



ACADEMIA ENGELBERG

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## Farewell

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Some final remarks ladies and gentlemen

First the remark, an enjoyable development has reached our conferences for two or three years. It's the growing active participation of young people from the whole world either in project preparation or as workshop controller or minutes keeper. The organisation committee is very happy that something which started softly a few years ago has grown up to a wonderful cooperation. Thank you very much YES members and participants from the Studienstiftung.

The international network of YES alumni, we heard it this morning, carried the Engelberg spirit and the messages and later I hope the declaration of Engelberg all over the world in more than 90 countries.

Water is one of the four elements; fire, earth and air are besides. I am very satisfied that during our discussions, the connection, the interdependence, the embedding of this one element water, into the relevant other factors of the future of our world whose jeopardize our focus to the policies, we heard it from Marc Rosegrant some minutes ago.

Back to the bottom: you remember perhaps at the public evening two days ago. One inhabitant of Engelberg asked the question: "I know now everything about the water, but I have no response to the question in the title of the evening, "Who owns the water?"". Switzerland gives an interesting answer to this question: "A water source which lies on your territory, is your own private property. You are therefore allowed to take away the water for your private purpose, also for a reasonable industrial, or business or agricultural purpose. Nevertheless, the regional authority, government of the cantons, not the federal, the regional, has the competence to enact laws and rules which restrict or even forbid to utilise your water if this ban is in public interest. And the public interest is defined by the authority itself or in popular votation.

Another legal problem is that of the groundwater. Regularly the political authorities of the region declare groundwater, even if it lies under your private territories as public water, and therefore not for use to private owners, unless a small own consumption. We can summarise that groundwater deposits of large volume fall automatically under or in public property. The same rule is valid for sources of rivers and lakes, which are automatically public property. I think these simple and reasonable rules, created in Switzerland more than hundred years ago at the beginning of the 20th century and developed faster by a rich jurisdiction,



correspond the best to the three principles we heard during these days. Uniformity in rules, regional adaptation and application, respecting private ownership, but always priority of public welfare over private interests.

Water is not like fuel, it renews permanently. But it is nearly sure that water will be the first natural resource to run short. Therefore it will be the first case where we as mankind can demonstrate that man is capable to manage enduringly the circulation and distribution of one of the most important natural resources.

Ladies and gentleman, the Academia Engelberg and the foundation council have already chosen next year's topic. We will prepare a conference about "Growth, chances or dead-lock?" which will be held from October 15th to October 17th 2008. There will be a bunch of different aspects to discuss. In the last, you know it, 70 years the world population has doubled twice and the energy consumption got 16 times larger. The voices get louder and louder that our world doesn't support an unlimited growth. I am sure that we will have again an interesting next conference corresponding to the results of this year's conference.

At the end of this year's conference, I am obliged to express a warm thank to the Titlis Bahn. It was too late to express this thank publicly yesterday evening during the chocolate dessert, so I do it now. Thanks for the invitation to the top of Engelberg at sunset.

Thanks to the programme committee under Dr. Bruno Porro for the excellent preparatory work. Thanks to all speakers and chairmen for their interesting presentations. Thanks to the Engelberg Abbey for the organ recital of this morning. Thanks to Dr. Dominik Galliker and all the good women behind him. If you turn your head, you can express your thank-you.

Finally, it remains to me to thank everybody for the active participation and I now wish you a lucky return to your homes, relatives and friends. See you again next year. The Engelberg Conference 2007 is closed. Thank you.