



# DAY OF GERMAN UNITY

The Daily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

October 3, 2007

## MESSAGE



**Horst Köhler**  
Federal President

ONE should not count one's blessings too soon, I agree. I believe, however, I can safely say even now that 2007 has been a good year for Germany. It started with the German EU Council Presidency during the first six months. With the conclusions adopted by the European Council in June, we have made major progress towards renewing the foundations of the European Union.

In the field of climate protection, too, we agreed on a substantial reduction in emissions. This was a crucial factor in achieving the accords reached at the G8 Summit in the Baltic Sea resort of Heiligendamm. Of course interests may differ. Nevertheless, there is a perceptible and growing recognition that here we are all in the same boat.

Protecting our climate is absolutely vital not only to preserve our planet for future generations but also to ensure support for an economic system based on freedom. People increasingly realize the advantages

of using natural resources economically and without damaging the environment. It is important, I believe, that we focus our energies not on passing responsibility for our planet, our environment and the atmosphere to others but on taking action ourselves to address these challenges. It is no longer good enough to say: "I will take action when you do, too". Today our maxim must be: "I will take action - come and join me!" Germany intends to set a good example. The task now is to translate this good intention into practical action.

Looking back over these past months, there is one thing I feel is cause for regret. I would have liked to see greater progress in implementing the Millennium Development Goals agenda aimed at halving extreme poverty worldwide by 2015. The second half of the implementation period is about to begin. In the coming years all of us, both in the North and the South, will need to redouble our efforts. That it was not possible to conclude the Doha Development Round in 2007 is a disappointment.

Humanity's paramount goals - peace, security and freedom from hunger and poverty - can be realized only if we unite our efforts. Everyone of course knows that. Often, however, it takes painstaking effort to negotiate the maze of short-term national interests without losing sight of these goals. At the international level we all need to work together still more closely and strengthen our international organizations.

For German business, too, 2007 was a good year. We have dynamic growth and rising employment; we remain a leading export nation. We now need to further consolidate and develop the basis of our economic strength. Whether we as a nation can hold our own in future, too, will depend above all on the quality of our education and training as well as our research and development.

On this 3 October, the 17th anniversary of German Unity, Germany can look to the future with confidence. The challenges facing the world community are immense. Our nation has both the strength and the will to make an effective contribution towards tackling those challenges.

*Horst Köhler*

## MESSAGE

17 years ago, on 3 October 1990, Germany achieved its central national goal: reunification in freedom. The then German President, Richard von Weizsäcker, described the historic importance of reunification in a sentence that has gone down in the annals of German history: "The day has come on which for the first time in history the whole of Germany takes a permanent place among western democracies."

Celebrating our national day, the Day of German Unity, we Germans are well aware that we owe what we achieved, united Germany, not least to our friends and partners abroad. With gratitude and respect we also recall the immense courage of the hundreds of thousands of Germans who ran high personal risks protesting in the cities of East Germany against the communist regime until the party leadership in East Berlin capitulated to the peaceful revolution: on November 9, 1989 the Berlin Wall fell - a symbol of the restriction of freedom similar to the Bastille in Paris 200 years before.

Having achieved reunification Germany is in a more fortunate position than ever before: a stable democracy, an important economic global player, a reliable and respected international partner, strongly supporting the United Nations, "encircled" by friends as a member-state of the European Union. Germany: a country with democracy and the respect of human rights as its foundation.

The strengthening of democracy and human rights is also a cornerstone of our foreign policy and an important element of German-Bangladesh relations. Our bilateral relations have traditionally been characterized by friendship and cooperation and are very good, indeed. As much as we are wanted and as much as we can, Germany is determined to support all efforts in Bangladesh strengthening democracy and human rights. In this context we particularly welcome the initiative of the Caretaker Government to establish a National Human Rights Commission. Germany supports the efforts of the Caretaker Government to achieve, with reforms of the political parties and necessary electoral measures completed, free and fair elections before the end of 2008 and the strengthening of sustainable democracy. This is also the common position of the European Union, which was reiterated by a high-level EU Troika mission visiting Bangladesh in June 2007 during the German EU-Presidency, with Ambassador Andreas Michaelis, Director

General for Asian and Pacific Affairs of the German Foreign Office, as head of delegation.

German-Bangladesh relations are particularly strong in the fields of trade and development cooperation. Germany is the second largest importer of Bangladeshi products and many German companies are successfully involved in business in Bangladesh. Among the veterans are Heidelberger Cement, BASF and Siemens, the latter having celebrated its 50 years jubilee in Bangladesh in July 2007.

Every year an increasing number of Bangladeshi companies are in search of new business opportunities in Germany or attend important fairs. The International Exhibition of Textile Machinery (ITMA) which was just held in Munich this year has attracted about 400 visitors from Bangladesh. A textile machinery symposium is planned for end of November where renowned German textile machinery companies will come to Dhaka to present latest developments in the textile machinery sector.

In the field of development cooperation I would just like to highlight two exemplary projects that greatly contribute to infrastructure development and improvement of energy efficiency in Bangladesh:

- the Rural Infrastructure Improvement Programme consisting of two largescale projects and focussing on constructing and upgrading roads, building bridges, improving rural markets, constructing flood shelters and strengthening union parishads in 39 (more than 50%) districts in Bangladesh. Here German development cooperation is combining financial efforts by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the British Department for International Development (DFID) together with a contribution from KfW and all-embracing knowledge transfer by our Agency for Technical Assistance, GTZ.

- the pilot project to introduce prepaid metering systems aiming at the reduction of system losses in the power distribution to households in Chittagong Metropolitan Area for which Bangladesh received a grant of about four million Euro from the German Government through our Financial Assistance bank Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW).

During the last weeks Bangladesh experienced severe floods which brought destruction and hardship to millions of people in the South Asian region. As a sign of sympathy and solidarity with the Government and the people of Bangladesh, Germany has made available

800,000 Euro to help flood victims in Bangladesh mainly by providing food packages, shelters and medicine.

As in previous years, Germany continues to support the preservation of Bangladesh's cultural heritage. Together with a local NGO we are currently promoting traditional Bengali folk music including a nationwide Baul talent hunt among other activities. Furthermore, we have introduced German language courses in Chittagong with the support of the Goethe-Institute and will do the same in Sylhet where we are actively participating in a recently opened European cultural centre founded by the Humayun Rasheed Choudhury Foundation.

In order to promote economic relations and cultural exchange between our two countries and provide assistance to Germans and Bangladeshis alike, Germany has appointed an Honorary Consul in Chittagong on August 5, 2007. This will further strengthen and intensify the already existing excellent bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Germany.

We Germans see Bangladesh as an important country and partner which, due to its greatest asset, its resilient, brave and hardworking people, will be able to significantly reduce poverty, to achieve economic success and secure sustainable democracy with the protection of human rights as a central element. Germany will continue to be a reliable partner on this way.



**Frank Meyke**  
Ambassador of Germany to Bangladesh



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