

Statement by the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Ms. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul

High-Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs

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The new millennium has confronted the world with new global challenges, with events that pose a threat to human lives and development achievements: the three major crises, often referred to as "FFF" (food, fuel and finance), and climate change.

We also know that there is a mixed record halfway to the MDGs, especially in Africa. There is light and be shade, achievements and disappointments.

Light: It is possible to reach the MDGs. This can be seen in the fight against malaria by the action of the Global Fund. For example in Rwanda malaria-related child mortality was reduced by two thirds.

Shade: For me – and I think for everyone else – it is completely unacceptable that the risk of a woman dying due to pregnancy or child birth is 300 times higher in Africa than in industrialized countries.

We will only able to reach the MDGs through an extra effort, an effort on the part of donor countries and of the African countries themselves. And the achievement of the MDGs and the resolution of global problems will only be possible if there is a working global partnership, with Africa as a strong player.

At the Doha conference on financing for development, we will need to reinforce confidence in the partnership which we launched at Monterrey. So I am pleased to be able to speak here today as the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy.

For its successful path, Africa needs true partners, considerable investment and predictable funding.

So it is vital that the G8 deliver on the pledges made in Gleneagles, namely doubling aid for Africa by 2010, bringing it to 50 billion US dollars.

The new challenges call for new ideas, new sources of financing, new forms of cooperation, new rules. Business as usual will simply not be enough!

We need innovative financing instruments. One particularly promising approach, which Germany is pioneering, is to use revenues from the auctioning of carbon credits for development.

Let me quote some figures that fill me with concern: in 2008, the LDCs alone will have spent an extra 50 billion US dollars on oil – that is more than they get in ODA (28 billion US dollars in 2006).

Since many countries are suffering from the high food and energy prices I am advocating that the countries and businesses that make high profits invest a proportion of them in development. The international community should establish an agro-facility for that purpose.

The current crisis is related to the lack of transparency in financial markets. We need to prevent our development efforts from being swept away by the tide of financial markets. We need at least a reliable regulatory framework for the global financial markets.

There is also an urgent need for international action on taxation. Tax avoidance and tax flight are costing developing countries an estimated 500 billion US dollars a year in lost revenues. That is five times global ODA. The industrialised countries are losing another 500 billion US dollars.

We therefore need to strengthen our efforts to build efficient and fair tax systems in developing countries and we need an international compact to fight tax flight and evasion.

I firmly believe that, if we boldly address these financing issues, we can achieve all the Millennium Development Goals – also in Africa. The Doha Conference must be a success. As the Special Envoy, I will personally be doing everything to ensure that it is.

In 2008 we must achieve the breakthrough on our road towards a global partnership that allows all people to enjoy a life in dignity.