

Summary Speech at the 6th Summer School 2014

Phnom Penh 13 November 2014

1. **Land Policy is not one-dimensional!** The White Paper on Land Policy (WP) should follow the multifaceted character of Land Policy. Accordingly it covers nearly all aspects of human life. The WP is thus fundamental for urban and rural development! H.E. Senior Minister has clearly pointed out this comprehensive character of the WP. He even made clear that land titling is not an end in itself. It's only the starting point and the basis for a lot of subsequent activities in the interest of the country and its people. It became very clear that much more focus should be given to rural areas and its future role and functions against the background of a global decrease of agriculture. Integrated rural development should become a priority!
2. With the current draft of the WP, Cambodia has successfully managed to cope with international challenges, trends, standards and criteria. The FAO representative has expressed that the WP has laid good foundations for acceptance of the principles stated in the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests. The UN Women representative has pointed out that Cambodia gives land rights to women. The Indigenous Youth Association representative has underlined that Cambodia is a leading country in adopting the UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous People (IP). In theory and in written text, it therefore seems that in principle everything is good: The WP meets international standards. It's now **all about the right implementation** and on putting ideas in action! There is a mandate for permanent remembering that poor people need much more support and possibilities for expressing their needs. H.E. the German Ambassador has mentioned that, with regard to this mandate, still a lot has to be done.
3. There is a clear demand to find consensus and agree on criteria in order to come to a **fair reviewing and evaluation of progress and achieved goals**. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will bring new dynamics in this field – the government, civil society, international development and other agencies have to be prepared. National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) can become an indispensable basis for providing the required data and information for permanent monitoring and final evaluation. But, NSDI is also according to the famous Bathurst

diagram, the tool for spatial and land use and all other data based planning and decisions! The WP has consequently demonstrated the importance of establishing a NSDI for Cambodia!

4. The Summer School made it very clear that land use planning (LUP) can even **improve land tenure security**. The participatory approach of LUP enables people to better follow planning on the respective parcels, what automatically raises the question of existing clear or disputed tenure rights. The Technical University Munich is currently undertaking an international oriented research in this field on behalf of the UN Habitat Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and GIZ. There is no doubt that this approach could be used in IP regions as well as for housing programs.
5. There came a wonderful, unforgettable slogan from the representative of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) in the Philippines, which seems to have fully embraced also environmental needs: **“Development between production and protection”**! The WP expresses the need of protection very clearly. As economic development is not only very positive, there should be much more discussion and even introduction of so-called ecological red lines - like it happens now in China! Ecological research in Cambodia should get much more support.
6. The real golden theme of the Summer School was: **It’s all about a balanced development of urban and rural areas!** Rural-urban migration is partly helpful for both sides, but it should happen in a reasonable dimension. It’s much more important to strengthen rural areas and to enable them to start an endogenous development. Rural areas need new economic incentives like small- and medium enterprises (SMEs) and some other non-agricultural livelihoods. They need a spatial development framework, which strengthens central urban places within rural areas. The WP has given strong focus to these aspects.
7. To reach a balanced development of the rural and urban areas, we need **much more inter-communal cooperation everywhere and we need inter-departmental or inter-ministerial coordination**, vertically and horizontally.
8. In the light of more and more complex challenges and interdependencies, **capacity building is the alpha and omega** in Cambodia. The WP stresses the need for it very clearly. The annual Summer School is one of many, many other opportunities to enhance systematic education and permanent training of all actors.

9. Cooperation between ministries and NGOs should be based on confidence and not on mistrust. There is a **need for creating an atmosphere for free speeches and enable the expression of true opinions** and making clear that participating in consultation does not automatically mean that all contributions will be accepted. Due to a democratic discussion and necessary weighing up of all arguments, finally only the best arguments will win! But one thing is clear: the weighing up must be transparent, and accountability should be ensured.
10. From “Land is life” towards “It’s all about people, places, politics” we finally once more have discovered the overwhelming message: **“It’s all about participation and information!”** This slogan is multi-dimensional: it encompasses not only the fair and early participation of people on grass roots level as well as of partners in the government, business, civil society, etc., but it means also the education and training methods of academic institutions to provide the future elite of the country with respective ethics and open minds and with modern and human-centered methods.

A final remark: This international 6th Summer School was an extraordinary success. It has strongly underlined the need for land policy and has proved the comprehensive character and big progress of the Cambodian White Paper on Land Policy.