

Welcome Address

Ambassador Dieter Haller
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany Pretoria

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear participants from Germany and South Africa,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the German Federal Government to the second dialogue event on 'Science for Sustainability.' This discussion brings together both expertise and strong commitment from Germany and South Africa. I am honoured to be associated with this dialogue, as it truly is a distinguished gathering of leading sustainability experts from our two countries.

I would like to thank the representatives of the South African Department of Science and Technology, as well as the German Ministry of Education and Research for making this event possible.

The importance of 'sustainable development' has gathered momentum throughout recent years in both Germany and South Africa -- especially in the context of ongoing debates on global challenges, such as 'climate change' and 'energy security.'

The Federal Government of Germany is strongly committed to its share of global responsibility regarding the principle of sustainable development. The dialogue for sustainability supports the implementation of the priority objectives of the Federal Government's Internationalization Strategy for Science and Research, as well as its High-Tech-Strategy.

We also witness the South African camp establishing a solid foundation, by developing an awareness to the growing potential of 'sustainable development approaches.' It has measures and plans, such as the 10-Year Innovation Plan, the Global Change Research Plan or the feed-in-tariff for renewable energies which underline these developments.

The dialogue builds upon these mutual scientific and technological interests in South Africa and Germany. I must say I am quite impressed by the momentum of it. The Joint Declaration of Intent on Cooperation on these topics was signed by the Ministers in February 2008 in Bonn. The first dialogue event took place in June 2008, and now we are already in the midst of the second discussion. In Bonn, four thematic areas of cooperation were identified as highly relevant and interlinked topics: Environmental technologies, Global Change, Sustainable Energy and Sustainable Resource Utilization are highly relevant topics.

Environmental technologies, such as renewable energies, recycling technologies or waste water treatment technologies are already considered success stories for a better environment. So-called "Green jobs" accompany this development both nationally and internationally. Global change has become one of the major topics on the international agenda, as the impact of climate change affects us all. Renewable energies and clean technologies are also closely linked to the necessary reduction of emissions. We need innovative concepts and strategies for sustainable resource utilization, such as land management, or dealing with mining impacts in order to be able to face the challenges of regional and global changes.

Science plays a major role in this context. Without science there is no basis to tackle these present and future challenges.

Innovation for Sustainability in a Changing World
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I would like to point out that 'sustainable development' initiatives and measures are not only relevant for politicians, scientists and intellectuals, but for the men and women out on the street as well. We are all affected by the impact of climate change. Green jobs are not only possibilities but already realities. We care for our children so our well-being should not be a cost to future generations. In this respect, science and technologies, as well as educational and awareness-raising measures for society are vital.

Translating science into products and services has always been a major challenge. Thus, I am all the more delighted to see that entrepreneurs are also participating in this dialogue.

I would like to encourage and invite all participants to make the most out of this special event and to use this great opportunity to lay a strong foundation for future collaborations between Germany and South Africa in this highly relevant area.

I wish all of you a very fruitful and successful dialogue and all the best for the already existing and the forthcoming German-South African partnerships.

Thank you for your attention!

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