

# UNIVERSITÄT HOHENHEIM

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Eröffnung Symposium SFB 564

und

Feierliche Vertragsunterzeichnung zum Joint Master Program mit der Chiang Mai University/Thailand

**Redebeitrag von  
Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Hans-Peter Liebig  
Rektor der Universität Hohenheim**

*- Es gilt das gesprochene Wort -*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

it is a great pleasure to welcome you at the University of Hohenheim to the international symposium "Interdependencies between upland and lowland agriculture and resource management". I am delighted to see here in Hohenheim so many distinguished scientists and Ph.D.-researchers, policy decision makers, development experts and students from Vietnam, Thailand and Germany.

At this point I wanted to greet Professor Pongsak Angkasith, the president of the Chiang Mai University. But last Thursday we got the sorrowful message that Professor Pongsak Angkasith was hospitalized and therefore had to cancel his visit to Hohenheim. Hopefully he will soon recover.

Personally I would like to welcome Professor Boonserm Cheva-Isarakul, dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the Chiang Mai University. Please send Professor Pongsak Angkasith our best wishes. Today we will sign an operational agreement together with the dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences in Hohenheim, Professor Jungbluth, in order to establish a joint master programme at Hohenheim and Chiang Mai University. We hope that Professor Pongsak Angkasith will be able to sign this agreement in Thailand later.

I also want to welcome Dr. Hermann Eiselen, Senator honoris causa as well as a generous sponsor and friend of our university, who attends this symposium together with Dr. Andrea Fadani. As member of the Parliament of Baden-Württemberg I greet Mr. Bachmann.

A very warm welcome to the officials and guests from Thailand and Vietnam. I am particularly pleased that the University of Hohenheim can count on the excellent cooperation of our counterparts in Thailand and Vietnam. The importance of the connected research is underlined by the presence of members of the German Research Foundation, the National Research Council of Thailand – represented by the Secretary-General Professor Ahnond Bunyaratvej and further attendees – as well as Mr. Lo Van Na as Head of Department of Science and Technology, Professor Tran Duc Vien, the Rector of the Hanoi University of Agriculture, and Professor Hoang Van Tieu, Director of the National Institute of Animal Husbandry, from Vietnam.

Last but not least I would like to thank Professor Stahr and his staff for organizing this symposium so well.

The long list of exquisite guests and participants displays the relevance of this symposium, where we want to discuss diverse results of the successful Collaborative research centres (SFB) "Sustained land use and rural development in the mountain regions of Southeast Asia". Furthermore we want to talk the future proceeding over.

The University of Hohenheim has always been interested in deepened international cooperation and has accomplished many activities in this field. This is especially true for the area of the tropics and subtropics which is one of our key competences. In this field we belong to the best in Germany. The German Science

and Humanities Council (Wissenschaftsrat) lauded the excellent work and research at Hohenheim concerning the tropics and subtropics in its evaluation in 2006. And we accept the Council's recommendation to foster this field of research furthermore.

Today's symposium helps to strengthen our efforts in this area and it gives us the possibility to discuss the intermediate results. Especially the young scientists get the chance to advance their development in presenting their work and results and in discussing current issues together. They get in contact with members of other working groups and can exchange their experiences.

In this context the scientists and researchers can confer the proceeding in the future with each other. We are of the opinion that we should continue the outstanding work in the Collaborative research centre and we want to enter the fourth phase of funding.

And there are additional steps possible. For this reason I am very glad to announce that we will sign an Operational Agreement together with our partners from the Chiang Mai University today. For the Chiang Mai University the dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Professor Boonserm Cheva-Isarakul, is going to sign today, the University of Hohenheim is represented by Professor Jungbluth, dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, and me as the rector.

The Operational Agreement is the precondition to start a joint master programme, which will be implemented at the Chiang Mai University and the University of Hohenheim. Both universities together can turn their attention to a subject matter which is crucial for the region of Southeast Asia: How can we support the inhabitants of the upland areas to improve their living conditions and to use the resources in a sustainable manner?

We have to face the problem that the population of upland areas is often of different ethnic origin and is politically and socially marginalized by their lowland peers. They are forced to live in areas which are not predestined for intensive land use. It is therefore necessary to enable the inhabitants of the uplands to earn their livelihood there. We want to facilitate them to establish sustainable agricultural systems under the hindered conditions. The adverse conditions concern political, ethnic, social, economical and other disadvantages.

This improvement is not only important for the inhabitants of the uplands themselves but also for the population in the lowland. They benefit from the reduced pollution and erosion, the higher quality and quantity of freshwater, and further aspects.

We should spare no effort to achieve these meaningful aims. So the work of our Collaborative research centre is already fruitful. Hopefully the researchers can continue in a fourth phase of funding until 2012. But the work has to go on afterwards. Therefore the joint master programme is of great relevance to tie in with these topics. The signing of the operational agreement is a really positive sign in this context.

I would like to thank the Organizers and the many helping hands for putting together an interesting program and I'm looking forward to stimulating discussions.

Thank you