

**Implementation in Germany of the decisions of the 1992 World Summit on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro**

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## **Sustainability in Germany**

In Germany as elsewhere, the 1992 World Summit on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro led to ongoing activities and great commitment at all levels to the road to sustainable development. The decisions taken at the Rio World Summit in 1992 and the Agenda 21 recommendations for action have already been put into practice nationally, regionally and locally through tangible political action in many spheres. Three quarters of the general public now agree with the principle of living and managing resources sustainably, although admittedly the broader paradigm of sustainable development has not yet made a general breakthrough and been manifested in concrete political and individual action in all domains. The only way to achieve this objective of development that is sustainable in all respects and hence offers a sound basis for our future is through energetic dialogue and negotiation in individual societies, a process that has also increasingly gained impetus in Germany over the last few years.

This brief depiction of moves to sustainable development in Germany gives an overview of national activities since Rio and preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002 (cf. the website <http://www.weltgipfel2002.de> set up jointly by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety). Detailed information on sustainable development in Germany over the last decade is available in the CSD Country Profile - Germany, submitted together with this publication, in "Data on the Environment", which appears four times a year, the regular Environment Report and in further Federal government reports and publications, including the 11th Development Policy Report (cf. <http://www.bundesregierung.de>). Prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the Federal government will table a national development strategy for Germany, which will cover all policy fields and articulate a modernisation strategy to make us fit for the future.

### **1. 1990 – 2002: steps towards sustainability**

The term "sustainable development", coined by the Brundtland Commission, became integrated into political debates in Germany in the late 80s. The vigorous preparations for the UN 1992 World Summit marked a first climax in the sustainability process. After the Earth Summit in Rio, the Federation and the federal states (Länder) took steps to support sustainable development, as did municipalities, social groups and individuals. Activities at the various levels are presented below.

#### **Activities of the Federation and federal states**

The German state initially addressed sustainability through environmental and development policy. National sustainable development activities were determined in particular by the international negotiations on the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Biodiversity Convention. The Alliance for Jobs, Training and Competitiveness, tax reform and budget consolidation are now the strategic cornerstones of the economic dimension of sustainability. The social dimension of sustainability also gained ground in Germany through the UN Habitat Conferences, the World Summit on Social Development and the follow-up conferences, as well as through the Fourth World

Conference on Women in Peking. For example, the Federal government's policy is now based on and informed by the concept of "gender mainstreaming".

However, as the paradigm of sustainable development adopted in Rio is not targeted solely at state actors, in 1996 the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (<http://www.bmu.de>) initiated dialogue on "steps to sustainable environmentally-friendly development". A good 200 stakeholders from politics, business and civil society met in six working groups and drew up priorities for action and a list of the next steps on the road to sustainable development. This process also revealed those areas in which there were - and are - conflicts of interest in using and protecting resources.

In 1997 the Federal Environment Agency published a study addressing the problems of the future, "Sustainable Germany – ways to achieve long-term environmentally-friendly development" (<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de>). The study considered the period up to 2010, examining the sustainability of energy consumption, mobility, food production and the manufacture and use of textiles. The sustainability aspects of consumer behaviour were also appraised. The most important conclusion was that simply improving technical efficiency would not go far enough to enable long-term environmentally friendly development by 2010. Changes in consumer behaviour are an essential corollary if the burden our lifestyle places on the environment is not to exceed the global ecosystem's carrying capacity, whilst at the same time leaving scope for the justified development interests of countries in the South.

The primordial importance of sustainability was first enshrined in development policy in 1996 and subsequently vigorous efforts were made to include this in the operational side of development after the new government took up office in 1998, as presented, for example, in the Federal government's 11th Development Policy Report, issued in June 2001 (<http://www.bmz.de>). Nowadays the Federal government views its development policy as structural policy on a global scale, contributing to striking a balance between the interests of the North and South, whilst opening up fair opportunities for the future for people in developing countries.

The German Bundestag (<http://www.bundestag.de>) has also begun to play an active role in shaping the sustainability process in Germany. In its 1998 final report, "The concept of sustainability - from paradigm to implementation", the Bundestag's Study Commission on "Protection of Mankind and the Environment" gave a decisive impetus to making the model of sustainability more tangible, with some of the steps it called for including setting up a sustainability council and inter-ministerial co-ordination. The Study Commission on "Globalisation of the World Economy" was established in the current parliamentary term and is taking a hard look at how globalisation and sustainable development interact. In October 2001 the Bundestag called on the Federal government to take various measures, including informing parliament in writing every two years about the development and implementation of a National Sustainability Strategy. In 1998 the new Federal government decided to take sustainability as the guiding principle for all of its policies and to foster modern, forward-looking structures in politics, business and society as a whole to rise to the challenge of global change. On 17 April 2002 the Federal government adopted the definitive version of the National Sustainability Strategy. This strategy brings together ecological, economic and social goals, involving all groups in society in implementing the principle of sustainability. The 17-member Council for

Sustainable Development was set up as a forum for dialogue with civil society. This body acts in an advisory capacity to the Federal government and promotes much-needed communication with society on the aims of sustainable development and means to attain it. Today, ten years after Rio, sustainability is therefore kept firmly in sight as a principle guiding action in politics, business and throughout society.

