

**German Bundestag
Committee on Economic
Cooperation and
Development**

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Committee on Economic Coop-
eration and Development

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R e p o r t

**on the Trip made by a Delegation of the Committee
on Economic Cooperation and Development,**

the Members of the German Bundestag

**Ute Koczy (Alliance 90/The Greens),
Head of the Delegation,**

Jürgen Klimke (CDU/CSU),

Christel Riemann-Hanewinckel (SPD),

and

Hellmut Königshaus (FDP),

to

Pakistan and Myanmar

from 23 to 31 October 2008

Programme in Pakistan

Friday, 24 October 2008

- 02:05 hrs Arrive in Lahore from Tashkent
- 10:30 hrs Briefing by Mr Marcus von Essen, Counsellor for Economic Cooperation and Development at the German Embassy
- From 11:30 hrs Drive to the Taangh Wasaib Organisation, Sargodha
Accompanied by Father Sohail Patrick, Director of the Taangh Wasaib Organisation
On arrival: Lunch with politicians from Sargodha District
- Interactive dialogue with the women's forum, religious leaders and victims of violence against women
Interactive theatre performance by the women's forum
- 16:30 hrs **at the latest** Return to Lahore
- 19:30 hrs Dinner at the invitation of the German Honorary Consul, Mr Anees-Ur-Rehman

Saturday, 25 October 2008

- 09:15 hrs Depart from the Avari Hotel
- 09:30 -11:30 hrs Round table: meeting with civil society representatives and human rights activists at the Shirkat Gah development organisation (*partner in the Heinrich Böll Foundation project 'Women Living under Muslim Law'*)
Discussions with:
 - I.A. Rehman, human rights activist, Director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
 - Muhammad Tahseen, social activist, Director of the South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP)
 - Khawar Mumtaz, women's rights activist, Shirkat Gah (Coordinator)
 - Ayesha Saddiqa, defence & political analyst, researcher
 - Kaiser Bengali, economist, National Coordinator of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)
- 12:00-12:45 hrs Meeting with the Lord Bishop of Lahore, Dr Alexander John Malik
- 13:00 hrs Visit to the National College of Arts, meeting with representatives of the Contesting Fundamentalism project
Discussions with:
Ali Qadir, Professor of Communications & Cultural Studies, and students
- 14:00 hrs Lunch at the invitation of Mr Gregor Enste, Resident Director of the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBS) in Pakistan
- Followed by Political tour of the city and cultural programme: Lahore Fort, Badshahi

Mosque
(introduction to the political history of Pakistan as illuminated by the cityscape of Lahore)

- 16:00 hrs Drive via Shalimar Garden to the Pakistani/Indian border (*'flag-lowering ceremony'*, daily performance conducted with great ceremony on both sides and watched by hundreds of spectators)
- 20:30 hrs Dinner at the invitation of Mr Gregor Enste, HBS

Sunday, 26 October 2008

- 10:00 hrs Meeting with media representatives (newspapers and TV)
- Abbas Rashid, educationalist/political analyst, Director of the Society for the Advancement of Higher Education
 - Azmat Abbas, journalist, DAWN TV
 - Sayeda Zafar, editor/journalist, *Business Recorder*
 - Khalid Ahmed, journalist/political analyst, *Daily Times*
- Followed by joint lunch with the participants in the meeting
- Around 14:00 Drive from Lahore to Islamabad
Check-in at the Horizon Guest House
- 19:30 hrs Reception at the invitation of Ms Ina Lepel, Chargée d'Affaires

Monday, 27 October 2008

Programme for Ute Koczy

- 07:30 hrs Depart from the Horizon Guest House with two KfW development bank/German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) vehicles, travelling from Islamabad to Peshawar, the capital of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP)
Accompanied by Mr von Essen, Mr Thomas Schaef, GTZ Country Director, and Dr Parvaiz Naim, KfW staff member
- 10:00 hrs Meeting with Mr Habibullah Khan, Additional Chief Secretary, FATA Civil Secretariat
- 11:30 hrs Visit to a TB centre
Accompanied by:
- Dr Wendl Richter, Team Leader, GTZ TB programme
 - Dr Paul Rückert, GTZ Health Programme Coordinator
 - Dr Parvaiz Naim, KfW
- 13.00 Visit to an educational institution (including lunch)
Accompanied by: Dr Julie Reviere, GTZ officer responsible for education contracts and coordination
- 15:30 hrs Visit to the Aurat Foundation
- 16:30 hrs Visit to the Greenstar Clinic
Accompanied by: Dr Parvaiz Naim, KfW
Discussions with: Dr Mashal Bahar, Greenstar, and patients/clients

Programme for Christel Riemann-Hanewinkel, Jürgen Klimke, Hellmut Königshaus and Ms Zender, accompanied by Ms Ahmad-Zaki (interpreter) and Dr Anna-Christine Janke, KfW Office Director

08:55 hrs	Depart for the GTZ/KfW building
09:00 hrs	Briefing on Greenstar and the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP)
09:30 hrs	Depart for Rawalpindi
10:25 hrs	Visit to the Talat Nursing Home Discussions with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Naila Talat, owner and manager • Dr Maheen Naveed, Senior Programme Manager, Greenstar • Mrs Dana Tilson, Executive Director, Greenstar
12:15 hrs	Lunch at the invitation of Dr Janke, KfW Office Director, with representatives of Greenstar and the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP)
13:00 hrs	Depart for Nalore
13:50 hrs	Visit to the Bhamlahri community organisation Discussions with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Rashid Bajwa, Chief Executive Officer, NRSP
15:40 hrs	Refreshments
16:00 hrs	Briefing on the food crisis by Mr Wolfgang Herbinger, World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director
19:50 hrs	Depart for the GTZ/KfW building
20:00 hrs	Reception and dinner at the invitation of the GTZ/KfW Invitations extended to: Civil servants in the Pakistani Economic Affairs Division: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Farrakh Qayyum, Secretary • Mr Ubaid Rubbani Qureshi, Joint Secretary • Mr Abdul Raouf Gandapur, Deputy Secretary • Ms Baseerat Memraiz, Section Officer Also attended by GTZ officers responsible for contracts and coordination, GTZ seconded experts, local advisers and KfW consultants

Tuesday, 28 October 2008

09:00 hrs	Round table with the German Federal Foreign Minister and civil society representatives Host: Ambassador Dr Michael Koch Participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Hamid Mir, leading political journalist, GEO-TV private television station • Mr Naveed Shinwari, Chief Executive of the NGO Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme (CAMP) • Lt. Gen. (ret.) Ali Muhammad Jan Aurakzai, former Governor of the NWFP • Prof. Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, Head of the Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad
11:30 hrs	Presentations on the health and energy sectors

- 12:30 hrs Lunch at the invitation of the GTZ/KfW
- 14:00 hrs Visits to educational schemes
Accompanied by:
- Mr Thomas Schaef, GTZ Country Director
 - Dr Julie Reviere, GTZ officer responsible for education contracts and coordination
 - Dr Anna-Christine Janke, KfW Office Director
 - and national partners
- 17:00-18:30 hrs Visit to a Christian World Service (CWS)/Church Development Service (EED) project to strengthen democratic participation, in particular among religious minorities and women
Discussions with:
- Mr Wajahat Latif, Senior Programme Adviser, CWS
 - Ms Shama Mall, Deputy Director, CWS
 - Mr Mansoor Raza, Deputy Director, CWS
- 20:00 hrs Dinner at the invitation of the Resident Representative of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Mr Henning Effner (attended by representatives of the Hanns Seidel Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation)
Mobile: 0092(0)346-521 3247

Wednesday, 29 October 2008

- 10:00 hrs Briefing by Mr Kilian Kleinschmidt, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), on the situation with regard to refugees/internally displaced persons (IDPs)
- 11:30 hrs Meeting with Dr Fahmida Mirza, Speaker of the National Assembly
- 12:45 hrs Meeting with Mahmud Ali Durrani, National Security Adviser to Prime Minister Gillani
- 13:15 hrs Depart for farmhouse
- 14:00 hrs Lunch at the invitation of the Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, H.E. Mr Mohammed Mian Soomro
- 17:00-18:00 hrs Visit to the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC)
Discussions with: Mr Anees Jillani, a prominent lawyer who is also well informed about the political situation in Pakistan
- 23:30 hrs **Delegation departs**

