



# DAY OF GERMAN UNITY



## Message from the Ambassador



Today, Germans back home and across the world are celebrating the anniversary of their country's reunification. In the fall of 1989 thousands of East Germans had taken to the streets. They demanded free elections, a democratic government and the

freedom to travel, and, above all, called for a united Germany. Simple and powerful, their slogan was "Wir sind das Volk, wir sind ein Volk" - "we are the people, we are one people". Forty years of separation had brought suffering and distress to millions of families. Now, in line with popular rebellion spreading all over the declining Soviet empire, there was space for change in East Germany. As a result, the Berlin Wall suddenly came down in November 1989. Germany was reunited eleven months later, in October 1990.

Having found their national unity, Germans could finally come to peace with themselves and all their neighbors. As despotism came to its end in Central and Eastern Europe, democracy and the rule of law were installed all over the continent. 23 years later, we remain grateful to our brave fellow citizens who wrote this wonderful chapter of German history.

Living at the heart of Europe, Germans are very much aware of their responsibilities towards their European neighbors. Europe today is united in diversity, and this is what Europeans want. We acknowledge our differences within the European Union. Recent debates with regard to the appropriate way of handling excessive sovereign debt of a number of EU member states have resulted in common efforts to improve certain aspects of Europe's still unfinished integration. Germany and her European partners have made it clear that they remain determined to further strengthen our com-

mon currency as one of the anchors of global financial stability. The foundations of the great European project remain unchanged, since they are based on common values. The new German government will continue to work for an even stronger economic and political union in Europe.

Friendship between Bangladesh and Germany was established at the early hours of Bangladesh's independence. Germany was one of the first European countries to recognize Bangladesh as an independent nation. Our relationship has been thriving ever since. Our bilateral development cooperation is focused on the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy, good governance, rule of law and human rights. Furthermore, Germany is assisting Bangladesh in adapting to climate change and managing unregulated urbanization.

In view of Bangladesh's high exposure to the effects of climate change, the German Embassy has recently launched two new initiatives: climate change awareness projects in cooperation with local journalists and government representatives; and a project to educate school students on the effects of climate change. We are looking forward to doing more in this important field in the near future.

Our bilateral ties are particularly strong in the field of business. In recent years Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in its economic development. As infrastructure improves, and investment conditions become more competitive, Bangladesh will be able to attract more interest among the

German business community. Germany is Bangladesh's first trading partner within the European Union, and the second largest market for Bangladesh exports worldwide. Although our trade has diversified over the last few years, the garment sector keeps playing a dominant role. This country is the second producer of ready-made garments worldwide. There is no reason why it could not soon become the first. But numbers don't tell the full truth - the first in quantity should also be the best in quality. Starting in 2005, GIZ, Germany's international cooperation agency has assisted the garment sector in improving social standards. The recent Tazreen and Rana Plaza tragedies have tarnished Bangladesh's international reputation. As a friend, Germany will continue to assist factory owners and workers alike in addressing the multiple challenges Bangladesh's most important industry is facing. This requires courage, determination and honesty of all concerned, and there is no time to lose.

Germans and Bangladeshis can be proud of their common achievements and the strength of their bilateral relations. We will do more, and we shall try to do even better.

On the occasion of this year's Day of German Unity, I extend my cordial greetings to the people of Bangladesh. I also greet my fellow countrymen residing in this country.

Dr. Albrecht Conze

## Climate change: How to tackle humanity's greatest challenge

LAST week the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) alarmed the world with yet another doomsday scenario by forecasting an up to 5° C warmer Planet Earth by 2100 and the resulting implications for nature, animals and humanity. It has been six years since the IPCC published its last report on the imminent threat of global climate change. In this period, awareness for climate change has risen to a very high level. Countless initiatives have been planned and implemented and international negotiations in Copenhagen, Rio de Janeiro and Durban have brought some progress, though no breakthrough yet. An international agreement on capping carbon emissions is yet to be reached, and time is running out.

