

Prof. Dr. Theodor Berchem
Präsident des Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienstes

**DIES-Konferenz: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: A Challenge
for Global Higher Education**

Begrüßung

„eMDeeGising Academic Cooperation“

Ort: Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin

Zeit: Mittwoch, 3 November 2004, 13.00 Uhr

1 Excellencies,
2 Ladies and Gentlemen
3 dear colleagues,

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5 Extreme poverty is more than just a humanitarian concern. It is a danger to
6 peace, stability, security and environmental sustainability in an increasingly
7 fragile world.

8 In recognizing the global dimension of development problems, many world
9 leaders have subscribed to the United Nations' Millennium Development
10 Goals. Most of these are to be reached by the year 2015. The MDGs were
11 declared in 2000. Five years after (and only 10 more to go) time has come to
12 review the progress achieved so far.

13 Since 2000 partnerships have been forged and the world's largest Summit on
14 Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg.

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16 The goals have clearly been identified by now but the global roadmap to reach
17 them remains sketchy.

18 I am honoured, pleased and happy to welcome you warmly here in Berlin to
19 discuss the implications, challenges and opportunities that the MDGs hold for
20 Higher Education.

21 The conference "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: A Challenge
22 for Global Higher Education" is part of the DIES series. DIES stands for
23 "Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies" and refers to activities
24 in the area of higher education management activities jointly organised by the
25 Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions in
26 Germany, the German Rector's Conference (HRK), and the German

27 Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The conference series was established
28 in 2002 with the aim to foster an international dialoge about the need and
29 strategies for creating innovative and efficient policies for higher education.
30 Today's event is the fifth DIES conference and we are pleased that GTZ
31 joined in to organise it.

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33 I am genuinely convinced that more can and must be done to mobilise and
34 integrate the world of Higher Education into the MDG process – and
35 vigorously so, if we are serious about attaining the MDGs on schedule.
36 Education, and in particular Higher Education, is indispensable for the MDG
37 process. Good governance, social progress, technical and economic
38 development cannot happen without proactive involvement of the universities.
39 It is in fact the universities that are able to generate and provide crucial
40 framework conditions which are needed to ensure the lasting success of any
41 developmental intervention, and even development at large.
42 First of all, development always requires leadership and experts.
43 One could define “*development*” as knowledge being applied to bring about
44 change to the better.

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46 Knowledge always has to be generated, managed and applied. This is only
47 possible, if adequate local human capital is available. Therefore any
48 institution of development cooperation needs to start with providing and
49 creating qualified native experts. Thus academic cooperation should be an
50 integral part of development cooperation.

51 Ideally foreign donors fund a development project for a limited time only.
52 Experience has shown that there is only one way to ensure that a project

53 produces long lasting effects: There must be local, native experts who can
54 make use of their unique local know-how. Only these local experts are able to
55 bring about the transformation processes initiated (and intended) by
56 development cooperation.

57 This yet another reason, why opportunities for higher education for local
58 experts should be carefully integrated into development cooperation from the
59 very beginning. The native experts do not necessarily have to be educated in
60 institutions situated in the industrialised world. In any case, development
61 cooperation needs to ensure that these experts are being made available on
62 the ground.

63 Universities – especially in developing countries- play a pivotal role for
64 regional and local planning. Often they are the only adequate, qualified
65 partners on the ground when it comes to the need of consultation – in
66 particular when planning a project.

67 Thus local universities should be strengthened. There is also a strategic reason
68 for this, if we look at the issue from a broader perspective. We all are well
69 aware about the global trend towards knowledge-based societies.

70 Developing countries must generate their own knowledge, transfer and apply
71 it- in tune with their own cultures and traditions.

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73 We have made very encouraging experiences with our alumni in this regard.
74 Often they have become key agents of change. One alumnus in Thailand, for
75 instance, founded a study course with great impact on food security. We keep
76 the contact details of 20,000 alumni constantly updated. These local experts
77 can be mobilised for conflict management and development work. It could

78 hardly be any clearer that the education sector is the driving engine, if we
79 speak about development.

80 If you give money to a poor individual to buy food - that is a kind gesture but
81 it is only when you teach him or her how to make a living that you really help.
82 Money - or the lack of it - is not the decisive factor in development. Many
83 countries do in fact have enough money to reach the MDGs. However, funds
84 have often been used inefficiently. A recent study by the World Bank Institute
85 estimated that one trillion of US Dollar is wasted in bribes. It might seem
86 naive to say education can create better, more sincere and honest individuals –
87 but certainly it can contribute to raising ethical standards. The DAAD strives
88 to promote good governance by educating future leaders. We do select our
89 scholarship holders very carefully, picking only the very best. Scholarships
90 help to promote the careers of these promising individuals - for instance,
91 Wangari Muta Maathai, who will become the first African woman to receive
92 the Nobel Peace Prize - so we contribute to forming better leadership for
93 development.

94 Through weekend seminars, summer and winter academies we promote the
95 ideals of transparency and rule of law.

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97 Development will make huge progress, when physicians, teachers, engineers
98 and researchers from poor countries will be qualified and empowered to carve
99 the destiny of their native countries. Development is about justice and
100 ownership.

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104 For us in the university and research community development is at the core of
105 our identity – and naturally we care about development cooperation between
106 North and South. For universities in the North development cooperation in
107 fact offers many strategic opportunities to focus their research and teaching.
108 Development cooperation helps universities to internationalise themselves and
109 to become more attractive and competitive.

110 Science has produced an excellent record when it comes to achieving
111 development targets, for instance in medicine.

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113 MDGs are interrelated and should be understood in a holistic way. They
114 represent a complex phenomenon good for interesting scientific discussions.
115 Moreover, MDGs are measurable and monitorable goals consisting of 18
116 timebound targets supported by 48 measurable indicators. This starting point
117 is well suited for scientific approaches and even if it were only for research
118 and diagnostic capacity, the work of Higher Education Institutions would be
119 indispensable for the common effort to remove some key barriers to
120 development.

121 We at the DAAD had the MDGs already at the heart of our work –long before
122 they were proclaimed. Ever since we have been refocussing our programs to
123 make pointed, well defined contributions.

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125 Higher Education Institutions are crucial in achieving the Millennium
126 Development Goals.

127 The DAAD uses all of its instruments to promote progress towards achieving
128 the MDGs: from awarding individual scholarships to exporting complete
129 study courses. We work at all academic levels and in all disciplines.

130 Research, training, expert advise, independent monitoring are some key
131 components that universities world-wide can contribute to attaining the
132 MDGs. This conference provides you with the opportunity to look with some
133 depth at the chances and challenges of the MDG process for the sector of
134 Higher Education.

135 Having followed the discussions about development cooperation, I am
136 sometimes left with the impression that some still seem to think that transfers
137 of money alone will alleviate poverty. This could be a tragic error.

138 Money seems to get less and less as we distribute it: And you all know we are
139 getting short and shorter of money.

140 Yet knowledges doubles, if we share it. Transferring knowledge is in fact
141 development cooperation that will sustain. It is because of this that the United
142 Nations proclaimed a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development,
143 starting next year.

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146 together we can add systemic approaches, methods and our creativity of
147 thought to the MDG process.

148 I would like to wish you inspiring discussions.

149 Thank you.

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