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Deutsches Institut für
Entwicklungspolitik



German Development
Institute

2030 New Year's address

**“But where the danger is, also grows
the saving power”**

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The Current Column

of 22 December 2017

“But where the danger is, also grows the saving power” – 2030 New Year’s address of the Federal Chancellor of Germany

Berlin, 31 December 2029.

Dear Citizens,

On this, the threshold to the 2030s, I would like to take a look back to the year 2015. In that year, one of my predecessors joined with the Heads of State and Government of all of the countries on earth to draw up a plan of action “for people, planet and prosperity,” the aim of which was also to “strengthen universal peace in larger freedom”: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the same year it was also agreed to keep the increase in the earth’s temperature below 2°C. 2015 also saw what was then a unique influx of refugees.

For many of you, this may seem like a tale from a different era. However, young people ever more frequently ask me why our governments failed to act more decisively then, why we had to allow severe crises to develop. I am happy that we will be able to draw a more optimistic conclusion in September at the sustainability summit to be held at the new seat of the United Nations in Hong Kong.

The year 2019 saw the first review summit for the 2030 Agenda end in fiasco. Following its withdrawal from the climate treaty, the USA had also largely rejected the 2030 Agenda. The European Union was diplomatically paralysed following the shock of the European elections. At the same time, the countries of Africa were not prepared to save the summit with empty phrases. This setback also had effects in other areas. The implementation of the climate agreement and the system of global trade went into a tailspin.

Also in our own country, the magic of the beginning swiftly dissipated when implementing the 2030 Agenda. Elections in quick succession led to Germany’s National Sustainable Development Strategy failing to be refined further, with the energy transition coming to a halt at the lignite mines. The political parties exhausted themselves with electoral tactics and were incapable of seeing the 2030 Agenda as an engine for innovation. Instead, the pressure of problematic issues grew.

At the beginning of the 2020s, extreme weather conditions triggered extensive migration movement worldwide. Accompanied by a decline in global trade, the consequences of the digitalisation of the labour world made themselves felt. The Digital Lud-

rites became a militant global movement. Inequality and tension increased.

However, desperation not only resulted in resignation and violence. More and more people took responsibility for redesigning their world. At home, in their villages and towns, in their companies and associations. This movement led to a significant improvement in living conditions in many parts of Africa in particular, the home of my parents. In Germany, agreements between retailers and consumers succeeded in halving the amount of food wasted. Not only did our food become healthier and more cost-efficient, it is now less of a burden on the soils and waters of other parts of the world. The integration of the second wave of refugees and the resultant reinvigoration of former industrial areas and rural regions is also primarily the success of you, the citizens.

However, in Europe this movement soon realised that achieving comparable success in areas such as transport or energy would require governments to be released from the grip of corporations, allowing a creative ecological and social market economy. In a short time this civil movement triggered a change in the landscape of the political parties, with focus placed on the unity, renewal and sustainable development of Europe. Broad, forward-looking coalitions emerged from numerous elections.

The climate also improved internationally, after an alliance of fair, green cities succeeded in having an independent female candidate elected to the presidency in the USA. The year before, her predecessor in office had completed the US withdrawal from the United Nations, after the success of a resolution - at the initiative of the newly-elected Chinese government - stipulating the responsibility to protect people and planet. Where governments fail, the reformed UN Security Council not only looks after endangered population groups, but also threatened tropical forests. A resolution to close the world’s remaining coal-fired power plants is in the pipeline.

Today, we can look to the new decade with confidence. If we maintain our course, a good life will be possible for everyone, in greater freedom and in harmony with the treasures and beauty of our earth. I would like to thank you for your efforts along this path and wish you health and happiness in 2030.