

## **Dialogue on Science for Sustainability**

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### **Introduction**

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research to our 2<sup>nd</sup> conference on Science for Sustainability. I would like to express my special thanks to the Department of Science and Technology (DST), to Imraan Patel and his team for hosting this meeting and for the invitation to Pretoria.

Sustainable development is one of the guiding principles of the policies of our both countries. To describe it in easy words: Every generation has to master the challenges of its time and should not pass them on to future generations.

### **What is the Role of Science and Technology?**

I think it is well accepted that science and technology in general play a crucial role in meeting the pressing challenges of sustainable development. But research into sustainability has not yet captured the attention of all senior politicians. And it is also true that sustainability research is not yet fully accepted by mainstream science.

In Germany we have tried to work on sustainability science for several years. The environmental research supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) initially developed methods and techniques for recording and reducing pollution. The objective of the technologically oriented strategy was to provide further development of the state of the art of environmental protection technology. The focus of research funding was focused on end-of-pipe technology.

In 2004 we reorganised our structure and launched the framework programme "Research for sustainability".

- ⇒ Paradigm shift from knowledge-orientated to interdisciplinary, solution-orientated research
- ⇒ Operating time: 2004 to 2009
- ⇒ Annual volume: 150 to 160 Mio. €
- ⇒ Total volume: 750 to 800 Mio. €
- ⇒ Implementation: approx. 25 Calls
- ⇒ Four thematic fields of action
  - 1) Concepts for sustainability in industry and business
  - 2) Sustainable concepts for regions
  - 3) Concepts for sustainable use of natural resources
  - 4) Societal action geared for sustainability

Presently we are finalizing the second BMBF framework programme “Research for sustainability” starting 2010 with the following specifics:

- ⇒ fundamental research (e.g. ocean and polar research),
- ⇒ special focus on landuse,
- ⇒ socio-ecological research,
- ⇒ interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches,
- ⇒ international collaboration will be given even more emphasis than before.

## **Dialogue on Science for Sustainability (D4S)**

Internationally coordinated research agendas are a must when it comes to finding sustainable solutions to the global challenges of our time. For this reason, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has launched a series of dialogues on Science for Sustainability with South Africa and other key emerging economies, i.e. India, Brazil, China, Russia. Bilateral events are being held under the slogan “Sustainable Solutions – Science for Sustainability”.

The objectives are

- ⇒ to establish the foundations for long-term, strategic partnerships in sustainability research,
- ⇒ to increase bilateral cooperation in sustainability related research,
- ⇒ to develop projects for the dissemination of already existing results.

A significant milestone of the South African-German Dialogue on Science for Sustainability has been the signature of a Joint Declaration by the then South African Minister of Science and Technology Mosibudi Mangena and the German Federal Minister of Education and Research Annette Schavan in February 2008.

On 16 and 17 June 2008 the 1st South African-German Conference on Science for Sustainability took place in Bonn.

- ⇒ The dialogue partners acknowledged the importance of each country’s evolving policy frameworks for building the capacities.
- ⇒ Both countries acknowledged the need for a balanced interaction between the ongoing process of the dialogue and enhanced cooperation on projects and interventions.
- ⇒ Both countries identified sustainability as a significant area of focus.

So we can describe it as a successful first approach.

Now we are here for the 2nd South African-German Conference on Science for Sustainability. The goal of the second conference is

- ⇒ to define common areas between South Africa and Germany in the field of research and development and
- ⇒ to build future networks between the scientists in both countries.
- ⇒ to generate innovation alliances for the better use of scientific and technological knowledge.

So we expect to go a bit more into detail.

### Conclusion

I would like to end with some remarks of our State Secretary, Prof. Meyer-Krahmer. He sends his best regards to the success of this meeting with the words:

***“I would like to see a boost of creativity for sustainable development in the years to come.”***

I am looking forward to an intensive and productive exchange of ideas with you all, and I hope to receive a lot of inspiration.

Thank you very much.