

## Ansprache des Stellvertretenden Generalsekretärs der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Dr. Gerhard Wahlers

ANLÄSSLICH DES ZWANZIGJÄHRIGEN BESTEHENS DER PARTNERSCHAFT ZWISCHEN DEM DEMOCRACY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (DDP) UND DER KAS

**Dear Mr Bhengu,**

**Honorable Dr. Buthelezi and other representatives of other political parties,**

**Esteemed partners of DDP,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you today. I was glad to accept your kind invitation to celebrate with you the 20th anniversary of successful cooperation between DDP and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. Not only because it is an opportunity to visit the wonderful city of Durban - especially during a time when in Germany winter is approaching and the days are becoming dark and grey. It is a welcome opportunity for me to recognize and appreciate the work and achievements of our partnership with DDP during the past 20 years. Looking back at our long lasting cooperation as the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung we are proud to have DDP as a partner and as a friend.

Our partnership started in 1993, ten years after the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung opened our first office in South Africa. 20 years is a long time for such a relationship. For a couple, with 20 years the rose and crystal weddings are over and silver is approaching rapidly. Unfortunately, many don't reach that point and it is certainly something to be proud of. And there is something else, a

good marriage and our partnership have in common: It is based on mutual trust, respect and common values. This is fundamental for a long lasting relationship.

Most important are the common values. For KAS and DDP, these values are the principles of freedom, solidarity and subsidiarity. Wherever we work in the world our activities are guided by these principles. Together with our partners we strive to encourage and to enable people to contribute to the improvement of their living conditions with their own means and to overcome shortcomings and obstacles. At the same time our cooperation with our local partners is guided by mutual respect and trust. We believe in equal relationships, combined with a commitment of our friends and partners to assume responsibility - like here in South Africa. And I am very pleased to know that our partnership with DDP is an outstanding example of these guiding principles of our international work.

An equal partnership, based on common values of freedom, solidarity and subsidiarity. Especially subsidiarity is one of the roots of Christian Democracy. Representing the political foundation affiliated with Germany's Christian Democratic Union, the party of Chancellor Angela Merkel, please allow me to elaborate a little bit more on this concept.

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In a political context, subsidiarity can be understood as a clear rejection of an omnipotent all-powerful state. We want a state to be strong, a state that reliably carries out its core tasks, but that does not assume responsibilities that other institutions can do just as well or even better. According to this interpretation, the state should only act in those fields which cannot be taken care of by society itself. And this is where civil society comes in. I am convinced that Civil society can address many social concerns just as well or even better than government.

This is also the reason why the German political foundations were created as they are. After the Second World War, Germany – that is West-Germany at the time – was to become a Democracy without actually having a tradition of democratic rule. Apart from a rather short period from 1918 to 1933 – the so-called Weimar republic – Germany had never been a full democracy. And the Weimar republic eventually failed – it could not prevent the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler which led to the catastrophe of World War II and the death of millions.

People needed to be informed about the new political system and about politics, the role of political parties and their policies. They needed to be convinced that democracy is the best political system with the most benefit for the people. And instead of leaving the political and civic education to state institutions only, the German Parliament decided to create the political foundations, independent institutions which would supply our young democracy with political and civic education, and thereby consolidate democracy.

In Germany the government promotes and supports civil society organisations like the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. Here in South Africa, the success story of DDP is an example for a flourishing civil society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

However, we have to realize that in many countries civil society organisations do not receive the support they actually should. Many governments, especially those with a doubtful legitimacy themselves, try to prevent civil society organisations from working in their countries. Both, local and international organisations. I deeply believe that the way, a government deals with civil society is a clear indicator of its legitimacy and democratic character.

Unfortunately this was the case in Russia. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has been a victim of such a crackdown on civil society in Egypt. For us, it also shows, how important our work is and that it should be continued.

South Africa provides much more open and welcoming conditions for civil society. Here, however, organisations are under pressure in a different way: My impression is that, Civil society is suffering from a state-centric conception of politics which does not leave much room for activities of civil society or, at least, does not sufficiently recognize and promote civil society. I was told the list of NGOs that had to close down is getting longer and longer.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Besides our belief in the special role played by NGOs, our co-operation with DDP also stems from our belief in the necessity of constantly promoting democracy. Successful democracies are not simply ushered in; they are carefully built up and need to be watched over daily. To make a democracy work, it is not enough to have a democratic constitution and to vote every few years.

Please do not misunderstand me – a constitution is certainly essential to a democracy, and we as KAS are proud to have supported

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the development of the South African constitution with advisory measures, especially exchanges between German and South African constitutional experts and lawyers. Democratic elections, too, are certainly essential, but they are still not sufficient for a functioning and stable democracy to exist. Functioning democracies can only be maintained if people help to carry them along, if people are interested in democracy and participate in it. And none of this is possible if people do not know their democracy.

I would like to say this very clearly here: The promotion of democracy is not only needed in political systems undergoing a process of transformation or in young democracies. Daily efforts to preserve and strengthen democracy are also necessary in countries like Germany and South Africa, who became famous for peaceful changes towards a democracy just a few decades ago.

