

## Visit of German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel in Kenya

During her recent visit to Africa, German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel's first stop was Nairobi Kenya on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2011 before proceeding to Angola and Nigeria. This was Chancellor Merkel's first visit to Kenya and the first visit by any head of a European state after the 2007 disputed elections that led to unprecedented violence in the history of Kenya. The intention of the visit was to strengthen the economic ties between the two countries and to stress the importance of fighting corruption in Kenya and the implementation of the new constitution. Her delegation consisted of Ilse Aigner, Federal Minister of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, several German MPs and economic experts.

During her busy schedule, Chancellor Merkel met President Mwai Kibaki at State House before proceeding to Hotel Intercontinental to meet with Prime Minister Raila Odinga and thereafter with the speaker of National Assembly Hon. Kenneth Marende and other Members of Parliament. She was also hosted to a State Luncheon by President Mwai Kibaki together with 250 invited guests before proceeding to the University of Nairobi where she delivered a public lecture on wide range of issues.

Chancellor Merkel also visited the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and the headquarters of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) before leaving for Angola in the evening.

The talks with President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga focused mainly on the implementation of the new constitution. While commending the Kenyan Government for its great effort towards the realization of the necessary reforms, she raised concerns about delays in implementing the same within the stipulated timelines. Of major concern were delays in passing the necessary electoral laws, the establishment of an Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) which is supposed to review the constituencies and conduct elections scheduled for 2012. On the economic front, the Chancellor emphasized that Germany would like to invest more in Kenya but the general conditions have to be conducive for German investors. She therefore called for better infrastructure, more transparency and as little red tape as possible. She advised the Kenyan Government to cooperate fully with the ICC and to take the fight against corruption seriously. Currently, Kenya is rated as one of the most corrupt states in the world ranking at 154 out of 178 countries as per Transparency International's corruption index rankings.

President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga appealed for financial and capacity building support in order to guarantee fair and peaceful elections in 2012. They also appealed to German investors to consider investing in the construction of the Lamu Port and the Lamu-Ethiopia-South Sudan railway, road and pipeline links.

The Chancellor agreed to offer the necessary support and promised One Hundred and Forty million Euros (140 million Euros) to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and another one million Euros of German development aid towards the Daadab refugee camp in Northern Kenya.

Together with PM Raila Odinga they signed an agreement to establish a German delegation for industry and commerce in Kenya and a memorandum of understanding granting the support to ILRI.

In the meeting with Hon. Kenneth Marende, the Speaker of the National Assembly and six MPs including Hon. Martha Karua, former minister of Justice and Leader of NARC-Kenya who is also a presidential candidate in the forthcoming general election in 2012, the discussions centred around the implementation of the new constitution and the enormous work that the legislature is expected to undertake to ensure that all the necessary laws are enacted.

In her lecture at the University of Nairobi which granted her an opportunity to speak directly to the Kenyan people and answer their questions, the Chancellor emphasized the need to fight corruption for the development of Kenya and the need to cooperation with the ICC in order to fight impunity. She also touched on the new constitution and articulated Germany's interest in strengthening the economic ties with Kenya. She applauded the country for the economic growth as well as the political and judicial reforms that were ongoing. Nonetheless, she urged Kenya to address social imbalances, reduce ethnic tension and promote public participation in national affairs to prevent conflicts and violence. The speech was broadcasted live on four Kenyan television channels.

During her visit to ILRI the Chancellor was glad to wear the white coat of a researcher once again as she holds a PHD in physics. The visit gave her the opportunity to know the work of the institute and to get information about any research findings so far achieved.

At the end of her visit to Kenya she went to the Headquarters of UNEP in Nairobi which was founded in 1972. With experts from UNEP Mrs. Merkel was able to discuss renewable energy and its potential for Kenya. She stated that Germany will strengthen her support to UNEP and ensure that the location of its headquarters remain in Nairobi.

Part of the delegation accompanying Mrs. Merkel were MP Hartwig Fischer, CDU/CSU, MP and former minister Michael Glos, CDU/CSU, Ute Koczy, BÜNDNIS 90/DE GRÜNEN, Christoph Strässer, SPD, Alexander Ulrich, DIE LINKE and Claudia Winterstein FDP. For these MPs the German Embassy Nairobi in cooperation with KAS, HSS, GIZ and AGEH organized the opportunity to discuss the current political situation in Kenya as well as challenges Kenya is currently facing. KAS was represented at the meeting by Prof. Christian Roschmann and Iris Föllner.

Her visit was well received by the people of Kenya as was evident in the Kenyan media for two main reasons, one it was the first visit by a European head of state since the coalition government was formed after the post election violence and second, she touched on issues that are of paramount interest and concern to the Kenyan people such as economic development, the implementation of the new constitution, the fight against corruption and the cooperation with the ICC.