

Opening Address
By the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Michael Bock,
At the lunch of Cairo Climate Talks,
El Sawy Culture Wheel, Zamalek, Thursday 3 November 2011

Your Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the launching event of the Cairo Climate Talks.

As countries all over the world are gearing up for the next UN climate change conference in Durban this December, it has become obvious that climate change is already happening and that it is not only an issue for some queer scientists but a threat to global growth, prosperity and stability. Consequently, Climate Change was even on the agenda of the UN Security Council last July. Let me quote UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon: "The facts are clear: climate change is real and accelerating in a dangerous mannerit is a threat to international peace and security".

Germany is committed to tackle this global challenge. As it is a global issue, it can only be solved at the global level. The United Nations provide the appropriate and legitimate forum to this end and despite some setback in the past we remain committed to the UNFCCC process. There is simply no viable alternative to the UN approach.

As changing facts on the ground tell us that time is running out, we urgently need progress towards a comprehensive, effective and fair international agreement post 2012, when the first commitment period of the Kyoto protocol will end. Within the overall package, we need to set ambitious targets to ensure that nay increase in the global average temperature remains below 2 grad cel. The upcoming UN climate change conference in Durban will be crucial to this end and I am convinced that Egypt has a lot to contribute to a positive outcome.

Nevertheless, while we must think globally, we have to act locally too. Some of you might ask why Egypt should care about this issue at this point in time when all eyes are on the domestic front and the upcoming elections. Allow me to briefly outline, why in my view, it should.

First of all, Egypt has been and continues to be a key player in the international climate negotiations, not only because it represents the Arab Group. A successful outcome in Durban highly depends on the continuous high profile of Egypt. Our countries must further cooperate in order to find common ground that is acceptable to the majority of states.

Secondly, Egypt has a lot to lose form climate change. Science tells us that Egypt will be heavily affected by its impacts such as droughts and sea-level rise. Agriculture soil in the Delta region will be affected first. Everybody who takes the highway to Alexandria and passes the swamps south of the city can clearly see what happens next in cast of a further rise of the sea level.

Thirdly, developing a low carbon, green economy that decouples economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions offers many opportunities for new jobs and sustainable economic growth. Germany is already harvesting the fruits of its environmental policies and we intend to carry on this way. Egypt has great potential in the field of renewable energies such as wind and solar power. It has also well educated scientist and has acquired reliable expertise concerning these new technologies. This is why I strongly believe that "going green" represents a great opportunity for a new Egypt and the welfare of its people.

Germany and Egypt already enjoy a sound and lively partnership with regard.