

## **‘The Prospect of the Cooperation on Climate Change between China and Germany’**

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on the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Atlantik-Brücke e.V. with the Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs, chaired by Ambassador Yang Wenchang (President of the Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs) and Dr. Walther Leisler Kiep (Honorary Chairman, Atlantik-Brücke e.V.) at the Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2009

*Ambassador Yang, Dr. Kiep, distinguished members of the Chinese and German Delegations, ladies and gentlemen*

I feel honoured to reflect on the Prospect of the Cooperation on Climate Change between China and Germany, focusing on what Germany is doing in Germany and in China.

Although there is a financial crisis, climate change remains a serious topic. It is not comparable to 10 years ago when one tried to escape commitments during a recession. For me, being a climate scientist and technical expert without a political mandate, this is very important as I know that our work remains effective.

At present, Germany is hosting a meeting of the ad-hoc working groups of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to negotiate a world-wide post-Kyoto follow-up. The meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Kyoto Protocol in Bali in December 2007 has already designed the so called Bali Roadmap, which identified the main pillars for a post 2012 climate regime, succeeding the Kyoto protocol. The main pillars of the Bali roadmap are:

1. design a long-term global target for reducing GHG emissions
2. introduce verifiable and comparable reduction targets of industrialized countries
3. develop emission reduction strategies of developing countries
4. technical and financial measures for developing countries to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.

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When talking about Germany and the climate change policy, we have to start with the European Union first. In the first semester of 2007, Germany held the EU Council Presidency and was the leading force to commit the EU to the target of limiting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrialization. Last week only, scientists from Stanford University and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research announced that the threshold to dangerous climate change could be overstepped sooner than previously assumed in IPCC reports. The European Union's goal of limiting global warming to 2°C is therefore not too ambitious. In fact it is a minimum requirement in order to minimize the risks of climate change.

In 2007, the EU committed itself to reduce GHG emission by 20% until 2020 compared to the 1990 baseline and to feed-in 20% of renewable energy sources into the energy mix. The EU is willing to go further and sign up to a 30% reduction target in the context of a sufficiently ambitious and comprehensive international agreement. But what is reasonable?

In terms of the EU, this would be an agreement that provides for comparable reductions by other developed countries, and appropriate actions by developing countries. Developing countries as a group should limit the growth of their emissions to 15 to 30% below business as usual. This shall come from domestic sources, from the global carbon market, but also by contributions from developed countries. As I said before, this is the EU's initial position on the Kyoto follow-up.

In January 2009, the European Commission presented proposals for a post-Kyoto regime, but the official EU proposal is postponed until June of this year. This is the conclusion of the European Council meetings which were held from 19-20 March. Despite that development, or call it challenge, acting outside the UN and EU framework, Germany continues with multiple approaches.

In terms of climate change mitigation, Germany has already reached more than 30% reduction of green house gases until 2020 compared to 1990 by means of legal instruments such as renewable energy law but also market incentives such as those for the electricity market. Germany is pushing for the twin track strategy: increasing renewable energies and a reduction in energy consumption through energy efficiency measures. In terms of climate change impacts and adaptation, much effort has been done in Germany to identify a standardized approach on how to estimate climate change impacts in Germany, and how to develop strategies for the different sectors that will be suffering from Climate Change Impacts, such as Human Health, Water, Biodiversity, Agriculture, and so on. The scientific impact assessment has nearly been finished for all federal provinces of Germany and Germany is stepping into the adaptation strategies. Indeed, it is recognized that there is the need for a scientific basis, for EU-wide research projects, to minimize GHG emissions and adapt to climate change. Large funding has been committed for these important works.

Outside and within the framework of the UN and the EU, which is the political, global framework of all EU member states, Germany has started a mature cooperation with China on climate change mitigation, impact, and adaptation.

In the past 10 years, several technical cooperation projects addressing renewable energy and energy efficiency have been conducted between China and Germany. The great achievement is that climate change has become one overall term in the Sino-German relations. Some years ago, it was very difficult to mention climate change when working on wind power or efficient coal management programmes. All activities can now be bundled under the heading climate change.