The premiers of the federal states asserted their support for the Rio follow-up process and its implementation in 1994. Since that date all 16 federal states have either adopted or are currently drawing up their own regional sustainability strategies, programmes on sustainable development or implementation strategies for Agenda 21, together with environmental plans or environmental partnerships with businesses in each of the federal states. Whilst strategic planning for sustainable development continues to focus on the environment, the commitment of the federal states and the municipalities to development policy aspects has continued to evolve since 1994.

### **Think global – act local: Local Agenda 21 Processes**

10 years after the Earth Summit, local Agenda 21s have been developed in over 2,000 German municipalities, including virtually all the larger cities, in a process that actively involved the local population.

The fundamental principles, priorities and areas of action were defined in 1998 and 2001 in joint declarations by the Conference of Environment Ministers of the Federation and the federal states, together with the Presidents of the local authorities' associations. These declarations also paid tribute to the municipalities' successes and called for further action.

Local Agenda 21 processes are organised mainly by Agenda Officers, who frequently work under the aegis of the municipal Environment Agency. Citizen's action groups, environmental associations and educational establishments play a particularly energetic role in these processes, along with individual members of the public, mainly by participating in working groups and fora. In some cases these also involve representatives of parliamentary groups, political parties, trade, industry, craftspeople and professional associations.

These Agenda processes concentrate on environmental protection and nature conservation, along with issues subsumed into these topics, such as the climate, energy, transport and mobility, as well as development co-operation. There is a growing focus on issues relating to business and work, whilst further important topics include "urban planning and development", "health, social affairs and leisure", "water" and "education, culture and schools". Initiatives like the Climate Alliance often emerge out of this work, as do models such as "the city of short distances".

Municipalities' development co-operation increasingly uses Local Agenda 21 as a platform to raise awareness of the notion of "One World" and for global exchange of experience. Many North-South initiatives, church groups and organisations involved in social work are also active here alongside local authority administrations. Town twinning schemes, plus development and project partnerships play an important role. The focus is on education and outreach schemes, social projects or projects for special target groups - children, young people and women - as well as environmental protection.

Since 1992 it has been possible to establish sound structures for work on sustainable development at municipality level. This has played a part in changing the political and planning culture and helped to create a new climate of communication. As a result of their positive experiences with a participatory approach, many municipalities are looking

to further professionalise Agenda 21 work. This is especially relevant to anchor the Agenda 21 process even more firmly in the administration and in the political process and to ensure this work is also pursued on an ongoing basis in the long term.

At the end of 2001 the Federation and the federal states, the local authorities' associations, the Association of German Development NGOs and the city of Bonn opened the Germany-wide "Service Point Municipalities in One World" in Bonn. It is funded by the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, nine federal states and the city of Bonn. The Service Point supports municipalities' development co-operation and implementation of the One World idea in local Agenda 21 programmes by providing information, advisory services and training schemes. New partners can thus draw on the considerable wealth of experience of Agenda 21 processes at the local level linked to North-South issues.

The Federal government will also be providing support to a broad range of Local Agenda activities through a German Environment Ministry-funded office for the whole of Germany. Through project work, also during the run-up to the World Summit in Johannesburg and in the follow-up phase, this office will

- ensure greater bundling and networking of municipalities' sustainability initiatives and support implementation of national sustainability objectives,
- further enhance public motivation to act sustainably,
- press ahead with the Local Agenda 21 Process in Germany as a whole and

if possible gain support for this process from all municipalities. The German Ministry for the Environment and the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation are also making information and advisory services available to promote Agenda processes in municipalities. The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) in Freiburg is an important partner on this front. On 13 September and 20 December 2001, an environmental organisation, Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH) and the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation (BMZ, <http://www.bmz.de>) launched competitions ("Municipalities fit for the future" and "Networked globally – active locally 2002") aiming to establish the Local Agenda in as many municipalities as possible, improve project quality and highlight global interconnections.

### **Taking on responsibility: groups in society**

Associations, trade unions, foundations and churches are a tremendous asset for sustainable development in Germany and their members and representatives are key supporters of Agenda 21 processes in many municipalities. The Environment and Development Forum (Forum für Umwelt und Entwicklung) (<http://www.forumue.de>, only in German), set up after the 1992 World Summit, plays an important part here as a network to which a host of non-governmental organisations are affiliated. It is one of the main contact points among civil society groups for the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation, together with the Association of German Development NGOs (Verband Entwicklungspolitik Deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen) (VENRO, <http://www.venro.org>, only in German).

The Environment and Development Forum has made a significant contribution to informing the general public and implementing the results of Rio. In November 2001, in conjunction with the Federal Ministry for the Environment and the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation, it organised the "Dialogue Forum on the World Summit for Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002 – our responsibility for a world fit for the

future" in Berlin as the initial contact event for preparations for the Johannesburg Summit.

Around 6.5 million people in Germany are involved in environmental protection and nature conservation associations. The umbrella nature conservation association, Deutscher Naturschutz-Ring (DNR, <http://www.dnr.de>, only in German) represents 97 member associations. The Federal government co-operates with the environmental protection and nature conservation associations on a number of projects and processes in a whole plethora of different fields and also provides project funding.

The consumer organisation, Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband e.V. (vzbv, <http://www.vzbv.de>, only in German) represents consumer interests to political and business circles. Consumer protection is also a central topic for agricultural associations, which play an active part in the shift to a new-style agriculture and in enhancing sustainable, environmentally-friendly farming methods that respect nature. The German Farmers' Association (DBV, <http://www.bauernverband.de>), for example, as the umbrella agricultural association representing the interests of agriculture and forestry, campaigns within society for the economically viable, ecologically sound, socially responsible – and thus sustainable, use of natural resources. For this purpose, it presented a green paper on sustainable agriculture and forestry in 2000 for public debate. Representatives from these associations and from the two major churches have been appointed to the Council for Sustainable Development because of their central role in public debate.

