

## Preface

Land is vital to all life. Our food comes from it, we live and sleep on it, our work places are set on it, we transport ourselves over it, we worship on it, we have festivals on it, we die on it and we are buried or cremated on it. Organized ways of access to land for people to undertake all these activities are needed, especially when more and more people need to rely on the same land. To undertake this land governance in an organized way, the government needs to have in place a well thought through land policy, and the administrative structures to regulate, monitor and protect the access and rights to land. For this a land administration system is needed. Such a system is especially important in fast developing societies like Vietnam, where the economy is growing fast and land use is changing at a high pace.

Land administration is often described as the process of determining, recording and dissemination of information about ownership, value and use of land when implementing land management policies. Most important is to remember that land administration is not a goal in itself, but a tool to support Economic Growth and Sustainable Development and Good Governance and Social Stability. Land administration is a multi-disciplinary undertaking, that calls for broadly educated professionals, and thus for a broad study program. A well designed land administration curriculum stands on two legs:

- Institutional leg, dealing with law, economy and organizational structures
- Geo-ICT leg, dealing with geo-spatial and information technologies

The need for these kinds of land professionals as the international federation of surveyors FIG calls them, is increasing rapidly. Five years ago, ITC, operating as an associated institute of the United Nations University, has taken up this challenge when introducing the course in Land Administration within the MSc program in Geo information science and earth observation. With capacity building as its main objective, ITC is happy not to have to do this alone, but build on and help to further build the capacity of our sister institutes around the world via Joint Educational Programs. These proceedings relate to the final workshop of the project '**Capacity building partnership in land administration for sustainable economic development in Vietnam**'. This highlights the firm establishment of such a program between the Faculty of Geography of the VNU University of Science and ITC of the University of Twente. Preparations of this program have been going on for several years and a wide array of ITC staff, some of them now retired, have been involved in getting it all together. Similarly an array of VNU US staff have been involved, and even took a few months of their valuable time to join ITC and to sit with our students to

experience how the program is taught. ITC is running a similar program with the Chang'An University in Xi'An, China, and preparing others in Tanzania and Nepal, with several others under discussion.

One should of course not forget the contribution of our respective governments that allow us to run our universities and pay us as staff. A special thanks goes to the Netherlands' government through the Vietnam Facility to support the preparation and launch of this program through a co-funding subsidy.

Any study program will only be successful if it attracts students, and that those students will be successful and flourish in the program. The first batch of students that started the joint program are extra brave. Not only will they have to change venue twice during their study period, they are also the 'guinea pigs' that will be confronted with all the itches that pop-up, even after the elaborate preparation the joint project has gone through. They will be the true beneficiary as well as the future ambassadors of program. They will be the new generation of land professionals who will stand firmly on two legs on the land on which all life depends.

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