Programme for Myanmar

Thursday, 30 October 2008

- 08:45 hrs: Flight arrives from Bangkok
Collected by Ambassador Julius Georg Luy
- 10.00 hrs: Briefing by the Ambassador at the Hotel Savoy
- 11.00 hrs: Meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with U Kyaw Htu, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
- 12.00 hrs: Appointment with Mr Bishow Parajuli, UN Resident Coordinator for Myanmar
- 12.30 hrs: Lunch with representatives of the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), Ambassador's Residence; participants from the NLD:
- U Nyunt Wei, Treasurer, member of the NLD's Central Executive Committee (CEC)
 - U Ilantha Myint, one of the NLD's three spokespersons
 - Dr Win Naing, one of the NLD's three spokespersons
- From 14.00 hrs: Tour of aid projects (Welthungerhilfe[German Agro Action]/Malteser International) in Htan Tabin (approx. one hour away from the city centre):
- 14.00 hrs: Depart from the Ambassador's Residence, collected by Mr Lothar Kinzelmann, Welthungerhilfe Project Leader for Htan Tabin
- 15.00-16.40 hrs: Tour of projects in Htan Tabin (including small agricultural projects, school refurbishment, rural health centre, discussion with women's self-help groups)
- 16.40 hrs: Return to Rangoon
- 17.30 hrs: Meeting with Ms L. Ja Nan, Assistant Director, Shalom Foundation
- 19.00 hrs: Buffet dinner with representatives of local and German NGOs and the UN, Ambassador's Residence

Friday, 31 October 2008

- 09.45 hrs: Flight departs

Excerpts from the delegation's report:

Preliminary remarks

The delegation had planned a trip to Pakistan last year. It was unable to go ahead because the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs had requested that the visit be postponed on account of the parliamentary elections that were due to be held there. The delegation had decided at that time to rearrange the trip again as soon as possible.

The delegation was led by Ute Koczy, Member of the German Bundestag (Alliance 90/The Greens). The other members of the delegation were Jürgen Klimke, Member of the German Bundestag (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union, CDU/CSU), Christel Riemann-Hanewinkel, Member of the German Bundestag (Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD), and Hellmut Königshaus, Member of the German Bundestag (Free Democratic Party, FDP). The delegation was accompanied by the head of the Committee Secretariat, Andrea Zender, and in Pakistan by seven officers from the German Federal Criminal Police Office, led by Detective Superintendent Holger Mengen and Detective Inspector Tino Weichelt.

Thanks are due to the German embassies in Pakistan and Myanmar, whose preparations for the trip were outstanding, in particular Mr Marcus von Essen (Pakistan) and Mr Ralph Timmermann (Myanmar), who also looked after the delegation during their trip.

Apart from this, we would like to express our great gratitude to our two interpreters, Ms Ahmad-Zaki, the Director of the Annemarie-Schimmel Haus in Lahore, and Ms Ilonka Meier, a lecturer at the America Center in Rangoon, who both stepped in at short notice. Finally, it is necessary to thank the NGOs and German political foundations, which had contributed to the preparation of the trip as well as assisting the delegation in Pakistan and Myanmar, and provided its members with a great deal of information.

Pakistan

Pakistan has an area of 796,000 km² and about 160 million inhabitants with a per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) of approx. 690 US dollars. It is a federal state made up of four provinces, Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), as well as the 'Federally Administered Tribal Areas' (FATA) and the 'Northern Areas'. The Northern Areas are mountainous districts separated from the former Princely State of Kashmir in the north of Pakistan that do not have the status of a province or enjoy representation. In addition to this, there is Azad Jammu & Kashmir ('Free Kashmir'), the part of Kashmir located on the Pakistani side of the 'Line of Control', the demarcation line between India and Pakistan. Azad Jammu & Kashmir is largely self-administered, but financially dependant on the central government in Islamabad.

The delegation spent the first part of its stay in Pakistan at Lahore, the second part at Islamabad.

Friday, 24 October 2008

Briefing by Mr Marcus von Essen, the Counsellor for Economic Cooperation and Development at the German Embassy

Mr von Essen reported that Pakistan currently found itself going through three major crises. The collapse of the coalition government in August 2008 had triggered a political crisis. It was necessary for a new cabinet to be formed, but this had not happened. The cabinet had previously consisted of 66 ministers, but there had been just 44 ministers since the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PLM-N) left the government. The National Assembly had recently sat for 14 days and finally adopted a 14-point anti-terror resolution on the continued prosecution of the struggle against Al-Qaida and the Taliban militias. These groups now controlled large stretches of the semi-autonomous tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan and had extended their influence to parts of the NWFP. There was no clear line on foreign and security policy. The relations to the military were characterised by mutual suspicion, but figures on both sides were prepared to engage in dialogue. In terms of security policy, there were several flashpoints. Pakistan Army ground troops had attempted to reassert the state's sovereignty over the FATA. More than 2,000 people had been killed and 200,000 people fled their homes during a military operation in the Bajaur Tribal Agency in August.

The second crisis was the increasing economic crisis. Pakistan needed 4.5 billion US dollars in order to preserve its solvency. The country's current account deficit was now running at more than 8% of GDP. The rising costs for imported oil and foodstuffs had driven up the deficit and resulted in a drastic fall in its currency reserves. Pakistan's currency reserves were enough for just three to four weeks.

The economy and the population were being particularly affected by the energy crisis. There were constant power cuts, which sometimes lasted for up to ten hours. There was an energy shortfall of 4,000 megawatts, with demand at about 20,000 megawatts. A billion US dollars would be required just in order to maintain the country's energy infrastructure in its current condition. This money was not available, given that the budget deficit had been 8.3% in the 2008 budget year. There was no possibility of structural investment.

Power prices had increased by between 50% and 60%. Two thirds of the country's power was generated from fossil fuels and one third from water power, which therefore possessed great potential for expansion. Solar and wind energy were still in their infancy, but were not being prioritised. Pakistan would have to start importing gas as of 2010. Foreign investors, including the Chinese, were holding back to a large extent in this sector.

Mr von Essen touched on the priority areas for German development cooperation in the health, education and renewable energy sectors in the light of the negotiations to form a new government due on 10/11 November 2008.

The biggest donor in the field of multilateral development cooperation was the USA, followed by Japan, China and Great Britain, which acted through its Department for International Development (DFID). The European Commission was giving 50 million US dollars a year, which was being channelled into budgetary aid, among other things. There were currently difficulties with the disbursement of funds on account of the lack of planning and implementation capacities within the NWFP government. Instead of cooperating directly with the government, the European Commission and the DFID were now planning to use the GTZ to deliver vocational training projects. If these plans were followed through, the GTZ would provide the staff (the German contribution) and advise the government on implementation. The costs of the programme would be borne by the European Commission and the DFID.

Furthermore, Germany was currently the only donor that still had a presence on the ground in Peshawar.

When asked whether there was a security concept for the GTZ's personnel, Mr von Essen stated that there was no such concept at the moment. They sought to keep a low profile and behave inconspicuously. However, they would soon have a security adviser. The first step was to move the families of the GTZ staff from Peshawar to Islamabad.

Visit to the Taangh Wasaib Organisation (TWO), Sargodha

TWO, an NGO that is active in the fields of human rights, education, peaceful coexistence and women's rights, is supported by the German Church Development Service (EED). The delegation was welcomed to TWO's headquarters in Sargodha, a town north west of Lahore, by its General Secretary, Rubina Feroze Bhatti, and was given an overview of the work done by the organisation, in particular its projects to develop and strengthen women's rights. She explained that TWO had been set up in 1998 with 25 volunteers, all students, teachers and lecturers from Sargodha District. Since then, the volunteer system had been continually expanded and there were now more than 1,000 volunteers. The volunteers came from all strata of society and worked unpaid in various ways for TWO's goals. Some worked with TWO for a short period, but others for many years. Its target groups included socially and economically disadvantaged people in the surrounding districts, victims of domestic violence, the justice authorities, the administration, religious leaders, the police, the media and the general population.

Rubina Bhatti reported that violence against women was a major problem in Pakistani society and affected about 70% to 90% of women. They were massively disadvantaged and openly discriminated against. Traditional attitudes led to girls and women being denied the right to education, especially in rural regions. Furthermore, women were often forced into marriages and abused, and were victims of the most horrific acts of violence. The culprits usually remained unpunished. Many women did not know their rights. Harassment in the workplace was also a problem. TWO was attempting to raise these problems publicly through the media and discuss them with parliamentarians. At the level of the districts, it had established women's forums, whose activities included the investigation of specific cases of violence and discrimination against women. A small amount of progress was to be noted, the number of honour killings and levels of domestic violence had fallen somewhat. Furthermore, draft legislation under which domestic violence would be made punishable was now being considered. It was hoped that this bill would soon be passed.

The delegation were informed about the political situation in Pakistan and possible approaches to the provision of aid within the context of development cooperation at a joint lunch with political representatives from Sargodha District.

Subsequently, the delegation visited the village of Tangowalli, where Mussart Shabeen had been attacked in 2004 in the incident that had motivated TWO to begin its work on violence against women. Mussart Shabeen had had both her legs chopped off below the knee by her brother-in-law as a consequence of family disputes. Other family members, including her own mother, had been present and had approved of the act. Those responsible had been punished.