Through the study "A Germany Fit for the Future", published in 1996, the environmental association, Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. (BUND, <http://www.bund.net>) and the Bischöfliche Hilfswerk MISEREOR (<http://www.misereor.de>) played a pioneering role in the national sustainability process. As was already made clear for some sectors in that study, public discussions are increasingly managing to consider both the ecological and social aspects of sustainability and to link these with the notion of economic sustainability. This is also demonstrated in projects on representation of women and incorporating women's experience into the sustainability process. The women's environmental network, LIFE e.V. (<http://www.oneworldweb.de/FrauenUmweltNetz/index.htm>), just like the Women's Working Group in the Environment and Development Forum, are symbolic of the participation of each and every one of us in sustainable development.

The German Environment Ministry is organising a national competition called "Mission: possible - fight for the environment", running until May 2002. It is specifically for young people, who can submit ideas and projects to combat global warming, improve energy-efficiency and make more sparing use of natural resources. Like other co-operation projects, the competition shows that young people's environmental associations have an important role to play as we strive to achieve sustainable development. They are, after all, often the best placed to get other pupils and students involved in solving the problems of the future.

Trade unions and private-sector businesses are playing a growing part in actively shaping integration of ecological and business concerns, whether it be in developing new products, services and processes, in marketing and sales of their products or in waste disposal. Leading German firms with global reach have set up the "econsense" Sustainable Development Forum (<http://www.econsense.de>).

The Federal government is providing targeted support to strengthen these voluntary environmental activities by businesses and helps to spread information about good examples of pro-sustainability activities ("best practices"). Furthermore, firms are to be encouraged to agree to a voluntary environmental audit (EMAS). At the start of this year over 2,600 locations in Germany were registered as EMAS participants; that is around three quarters of all participating sites in Europe. The Federal government's draft "Special Privileges Ordinance" for these businesses seeks to create a further incentive to take part in the scheme. Over the last few years stringent quality labels have been developed in conjunction with business, trade unions and consumer associations for food produced using environmentally-friendly farming methods, as have certificates for sustainable forestry and fair trade products. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development is promoting comparable measures in developing countries. In addition, it is helping these countries to gear themselves more to the growing demand for green products that do not exploit workers, and to raise product standards accordingly.

## **2. National Sustainability Strategy – sustainability concerns us all**

The Federal government's National Sustainability Strategy, adopted on 17 April 2002 aims to strike the right balance between the needs of people today and the prospects for future generations. The strategy is structured around long-term objectives, a set of 21 key indicators from the central domains of generational equity, quality of life, social cohesion and international responsibility, together with seven priority areas for sustainable development, the areas for action.

### **Integration – a new way of looking at things**

Sustainable development is a challenge in shaping policy that cannot be restricted to a single problem or resource. As it is pertinent to all realms of life and work, it must be "built-in" to all policy areas right from the outset. That is the only way to take a networked approach in aiming for comprehensive sustainable development in the four areas of sustainability detailed in the National Sustainability Strategy, namely, generational equity, quality of life, social cohesion and international responsibility. Decisions about important ecological goals, such as future-compliant energy supplies or environmentally friendly mobility, are taken not just in the environmental policy domain, but rather in economic and transport policy too. The converse is also true: social and economic considerations have to be taken into account in devising environmental policy. The ramifications for development policy must also be borne in mind in all policy areas. Projects such as the ecological tax reform demonstrate that, when undertaking ecological modernisation, protecting the environment goes hand in hand with overhauling economic structures, and in particular with creating new jobs, which means that it enhances rather than jeopardises German economic competitiveness. For, essential economic aims can equally be achieved when ecological goals are put into practice.

This can be seen in that economic performance between 1991 and 2000 (gross domestic product corrected for price increases), which went up by 15.1%, showed a more rapid increase than the rate of consumption of natural resources. Economic growth and the creation of new jobs thus coincided with a fall in rate of consumption of raw materials and energy, as well as a drop in absolute terms in outputs of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse

gases. That signifies that a significant step has been made towards the target of breaking the link between economic growth and increasing use of natural resources.

Manufacturing and exporting environmentally friendly products and providing environmental protection services helps to preserve existing jobs in Germany and to create new jobs. In 1998 at least 1.3 million jobs depended on the environmental protection industry, which is around 3.6% of those in work.

### **Ecological Modernisation**

The coalition (Social Democratic Party/Greens) Federal government initiated ecological modernisation in 1998 in order to put the principle of sustainability into practice. A focal point of this process was the ecological tax reform launched in 1999, which is phasing in a step-by-step increase in energy prices, with this revenue being used to lower the non-wage costs of labour. The turn-around in energy policy, the programme to fight global warming and the funds earmarked to support renewable energy all contribute to achieving the goal of making Germany sustainable.

In the National Sustainability Strategy the Federal government has drawn up detailed concepts, goals and measures for sustainable development, focusing in particular on the three areas for action of future-compatible energy policy, environmentally sound mobility and a reorientation in agriculture and consumer protection.