Also within the scientific cooperation between China and Germany, climate change has become a main pillar, funded by both the Chinese and German side. One example is the Sino-German Center for Research Promotion in Beijing, jointly funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the China National Science Foundation, which operates in its 10<sup>th</sup> year now.. A series of additional programmes have been implemented with funding from the German Ministry for Education and Research, addressing climate change impacts.

Therefore, a sound basis for a scientific cooperation in the field of climate change has been built, and we are all aware that scientific evidence was required to cooperate on climate change. Internationally, we went through different phases of climate change perception: In the 1990s: sceptics prevailed, and it was hardly possible to publish a scientific paper dealing with water resource changes if the term climate change was mentioned. In the early 2000s: mass hysteria prevailed when climate change became popular and a lot of uncertainty scared the population.

Now, Germany and China have stepped into a reasonable, pragmatic cooperation on climate change, making use of the common achievements. As I mentioned before, a scientific basis has been built. We know that scientific solutions have to be translated into facts for decision makers. China and Germany will continue to carry out common science projects on climate change. But the prospect now is that these will be used for common action. No paper studies, but real action on the ground.

In the last two years, the Chinese Government has signed several agreements with the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, under the framework of official development assistance (ODA). The most important, speaking as a climate change expert, is an agreement for a joint climate change programme, covering the topics climate change mitigation, impacts and adaptation. This programme will be supervised by the German Technical Cooperation agency, gtz. What happens is that many activities are bundled now under the main headings for climate change.

There has been a long history between China and Germany to develop renewable energy plants or to increase energy and coal efficiency. China and Germany will

continue to cooperate in this field, not only delivering technical solutions, but also transferring policy support, as it is very important to know better about the targets that can be achieved before setting standards in the Chinese legislation.

At the same time, Germany is going beyond the scientific and technical cooperation, stepping into a new era of cooperation. In January 2009, the German Federal Minister for the Environment, Mr. Gabriel, and Chairman Zhang from the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding between both Governments to work on a Climate Partnership. This comprises climate protection, energy, science, research, and technology, headed by a high-level working group under the auspices of the NDRC and the German Ministry for the Environment.

The first meeting is scheduled to be in June. As there is no time to lose, the German Ministry for the Environment has already started contracting a study which will show the benefits of a energy and resource efficient economy in China, which can be the basis for a future cooperation and a start for a dialogue on a Sino-German roadmap.

The German Ministry for the Environment has already provided cooperation frameworks for climate change related cooperation programmes which go beyond the classical official development assistance. At present, a large number of projects is under implementation already, just to mention some: 2 CDM projects to strengthen the cooperation between the Chinese and German industries in the field of Clean Development Mechanism, which can be regarded being a business matchmaking; a Sino-German Renewable Energy Platform; a project to protect carbon-storing ecosystems; but also a programme to introduce insurance for weather related risks. The latter could be one of the stable financial instruments outside the market-based mechanisms under the Kyoto protocol which are facing fluctuations.

Last but not least I would like to mention the work of the integrated experts which are provided by the Center for International Migration and Development (CIM), which is an instrument with funds from the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. I am one example for such an integrated expert. Integrated experts work on a Chinese work contract, being paid by the Chinese employer and integrated in the host institutions hierarchy, with topping from the German development cooperation.

There are 40 such experts in China. Several dozens of these are working on topics related to climate change, not coming with a financial budget, but with purely the know-how that we have. And it was agreed to enhance this kind of cooperation in close future.

Distinguished participants, what does this mean for the prospects of the Sino-German Cooperation on Climate Change? Both sides cooperate on climate change mitigation,

impacts, and adaptation issues already, regardless of the post-Kyoto regime, as there is no time to lose on this global challenge.

Technically, China and Germany are cooperating on the latest state-of-the-art in these fields. On the context, Germany is working on the same topics under the climate change umbrella in China as it is in Germany. We cannot export the German way of dealing with climate change to China, vice-versa. But we can commonly develop our own ways.

With these words I would like to conclude that Germany and China should not worry about the prospects, but should just continue what has been started already.

Thank you very much for your attention.