

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Klaus Schümann and I have the privilege to lead you through this Tribute Session for Rainer Gross tonight.

Dr. Rainer Gross died on Sept. 30th 2006, this is 8 years ago, at an age of 61 years. He was UNICEF's Chief of Nutrition from April 2002 until his untimely death and had focused UNICEF's global Health and Nutrition strategy on the ongoing "silent emergency of undernutrition" and its complex causes, including not only food shortages but also access to education, health care and economic opportunities. Before he joined UNICEF he served in the field in Indonesia, Brazil, and Peru as senior nutrition advisor for the German government.

These facts are taken from the obituary that UNICEF released soon after his death. They cover the "minimum requirements" all right that need to enter an obituary. This encompasses, first of all, to deliver correct information regarding name, title, dates of birth and death, as well as function and position of the departed person. It may seem an ironic observation that you are rarely asked for obituary comments before you are in an advanced age yourself, but this opens the opportunity to talk "first hand" about personal encounters and relationships with the deceased. Indeed, the purpose of today's meeting is to try and go beyond the facts to draft some surely less objective, but more colorful pictures of Rainer as seen by different persons who worked with him.

We are happy and proud to have two such persons in the room who can do so first hand: One of them is Noel Solomons, who lives in Guatemala since over 30 years and worked with Rainer in the fields of "Urban Nutrition" and "Micronutrient Supplementation". The other is Erik von Baer, who is Chilean and one of the world's leading experts on lupines; he cooperated with Rainer on Lupines. One has to start: Noel, please come to the stage and share your memories with us.