### **The turn-around in energy policy and combating global warming**

Phasing out nuclear energy is a prerequisite for moving into environmentally friendly energy production based on efficient technologies and renewable sources of energy. An opinion poll conducted by the EMNID Institute in June 2000 showed that 85 percent of the German public consider nuclear energy to be dangerous or rather dangerous. And using nuclear energy is not sustainable. In representative opinion polls, three quarters of the German public are in favour of phasing out nuclear energy. For that reason the Federal government took the phase-out of nuclear power seriously and amended the Atomic Energy Act: the last nuclear power station is to be decommissioned by 2021 at the latest. On average the 19 German nuclear power stations are scheduled to remain in operation for another 12 years. The high safety standards specified in the Atomic Energy Act must continue to be guaranteed until decommissioning.

Phasing out nuclear energy goes hand in hand with switching over to renewable energies. The Federal government's goals include doubling the proportion of energy produced from renewable energy sources by 2010. The Renewable Energies Act, enacted in 2000, stipulates high buy-back fees for electricity produced using solar power, wind-power or from hydro-electric plants and, in conjunction with the Biomass Ordinance, has triggered an unexpected boom in the renewable energy sector. These measures are complemented by funding schemes such as the 100,000 Roofs Programme.

Germany plays a pioneering role in fighting global warming internationally and is well on the way to implementing the EU pledge to reduce the six most important greenhouse gases by 21% by 2008/12. Germany ranks top of the few industrialised countries that have actually lowered emissions of greenhouse gases relative to 1990 levels, having attained a figure of -18.7% for the six Kyoto gases. In addition to its national efforts for climate protection, Germany is preparing to use Emissions Trading, Joint Implementation

and the Clean Development Mechanism as means for global action for sustainable development.

Germany has been an active advocate of adoption of the Kyoto Protocol and played a decisive part in developing the concluding Marrakech compromise. The EU and its member states ratified the Protocol on 31 June 2002. EU ratification will make a significant contribution towards entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol at the Johannesburg Summit.

Germany's national programme to combat global warming specifies sector-specific reduction objectives for the various emission-producing sectors (private households, energy, transport) - a decisive step on the road to integrating sustainable development into all policy areas. The Building Renovation Programme offers great scope to make headway on renovating old buildings in the light of global warming concerns. The most recent figures show that the trend in the transport sector has even been interrupted, at least temporarily, with a 2% drop in CO<sub>2</sub> emission in 2000 relative to the previous year. Consumption of petrol fell by 2.8% and diesel consumption was down 1% in 2001 relative to the previous year, so this downward trend is likely to continue in 2001. Developments in the household sector are still more impressive. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2002 were 11.5% down on 1990 figures. As private households account for virtually 1/3 of energy used by consumers, there is still considerable potential to reduce emissions here. However, the environment is not the only beneficiary of measures to combat global warming, for these also boost the economy. By 2005 phasing-out of nuclear energy and anti-global warming policy will create 155,000 long-term jobs. Forecasts indicate that by 2020 as many as 194,000 new jobs will be created. Small and medium-sized businesses in the construction and mechanical engineering sectors gain the most from this development. In addition, the German Institute for Economic Research has estimated that the positive impact of the ecological tax reform will generate up to 250,000 new jobs by 2003.

### Environmentally sound tourism

According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) figures, world-wide tourist arrivals will increase up until 2020 by an annual average of 4.1%. This growth could put a major strain on the environment. This must be countered in good time by the appropriate measures. In the interests of sustainability, therefore, the German government is supporting natural, environmentally sound and environmentally responsible forms of holidaymaking. It finances projects to promote walking, cycling, watersports, camping and the marketing to tourists of national parks.

By providing funding for the eco-label "Viabono", the aim is to increase the range of sustainable tourism products available, to increase the demand for these products and to provide a guide to consumers when looking for environmentally-friendly options.

The German government's measures as part of the "International Year of Mountains" aim to draw attention to the sensitive ecosystem of the mountains. The German government also sees these measures as a national contribution to the UN "Year of Ecotourism" in 2002.

### Environmentally sound mobility

Nowadays action is called for in transport policy as part of the sustainability process, above all to address global warming and noise abatement issues. A drop of around 2% in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions relative to the previous year was achieved for the first time in 2000. The ecological tax reform has played a large part in this, as has the German car industry's voluntary commitment to reduce the average fuel consumption of cars that are new on the road by 25% of the 1990 figure by 2005. To encourage progress on the principle of sustainability in the transport sector too, the German government has resolved to provide tax incentives for low-sulphur and sulphur-free fuel by imposing a higher mineral oil tax on motor fuels with a higher sulphur content. The result of this graduated tax is that low-sulphur fuel is now generally available. The promotion of sulphur-free fuel as of 1 January 2003 is expected to lead to this form of fuel rapidly also becoming generally available. Another aspect of the reform is that the amount deducted from commuters' tax bills for transport costs will be the same for all modes of transport. As of 2003 heavy goods vehicles will be charged a route-dependent levy, whilst environmentally friendly gas-driven vehicles will pay drastically reduced fuel tax until 2009. Efforts are also being made to introduce more stringent provisions for greenhouse gas emissions and noise in the air transport sector. Other current projects in the environment and transport sector include review of the Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan, rail infrastructure improvements, encouraging energy-saving driving habits and the 3-litre car, as well as improvement for motorcycle emissions and noise performance.

