

BGCCCI President's Message

THIS year marks 18 years of German unity and we at the Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI) would like to extend our felicitations on this auspicious day. We want to mark and celebrate this significant event together with Germans, Bangladeshis and the world. BGCCI was founded in 2003 to strengthen trade and harmonious business relations between the two countries. Today BGCCI is the only active and involved in facilitating and improving trade relationship between the two countries by offering services to the German as well as the Bangladeshi business community. Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(BGCCI) has been closely working with the German Embassy and other German organizations here in Bangladesh fostering economic cooperation between the two countries. BGCCI assists German investors and traders, by organizing business trips, providing contacts, gathering information and researching data. BGCCI also helps the Bangladeshi business community arranging their trips to Germany where necessary, helping with contacts and information where possible and raising the image of Bangladesh among Germans and Germany. BGCCI arranges translation and interpreting services and provides an important platform to discuss various business related issues to successfully bridge the cultural differences that sometimes

impede business. For the first time ever BGCCI is organizing the German Trade Show 2008 from Nov. 6-8 at the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka. Besides a fully booked exhibition venue, there will be presentations and discussions on specific business topics in special sessions. This event will be an important step towards developing a platform and awareness for increasing opportunities for the mutual benefit of our two countries. BGCCI joins the German people in their rejoicing of German Unity Day celebrations. Long live Bangladesh German friendship.

Md. Saiful Islam
President, BGCCI

'The world is searching for a new international order'

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in Paris for the Afghanistan Conference in June. What have we achieved? Where are we going? In which areas must we do even more? Besides critically taking stock at the conference, two things in particular were important. The international community confirmed the further support. Furthermore, the Afghans also agreed to gradually shoulder more and more responsibility. Our aim is to enable them to take care of security in their country themselves as soon as possible. For this reason, we will also reinforce our efforts to train the police and armed forces. For years German foreign policy has been supporting peace efforts between Israelis and Palestinians. What contribution is Germany making here? I don't think we should overestimate what we can achieve here. On the other hand, we shouldn't underestimate it either. There are certainly areas where we can make a contribution and there is room for a European role in settling this conflict. As you know, we are working for a comprehensive political solution in the Middle East. Our objective is a permanent end to violence and the establishment of peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians on the basis of a two-state solution. During our EU presidency in 2007, we worked hard to revive the Middle East Quartet and to incorporate the countries of the region into the international efforts. In the end we succeeded in relaunching talks, resulting in the Annapolis Conference.

I can see a role for Germany and Europe in giving appropriate support to the political process that began in Annapolis. That is the main objective of our common "EU Action Strategy". We want to show the people in the region that the road to peace is worthwhile, however strenuous it may be. This supports the negotiators on both sides and strengthens the advocates of moderation. It involves promoting economic reconstruction, but also supporting the police and judiciary in Palestinian territory. Many things are lacking: court buildings, police vehicles, workshops to repair and maintain them. These are areas in which we can give practical assistance.

With our initiative called "Future for Palestine" we are promoting specific projects that can be implemented quickly in the Palestinian territories. Projects we hope can tangibly improve living conditions now. And by staging the major Palestine Security Conference in Berlin, we have given Europe a clear signal that we wish to play a leading role in building up the Palestinian police and judiciary. The fight against hunger and the promotion of economic development as a stabilizing factor are part of crisis prevention. Which of Germany's development-cooperation projects do you regard as especially promising for the future, also with a view to achieving the United Nations' Millennium Goals?

As early as 1980 Willy Brandt hit the nail on the head when he said "Peace cannot endure where there is hunger." If we want to prevent crises, we must do something about the structural causes of conflict. This also involves combating hunger and poverty and promoting economic development. Lack of future prospects and an unequal distribution of wealth exacerbate the risk that conflicts will lead to violence. Conversely, crises and acute conflicts deprive people of their livelihoods and cause even more hunger and poverty. That is why the prevention of violent conflicts worldwide remains a key concern of German foreign policy.

I am convinced that sustainable crisis prevention can only succeed if we choose a comprehensive approach, an approach that includes all fields of politics, i.e. not only foreign and security policy, but also economic, environmental and development policy. Security and development are closely linked; one is not possible without the other. That is why the Federal Government is committed to promoting economic development as a way of preventing crises and making peace secure. It is also a matter of structuring globalization in such a way that existing inequalities are not further reinforced. This, too, is an important prerequisite for economic and social development.

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in autumn 2000, the world's nations, including Germany, declared their goal of halving the percentage of people who live in extreme poverty worldwide by 2015. As you know, on a national level we have adopted the "Action Programme 2015" for this reason and are working hard on its implementation. The 2008 Bertelsmann Transformation Index study shows that, although the number of democracies has risen over the last few years, more and more countries are developing into "secret autocracies". How is German foreign policy dealing with this trend?

The first step when formulating foreign policy is to closely observe and analyze political developments worldwide, and then to develop political concepts and strategies on this basis. One of the essential tasks of foreign diplomatic missions is to report regularly on the situation of human rights and the basic legal framework in each individual country. And I can assure you that we take a very close look! We talk with governments and authorities, but also with representatives of civil society, journalists, lawyers, human-rights activists and political foundations. If there are any indications that the principles of the rule of law and democracy are under threat, we address the issue and try to encourage remedial action. We do this bilaterally or within the framework of the EU and the United Nations, but always in close coordination with our European and international partners. As you know, we have developed a

wide range of instruments for this purpose. I would like to mention the dialogues on human rights and the rule of law which we have taken up bilaterally and at the European level with countries like China, Russia and many others. May I also remind you of the Rule-of-Law Initiative which we launched during our G8 presidency. If you want to sustainably consolidate human rights, you must also take into account the societal environment in which these rights are to be assured. Deficiencies must be clearly identified. However, patience and persistence are required to remedy them. We are working hard on this and will continue to do so in future.