The delegation were welcomed by hundreds of people from more than 40 other villages who carried bright, colourful banners, on which they had written texts that called for women's rights to be strengthened. A series of women demonstrated the kind of activities carried out by Pakistani women in the course of their routine daily work.

The delegation watched a play put on by the women's forum that was intended to teach women how they should behave if they suffered sexual harassment and persuade them they should call in the police. Following this, the members of the delegation split up for separate meetings, during which they had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the members of the women's forum (Christel Riemann-Hanewinckel), religious leaders (Hellmut Königshaus) and victims of violence against women (Ute Koczy).

Dinner at the invitation of the German Honorary Consul, Mr Anees-Ur-Rehman

This event in the garden of the Honorary Consul's villa, to which numerous representatives of politics, business and the administration were invited, was a chance for the delegation to gain an idea of the diversity of opinion on a wide range of the topics under discussion in Pakistani society. At the dinner, they met the Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, Mr Mohammed Soomro, who had also invited the delegation to his country residence later in their stay.

Saturday, 25 October 2008

Round table: meeting with civil society representatives and human rights activists at the Shirkat Gah development organisation

Khawar Muntaz, a representative of Shirkat Gah, explained that this women's organisation was working in 27 districts with 44 community organisations and reaching up to 200,000 women. The goal was to improve the situation for women, which was why it was, above all, trying to communicate with men as well. Apart from local, national and international organisations, it was cooperating with the government.

Major problems were being caused by the increasing Talibanisation and the violence that went with it, poverty, poor governance and the dysfunctional justice system. In some parts of the country, the situation of women was deteriorating further and further. Women were falling victim to violence and mass expulsion. On the whole, Pakistani society was patriarchal in nature. Furthermore, the state did not engage with women, but exclusively with community leaders and family heads, most of whom were male. It was necessary to strengthen the measures that had now been initiated, which were enabling women to register and, in this way, giving them the chance to have a formal identity for the first time. One third of Pakistani women were not yet registered and had no identity papers. In consequence, they could not take part in legal transactions or, for example, effect financial business, which kept them in a state of dependence. In addition to this, many were married too young because no one knew how old they were. These problems were to be attributed to the failings of the Pakistani system for registering births. Overall, there were big gaps in women's rights. There were no statutory provisions concerning questions of land ownership, inheritance law, domestic violence and harassment in the workplace.

I.A. Rehmann explained the structure and goals of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, emphasising that it was secular and did not accept religion had a role in politics. It was, among other things, fighting for minority and women's rights, and calling for the abolition of capital punishment. He described the country's current crises, its militarisation, its economic

crisis and its food crisis, and drew attention to the ongoing predicament of the refugees and the people who were being resettled. The country's people did not trust the government. They saw a danger that it would adopt the same methods as the military government. Although Pakistan had a federal structure on paper, it was in fact a centralised state. The central government interfered in the affairs of the provinces. It would only be possible for Pakistan to develop if the tensions between Islamabad and the provinces were resolved as well as the country's economic problems.

Kaiser Bengali criticised the foreign policy of the West, including Germany, in clear terms. He said the Western countries followed US foreign policy too closely. The problems Pakistan was now having with terrorism had their roots in the 1980s, and the USA was causally responsible for what had happened then. Nevertheless, 20 years later, no one could make the USA and the West solely culpable for what was going wrong: Musharraf's dictatorship had been created by the country itself. It was not poverty that produced terrorism, but inequality. One of the examples he mentioned was the tax system, which placed an incomparably greater burden on the poor than the rich. While the richest 10% only had to pay 12% of their income as taxes, the poorest 10% had to pay about 16% of their income. Apart from this, Pakistan was marked out by its educational apartheid. The official education system was elitist. The rich sent their children to English-speaking schools; the poor went to schools where they were taught in Urdu or the religious schools, the madrassas, at which Pakistani pupils did not pay any fees either for food or for tuition. This made them magnets for the children of poor families, many of whom would inevitably remain illiterate otherwise. This inequality effectively meant there were two states within a single state.

The strong position of the military (650,000 soldiers and 302,000 paramilitaries) and the secret service, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), which controlled the government, was still a big problem. The West should increase its efforts to consolidate democracy in Pakistan and help the Pakistani government in attempting to gain more control over the secret services.

The tribal areas had not arrived in the 21st century. Honour killings were still being committed, girls were married in order to end disputes, and women were kept in a state of dependence. Bengali also referred to the number of women who were not registered. He presented the income support programme that was currently being set up by the government, under which 1,000 rupees a month could be paid to needy families. The money was only disbursed to women who could identify themselves. As a result, women were currently queuing in front of official buildings to get identity papers.

When the delegation asked for the term 'Talibanisation' to be defined more precisely and more information about the safe havens, as they were known, it was explained that the word

taliban was to be translated as 'students' and the movement had emerged from the madrasas of Afghanistan. Since the same tribes lived on both sides of the 2,400-km-long border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the dividing lines between the groups on either side were blurred. They did not recognise the existence of a border, which allowed Al-Qaida and the Taliban militias to retreat to the safe havens and made it so difficult to combat them. The extremist groups controlled large expanses of these areas and had now extended their influence to parts of the North West Frontier Province. Even the bigger cities were suffering increasingly from terror attacks. This was causing great concern to the whole of society. Civil society was increasingly becoming a victim of the situation. From a realistic point of view, the military would have to play an important role in Pakistan over the next two to five years. However, it was important that parliamentary politicians learned to deal with security issues and the dominance of the military. A reform of the whole security sector was therefore urgently required.

Furthermore, it was the lack of alternatives, above all, that helped extremist ideologies to recruit their supporters.

Meeting with the Lord Bishop of Lahore, Dr Alexander John Malik

Bishop Malik emphasised that his church was working in education (schools, colleges, universities) and the healthcare sector. In this respect, special emphasis was placed on activities with children, above all orphans and street children, a field in which it was working in partnership with the German children's charity Kindernothilfe.

The elections in Pakistan had established democracy in the country, but the fight against terrorism was confronting society with many problems, which were ultimately caused by what were merely a small minority of fanatics.

In the northern areas, in particular, there were only a few Christian communities, and it was difficult for the church to give its members there pastoral care. The community was very active in the larger cities, running hospitals in some places. True to the common medical ethos, everyone was welcome there, and even Taliban were treated.

He mentioned the forced conversion of Christian women who were kidnapped and then compelled to convert to Islam as a special problem.

When asked whether there was systematic persecution of the churches by Islam, he commented that there was no state persecution, but social discrimination, in particular as a result of the blasphemy law. Under this law, insulting Islam could be punished with the death penalty. The law was misused to pursue private and business vendettas. He recounted the case of a Christian businessman from Karachi he knew, who had been denounced for insulting

Islam by a jealous rival and had eventually had to give up his business and leave the city. The mullahs also assumed that Christians collaborated with Western forces, which was why they came under attack from this direction.

Visit to the National College of Arts, meeting with Prof. Ali Qadir and students about the Contesting Fundamentalism project

Fine arts, music, architecture and modern media are taught at the College, where 1,000 male and female students from all the provinces of Pakistan are enrolled under a quota system. As Professor Ali Qadir stressed, the experience of violence was part of life for many students, in particular those from the FATA. Nevertheless, it had proved possible to maintain a peaceful atmosphere on the campus. Even so, there had been threats against the College in the past. The Contesting Fundamentalism project was aimed at creating and strengthening awareness of democratic structures in Pakistan among the students. Art and culture were currently being attacked and threatened by fanaticism and neoconservatism. There had already been cases of books being burnt and sculptures vandalised. The message from the fanatics to the people was: You are either with us or against us. It should also give cause for thought that there were no artists, musicians or humanities graduates among them. Osama bin Laden, for example, was an engineer.

The subsequent discussion with five male and female students made it abundantly clear what extraordinary levels of stress and fear these young people were being subjected to:

A female architecture student described her great fears about the security situation in the country and stressed that she had not thought it possible for violence comparable to that in Israel to come to Pakistan. Violence represented cultural death, it meant the state would no longer have any money left over for education. Something had to be done to stop young people's energies being guided into destructive directions. They needed a platform on which they could find outlets for their energy. In this respect, the project was a good way forward.

A male media studies student whose home was in the FATA described how he had been travelling behind a NATO car in Afghanistan that had been shot at and he had had to see a woman lose her life during the attack. Apart from this, he reported that anyone who wore a shirt and trousers instead of traditional clothes had to reckon with verbal and physical attacks there. One of his former friends had joined the fighters. He had attended a madrassa for financial reasons and developed with a corresponding mentality there. As far as the work done by NGOs was concerned, he called for the international community to exercise stronger control so that more money was spent on social activities and less on salaries.