### A change of direction in agriculture and consumer protection

All food-related issues are being examined with a critical eye and re-appraised. This encompasses food quality and safety, production processes and their impact on the environment, the natural world and animals and even healthy diets and the pleasure we take in food. The Federal government's guiding model incorporates various components. These include giving priority to precautionary consumer protection through competitive, environmentally compatible agriculture and food production with the emphasis on quality, together with consumer behaviour that promotes sustainable development. Further elements of this model are more careful husbanding of the environment and the natural world, together with sustainable agriculture in the international context.

The change of direction in agriculture and consumer protection covers a broad spectrum of points pertinent to sustainable development, ranging from the substances contained in animal feed to environmentally sound production processes and consumer behaviour. The measures and instruments deployed fall into four priority areas addressing closely related substantive issues:

- food safety, quality and a healthy diet
- agriculture and the environment
- development of rural areas and
- international implications.

In the priority area "Agriculture and the Environment" the amendment of the Nature Conservation Act, which came into force on 4 April 2002, has laid the foundation stone for modern nature conservation that addresses the challenges of the future, striking a balance between user interests and the needs of nature conservation, whilst at the same

time enhancing acceptance of nature conservation. Further priority areas include improved immission protection, enhanced measures to combat global warming and progress in protecting water resources. The Federal government is seeking to advance ecological modernisation of the economy and environmental measures in agriculture, steps to foster sustainable forest management and promote renewable raw materials including renewable energies are important building blocks in this strategy.

The Federal government supports further steps to reform EU agricultural policy to ensure that agricultural policy is geared more to consumers' interests, whilst making European agriculture more competitive and also contributing to global sustainable development in the farming sector.

### Environmental protection means life

Over the last few decades, environmental protection has notched up a number of achievements in protecting human health. For example, public exposure to many harmful substances has been considerably reduced. Nevertheless, the last few years saw the appearance of a growing number of clinical syndromes, the causes of which could not be readily determined. At the same time the incidence of asthma and allergies also went up. Air-borne pollutants have been identified as one of the causes of this trend, despite successful policies to enhance air quality. However, the pollutant load inside buildings also continues to appear on the environment policy agenda. Healthy buildings are therefore one of the objectives of preventive environmental protection.

In addition, the impact on human health of environmental chemicals is an important topic. Considerable progress was made in the 90s across the EU (as it is product-related this sector is largely harmonised at EU level) e.g. in the obligation to obtain authorisation for pesticides and biocides, or the general marketing ban on carcinogenic, mutagenic or teratogenic substances. In line with a Resolution adopted by the Council in late 1999 under the German Presidency, the EU Commission tabled a White Paper, "Strategy for a chemicals policy for the future" in early 2001. This provides for systematic testing and evaluation of all chemicals above a certain threshold volume, a simplified risk management system, together with a notification procedure for the use of high-risk substances - e.g. carcinogenic substances. The EU's legislative bodies welcomed the White Paper. The Commission is currently transposing the White Paper into specific legislative texts, which will considerably improve environmental, workplace and consumer protection in this area.

The amended Radiation Protection Ordinance provides improved protection against radiation in all areas of life. A new development in workplace legislation is the suspension of the former blanket ban on pregnant women entering rooms containing radioactive substances or in which apparatus to produce ionising radiation is in operation. As the new Radiation Protection Ordinance now incorporates explicit limit values for the unborn child, the former ban could be lifted, meaning that there are now fewer provisions curtailing equal opportunities for women at work - one example of comprehensive sustainability.

Further progress has been made on the closed loop substance cycle and on product liability. The deposit on drinks cans to be levied from 1 January 2003 will curb the flood of single-use packaging. The Waste Disposal Ordinance, in force since 1 March 2001,

stipulates that by 1 June 2005 at the latest, household waste must be sufficiently pre-treated before disposal; thermal and high-performance mechanical/biological processes may be employed for pre-treatment. The Federal government has also adopted a Landfill Ordinance. With a view to encouraging more waste recycling, the Federal government has also introduced ordinances on commercial waste from settlements, waste wood and underground stowage of waste, together with amendment of the Waste Oil Ordinance. The PCB Waste Ordinance has improved protection against dangerous substances. The mercury content of batteries has been further reduced. The German Environment Ministry has drawn up a guide to environmentally friendly disposal of meat-and-bone meal as part of its response to the BSE crisis. Uniform provisions on scrapping old vehicles have been adopted at the EU level. Furthermore, moves to introduce stringent provisions across the EU to limit emissions from waste incineration have also been successful.

The "Action Programme on Health and the Environment" was tabled in London in 1999 on the occasion of the Third WHO European Conference "Health and the Environment" with a view to creating closer links between policy on health and the environment in Germany. The main aims of the Action Programme are to improve the instruments available and obtain greater insight in order to take preventive action on environmental factors associated with health risks. The important objectives it contains include improving the way in which health risks associated with environmental factors are dealt with, i.e. timely detection of potential risks, optimising risk assessment procedures and the establishment of standards, together with better information and communication on risks to health from the environment. The programme places a particular emphasis on links between environmental pollution and child health.

#### Nature conservation

Although clear progress has been made in improving air quality and protecting water resources, the natural environment and landscapes are still threatened in Germany. This is the result of unspoilt areas being lost due to development of greenfield sites and new transport infrastructure, as well as through intensive agricultural use.

The amended Nature Conservation Act, which came into force in April 2002, seeks to remedy this. Its aims include creating a biotope network covering 10% of the land across Germany. The Act includes provisions specifying a new approach to the relationship between nature conservation, agriculture and forestry. Progress has also been made on international species and biodiversity protection.