And that is why we are doing the same work that we are doing here in South Africa in Germany as well. This distinguishes us from many other international players involved in promoting democracy, and our experience tells us that this gives our work even greater credibility. Promotion of democracy involves spreading the knowledge of politics, through both civic and political education. And this is where the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and DDP share the same objective:

DDP's mission is the consolidation of democracy through the promotion of citizen participation, a culture of human rights, and good governance in South Africa. DDP believes that a democratic society can only function when the people can voice their aspirations properly and when those who govern are able to do so efficiently and inclusively. DDP has always been convinced that democratic consolidation is dependent on ordinary citizens taking responsibility for

their own development process. I believe that these two points make it very clear why we cooperate with DDP.

I Have been asked to provide a few impressions of South African politics. I know there are many people in this room who could say much more about this topic than I can. So, just a few impressions:

There can be no doubt that the challenges for South African society and politics after the end of the Apartheid regime were enormous. These challenges included the establishment of truly representative democratic institutions, because under Apartheid the largest population groups were excluded from political participation.

The challenges further included overcoming the country's external isolation, the reduction of the inequality of opportunities in life within the South African population, as well as the establishment of a shared identity for all South Africans. Nearly 20 years after the political change one can say: Much has been achieved.

South Africa has one of the most progressive constitutions in the world and the branches of government largely operate independently of one another. The judiciary functions largely without direct exercise of influence by the government; the constitutional court is independent. Freedom of the press and freedom of speech are guaranteed by the constitution.

South Africa was equally successful in overcoming its external isolation. Today South Africa is the only G20 country in Africa, counts as an emerging economy, has joined Brazil, Russia, India and China in the BRICS group, and, along with them, represents the interests of emerging economies.

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All this was achieved in little over 20 years. Two decades is a long time for an institutional partnership, but it is a short time for changing a country and a society. So, one should not be surprised that there are still great challenges to be met.

This is mainly because the grave inequality of opportunities in life is far from being overcome. Measured according to the GINI index, South Africa counts among the countries with the highest inequality of income in the world. In a potential labour market of 33 million South Africans, only 13,6 million are employed. As a result of this situation, 42 percent of South Africans are classified as poor and live on less than two US Dollars per day. Violent protests are on the increase and South Africa counts as one of the countries where people go on strike most often.

The state of the country's education it seems to me is highly contradictory. On the one hand: Much progress has been made during the last decades by replacing the inhumane system of Bantu education under Apartheid – the deliberate guiding of black South Africans into work requiring few qualifications. Sufficient numbers of schools have been established throughout the country, even in rural areas, and the proportion of children enrolling in schools has by now reached almost 100 percent. However, unfortunately if the education system is judged by its outcome, namely the qualification of its students, then South Africa does not fare well even when compared with many other African countries.

More generally, education remains a reflection of the situation society is in, marked by substantial inequalities of opportunity. 71 percent of all unemployed people in South Africa are under the age of 35 and due to an inadequate education and inadequate career qualifications, they hardly have any chance

of long-term integration into the labour market.

All this presents enormous challenges to any government of South Africa.

Last year the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung sponsored a publication titled "Friend or Foe: Dominant Party Systems in Southern Africa". This report comes to the conclusion that in dominant party systems the boundaries between party and state often become blurred, that corruption is likely to increase, and that constitutional bodies may be put under political pressure and only partially fulfil their regulatory function.

So there is a change but I am optimistic that this will not happen in South Africa. You have a strong civil society and there are vibrant opposition parties on alert. Surveys have found that a majority of South Africans support democracy as a political system. But there is reason to worry, because the same surveys found that larger sections of the population are not satisfied with South African democracy. Trust in political parties and parliament is low and decreasing further. New political forces are evolving that want to provide simple answers to difficult questions, using a recipe which combines nationalism and socialism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This look at South Africa from the outside strengthens my conviction that the work of DDP is important and will become even more important. So we are all looking forward to a continuing partnership with DDP.

On behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung I can say that we are honoured to have had you as a partner for 20 years now – since the establishment of DDP. 20 years of DDP is something you can proudly look back on. I sincerely congratulate you on this anniversary.

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This development would not have been possible without the ongoing commitment of its staff and especially the driving force behind this project, Dr. Rama Naidu. Dr. Naidu has been more than the executive director of DDP, he has been a friend to KAS and all its regional representatives. He is and was a great advisor on all issues regarding the development of South Africa. Dr. Naidu made it his personal goal to develop South African civil society, he has been always willing to help people who shared his idea even beyond his tasks as executive director. Thank you very much, Dr. Rama Naidu for your excellent work.

An anniversary like this is a reason not only to look back but also to look to the future. There is much that has been achieved but there is a lot, that remains to be done. So I toast to the next 20 years of success for DDP.

*(Toast)*

Let me conclude by thanking everyone who contributes to make this partnership a success:

As a representative of the board, Professor Vilakazi; as a representative of the management, Dr. Naidu; and – also because care in dealing with finances is especially important to us – representing all the staff, Lynn Schmitz. And – last but not least – the many “unknown soldiers” in the staff of both our organisations.

Sincere thanks and best wishes for a successful future of DDP and for our partnership.

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