

**Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES):  
Conference on „Cross-border Education and Development Co-operation“**

**Thursday, 30 June 2005**

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German Rectors' Conference

Dear conference participants, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great privilege and pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the German Rectors' Conference. Thank you for joining us here today to exchange our views and share our experience in this important field.

When we met in Berlin last year, to discuss the role of higher education institutions in development co-operation – and especially in achieving the Millennium Development Goals – participants from both, the North and the South agreed that it was important to create a win-win situation for all parties involved in order to make development cooperation in higher education more than a “charitable one-way street”, as it is perceived by some.

DAAD, GTZ and HRK as the three organisers of the Berlin Conference decided to follow-up on these suggestions and to look at some “win-win scenarios” in more detail. We feel that cross-border education is one effective and sustainable way of creating such a win-win situation for universities in the South and the North.

Clearly, in these past years, life has been challenging for German universities and universities of applied sciences. What we define as the “Bologna Process” is only part of a far-reaching reform process in education and research at our higher education institutions. The German Rectors' Conference is currently dealing with issues such as:

- How can universities keep up or even enhance quality in teaching and research when student numbers are rising, but financial means are not?
- How can we adapt and internationalise our study programmes to make our graduates “fit” for the national or even global labour market?
- How can we define international standards for the different stages of the educational system, for example with a framework of qualifications?
- And how can we sharpen the profile of our institutions and make our students and researchers more international without giving up valuable traditions?

As the voice of universities in Germany, HRK closely cooperates with rectors' conferences around the world in order to facilitate the mobility of students and researchers. We believe that sustainable cross-border education – as co-operation “at eye level” – can answer maybe not all, but at least some of the questions raised before. This is why DAAD and HRK decided to hold this conference within the framework of our joint conference series „Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies” (DIES).

Well, all that is left for me to do is to thank the co-organisers of this meeting, my colleagues at DAAD, for the good cooperation in preparing and implementing this conference.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development for supporting our conference.

I wish all of us for the two days ahead fruitful discussions, new insights and interesting encounters.

I would especially like to welcome our guests from abroad: Enjoy your stay here in Bonn!

Thank you.