The revised European Deliberate Release Directive introduces stricter safety considerations in genetic engineering. Internationally, Germany successfully championed adoption of the Cartagena Protocol to limit release of genetically modified organisms. Another important factor in protecting our national natural heritage are the provisions adopted in 2000 to secure valuable Federal nature reserves for nature conservation.

#### **Getting everyone on board – participation + individual responsibility**

Since 1998 the Federal government has been making increased efforts to ensure the participation of social groups in politics. This is put into practice through the Sustainability Council and the Alliance for Jobs, Training and Competitiveness, as well

as on specific topics, e.g. in debate on using genetic engineering methods in farming or the discussion on selection criteria applied to sites for final storage of nuclear waste.

The amendment of the Nature Conservation Act, which came into force on 4 April 2002, introduced into Federal law for the first time under the Nature Conservation Act the right for associations to institute court proceedings, a process already successfully implemented in 13 federal states. Nature conservation associations who have participated in the respective administrative procedures may institute court proceedings against zoning plans, certain zoning authorisations, land-use plans that take the place of zoning plans and against exemptions from legislation and prohibitions in protected areas.

The Federal government has increased the total sum earmarked in the Federal budget for environmental and nature conservation associations' projects by 60% since 1998. Project funding for 2002 amounts to €3,280,000. On top of this, every two years around €250,000 from sales of special environmental protection postage stamps top up these funds. In the 2002 budget a further €59,000 are earmarked for project funding for nature conservation associations.

The Article Act, which came into force on 3 August 2001, gives the public greater rights to comment and be informed on approval of industrial plants and other projects with environmental implications. And this public participation no longer stops at national or EU borders. For example, the local populace in areas near the border in Poland can take part in approval procedures in nearby German municipalities. The planned transposition of the Århus Convention, signed by Germany in 1998, will further improve the public's right to information and participation relative to the existing Environmental Information Act.

### **Sustainability is international**

Sustainability doesn't stop at national borders. More and more people around the globe share the limited resources of clean water and air and animal and plant biodiversity. As population grows – the world population is now 6 billion, in 50 years it will be almost 10 billion - the burden on the natural world and the environment increases apace. In addition to the over-use of natural resources triggered by the lifestyles predominant in prosperous societies, we also see destruction of the environment caused by mass poverty.

Scientists talk about the "ecological footprint" when measuring the amount of resources consumed by human beings in terms of the amount of land employed e.g. for food production, energy generation or to obtain raw materials. This concept makes it relatively easy to compare lifestyles in different societies and to identify how sustainable their behaviour is. Such assessments show that the average pro capita ecological footprint is 2.8 hectares. That is twice as high as the figure scientists believe would be compatible with sustainable development. The WWF's "Living Planet Report 2000" concluded that the 4.36-hectare "footprint" of the average consumer in Germany is three times the area that would be available to him or her in statistical terms. All around the globe, people in industrialised countries use four times more natural resources than people in developing countries. Production methods and lifestyles in rich countries therefore need to change and existing natural resources must be used more economically to allow improved living conditions around the world.

This example demonstrates clearly that a National Sustainability Strategy not only needs to respond to the domestic consequences of global changes but must also take into

account the impact of national action on the situation in other world regions. The interdependency of global ecosystems and the international intermeshing of economic and financial systems underscore this point forcefully.

In the future, international action will have to be much more consistent in taking global improvement of living conditions as its guiding principle. In September 2000 at the Millennium Summit the international community reaffirmed its intention to take a concerted approach in moving in this direction by recognising international development goals. These include cutting world poverty and malnutrition by half, reducing child mortality by two thirds and generating more gender equity, all by 2015. Furthermore by 2005 each country is to implement National Sustainability Strategies, in order to reverse the current trend of vanishing natural resources, which are essential to our survival, by 2015.

Germany was one of the first states to make a binding declaration on its contribution to global efforts to combat poverty, in the form of the "Programme of Action 2015 – Poverty Reduction: a Global Responsibility" adopted by the cabinet in April 2001. The programme states that combating poverty is the overarching challenge for development policy and an important component of the general thrust of the German government's policy. It sees combating poverty as a long-term process in which the issues are addressed internationally in the light of global structural policy, as well as being tackled in partner countries under the aegis of development co-operation and within Germany. It considers both the impact that poverty and environmental destruction elsewhere have on German society and the consequences that our patterns of consumption and politics for global opportunities for sustainable development and it states the German government's positions on specific political demands in individual fields.

The importance of disaster reduction was also reflected in the German government's 11th Development Policy Report and the Programme of Action 2015. Since the beginning of the International Decade for International Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), from 1990 – 1999, the German government advocated at UN level and at EU level that disaster reduction should be acknowledged as an important aspect in the sustainable development of very many countries.

The government of the Federal Republic of Germany does more on environmental policy issues than simply serving as a good example thanks to high and ever-improving environmental standards domestically. Germany also plays an active role in moving ahead on environmental protection in the EU and other international organisations and fora, as demonstrated, for example, in its advocacy of greater integration of environmental considerations into World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. In addition, Germany is also an active player in seeking to take preventive action to avoid ecological, economic and social crises through international environmental agreements and in bilateral co-operation with other states. Between €409 million and €511 million per annum have been spent in government bilateral co-operation work on environmental and resource protection in the strict sense of the term since 1990 - that is between one fifth and one quarter of aggregate financial commitments. Germany also succeeded in ensuring that disaster reduction was included as an important goal in the conclusions of

the second ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Berlin on 29 March 1999, the programme of action of the first Summit between the Heads of State and Government of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union in Rio de Janeiro on 28 June 1999 and the Cairo Plan of Action of the first Africa-Europe Summit on 4 April 2000.