Engagement for democracy and human rights are among Germany's core values. Yet some countries regard calls on them to respect western standards and values as intrusive or moralizing. What concrete possibilities does diplomacy have here?

First of all, human rights as laid down, for example, 60 years ago in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights really are universal and indivisible! They are not "western" values. That is why we are so strongly committed to them and why I believe that the principle in international law of non-intervention clearly reaches its limits when human rights are being flagrantly violated. It is the task of diplomacy to keep drawing attention to this fact and to make it clear that religious or cultural ideas cannot be used as a basis for calling universal standards into question. I have already mentioned the instrument of human rights dialogues we can also use to discuss such fundamental matters of principle. And since you ask about the role of diplomacy, it is also needed when solutions are being sought for specific cases where human rights have been violated. Of course, we also have to keep on clearly stating our position publicly. But if you want to help specific people in specific situations, you cannot do without "quiet diplomacy", i.e. persistently working behind the scenes to bring about a solution.

In an interview you recently said: "Art and culture are becoming increasingly important in foreign policy because they reach people where classic diplomacy has no effect." Where do you see the specific influence of culture in foreign policy?

I have already mentioned that we are living in a world that is changing dramatically before our very eyes. New powers, new actors are appearing on the scene and promoting their ideas and values. This means we can no longer assume that everyone necessarily shares our own values and ideas which for decades seemed to us to be the measure of all things. On the contrary, we, too, must promote our values and ideas; we, too, must be convincing and make ourselves understood. Conversely, it is also true that we can only understand many processes and developments if we judge them against their cultural background. That is why I say we must create opportunities in which mutual understanding can develop, in which the tolerance we need in today's networked world can grow. If we only use the means of classical diplomacy our success in this will only be limited. Art, culture, education are the bridges across which people can approach each other. That is why foreign cultural policy should be the third pillar of our foreign policy. Cultural exchanges and education work can also lay a foundation on which our political relations can build. It is at our German schools or partner schools abroad, at our 134 Goethe Institutes abroad, or within the framework of foreign science policy which we are particularly promoting this year.

Germany is the United Nations' third-largest financial contributor and the seat of numerous UN secretariats and institutions. How is Germany currently pursuing the aim of reforming the UN Security Council including the Council's enlargement? Although the subject is no longer in the headlines as often as it was a few years ago, the reform of the

United Nations will remain patchwork without a reform of the Security Council. As it stands, the Security Council reflects the world after 1945. Today we are dealing with a completely different geopolitical reality, and if the Council's authority and credibility are to be maintained, there must be a reform. As you know, corresponding proposals were submitted by Germany, together with Brazil, India and Japan, in 2005.

And even though there was widespread support for these proposals at the time, they, like the other draft resolutions, were never put to the vote. Today we are debating so-called "interim solutions", i.e. a reform that would only apply for a limited period of time and would be followed by an obligatory review conference. We are open and flexible as regards these ideas and are actively participating in the ongoing discussions. The aim is

to begin a negotiation process as soon as possible that will end in a concrete reform. Two things are key here. First, we want a real structural reform of the Security Council that reflects the world as it is today. And second, the proposal must be formulated in such a way that it can win the necessary two-thirds majority in the General Assembly. Thank you for giving us your valuable time.

12th IAAF World Championships in Athletics berlin 2009TM

Following the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup, the third largest sporting event in the world, the World Championships in Athletics is coming to Berlin in 2009. From August 15-23, the best track and field athletes from around the world will compete in the Berlin Olympic Stadium for the title of world champion in 47 disciplines. One very special highlight will be the world championship marathon race. For the first time in the history of athletics, it will not start and finish in the stadium, but will rather take place in the heart of Berlin. The start and finish will be located at the Brandenburg Gate, could there be a better backdrop in Berlin? The race walking events over 20 km (men's and women's) will also



take place in the city centre on the grand boulevard "Unter den Linden". Information and tickets for the 12th IAAF World Championships in Athletics berlin 2009TM are available

online at www.berlin2009.org and via the ticket hotline +49 (0) 1805 1 209 1 (0.14 Euro/min. from the German landlines; cellular prices may vary).

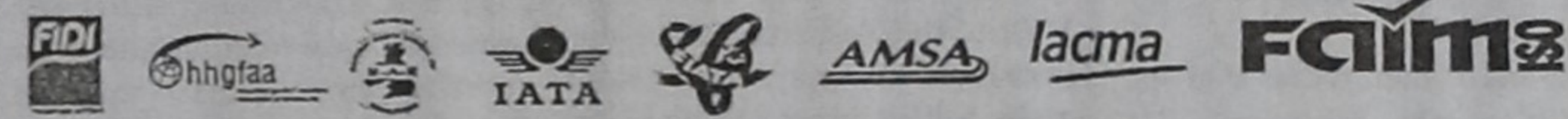
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