

# Introduction to the conference

## Welcome address by Prof. Georg Stingl, representing the Presiding Committee of the Austrian Academy of Sciences



Ladies and Gentlemen!

Five years ago the 189 UN Member Nations have adopted the Millennium Declaration, which outlines the commitment of the signatories to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the so-called MDGs. These eight goals were defined to monitor and measure the implementation of the Millennium Declaration until 2015 and aim at improving the situation for the World's poorer half by reducing poverty, improving access to education and health services and forming a global partnership for sustainable development.

Science plays an important role in this process, research and innovation being essential building blocks for the development of any society. The increasing number of globally relevant problems demand an even stronger involvement of science in the development of sustainable solutions for food insecurity, environmental issues such as desertification and deforestation, natural disasters such as earthquakes and flooding, health issues such as Malaria, HIV and pandemic diseases like bird flue, to name just a few.

The Austrian Academy of Sciences incorporates several institutes that are dealing with some of these issues, thus contributing with their research activities to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission for Development Studies has now put forward an initiative to take a critical look at Austrian efforts in research for development. Science has a global responsibility and a mandate to make a sustainable contribution to the Millennium Development Goals – and this conference will hopefully bring us a step further towards achieving the MDGs until 2015.

Let me welcome especially the keynote speakers Dr. Wolfgang Lutz, Director of the Vienna Institute of Demography of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and leader of the Population Project undertaken by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA); Dr. Olivia Castillo, President of the APRSCP (Asia Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption & Production) and Prof. Hannah Akuffo from the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation (SIDA)/ Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC).

Let me also extend my greetings to the representatives of the Ministry of Science, Education and Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Water and Environment and the Ministry of Finance, who we have the pleasure to have among us today, as well as the many other guests who have travelled from far abroad to join us here in Vienna.

I wish all of you an exciting and profitable conference!

## Welcome address by Prof. Gerhard Glatzel, Chair of the Commission for Development Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences



Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of the Commission for Development Studies I want to thank Prof. Stingl for his opening address. I am particularly pleased that Prof. Stingl represented the Presiding Committee of the Academy of Sciences, because he is a medical scientist and he knows very well how closely health issues are linked with the MDGs. As medical sciences are a multidisciplinary bundle of scientific disciplines and skills, he also knows that many problems of human communities can only be adequately treated by inter- and multidisciplinary collaboration and participation. The whole width of scientific disciplines represented in the Academy, from humanities to technical sciences, is therefore a very appropriate basis for this kind of research.

Now a few words to our workshop: It is neither intended to praise our achievement nor to lament our deficiencies but to arrive at recommendations for scientists, scientific organisations and policy makers. The situation of research for development in Austria is directly affected by recent changes in the organisation of universities and many non-university research organisations, but also by EU policy. At the EU level the strengthening of European research to successfully compete with other highly developed regions in the world is of high priority and is very visible. At the university level young scientists more than before have to demonstrate their academic standing by publications records and to demonstrate the importance of their work to society by earning money, to put it briefly.

As Austria lacks a specific instrument for funding cooperative research with scientists from developing countries, apart from the OEAD programme for training and studies, it is difficult for young scientists to get funds for research for development. The organisations they can apply to are geared for basic research and not for human capacity building, and there is no similar slot for this as in many other countries. The universities lack the funds to bring in people for developing projects, or to pay travel costs for scientists to go there. So we see a shift towards European cooperation, which is well established, and a reluctance to devote work to other, new kinds of cooperations.

I hope this workshop will strengthen the arguments for the need of a specific competitive funding scheme for highest quality cooperative research for development, as it exists in many other countries, and that the Austrian Academy of Sciences will adopt the idea and argue for it with the weight it has in policy and society.

In a few minutes we will start with our first session and Prof. Bolhár-Nordenkamp will introduce the speakers and moderate the discussion. Let me grasp the opportunity to thank all speakers and participants and in particular our sponsors BMBWK and OEAD, which brought in many alumni, as well as the Austrian Development Cooperation.