

**Message by the German Ambassador, Klaus-Dieter Duxmann,  
on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban**

Climate change is the definitive challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Changes in the climate destroy the basis on which human life subsists; drought, for instance, leads to shortages in food and water. Rising sea levels are already threatening the territories of small island states and vast stretches of coastland.

However, the international community has to admit that it has not, as things stand, lived up to the challenge posed by climate change. Global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions went up again in 2010, global temperatures are already 0.8°C higher than before industrialization, and sea levels rose twice as fast between 1993 and 2003 as they did in the preceding decade; icebergs and glaciers are melting at record speeds. We all need the climate change negotiations underway in Durban to come up with tangible results.

At the highest level internationally, we want to create awareness that we have to act now to tackle climate change. It was under Germany's presidency that the United Nations Security Council, on 20<sup>th</sup> July, unanimously acknowledged for the first time ever that climate change poses a threat to international security.

Germany is working both globally and domestically to combat climate change because we take the problem seriously and are aware of our responsibility. At the same time, in-depth analysis shows that the structural transformation we have set in motion is one which will in future also serve us well economically. By switching to a low-carbon economy, we want to prove that tackling climate change is compatible with economic development. We want to support others as they pursue this path to success; going green can be an opportunity for everyone!

Germany supports Uganda – in the areas of both climate change mitigation and adaptation. To mitigate climate change, since 2007 the German Government has committed more than 64 million Euro (more than 200 billion UGX) for the promotion of renewable energies and energy efficiency in Uganda. Our cooperation activities range from investments in hydropower plants such as Bujagali and Nyagak to community-based initiatives such as the dissemination of energy-saving stoves. To improve adaptation to climate change, Germany actively supports the Ugandan Ministry for Water and Environment in enhancing its monitoring and planning capacities and cooperates with UNEP and UNDP in introducing ecosystem-based adaptation systems in the Mount Elgon area. In addition we are about to

start a 4 million Euro (more than 15 billion UGX) project to improve resilience to climate change in Karamoja.

Parallel to these specific measures, we also need to reach a comprehensive agreement in the international climate change negotiations which encompasses all the big emitters – including those which were classed as developing countries for the 1992 Framework Convention but have since become major economies. Only when we finally stop pointing the finger, and create the legal certainty that no country will be at a disadvantage or be able to opt out, can we combat climate change effectively.

This is an extremely ambitious enterprise, which requires us to take concrete steps urgently and to demonstrate stamina. Copenhagen saw the failure of the first attempt to establish such a comprehensive agreement and simultaneously resolve the details of everything from funding to legal status to rules for including forests in calculations. That is why we are playing it safe this time by addressing the various issues step by step. The countries have been negotiating the details since Cancún – where they made great progress – and will embed them in the necessary new framework once it is established.

We know that time is short; all the decisions reached need to take effect quickly, so that we don't lose any more time.

We are holding this stance in Durban too. As part of the EU, and shoulder to shoulder with many developing countries, small island states and LDCs, we are working for a robust, legally binding climate change agreement. That is the only way for us to achieve our common goal of capping global warming at 2°C and so fulfil our obligation to future generations. I am convinced that we cannot afford, economically or otherwise, to hold off on combating climate change until its effects become even more drastic.