

FIG President's Welcome Address
to the 50th Anniversary Celebration of WTUSM
on 28 October 2006

Honourable Vice Minister Lu Xin She, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, dear Professors, Students and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to convey to you cordial congratulations and greetings of the international JBGIS, the international community of surveyors, geodesists, photogrammetrists, cartographers and all other geo-experts on the occasion of your 50th anniversary. WTUSM is worldwide very famous and stands for the high standard of Chinese surveying, mapping and geo-informatics. Already my father-in-law Prof. Rinner from Graz and former Director General Dr. Chen have told me about the famous Wuhan University. I am very happy to be here today with old friends and I look back to the 80's when, for example, Prof. Knoop and I have given lectures about cadastre and land consolidation to such eminent students like later Vice Minister Lu Xin She translated by Wuhan Prof. Zhang Zhanglu .

As current Chair of JBGIS and as FIG President I am happy that our (FIG) academic member WTUSM as well as Chinese and Hong Kong member associations play a very active role within FIG and the other international associations IAG, ISPRS, ICA etc. I am sure that Wuhan University is willing to join us coping with huge challenges like Millennium Development Goals, especially poverty reduction, shaping the rural-urban-migration, Agenda 21, sustainable development especially in urban and rural areas by comprehensive land use planning and land management; challenges like integrated rural development – which is of top priority in China (I have just visited a new project in Chongqing) – and for which surveyors should be well or even better prepared –, challenges like secure tenure and reliable land administration, disaster preparedness and risk management, establishment of well balanced land markets and related valuation systems, gender equality, climate change etc.

We also want to join Good Governance and decentralisation campaigns and the fight against corruption. It is fact and it is a fortune for our community that for all before

mentioned topics our contributions either is classical and modern geodetic work, survey engineering and satellite positioning or it is land management and modern GIS techniques and implementation are not only needed but even essential!

I do not want to anticipate my keynote speech at Geoinformatics 2006 in the afternoon but at least I would like to point out some hot issues which seem to me are very important for our community and professions:

It is fact that, as I have just mentioned it, we all can contribute essentially to the development of our countries – and our possibilities and contributions are still growing! Bavaria's Premier Stoiber has expressed this very clearly at the opening ceremony of the XXIII FIG Congress in Munich three weeks ago and Vice Minister Lu Xin She has just done it as well. But this happens worldwide too seldom, unfortunately most politicians do not really know how our professions and contributions have changed and evolved, and above all: especially the public do not know and appreciate enough, what we are doing. What we have to do is to bridge the information and communication gap between surveyors and politicians by integrating the latter one in our conferences and to speak to them in more simple words. And, besides of a better cooperation with neighbour disciplines, we also have to publicly demonstrate that we are not only pure technicians working in their "ivory towers" having been fallen in love with the high-technology, unable to communicate in understandable language to everybody. We also have to demonstrate that our motto is "From surveying and geo-informatics **to serve society**" and that we are able to communicate with decision makers and the public, able to shape our land and houses, able and eager to influence decisions on sustainable development of our home town, our community and our **one** world. And with regard to classical education in surveying and geodesy we should not stop using modern GIS techniques thus delivering data, information or even knowledge. We should aim at more, we should aim at more active implementation of political and social goals and programmes like Millennium Development Goals or national programmes, for example urban and rural development everywhere either in Africa, Asia or in Europe. This means that we have to move on to a much broader range of activities and education like it is permanently described in my messages to the FIG community: To achieve the range of responsibilities "from the simple parcel to the planet Mars" we need a profound and

comprehensive education and training of academics, students and professionals according to my worldwide accepted philosophy that we need “well grounded specialized generalists”. We have too many specialists, but too few generalists! In fact we do need both for enhancing the progress of geodesy, geomatics, geoinformatics, land management and for enhancing the public reputation of our geospatial societies. I add: for enhancing the attractiveness of our professions to the young generation in many countries!

As Chair of JBGIS and as President of FIG, the mother of all surveying and surveyors, I am confident that the Geoinformatics 2006 at the inspiring venue of Wuhan University can bring us an essential step forward and contribution to these before mentioned hopes! I wish you the best!