The natural atmosphere of the earth is severely threatened by increased emissions from industries, households and traffic. The average global temperature on earth's surface is continuously increasing due to ever higher carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases' concentration in the atmosphere. We are seeing the consequences already, in Bangladesh and elsewhere. If global warming continues unchecked, it is likely to exceed the adaptive capacity of natural, economic and social systems.

Restricting global climate change is a task and target for the entire international community. The increase in the average global temperature should be limited to a maximum of 2° C, compared to pre-industrial levels. To this end, Germany is very much engaged in promoting a more sustainable way of living and in negotiating an ambitious international agreement on carbon dioxide reduction. Germany has pledged to reduce its emissions by 40% by 2020, regard-

less of the efforts of other states.

In 2008, the Federal Ministry of Environment launched a comprehensive Climate Initiative, financed through additional funds drawn from the emissions trading scheme. It aims at tapping existing potential for reducing emissions in a cost-effective way, and at advancing innovative model projects for climate protection.

Even if we manage to limit the rise in the global average temperature to 2° C compared to pre-industrial levels, there will be consequences of climate change to

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deal with. Therefore, the Federal Government adopted the "German Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change" in December 2008. The aim of the Adaptation Strategy is to reduce global vulnerability to the consequences of climate change and to maintain or improve the adaptability of natural, social and economic systems.

In addition, the German Government supports measures for adaptation to climate change and the conservation of climate-relevant biodiversity in developing and industrialising countries. Germany believes that a new ambitious international climate protection agreement for the post-Kyoto Protocol period ought to be achieved without further delay.

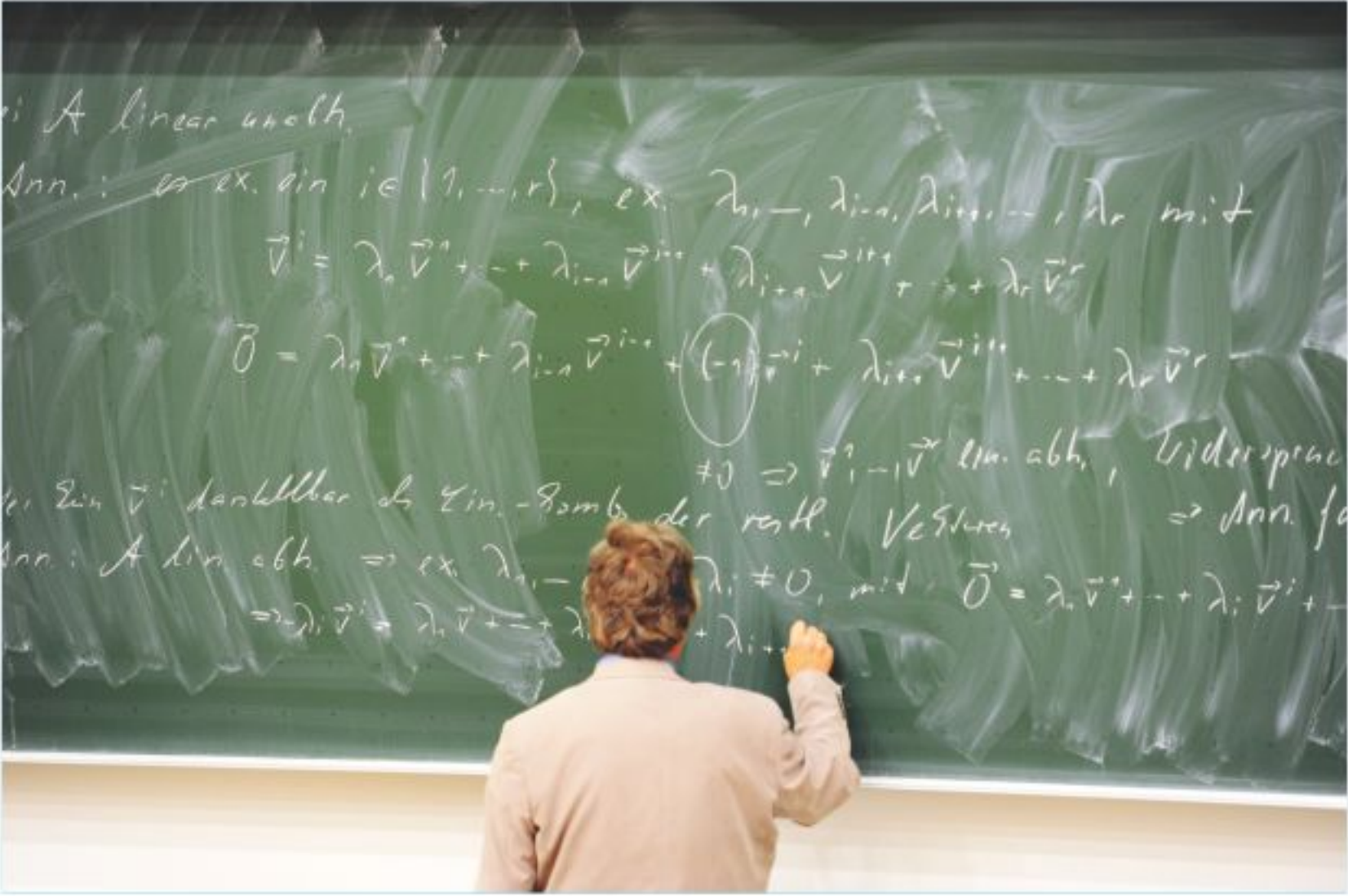
Germany has been very vocal in tackling the global challenges of climate change. We do believe that an international agreement is still reachable and that the international community will manage the transition to a greener economy. These are ambitious goals. But they can be achieved if we act jointly and swiftly.

