

# ***Dinner Speech by Federal Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle on the occasion of the "Petersberg Climate Dialogue" (Bonn, 2 May 2010)***

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-- Translation of advance text --

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to my home town. Bonn is where I grew up, I went to university here, and the Rhineland is also my political home.

The Federal Government Guest House here on the Petersberg has a long history. In the past major international conferences have been successfully held in this venue. The name Petersberg stands for peace and security through international cooperation. With this in mind, I would like to wish us all a successful conference.

The fight against climate change is one of the central issues of the 21st century. This theme is closely related to the city of Bonn. As Germany's main United Nations site, Bonn hosts, for example, the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Federal Government wants to promote and further develop Bonn as a UN location. This is also an expression of our commitment to the UN itself.

The global economic and financial crisis has not slowed down or halted the globalization process. The effects of the economic and financial crisis are, in fact, the expression of an advancing globalization. Events that take place in far-flung corners of the globe directly affect us. The same rule applies to the economy and financial affairs, the environment, climate change, energy and food: we can only achieve sustainable solutions together if we cooperate at a global level.

We need to work together on defusing conflicts before they escalate, using preventive foreign policy. In order to do this we need to address the roots of these problems. Where are conflicts more likely to arise owing to a scarcity of resources? How can we use our foreign policy and economic tools to prevent these conflicts? Our foreign policy must stop global problems turning into global crises. Today foreign policy must ensure that globalization develops according to a set of rules and values in order to preserve peace and security in the long term.

Climate change is one of the key challenges facing humanity. The consequences of our actions won't be clear to all until the distant future. But we need a global consensus now. In this age of globalization, climate protection is a cross-cutting task for politics, business, science and society as a whole.

Climate change has a far-reaching impact on the economic and social development of whole continents and indeed of the entire international community. Climate policy issues therefore form a major part of our foreign policy which is aimed at achieving and maintaining peace and security.

With each year that passes it will become more difficult and expensive to resolve the climate issue, and its impact will be more dramatic. We still have time to limit global warming to 2°C.

We must reverse the global trend of constantly rising greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

Time is short. The window of opportunity for joint global solutions is closing. But this must not be an excuse for us to give up our ambitious goals, which remain necessary and achievable.

Unchecked climate change jeopardizes respect for fundamental human rights. It particularly threatens one of the most basic human rights, that to life in a healthy environment.

Especially in those countries that have done the least to cause global warming, the very existence of millions is in danger.

The fight against climate change is also an opportunity, however. We have the chance to create the framework for sustainable, qualitative growth at global level.

It is not about giving up the idea of growth. Those who do not aim for growth will not become prosperous. It's a question of qualitative growth which is sustainable, resource-friendly and which contributes to climate protection.

That is a huge challenge, but above all it is a great opportunity. At global level a modern industry can be established which produces in an environment-friendly way, enables growth and innovation, and creates jobs. Education and innovation are the primary factors here.

For that reason, too, the Federal Government, soon after taking office, decided to invest an additional 12 billion euro in education and research.

I personally see a broad area for cooperation to our mutual benefit in the field of environment and climate protection, energy and infrastructure. This especially applies to the promotion of new technologies. Germany will be happy to make a contribution with its expertise in the renewable energies and energy efficiency sector.

As foreign minister the theme of climate and security is of special concern to me, as climate change can lead to internal instability in countries and regions and have a dramatic impact on relations between peoples.

We are already seeing changes in the way people live in many parts of the world due to global warming. We must assume that climate change will bring rising sea levels, extreme weather conditions and droughts. The consequences are clear – food and water shortages, disease, rural depopulation and migration.

For some countries this threat is directly tangible.

My recent talks with the President of Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed, greatly moved me. He vividly drove home the danger facing the small island states due to global warming – today their very existence is threatened.

To simply accept or ignore this is not an option for us!

We will use all the foreign-policy tools at our disposal with regard to climate change: classical diplomacy, development policy, international education policy

and the promotion of innovation and high tech.

Climate protection has become one of the major policy issues worldwide, also in the foreign-policy field. Climate protection and the promotion of new technologies feature in almost all my visits abroad. Whether in China, Japan, Brazil, South Africa or Tanzania, all are aware how urgent the problem is.

But we must still agree on how to jointly achieve our objective. It will not be easy, but there is no alternative. We can bring our experiences from classical foreign policy into that process.

Hans-Dietrich Genscher once put forward three options for the multipolar world he saw on the horizon:

The first is a world without rules, sanctions or responsibility. This he called the chaos option.

The second is a world in which individual states can set the global rules due to their economic or military strength. This is a dangerous option.

The third option is global cooperation based on equal rights and status for all nations, states and regions. That is the cooperation option.

Chaos is not an option, nor is rule by individual states or regions, if a global consensus has to be brought about. The name Petersberg stands for the third, the cooperation option, cooperation based on equal rights and status for all nations.

The cooperation option requires far sighted and responsible action, also at regional level. Only this option offers the prospect of sustainable, long-term success.

The cooperation option means more than just mutual consideration and an appeal to shared responsibility. It means harmonizing our values and interests. This is our common task.

Since the Second World War Europe has gathered experience of how to build mutual confidence in spite of fundamental differences.

Take the Conference on Security and Co operation in Europe (CSCE), which played a major role in ending the Cold War. Through the CSCE and its successor, the OSCE, we have built up a great deal of mutual trust in Europe. In this way German reunification became possible and the division of our continent was overcome.

Today's world is facing a similar challenge. Europe wants to set the pace in achieving a global consensus on how to combat climate change.