

Your Excellencies,  
Members of Parliament,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

The human being is a curious case.

The power of human creativity can produce so breathtaking, so amazing things.

And it can also be so terrible and so destructive.

This year, America and the world celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Moon Landing.

Neil Armstrong's steps on the moon were the culmination of America's rush for excellency in spacecraft.

As you all know, the story already began 12 y earlier – with Russia that had launched Sputnik satellite into the orbit.

Those two scientific achievements, that we would call disruptive today, were prime examples of human creativity at its best.

Since 1998, there is a new space station that flies around the earth.

It's neither American, nor Russian, it's now an international one.

And on one day after the Millennium, an astronaut on board of the ISS took a picture of our world.

On the photo, you could see a long, straight line.

Clearly a structure, built by humans, and to give you more hints, more than 2.700 years ago.

And you might laugh now, when I say, that already this structure was 'Made in China'.

Because of course I am talking about the Chinese Wall.

In 1969, when he was walking on the moon, Neil Armstrong couldn't see the Chinese Wall simply because the moon is too far away.

ISS flies much closer to earth.

But you know, even if Armstrong had been closer to earth, he wouldn't have seen this other wall, that is our subject tonight, when he was looking outside his window, for it was so thin and short.

As primitive its architecture AND its political motives, unfortunately the Berlin Wall did the job.

It was an example of human creativity at its worst.

Tonight, we will celebrate the Fall of this Wall.

This coming Saturday, November 9, marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event that shook the world.

If we look back on that night, we might think the end of the Wall couldn't have been written better by Hollywood.

This concrete structure, which survived and divided for 28 years, was swept away from one moment to the other, for the very simple reason: human failure.

In the person of a GDR spokesman, Günter Schabowski, who did a poor job in announcing a new immigration law during a press conference of his East German regime.

Truth is, his human error was only the last piece in a chain of events that had begun much earlier and led to the Fall

which, in summary, was brought about by many brave people in the different countries of the Eastern bloc who longed for peace, who longed for freedom,

a state of being where they could unfold all of their human capacities and not only the ones they were asked to.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

There are only so many events in a human's life when history kisses us, when we feel that the globe stands still for a moment.

The night of November 9 in 1989 was truly one of them.

Many of you, I am sure, have very personal memories.

Our special guests here, they do. Some of whom were actually there when it happened.

So, tonight, we will talk about the event that ushered in so many new things.

We will talk about the developments that followed in Germany, America, Russia and the Congo.

We will talk about the new World Order that was built right after and because of the Fall.

And we will look on the world how it is today.

I am very happy that Konrad Adenauer Foundation can host this event.

Not only because it's so important to German history, but it's also so timely.

It will be the first of a series that our office in Kinshasa organizes over the coming years to talk about current global issues and international affairs for which I believe is great demand in Kinshasa – as restless and interesting as Congolese party politics are, I know.

But the Congo, the world, it's all connected – or as Harvard's Kennedy School Dean Joseph Nye said: interdependent

And I also believe it is very good that we create an offer for English-speaking events – as beautiful as the French language is – and create a forum where the elites of Kinshasa, Congolese and international ones, meet, think and talk.

It would be a pity, given the intellectual power that we have here in Kinshasa, to miss out on that. Sometimes, it just takes an effort to connect the dots.

So my hope is that tonight can contribute to great examples of human creativity at its best.

Chère Mesdames et Messieurs.

Pour clôturer, j'aimerais saisir cette occasion pour remercier mon bureau qui a contribué à cette soirée, soit direct, soit indirect, et pour tous les mois passés.

On a travaillé beaucoup, on n'a pas encore fini. En quelque semaines, on va présenter les premiers boursiers de notre bureau en RDC. Nous voulons tout faire pour contribuer au maximum à la démocratie en RDC, comme la Fondation Konrad Adenauer fait dans plus de 100 pays du monde.

C'est un plaisir de voir beaucoup de personnes familières dans cette. Je remercie à tous nos collaborateurs et à tous les autres qui nous ont aidé.

Soyez le bienvenu. Merci à vous tous.

I wish you a very stimulating and joyful event.

*(Welcoming speech by KAS Country Director in the DRC, Benno Mühler, on Nov 7, 2019 in Kinshasa – on the occasion of a panel discussion on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall)*