Flag-lowering ceremony at the Pakistani-Indian border

The delegation watched the flag-lowering ceremony that takes place daily at sunset at Wagah, the only border crossing between India and Pakistan open to road vehicles (outside Kashmir). However, there was no sign of busy cross-border traffic there. Individuals were not allowed to pass. The goods on lorries and even postal vans had to be unloaded on one side, then loaded into vehicles on the other side again. Only one coach was allowed to cross once a day. It travelled without stopping from Lahore to India and back again on the same day.

As was explained to the delegation at several meetings, improved relations between Pakistan and India were also mirrored in the ceremonial. Just two years previously, it had been conducted very earnestly and grimly on both sides. Today, it was possible to describe it more as a spectacle.

Sunday, 26 October 2008

Meeting with media representatives (newspapers and TV)

- Abbas Rashid, educationalist/political analyst, Director of the Society for the Advancement of Higher Education
- Azmat Abbas, journalist, DAWN TV
- Sayeda Zafar, editor/journalist, *Business Recorder*
- Khalid Ahmed, journalist/political analyst, *Daily Times*

During the meeting, it became clear that there was now press freedom in Pakistan, but there was a lack of trained journalists skilled in political reporting. Many political discussions were broadcast on television, with almost 60% of the talk shows dealing with topics of this kind. These programmes mostly covered foreign policy. However, since there was so little experience of foreign affairs to draw on, these programmes did more to confuse than educate. The West was condemned sweepingly, and the dominant sentiment was one of strong anti-Americanism. There was also a failure to distinguish between German and American policy.

The print media were less widely distributed in Pakistan. Only 6% of the population regularly bought a daily newspaper.

Germany's role in Afghanistan was also discussed, and the members of the delegation were asked whether they could imagine Germany pulling out of Afghanistan. They set out the positions of their parliamentary groups on this issue. The journalists put forward the view that a solution for Afghanistan was only possible with the involvement of the whole region – including Pakistan, Iran and the Central Asian states. A strategy had to be developed to this end.

There was also talk of the differences between the publications that came out in the national language, Urdu, and the English-language press. The Urdu press was considerably more emotional and nationalistic, reflecting popular opinion and tending to pass over economic topics. By contrast, the English-language newspapers and magazines were more open to opinions from outside, but also influenced by them. On the whole, the English-language press was to be accorded greater significance.

There was hardly any investigative journalism. At most, two or three journalists on each newspaper worked in this way. However, it was also very difficult because so little of what the state did took place in the public realm.

In the afternoon, the delegation travelled overland from Lahore to Islamabad by coach.

Monday, 27 October 2008

The delegation undertook two separate programmes on 27 October 2008. Ute Koczy travelled to Peshawar for the day, while the rest of the delegation attended appointments in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Programme for Ute Koczy MdB

Report by Ute Koczy on her trip to Peshawar:

Together with representatives from the Embassy and the German development cooperation implementing organisations (the GTZ and KfW), we drove in two vehicles from Islamabad to Peshawar (approximately 1.3 million inhabitants), the provincial capital of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP, approximately 21 million inhabitants). The journey took roughly two hours.

Meeting with Mr Habibullah Khan, Additional Chief Secretary of the Civil Secretariat of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)

Mr Khan had spent six years in Kosovo working for the United Nations (UNMIK).

This meeting was very intense and impressive. Mr Khan said how important development cooperation was in the tribal areas and expressed his gratitude for the German activities. He identified the main problems as poverty and the dismal social situation. These were at the root of the fundamental crisis and provided fertile ground for Al-Qaida. This was why development was of the highest significance. For it was only if the government broke down the isolation of the tribes, made them offers and gave them support on the ground, e.g. by treat-

ing their animals, that things would change and the tribes would not turn to the fundamentalists.

The security situation was a major problem, especially when it came to the protection of aid workers. Furthermore, some sectors of the population were opposed to the presence of NGOs because people could not tell the difference between what these organisations were doing and the policies pursued by the United States. Nevertheless, it also had to be pointed out that, in the eyes of US donors, any particular group was only important if it was relevant to US policy. It was true that USAID spent a lot of money, but the recipients of these funds were then accused of having sold out to the Americans. This was why he was arguing for a wider range of donors to be brought on board.

When the widespread fear our delegation had encountered, for example when we talked to students in Lahore, was raised, he said that the media had done a great deal to encourage these concerns, and that the impression was being created the situation in Pakistan was out of control. However, this was not the case: 'The situation is manageable.' It was necessary to rely on development and strengthen the system, which was admittedly weak, but not broken.

The fact that fear was spreading had also had positive effects, for people in the FATA were no longer being left alone with the problem these days. There was now full support for the work that was being done, and many people in Pakistani society were thinking about whether they really wanted to abandon the field to terror. They were having to make up their minds and could no longer ignore the problem.

One central point was action to combat the cultivation of drugs. The profits that could be made from this were partly the responsibility of the international community. There was a need for action in this area.

At the end of our meeting, he expressly gave me three messages, which I said I would be very glad to pass on to the German Federal Foreign Minister:

- 1) The situation is manageable.
- 2) We have to fight it out.
- 3) Development is the key.

Mr Khan stated that he was very optimistic, even though he was a pragmatist.

Visit to an inner-city tuberculosis centre

In a cramped building on a narrow street, I encountered long queues of male and female patients, who were waiting patiently, separated by sex, to be examined, diagnosed and treated. Between 200 and 300 people came every day. Despite the difficult conditions – the

building was bursting at the seams –, tuberculosis (TB) was being treated successfully at a high level there. Unfortunately, TB was a very common disease in the region on account of the poor living conditions. The numerous refugees in the camps outside the city also suffered from it and attended this TB centre as well.

Visit to the Education Support Development Programme (ESDP)

Here, I met a group of very committed female and male teachers who had taken on the job of modernising teaching and education in the province by revising the curriculum. This was being done in Peshawar because education policy was a matter for the provinces. Apart from the work of this group, the GTZ was supporting teacher training, the construction of schools and the production of textbooks and teaching materials. This was one of the priority areas for German bilateral cooperation. At present, the GTZ and KfW were the only international implementing organisations that still had a presence in Peshawar.

But here too, it was reiterated to me: ‘We live in great fear.’ At the same time, I was also told that Pakistanis had to find the answer to the security situation by their own efforts.

Aurat Foundation

At the Aurat Foundation, I met Rukhshanda Naz, a lawyer, women’s rights activist and member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and its team in Peshawar. She saw her role as putting women on the political agenda and fighting for equality and women’s civil rights. The foundation had been established in 1986 and had its headquarters at Lahore. It produced information materials and worked for good governance in Pakistan.

Ms Naz complained about the poor security situation and the terror directed against women: ‘This is 9/11 every day.’ She also gave me the most recent report on violent attacks against women between July and September 2008. It concluded that, despite all the efforts being made, the number of attacks on women was increasing from day to day and the situation was alarming.

She criticised the jirga that was currently being held between Afghanistan and Pakistan as an event at which women had no place because it was patriarchal in nature. This was why the immense problems encountered by women were not being addressed there.

Greenstar Clinic

A narrow entrance on the bustling Charsaddah Road leads into the small practice of Dr Mashal Bahar. She is a gynaecologist who treats women and advises them on all the key

issues connected with health, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, conception, birth and abortion. Supported by her husband, the Afghan-born doctor is an important contact for the women in this part of the city. She told me that, as a foreigner, she could only work as a self-employed doctor in Pakistan and, when I sympathised with her, informed me critically that her sister who lived in Germany had much greater difficulties with her work permit there than Mrs Bahar did in Pakistan.

Programme for Jürgen Klimke MdB, Christel Riemann-Hanewinckel MdB and Hellmut Königshaus MdB

Visit to the Talat Nursing Home (Greenstar)

Discussions with:

- Dr Naila Talat, owner and manager
- Dr Maheen Naveed, Senior Programme Manager, Greenstar
- Mrs Dana Tilson, Executive Director, Greenstar

The rest of the delegation visited a health centre located in an inner city area of Rawalpindi that was supported by the non-governmental organisation Greenstar and also received funding from KfW. They were informed that Greenstar worked to improve the quality of life for people on low incomes. The organisation had been in existence since 1991 and had been set up with funds from USAID. In Pakistan, it had a network of 34 offices across the country, which provided care in more than 100 districts. It employed 283 doctors, apart from whom there was a broad network of careworkers. About 70% of Pakistanis had to rely on private medical services. Of the patients who were treated by Greenstar, 70% had a household income of less than 7,000 Rupees (approximately 70 euros) a month. Family planning was a big part of the NGO's work. Its Improving Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services project in NWFP was funded by KfW, and the intention was for it to be extended to the FATA. The networkers from Greenstar went into the communities and offered help at the grassroots, distributing condoms or the coil, for example. For cultural reasons, they spoke of 'mother and child health' instead of 'family planning'. Usually, the community-level meetings with the organisation's networkers were held in small groups divided by sex. At these meetings, the men were often surprised by the problems their wives had to cope with. Other fields in which Greenstar worked were HIV/AIDS, healthcare for mothers and new-born children, tuberculosis and water supplies. At its centres and the camps set up at the community level, Greenstar offered a free-of-charge clinic day when people could have themselves examined without paying. The fees for any subsequent treatment ranged between 80 cents and one euro, while treatment was also provided free of charge, depending on need.