Also, the German government takes account of the fact that, particularly in developing countries, people's survival is threatened not only by wars or conflicts but increasing also by natural disasters. Here, rapid help must be provided with a minimum of red tape so as to alleviate the worst suffering. The German government's aim, bearing in mind the principle of sustainable development, is also to promote preventive measures in particular so that disasters either do not occur in the first place or have less devastating consequences. The focus should therefore be switched from disaster relief to disaster reduction.

#### The twofold threat to the earth's atmosphere

Reducing global emissions of greenhouse gases is essential if we wish to put the brakes on the forecast increase of 1.4% to 5.8% in average global air temperature by 2100 and the increase of 10 cm to 90 cm in sea level as against 1990. For that reason Germany has shown great commitment to global moves to combat global warming and specifically to formulating the Kyoto Protocol. Through its ratification of the Protocol, Germany is helping to ensure that this agreement will enter into force in Johannesburg. A further central policy plank is cutting emissions of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and similar chemicals in order to counter the threat these substances pose to the climate and to act against depletion of the protective ozone layer in the stratosphere. Germany was an active player in work leading up to extension of the Montreal Protocol, decided in Peking in 1999. Through further comprehensive restrictions on production and trade of substances that damage the ozone layer, the Protocol ensures that from around 2006 the ozone layer will stabilise and will be reconstituted by around 2050 - 2060. In addition, Germany provides considerable funding from the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development's budget to help convince developing countries to phase out substances that damage the ozone layer as soon as possible.

#### Loss of biodiversity

Germany is a contracting state to the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). The Federal government pursues the Convention's goals both nationally e.g. through amendment of the Nature Conservation Act, and in international co-operation in the various competent fora. To that end the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Agriculture and Food was adopted in November 2001 in the context of the 31st Conference of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The treaty contains mechanisms for the protection and sustainable use of species and varieties of significance for agriculture, along with provisions on benefit-sharing. Furthermore, in October 2001 the Federal government invited the working group on "Access to Genetic Resources and Fair Benefit-sharing", set up by the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the CBD, to meet in Bonn and played a vigorous part in devising what are known as the Bonn guidelines. These Bonn guidelines were adopted by the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) in April 2002 in Den Haag. By adopting

the Bonn guidelines on "Access to Genetic Resources and Fair Sharing of Benefits from their Use", the CBD's provisions on access to genetic resources have been made more concrete. This provides a clear legal framework for industry and science and hence facilitates access, whilst also specifying the obligations for users of genetic resources in order to ensure fair benefit-sharing. This "fair benefit-sharing" is of particular importance for developing countries due to their rich biodiversity, particular in respect of combating poverty. By championing adoption of the Bonn guidelines, the Federal government has helped to foster greater social and ecological equity.

#### Destruction of forests

In the international arena, Germany has been energetically championing measures to limit forest destruction, particularly of tropical and boreal forests, in order to reduce climate change, desertification and the irreversible loss of biodiversity. In keeping with the spirit of the Statement of Forest Principles adopted in Rio in 1992, Germany supports projects and programmes to protect and conserve tropical forests to the tune of over €128 million per annum. The G7 pilot programme to protect the Brazilian rain forests (PPG7) is a good example of these policies, with 46% of the funding from Germany. In addition, Germany has been involved in a whole host of initiatives to support the establishment and development of the Forest Forum (UNFF), set up by the United Nations in October 2000. This body is to give more concrete form to the Statement of Forest Principles and put proposals for action into practice. Germany also supports adoption of an implementation-oriented working programme on forest biodiversity, planned for the sixth Conference of the Parties to the CBD in April 2002 in The Hague. Germany believes that certification systems are an important component in the global protection of forests. In addition to what is, to date, the only functioning certification system, operated by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), there are also many other schemes, such as the regional Pan European Forest Certification scheme. The German Environment Ministry employs development co-operation tools to encourage wider use of such systems in developing countries.

5 % of forests in Germany are covered by particularly stringent protection schemes, whilst around 57% of forests are certified. Both the Federation and the federal states invest around €22.5 million a year on measures to help conserve largely unspoilt forests and devise strategies for sustainable forest management through an ongoing dialogue with society in the context of the "National Forest Programme".

#### Protection of the marine environment

The seas and oceans are not just important transport routes and a source of raw materials, but are also an important factor in climate regulation and the still largely unexplored habitat of countless animal and plant species and an irreplaceable source of food. As a country bordering both the North Sea and the Baltic, Germany has strongly championed measures to reduce the load on marine ecosystems occasioned by pollutant and nutrient inputs, maritime transport, oil and natural gas production and fishing. At the regional level this includes measures taken within the framework of the OSPAR Convention (North Sea/North-East Atlantic) and the Helsinki Agreement (Baltic Sea). Globally, action is taken for example in the framework of the IMO, the CSD and the UN Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

In the North Sea and the Baltic the central concern is still to continue to reduce pollution caused by toxic and radioactive substances as well as by nutrients. Furthermore a network of protected areas is to be established to protect and conserve ecosystems and biodiversity. The Wadden Sea Plan is to be implemented and more work is to be done on devising and implementing coastal zone management schemes. It is also intended to use the forthcoming reform of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy in 2002 to ensure that environmental protection is also integrated into this policy area.

