

Press statement

Megacities III: Working models and strategic solutions
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What has Sao Paulo to do with us? What can German co-operation achieve there? One thing is certain, namely that by 2007 half of the world's population will live in cities and by 2015 more than 600 million people will live in megacities, two thirds of these in developing countries.

Three international specialist conferences were devoted to the search for working models, for example of global growth potential and the optimisation of urban mobility needs, and solution strategies for the urgent problems in megacities (especially: massive environmental destruction and the growth of slums versus enclaves of prosperity). These were organised by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (Konrad Adenauer Foundation), Servicestelle Kommunen in der Einen Welt/InWent (Service Point Communities in One World) and the MegaCity TaskForce of the International Geographical Union.

Key themes for shaping the future of the megacities are: issues of governability and models of direction, sustainability as a guideline for policy formation, innovative transport strategies and optimised area management. The aim of this series of events was to integrate scientific research, politics and municipal practitioners in an international exchange of experiences for the first time. Encouraging examples were identified, deficits in research and implementation pinpointed and recommendations for political action developed.

Megacities were not seen merely as Molochs of misery, but rather as motors of global innovation and growth as well as sources of momentum for culture and science. A leitmotif of the specialised discussion was the insight that increased participation of those directly affected is a key factor for the successful implementation of sustainable megacity development.

In this context it became apparent that today, development co-operation going beyond classic aid means learning from and with the partners in the South. At the same time it became clear that it can also make a central contribution to the establishment of global peace and to global environmental transformation. It is however a necessary precondition that German foreign policy and development co-operation utilise the potential of these massive global and local transformation processes.

The results are summarised in a strategy paper for political decision makers. In spring 2004 an international scientific publication will be presented. Further information is available at www.kas.de, www.megacities.uni-koeln.de and www.service-eine-welt.de