When the question of abortion was raised, it was explained that this was a legal grey area in

Pakistan. About one million abortions were carried out each year. The issue was not talked about openly in the country. Greenstar did not provide professional assistance because USAID had strict rules on this. However, the networkers were trained to support women and enable them to cope with the possible consequences of an abortion.

Visit to the Bhamlahri community organisation, a National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) microfinancing project

NRSP had been operating since 1991 and had defined its mission as enhancing the potential, skills and knowledge of people who lived in rural areas in ways that would enable them to develop themselves. To this end, NRSP's activities included successful microfinancing programmes, and it would soon be in a position to establish a microfinance bank. The initial loans tended to be around 150 euros; 42% of the borrowers were women. NRSP awarded the loans to communities that formed local organisations, which then passed on the loans to their members. The community organisations also stepped in if a borrower were unable to service their loan.

The chairwoman of the organisation explained that all its loans, on which an interest rate of 20 % was charged, had been paid back in full. Overall, the community organisation was being run so efficiently that surpluses were being earned. The women used the loans to purchase livestock, e.g. a cow, and then sell the milk or open a small business, e.g. a tailors' workshop. During the discussion with the delegation, the women reported that the stakes they held in the programme had done more than just improving their finances, health and standards of living to a considerable extent. They had also been able to increase their sense of self-esteem enormously, and their position had been markedly strengthened in their dealings with their husbands and families. With their additional income, the women were making a considerable contribution to the roughly 100 euros an average family of six needed to live on every month. A few of the women stated that they were investing the additional income in education and training for their children.

Briefing on the food crisis by Mr Wolfgang Herbinger, Country Director for the World Food Programme (WFP)

Mr Herbinger gave an overview of the food situation in Pakistan. It was worrying, especially in the areas along the border with Afghanistan and the NWFP. In rural parts of the NWFP, the number of those who had access to less than 1,700 Kcal a day had risen to 56%. A total of more than seven million households were affected across Pakistan. Poor households now had to devote more than 70% of their income to food. Above all, this reduced the amounts being spent on necessities such as health and education. Child labour had also gone up

again. 38% of children under the age of 5 were chronically undernourished.

Pakistan produced approximately 22 million tonnes of wheat a year, about 3.5 million tonnes less than it needed. Furthermore, it was not certain that the Pakistani Government would be able to compensate for this by bringing in imports. There was a shortfall of about 800,000 tonnes, although this was not due to the price: the requisite amount of wheat was not available on the market.

The way prices varied regionally in the provinces also constituted a problem. Where food was being produced, the provincial governments were holding it back. The highest prices were to be found in the NWFP and the FATA. In Lahore, a worker could afford 14.4 kgs of wheat with their monthly wage, but only 7.4 kgs in Peshawar. People were only able to buy food in the province in which they were resident, and not in other provinces.

Afghanistan too had had a poor harvest, and Pakistan was delivering wheat there, for that was where the highest prices could be obtained. Prices in Kabul were three to five times higher than in Punjab, but could evidently be afforded there.

When asked whether it would make sense to redirect funds for development towards short-term aid, Mr Herbinger said the situation was so serious that people needed aid in order to survive. The crisis had been triggered by the global situation. However, underinvestment in Pakistani agriculture was also a problem, one that neither Pakistan's government nor the World Bank had as yet done anything to tackle.

Tuesday, 28 October 2008

Round table with the German Federal Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and civil society representatives

Host: Ambassador Dr Michael Koch

German Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier was in Islamabad at the same time as the delegation on a brief, one-day visit. The delegation were invited to take part in a round table discussion between the Minister and leading opinion-formers. Following this hour-long discussion, they had the opportunity for separate conversations with the participants in the round table.

Federal Foreign Minister Steinmeier asked the Pakistani guests to assess the situation in the tribal areas as they saw it.

It was explained that the situation was slowly improving and reference was made to the 14-point anti-terror resolution. People hoped that the fighting would stop. The US military strikes on Pakistani territory always hit areas in the FATA, North Waziristan and South Waziristan, where no Taliban were based, while the Pakistan Army was fighting in Bajaur. For instance,

a madrassa in North Waziristan had been attacked recently, with at least ten people, all students, being killed and others injured, some of them seriously. Since 2004, civilians had lost their lives again and again in such attacks. The Americans always claimed they had killed Al-Qaida fighters. This was demonstrably untrue. It was difficult to work as a journalist in these areas, the Americans had no interest in reporting that did not follow their line and made sure it was not allowed. This was not being questioned by anyone.

There had been no problems in the FATA until 2004. Plenty of development cooperation projects had been underway, and very clear progress had been made in the region. Since the US strikes had begun, everything had changed in the districts that were coming under attack. However, the troops had just as little chance of defeating the Taliban and Al-Qaida in North West Pakistan as they had had the previous year in Afghanistan. The military operations were not creating security from terrorism; on the contrary, as a general rule, bomb attacks became more frequent in reaction to the operations launched by the armed forces. The United States had increased the pressure in the region massively over the last few weeks, but it was mainly civilians who had been injured or killed in the course of these operations. Doubts were expressed that the Americans wanted peace. The political environment in Pakistan was not appropriate for a purely military approach.

Anti-Americanism was deeply rooted in Pakistan and the trend still pointed to further growth. The majority of Pakistanis probably believed that, under the banner of the fight against terror, the USA was in reality waging war on the Muslim world. Many Pakistani soldiers did not see the Taliban as their enemies, but primarily as fellow Pakistanis. Even today, it was possible to identify the potential outlines of a peaceful resolution there. A ceasefire and dialogue between the tribal leaders and Afghanistan and Pakistan would be the only way of arriving at a solution. The tribal areas would then have to be supported socially and economically, which would also mean building up parties and establishing the rule of law. This would be the only practicable way of arriving at a lasting peace.

Some of the participants in the discussion claimed there was evidence that India had contributed to the destabilisation of the tribal areas, while others did not share this view.

The participants also talked about the large number of Afghan refugees in the border provinces and the social links that had grown between them and the Pakistani population. The refugee problem had to be resolved. The international community could give assistance in this connection. There were also numerous international fighters among the refugees, including Uzbeks, Chechens and Arabs who were close to Al-Qaida. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan should concentrate on their own territories.

The unanimous opinion was that no stimuli were to be expected from the elections in Afghanistan in 2009. Those present felt the same about the prospects if Obama won the elec-

tions in the United States. Obama was an 'open enemy', while McCain was a 'secret enemy'. It was also made clear that the policies of the new Pakistani government did not differ considerably from those of the previous administration. With regard to the 14-point resolution passed by the Pakistani National Assembly, it was decisive how it could be implemented, but this would not be easy for the government. It was important to bring together decision-makers and intellectuals on all sides and seek dialogue with everyone concerned. In this respect, Pakistan was inevitably reliant on assistance from the international community above all else.

Presentations on the health and energy sectors at the GTZ building

Mr Rückert, who is responsible for the GTZ's work in the Pakistani healthcare sector, explained that Pakistan had the worst health status in Asia after Afghanistan. Spending was just 4 US dollars per head per annum, whereas the WHO recommended a level of 32 US dollars. Not only that, the little funding that was available was still being used inefficiently. There was no regulation of the private sector by the government.

One current problem was that important ministries, including the ministry responsible for health, still did not have ministers. The efforts to put in place a new health policy were not very creative and there was no interest in the work being done by other countries. This resulted in many competent people leaving Pakistan and working for international organisations in other parts of the world.

German development cooperation was focussed on pushing ahead the health reforms. Between 25% and 30% of the population were insured. Pakistan could certainly become a pilot country for new approaches to social security.

Dr Janke, the Director of the GTZ Office in Islamabad, gave an overview of the current energy crisis and the regular power cuts, which lasted between 5 and 8 hours, and sometimes up to 10 hours a day. She explained that 20% of energy losses resulted from grid losses. What was more, electricity bills were not always paid, especially in the FATA. The state grid was therefore being run at a reduced level. One major problem was that hospitals did not have emergency generators. The difficulty was not purchasing the equipment, but then operating the generators.

