better housing without these rights. We must be aware of those interrelations. Therefore development policy urgently needs your knowledge. We need you as a premium partner. This is not window-dressing at this conference, this is an urgent request for help! You should be aware that the United Nations system altogether must have this backing in a time of huge changes.

This is one important part of the equation, but we have to go even further. We need better land management systems with better data. I was very happy to learn in Germany: It was decided by the Parliament that government should make money available for the development of data concerning land use and interrelated activities in this field, in your domain of work. What made this decision specifically important? The Parliament underlined: To invest in reliable data are infrastructure investments with a high return on investment – they are infrastructure investments. Your work – the data, geodata, in the broad sense: They have all the qualification of infrastructure investments. Investments in this part of infrastructure are producing important external effects on lots of other decisions. They make other decisions better, more reliable. Therefore the data you are producing and using – these data are a backbone for the development agenda around the world. They are of highest importance for those who are handling, who are shaping

this change. The changes will go on. They will not go on on a lower level, at a lower speed. That is not pessimistic, that is optimistic. We are more and more one planet. We should be very happy about this. We should see this as an offer to our young people. Always underlining that at the time of my father the labour market was around the church. In my time the labour market at least for the average is the whole of Germany, even a little bit Europe. In the time of our children the labour market will be the world. Let the young people around the world qualify themselves for this future. Make it a precondition that this integrated world is also a peaceful world, coming from the understanding of the ideas, of the ideological basis, religious believes, of the cultural identity and diversity. We need this cultural identity. I am convinced, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends and colleagues, people will not accept globalization for the price of losing their identity. It is the contrary: The people in the global world need their identity otherwise they cannot handle this anonymous development in globalization. Therefore it's good to come to Bavaria with open eyes, to see that you can combine identity and diversity with a successful economic agenda. I believe we have a totally new feeling of these identities in languages, in songs, in behaviour, even in the cuisine – we have a renaissance of regional identity. Globalization needs urgently identity and cultural diversity. This must be combined with the need for everybody to live up to dialogue and tolerance in an organization like FIG. To be aware of respect, of dialogue with others is the precondition for solving problems in peace, to avoid conflicts, to avoid wars. This must be your contribution to a peaceful world, a world where there is development for each and everybody. This would be a great, an outstanding success. That's what I wish you all and I hope you really will have the chance to contribute in the way I tried a little bit to single out.

I thank you very much!

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