## Higher education in Germany

IN the global competition for the world's brightest minds, Germany is catching up. Although most international rankings continue to evaluate universities of the Anglo-Saxon world as being almost without match, Germany's excellent academic environment truly is an alternative. When it comes to the number of foreign students, Germany now ranks third with over two million foreign students enrolled in our universities. But Germany does not just stand for an excellent teaching environment and world class universities. Financed through public funds, most academic institutions of higher education do not charge any tuition fees regardless of the student's origin. Germany's diverse university landscape is made up of more than 400 institutions, establishing itself as the most popular non-English-speaking host country for international students. But that is no reason for resting on our laurels: the German Academic

Exchange Service (DAAD), the world's biggest and most influential organization for the exchange of students and scientists, aims to attract even more international students to Germany by 2020, and has increased the number of scholars.

Germany has a long tradition of academia. Germany's oldest university is the Ruperto Carola at Heidelberg, founded in 1386. The Humboldt University in Berlin, although established in 1810 only, is of particular historic significance. Its founder was Wilhelm von Humboldt, an eminent diplomat, scholar and educational reformer. He left an indelible mark on Germany's academic landscape by realising his dream of "unity between research and teaching". Under this policy, still in force today, professors did not just disseminate their knowledge but also



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had the chance to research and keep up with the latest developments in their fields during sabbaticals.

Academic life in Germany has changed significantly in recent years. Bachelor's and Master's degrees are now the norm, and an initiative recognizing elite universities has provided new reason to compete for funds. Since the introduction of Bachelor's and Master's degrees, more and more German universities have aimed at incorporating practical experience into the curriculum to ease the transition from school desk to workplace. Initiated in 2005 by the Federal Government, the so-called "Excellence Initiative" is another program that has changed the university landscape in Germany. It is

designed to promote competition among domestic universities in order to improve the overall quality of education. Nine universities have so far been awarded the title of "Elite University" due to their innovative research and interdisciplinary programs.

More is at stake than just a title, though. Elite Universities in Germany receive additional funding in order to attract and support top researchers and lecturers. The "Excellence Initiative" also comprises support for other universities in specific areas of their curriculum.

German universities have partnerships with other institutions worldwide in order to prepare their students for the global job market. Economics and mechanical engineering are among the most popular degrees pursued by foreign students in Germany.

Recently, students from Bangladesh have also discovered Germany as an attractive option to pursue their higher education. Numbers have sky-rocketed since the middle of 2012 and are still on the rise. Extensive information to all interested candidates is available on the DAAD website: [www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de)

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