Little was being done to make the population more aware of the need to save power. The government felt it was more important to put in place the missing generation capacity. Small businesses were also particularly affected by the power cuts. If they did not have a generator, production was interrupted all the time, and ever more enterprises were having to close.

Two thirds of Pakistan's energy came from fossil fuels. The imports required were having an impact on the foreign trade balance. The routes used to transport these fuels were also difficult on political grounds because they ran through Afghanistan.

The Pakistani government's ideas about alternatives were tending in the direction of coal power, while hydropower was also coming into favour again. No attention was being paid to wind and solar energy. This was currently a seller's market, which was concentrating on more lucrative places, such as the United States.

Overview of the education sector in Pakistan by Dr Julie Reviere, GTZ officer responsible for education contracts and coordination

The delegation were given a Powerpoint presentation that informed them about the problems and challenges in the education sector, the challenges faced by development cooperation and the successes that had been achieved to date.

Dr Reviere made it clear that there were still plenty of problems with primary education in Pakistan, and about three million children of primary school age were not registered. The official statistics, which stated that 84% of children attended school, had little bearing on reality. The standards in the school system were too low. Above all, there were not enough well qualified teachers. The proportion of pupils who failed to complete their schooling was greater than 39%. Other problems included decentralisation and a lack of clarity about the allocation of responsibilities between central government, the provinces and the districts, as well as the inequalities within the various provinces. Apart from this, the low level of state spending on the education system was to be regretted: just 2.4% of gross national product went into education.

On a positive note, it was to be remarked that it had been possible for the net enrolment ratio in primary schools to be increased from 57% in the 2001/2002 school year to 66% in 2005/2006. Apart from this, a revised curriculum for grades 1-12, a draft National Education Plan and a sector plan for the NWFP had been drawn up. The thorough revision of the textbooks and the development of a framework for teacher training were also to be emphasised.

There were currently 20 donors active in the education sector. Coordination and cooperation were limited and generally restricted to the work done at a bilateral level.

Children who attended state schools were provided with resources free of charge, and no school fees were charged. The regions had various programmes to make sure that very poor families were helped to afford school uniforms and other necessary items of expenditure.

The curriculum reform had been accompanied by progress in terms of consultation on decisions about the curriculum. Pupils and parents were now involved and included in discussions about the quality of teaching and possible improvements.

Above all, the textbook reform was intended to bring about a change of methodology. In the past, the focus had been on rote learning, but the aim was now to strengthen analytical thinking. The challenge was to train teachers accordingly and explain to parents how they could support this new method of learning.

When Dr Reviere was asked about pupil-teacher ratios, the figure of 40 to 1 was mentioned, but it was admitted that the actual figures were often much higher. Against this background, there were also plenty of parents who helped out or took over the teaching of some lessons.

Visit to a Christian World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS P/A)/EED project to strengthen democratic participation, in particular among religious minorities and women

Discussions with:

- Mr Wajahat Latif, Senior Programme Adviser, CWS P/A
- Ms Shama Mall, Deputy Director, CWS P/A
- Mr Mansoor Raza, Deputy Director, CWS P/A

When the elections were held in February 2008, CWS P/A had cooperated with the Pakistan Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (PACREL), a network of 9 NGOs, to mobilise and educate voters, monitor the elections in 110 districts with 2,200 election observers and undertake active media and advocacy work.

The representatives of CWS P/A told the delegation that studies of voters who had not been registered and the lack of participation on the part of women and minorities had demonstrated that it was necessary to promote the political involvement of disadvantaged people in Pakistan after the elections as well, which was why projects intended to do this were being continued.

Overall, the result of the elections was to be accepted. It was viewed as tragic that, following Bhutto's murder, someone who ought to be classified as a criminal was now in power as president. So far, it had not been possible to make out new approaches to policymaking either. The same policies were being continued, even if the faces had changed.

They had no idea what would happen in future in view of the security situation and the fear of terror among the population. This situation made the work of NGOs considerably more diffi-

cult, while conditions were fundamentally even harder for anyone with a Christian background.

With this project to strengthen the democratic participation of religious minorities and women, CWS P/A wanted to ensure that these groups learned about their rights and could take part in political discussions and processes. It was also working to get women registered.

Under the Musharraf government, a women's quota had been introduced in the elected assemblies at the federal, provincial and district levels. Women now made up 21% of the National Assembly and 17% of the Senate, as well as holding 22% of the seats in the provincial assemblies and 28% in the district assemblies.

Mention was made of the Blasphemy Act, and it was explained that it had been adopted in response to pressure from the religious parties. The other parties were too weak or not concerned enough about societal change to assert themselves successfully against the interests of the religious leaders. This was one of the reasons why the military was still so strong. The parties were not in a position to act as a counterweight. Most of the parties either had no programme or failed to keep to it. Many were merely interested in power. Not only that, there was very little transparency about who was being financed how. In particular, militant groupings were receiving funds from abroad.

Civil society was much more active than just 10 years before. Above all, the protests associated with the dismissal of the Chief Justice had given it new momentum. Nevertheless, there was still a great need to build up new structures.

The hope was expressed that German politicians would maintain the aid being provided to bolster democratic processes in future and carry on exerting as much pressure as possible at the European level.

Wednesday, 29 October 2008

Briefing by Mr Kilian Kleinschmidt, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), on the situation with regard to refugees/internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Mr Kleinschmidt explained that Pakistan and Afghanistan were having to deal with the biggest refugee situation in the world. 365,000 Afghans had returned home in 2007 and 280,000 in 2008. In total, there had been 3.5 million returnees since the fall of the Taliban. At the same time, Afghans were still coming to Pakistan. In 2006/2007, 1.8 million had been registered, in addition to which there was a high number of unregistered refugees. A repatriation allowance of 100 US dollars per person was paid, which amounted to 700 to 1,000 US dollars per family. Many people took the money and did not leave the country or came back

three days later. They were being prevented from returning to Afghanistan much less by security problems than by economic difficulties. Wages may have been higher in Afghanistan, but there was no land available and food was also more expensive there.

Yet the food situation for the refugees was dramatic in Pakistan as well. No humanitarian aid had been provided since 1995. The UNHCR had 70 US dollars per person available, which was one of the smallest sums in the world.

Since 1995, many Afghans had moved out of the camps and into the cities, where they were working as rubbish collectors, in the construction industry, in agriculture, in the carpet trade or in the transport sector. It had to be asked whether these people could actually be classified as refugees any longer. It also had to be kept in mind that more than 60% of the Afghans who were living in Pakistan had now been born there.

The UNHCR was working to convey to the Pakistani population that the Afghans were an enrichment rather than a burden and campaigning for them to be recognised as migrants. If this were to happen, the Afghans in Pakistan could, for example, obtain work permits, which would also oblige them to pay taxes and would give them greater recognition in the country.

Finally, the situation in Pakistan's prisons was touched on. Conditions were catastrophic, particularly in Baluchistan, with 30 to 40 people crammed into tiny spaces without heating or food.

Mr Kleinschmidt asked the delegation to pass on his request that Germany should play a bigger role in the field of regional cooperation, both bilaterally and multilaterally. He suggested a stability pact and the deployment of small teams in various policy areas. Germany could act more neutrally than the Americans, British or Canadians. Above all, it was important to invest now in the areas that were particularly at risk and to do so as rapidly as possible.

Meeting with Dr Fahmida Mirza, Speaker of the National Assembly

The Speaker of the National Assembly spent longer with the delegation than had been allowed for in the programme. She emphasised that the delegation had come at a time when Pakistan was suffering greatly, having to face major challenges and needed support from its friends. She said the delegation's visit would send out a positive message.

Pakistan's parliamentarians wanted to fight for the development of a better society. She was the first woman in the Islamic world to be appointed the presiding officer of a national parliament, and other important positions had been assigned to women in Pakistan. This was all setting an example.

When asked about the women in the National Assembly, Dr Mirza explained that they were networked in caucuses, and worked above all on action to strengthen women's rights. In view of the pace of population growth, family planning was a major topic. There were also plans for a programme under which women would receive communal land and microcredits. Apart from this, women politicians had been very active in the fields of health and training.

When it came to fighting terrorism, she said Pakistan continued to be reliant on assistance from the international community. The National Assembly had sent out a positive message with its 14-point resolution. She too saw development as the key if peace were to be achieved. Above all, there had to be investment in education and infrastructure. This was difficult on account of the current state of the public finances. It was also problematic that the situation tended to be seen from the perspective of the military. This was another field where women could take action and bring about change.

Meeting with Mahmud Ali Durrani, National Security Adviser to Prime Minister Gillani

Mr Durrani emphasised that he valued Pakistan's good relations with Germany in multilateral forums and would like to expand them. Apart from this, he praised the commitment shown by the GTZ and said it was doing an outstanding job.

