

d·i·e

Deutsches Institut für
Entwicklungspolitik



Years | 1964 – 2014

German Development
Institute

BMZ Charter for the Future – New development goals

By Imme Scholz,
*German Development Institute /
Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)*

The Current Column

of 24 November 2014

BMZ Charter for the Future – New development goals

Bonn, 24 November 2014. In mid-November 2014, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) published its "Charter for the Future", which is to be presented today to German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In this document, German Development Minister Gerd Müller sets out the political priorities he intends to pursue over the next three years in Germany and in its partner countries, in the cabinet in Berlin, and in German business, civil society and academia.

The eight action areas of the Charter for the Future are:

1. Ensure a life of dignity for all everywhere,
2. Protect natural resources and manage them sustainably,
3. Combine economic growth, sustainability and decent work,
4. Promote and ensure human rights and good governance,
5. Build peace and strengthen human security,
6. Respect and protect cultural and religious diversity,
7. Drive transformational change through innovation, technology and digitalisation,
8. Forge a new global partnership and develop multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development.

The Charter for the Future was drawn up between April and October 2014 as part of a broad-based participatory process. This process focused on finding common objectives for the necessary changes. The charter does not include any specifics on how and with whom Germany development policy intends to contribute to achieving these objectives. However, this information is to be provided at a later date, with BMZ intending to report annually from 2015 on its contribution to implementing the charter and inviting all other players to follow suit.

As a thematic ambassador for the environmental dimensions of the charter and a member of the German Council for Sustainable Development, I find this process particularly fascinating. It offers some tremendous opportunities for systematically linking development policy objectives with the further development of the German sustainability strategy and the implementation of the emerging post-2015 agenda in and by Germany.

The Charter for the Future outlines political goals for

transformative action not only within development policy but also in other policy areas. This is not surprising, as the general economic and political conditions for eradicating poverty are not shaped primarily by development policy, but rather by trade, financial, economic, foreign, and energy and climate-change policy.

The charter also places a strong emphasis on the ethical and political obligations incumbent upon a globalised world economy in which the living and working conditions and the production and consumption patterns of people all around the world are interdependent at many different levels. These obligations apply to individuals as well as to policy-makers, business, society and academia, whether at local, national or global level. This means that there is a need to justify political and economic decisions not only within the German and European political contexts, but also with regard to these global interrelationships in the "ONE WORLD" described in the Charter for the Future. Conversely, this also means that the well-being of citizens in Germany and the European Union not only depends on decision-making processes at home, but is also influenced by the state of well-being of others around the world and by the extent to which the international community is able to work together effectively to tackle global challenges.

Nevertheless, of utmost concern is our ethical duty to ensure a dignified life for all people. This is the first goal of the charter and, as is outlined later in the text, strategies towards its implementation must consider the promotion of human rights as much as the environmental limits of our planet. This means that current decisions need to take into account the rights of both current and future generations.

In taking this approach, the Charter for the Future is drawing attention to the fact that we live in economically-interdependent world which, especially in times of growing crises and violent conflict, needs international action that is committed to solving the common problems that affect us all. This includes restructuring energy systems in order to avert the dangers of climate change, expanding and restructuring social security systems in ageing societies, implementing human rights, and altering patterns of production and consumption to make them more sustainable.