#### Waste and Destruction of Freshwater Resources

Although in global terms there are still sufficient supplies of freshwater, this resource is distributed extremely unequally around the world. In the Middle East, for example, conflicts over the use of rivers such as the Jordan, the Euphrates and the Tigris demonstrate that disputes over scant freshwater reserves can lead to threats to regional stability with global consequences. The German government considers that protection of freshwater resources - i.e. ground and surface waters within national borders but also cross-border water resources - is of decisive importance in preserving the environment, peace and the fundamental basis of life, both now and in the future. Germany therefore organised an International Freshwater Conference in Bonn in December 2001, with the participation of delegations from 118 states and observers from a comparable number of international and non-governmental organisations. The conference did the groundwork on the issue of water for the review of implementation of Agenda 21 at the "World Summit on Sustainable Development" in 2002 in Johannesburg. The conference confirmed the close links between water, poverty alleviation and sustainable development, whilst making progress on cost recovery in water supply, private-sector involvement, the importance of co-operation on cross-border water resources and the need for decentralisation and participation, particularly of women. The principles adopted in Bonn have been seen as a significant step on the road to the World Summit in Johannesburg. Germany has thus taken on the role of "lead country" in the EU on the topic of "Freshwater Resources" in the run-up to the World Summit.

#### The threat to soils

In many places human activities have damaged soils and reduced their agricultural value or made them impossible to farm. The onward march of soil erosion and increasing desertification are a threat not only to world food supply but also to the climate. Only limited use can now be made of one-third of the world's approximately 1.5 billion hectares of farmland. The biological properties of one-fifth of the world's grassland and one-fifth of forest soils have been seriously curtailed or already lost entirely.

Entry into force in 1996 of the Convention to Combat Desertification (UN-CCD), which has its secretariat in Bonn, created a binding international framework for action and co-operation between countries threatened by desertification and industrialised countries. Germany supports its partner countries – in particular around 40 countries in arid areas of Africa together with countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia – within the framework of bilateral co-operation through numerous projects to combat desertification and plays an active part in international expert discussions on implementation of the Convention.

The V. Alpine Conference adopted a protocol on soil protection in October 1998 with a view to protecting soils in the Alps. It aims to maintain the functions and specific

characteristics of alpine soils, which are particularly at threat from erosion. Germany is currently preparing to ratify the Protocol.

### **3. Prospects**

Ten years after Rio, sustainable development has become well established in Germany. However, great efforts are still called for to ensure that sustainability standards are achieved in all areas of society, making it possible to ensure good quality of life for future generations too, together with social cohesion in an ever more closely intertwined world.

In particular this means that the well-functioning structures for the sustainability process that have been developed over the past ten years need to be put on an increasingly sound political and financial footing at all levels and developed further where necessary. There is a need to extend scope for participation – experience has shown that rather than hindering politics, participation complements and supplements political activity.

Although some respectable successes have been achieved in certain important areas internationally – examples include progress in international negotiations on combating global warming or international decisions on debt relief for the poorest developing countries or the decision taken by the European Council in Barcelona to speed up implementation of the 0.7 % goal for Official Development Assistance (ODA) – we still have to face up to some major challenges. There has still not yet been a broad change in policy direction world-wide to embrace sustainable development. In addition, as globalisation increases, economic and technical progress can spread more rapidly. Conflicts and trouble spots increasingly tend not to be constrained by borders. Sustainable development needs peace – and peace in turn cannot exist without global justice – between North and South, between current and future generations, between humans and the natural environment.

As economic globalisation accelerates, there is an urgent need for an ecological and social framework of governance, to ensure that globalisation acts to serve sustainable development rather than undermining it. An individual state acting in isolation cannot establish these framework conditions – *national* legislation cannot prevent ecological and social dumping in a *global* economy. The WTO Conference in Doha has already taken the first step forward on this issue, creating a basis for future work. The forthcoming world trade round will include environmental topics in the negotiations for the first time. However, this is not merely a challenge for international trade policy; the private sector must shoulder its share of responsibility for ensuring that business is compatible with ecological and social concerns. One model for this could be the approach taken by the German government, which is currently devising principles to enhance environmental protection in foreign direct investment through dialogue with the private sector, trade unions and non-governmental organisations. Germany will present this initiative at the World Summit.

Another example: two billion people around the world do not have access to commercial energy supplies. One of the major challenges in the coming years will be how to close this gap with a genuinely sustainable energy policy. Decentralised energy supplies using renewable energies can at the same time make a tangible contribution to combating poverty in rural areas in many developing countries. The German government and its EU partners are therefore calling for the Johannesburg Summit to commission work on a sustainable energy policy with the emphasis on action. This would take a hands-on approach to specifying the work to be done and options available for all relevant

stakeholders, from civil society to the World Bank, and incorporating differentiated measures to reflect the highly varied points of departure for industrialised countries, emerging economies and developing countries.

Only if we make enormous efforts will it be possible to convince all states to be resolute enough in paving the way to move in the right direction on many of the pressing questions on the World Summit's agenda. But when will we have another world-wide opportunity to find creative, courageous, sustainable answers? A global pact with these objectives must be concluded in Johannesburg. The aim is to renew the global partnership declared in Rio. Sustainable development must not vanish into the filing cabinets as past history but must lead to tangible decisions with the focus on action, which are subsequently really put into practice.