He saw his role as coordinating national security issues in the regions and, at the same time, coordinating policy on defence, foreign affairs and the secret services at the level of the central government.

At present, the biggest struggle was that against terrorism. In this field, there was a need for deterrence, but dialogue as well. Terrorism was driven by a lack of development, poverty, an absence of social justice and insufficient educational opportunities. In the FATA, there was the problem that militant extremists from all over the world had gathered there. There was a pipeline of international terrorism with parallel commercial relationships. This meant it was a global issue and not exclusively a Pakistani problem.

He highlighted the recent meeting between the two presidents of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the 14-point resolution and the jirga that had just ended. The Pakistani government were hopeful that people would support a strategy built on the foundations of democracy. It would not be possible to resolve the problem overnight, and Pakistan was still dependent on international aid. However, Pakistan and Afghanistan were like twins that were joined at the hip and therefore forced to rely on one another. He gave the delegation the final document from the jirga, which confirmed the deep roots shared by Afghanistan and Pakistan and, expressed the countries' shared will to create peaceful, stable conditions in the region. Terrorism was recognised as a common threat that required concerted, coordinated action. The

necessity of dialogue and cooperation on trade, economic and development issues and at the parliamentary and cultural levels was underlined throughout.

When asked about India's role in the conflict, he answered that the Pakistani government wanted good relations with India, for this would secure Pakistan's continued existence. The country would not survive further wars against India. There were complaints and distrust on both sides. He said the Pakistanis also had evidence that India was fomenting instability and running training camps near Kandahar, and that there were contacts between the Indian and Afghan secret services. Irrespective of this, it was necessary to engage in dialogue and find ways of cooperating, which also had to extend to Kashmir. It would be a dream to be able to create something like the EU with India. This would also make sense because the two countries had the same fundamental structures and the same problems and could learn from one another.

He regarded the suggestion made by the UNHCR that the refugees be given migrant status as an unsound proposition. It was true that many Afghan refugees had settled permanently, but Pakistan did not have the capacity to absorb them. It had enough difficulties feeding its own population. Apart from this, there were serious problems with arms smuggling and drugs trafficking at the UNHCR camps in the border region. The militants were able to find safe havens there. His recommendation was that the rest of the world should take in the refugees.

Lunch at the invitation of the Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, H.E. Mr Mohammed Mian Soomro

Before the lunch, to which Chairman Soomro had invited numerous figures from politics and society, the delegation had the opportunity for an interview with him. The issues discussed included microfinance, which he viewed as a very good instrument. He also regarded education policy as an important priority, in particular teacher training and professional development. He said women were increasingly playing a significant role in Pakistani public life and were also active in prominent public positions, not just at the central level but also in the districts and the provinces. For instance, his mother too held political office.

Chairman Soomro believed it was necessary to get to grips with population growth, otherwise the country's development would not move forward. It was important to improve the population's quality of life. Otherwise there was a danger that people would turn more and more to extremism.

Apart from this, Bishop Malik's comments on the Blasphemy Act were raised. Chairman Soomro confirmed the Bishop's experiences, citing an example from his mother's constituency.

He regretted that Lufthansa had discontinued its direct flight service to Lahore.

Meeting at the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) and brief presentation by the Liberal Forum Pakistan

The representatives of SPARC, a Pakistani partner of Kindernothilfe, gave a detailed overview of the organisation's structure, the issues on which it campaigned, its objectives and its methods. The organisation worked above all in the fields of education and health, fighting for a child-friendly juvenile criminal law, as well as to stop forced labour, child labour and physical violence against and corporal punishment of children. SPARC wanted to raise society's awareness of these issues and exert influence on decision-makers, making use of the most varied approaches to do so. Apart from its numerous publications, the organisation undertook campaigns, did educational work in schools and universities, and ran vocational training centres. Further to this, it maintained seven centres for children, which were set up after the earthquake in 2005 as places where girls and boys could find help. About 400 children were now taught and cared for at these centres. SPARC recruited its staff at the local level. Deliberate attempts were made to get local representatives who also had access to the authorities or institutions to collaborate with the organisation.

The age of legal responsibility in Pakistan was as low as seven years, although judges had the scope to decide whether a child should be made responsible for his or her actions. Draft legislation to raise the age of legal responsibility to 12 years was currently under consideration. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child had been ratified by Pakistan, but its implementation was still going anything but smoothly. In particular, the Pakistani government had been rebuked when it submitted its most recent report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva due to the high number of children being arrested. A critical view was also taken of the fact that it was at the discretion of the police whether they took a child into custody or not.

It was a good thing that draft legislation had now been put forward to protect children at work. This would, among other things, provide for corporal punishment to be banned.

Another problem that had to be addressed and was an enormous obstacle when it came to the implementation of children's rights was the inadequacy of the birth registration system, for which the districts were responsible. Only 29% of births were registered in 2008.

Myanmar/Burma

Myanmar has an area of about 677,000 km² and 54 million inhabitants. Its per-capita gross national product is 622 euros a year (2001).

Given that Members of the German Bundestag had previously been refused permission to enter Myanmar on several occasions, the delegation wanted to send a signal to the government of Myanmar by making a renewed application for visas, and was pleasantly surprised when its visas were approved. Against this background, however, it had only set aside one day for the visit. If it had been certain that the visas would be issued, the delegation would have arranged to spend longer in Myanmar, which would have enabled them to gain a more thoroughgoing impression of the country.

Thursday, 30 October 2008

Meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with U Kyaw Htu, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

The head of the delegation made it clear at the beginning of the meeting that Members of the German Bundestag would gladly have visited Myanmar earlier, but no visas had been issued, and explained that this was why the delegation was only in the country for one day. The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs declared that it had not been possible for visas to be issued earlier because communication systems had been disrupted after the cyclone. Furthermore, the Army had not been able to reach the Irrawaddy Delta. No visas had been granted until the referendum about the new constitution. After this, however, they had immediately begun issuing visas, although some ministries had not been happy about this. With the exception of visas for US citizens, there were no difficulties at present. Relations with Germany were good. It was a shame that the delegation was only staying in Myanmar for one day, it was warmly invited to travel around the country for a longer period of time as well. It was just six months since the cyclone and the reconstruction work was ongoing. However, the Minister said it would certainly take another four years before it was completed.

When asked whether Myanmar had received sufficient aid from abroad, the Deputy Minister commented that the cooperation between foreign organisations and the authorities had been good, and they had not had any serious problems. However, the aid that had been offered was not sufficient. He made a comparison between the 240 million US dollars Myanmar had been promised by the international community and the 7 billion US dollars Indonesia had been given after the Tsunami. He emphasised that the funds had not been paid to the government, but direct to the aid organisations and that otherwise aid supplies had been deliv-

ered rather than financial assistance. The delegation pointed out that the situation in Indonesia had been considerably more transparent.

It was also important for the country that investors came. However, they expected a secure environment. He hoped that there would be a situation that would make this possible in 2010 after the parliamentary elections.

When asked whether and how it would be ensured that the people benefited from the country's rich mineral resources and that the financial proceeds from their commercial exploitation were invested in infrastructure and social security, he stated that this was a matter for the Ministry of National Planning. Furthermore, when asked about the Human Rights Commission, he said other parts of the administration were responsible for this question, but admitted it might be true that infringements of human rights were committed in Myanmar. However, he played the whole issue down and referred to the occupation of Government House in Bangkok, where the Thai government was not taking action against supporters of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) because it was afraid of being accused of human rights violations. He believed no government could stand for such behaviour.

There were also questions from the delegation about the extent of interest in cultural exchanges with Germany, which could, for instance, be facilitated by a branch of the Goethe-Institut. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs answered rather vaguely that the population was very interested in visiting the rest of the world, but this was not possible due to financial limitations.

Appointment with Mr Bishow Parajuli, UN Resident Coordinator for Myanmar

For time reasons, the visit to the UNHCR also ended up being rather brief. Mr Parajuli summed up the following messages:

Isolation had made people in Myanmar vulnerable and despairing. The only way of dealing with this was free dialogue, which would make it clear to the people that we cared about them and were helping them. Otherwise, the isolation would rub salt in their wounds.

The food situation was very bad. There was aid from the UNDP, which went directly to the people. After Cyclone Nargis, as was well known, the aid had reached the people only very late. Until now, it had merely been possible for 55% of what was needed to be made available. It was cheering that the government had now become more open and free access to the Delta was possible. This had to be used in order to improve the situation there. People knew that Indonesia had been supported with 7 billion dollars and felt they were less valuable on account of the considerably more modest amount of aid provided to Myanmar.

It would be desirable for Germany to give support in the fields of food, health and education. The sanctions were achieving nothing from his point of view. All they did was inflict suffering on the population.

Lunch with representatives of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD)

- U Nyunt Wei, Treasurer, member of the NLD's Central Executive Committee
- U Ilantha Myint, one of the NLD's three spokespersons
- Dr Win Naing, one of the NLD's three spokespersons

The NLD representatives made it clear that Myanmar was not a free society. However, this was not something that a visitor would notice straight away. The country had been ruled by military dictatorships since World War II, a fact that had to be borne in mind by anyone who wished to understand the situation.

People had wanted to vote in the referendum about the constitution and wanted to vote in the elections. 92 % had voted for the constitution in the referendum. However, this huge majority also revealed just how liberal the country really was. Parliamentarians could be described as 'employees' of the government and found themselves under great pressure. Many votes had been bought. The constitution merely supported the system that had been in place before. The opposition did not accept the constitution. Were the people to be asked what they thought of it, it would be found that they were more concerned about their daily lives and their own survival.

Aung San Suu Kyi was physically and mentally well, and the road to her house had been open for several days. They were not able, or did not want, to give more detailed information about her. However, they reported that the NLD had once again submitted a written appeal to the Supreme Court, calling for the ending of her house arrest and the release of detained members of the opposition. They only knew that the submission had been received. They had not yet received a case number.

It had not been possible for her to meet with the UN Special Envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, during his recent visit to Myanmar because he had not been allowed into her house.

Tour of aid projects (Welthungerhilfe/Malteser International) in Htan Tabin

Project manager Lothar Kinzelmann explained that the German charity Welthungerhilfe had been supporting development projects in Myanmar since 2002 and had itself had a presence in the country since 2004. Its project areas lay in the rural hinterland of Rangoon,

the Shan States (including the Wa Special Region) and, since Nargis, the Irrawaddy Delta as well.

There had been two pilot schemes for the projects in the rural hinterland of Rangoon: one involving school refurbishment work and the provision of school dinners in a slum area of Rangoon (Dawbon), and one involving income generation measures for poor families who had been resettled from urban areas of Rangoon to a peripheral rural district (S-Dagon). Welthungerhilfe had built on the experience gained from these schemes when developing the approach applied in the township of Htan Tabin.

It consisted of two projects, the first aimed at generally improving living conditions and municipal infrastructure, which was being financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented in cooperation with Malteser International, and the second a food security project cofinanced by the EU and implemented by the Welthungerhilfe alone. The objectives of both projects were to fight poverty and strengthen the local population's capacity for self-help.

Welthungerhilfe was targeting its measures at 1,930 households in 21 villages with a total population of approx. 8,600 persons. A baseline survey of food security at the beginning of the project had shown that more than 80% of the households had experienced problems with food security at least occasionally. Although the target area was on the edge of Rangoon City, it was very rural, and the overwhelming majority of the population lived directly or indirectly from agriculture. Only about one third of the population owned land. Two thirds were working as day labourers, mainly in agriculture. Even farmers who owned land often lived on the breadline and depended on loans in order to prefinance investments in their farms. The interest rates on loans of this kind were around 50% for one cultivation period (five to six months). This was leading to increasing impoverishment and, in many cases, farmers were losing their land as a result of overindebtedness.

Meeting with Ms L. Ja Nan, Assistant Director of the Shalom Foundation, and Rev. Dr Sbaoi Jum

The Shalom Foundation is an NGO that is supported by the EED, as well as other organisations. The delegation was informed that its aim was to encourage the creation of a society characterised by mutual understanding and respect between the adherents of different religions, cultures, traditions and customs. To this end, the members of the organisation ran peace and civic education courses. Other programmes focussed on mediation and help for traumatised people. The groups its work was focussed on included leaders at the local level, religious leaders and ethnic mediators, as well as military personnel, social workers, teach-

ers and anyone who was involved in peace and development work. The Foundation's budget was 10 million US dollars, including donated funds.

Dinner with representatives of local and German NGOs and the UN at the German Ambassador's Residence

This final dinner at the invitation of the German Ambassador gave the delegation an opportunity to deepen the impressions they had gained during the day and learn more about the situation in the country in conversation with the Ambassador's guests.

Conclusions and recommendations:

Pakistan:

1. Pakistan plays a crucial role in the region and must be given a corresponding degree of attention. Our view of Pakistan as 'the most dangerous country in the world' needs to be corrected. Violence and the spread of terror have much to do with the neglect of conflicts and crises in society. In view of the country's significance, a consolidation of our development policy commitment in Pakistan would be justifiable. The efforts to promote the country's development were described as the key to the future by many of the people the delegation met.
2. Pakistan requires international support in order to overcome its multiple crises, which include Talibanisation, impending state bankruptcy, violence against women, the disastrous state of the education system, impoverishment, food inflation, price rises, the energy crisis, etc. Left to itself, the country would pose a risk to the whole region, above all having an impact on the situation in India and Afghanistan. The recently elected government is fragile, but appears to have an open-minded attitude towards contacts and dialogue. The impression gained by the delegation was that there was great pessimism in Pakistan and many felt oppressed by the seriousness of the situation. This was partly because they did not believe its elites had the determination and the strength to grasp the levers of power firmly and steer the country round in a positive direction, apart from which the military continue to have a strong position.
3. The human rights situation is bad, and the situation of women in Pakistan disturbing. Many women are victims of domestic violence, are poorly educated, above all in the countryside, cannot exercise their rights and are threatened by Talibanisation, the proponents of which do not shrink from denouncing the education of girls as un-Islamic or murdering female healthcare workers. At the same time, the delegation made the acquaintance of strong female personalities who had embarked upon the tough battle for more women's rights through the organisations in which they are active. The appointment of a National Assembly Speaker, Dr Fahmida Mirza, who is the first woman to take on this function in the Muslim world and wants to bring about changes in the situation of women, has been a very positive signal.
4. The situation in the areas that border Afghanistan is critical. The neglect of the tribal districts, the bitter poverty, the bad health situation and, above all, the lack of education are regarded as the causes behind the Islamist fundamentalists' willingness to commit acts of terrorist violence in their quest for power. Development policy measures can be used to break down the isolation of the people in the tribal areas. The work being done by our development policy implementing organisations at the grass-roots is therefore extraordinarily important, but is in grave danger from the increase in acts of terrorism. Support for an improvement of the situation must be redoubled so that the measures taken can continue to unfold their effect and the security situation improves again.
5. The struggle against terrorism can only be conducted with the help of the Pakistani state and Pakistani society. The attacks on what are called terrorist groups during US-led OEF operations are counterproductive because they are understood in Pakistan as attacks on its state sovereignty. It will also be decisive whether the USA is actually prepared to accept agreements with the Taliban. During our visit, Pakistanis expected little from the election of Barack Obama because he had announced before his election that he wanted to increase military presence in Pakistan.
6. Solutions have to be found for the numerous refugees in the North West Frontier Province and the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan have to be stabilised by means of an intelligent border policy.

7. Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have made progress. Concrete agreements were reached about further cooperation between the two countries at the peace jirga in October 2008. It is to be regretted that women could not be involved in this meeting and that their concerns were not articulated there.
8. There are positive signs that the old enmity between India and Pakistan could be set aside. This would also be of great significance for Pakistan's economic development. It is uncertain how the military and parts of the secret services that benefited from the tension between the two countries in the past will respond to this rapprochement.

Myanmar:

1. The Bundestag delegation's one-day visit could only shed brief light on the difficult situation in Myanmar. It came as something of a surprise when the German delegation were issued visas in the first place. The invitation from the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to visit the country for even longer and get to know it better should be taken up.
2. On a positive note, it is to be remarked that the roadblocks in front of Aung San Suu Kyi's house were removed two days before our arrival. It can also be seen as a step in the right direction that the day after our visit the press documented Myanmar's readiness to agree on common policies in talks with the ASEAN states.
3. It is becoming evident that, following the disaster caused by Cyclone Nargis, the military regime has become more willing to coordinate at an international level how joint action could be taken in response to such natural disasters.
4. By contrast, the opposition NLD painted a very gloomy picture of the situation in Myanmar. Unfortunately, however, its representatives also left the impression of an organisation with little future. The only encouragement came from one statement by an NLD official who said that, in spite of all the hopelessness, 'surprises are possible.' This was a reference to the situation in the former German Democratic Republic and expressed the hope that things could change peacefully in Myanmar as well.
5. The question of sanctions against Myanmar needs to be rethought. They are not changing the circumstances of the population in any way, but worsening conditions in the country. At the same time, the generals are not going to let themselves be impressed by sanctions.
6. The talks and contacts with non-governmental organisations showed how important humanitarian support is for people on the ground. The opportunities for international donors to engage with Myanmar, even if they are very limited, and the efforts to overcome the smouldering conflicts between its population groups through civil conflict mediation will be very important for the future. Maybe the ground can also be prepared for change by means of development policy work and assistance for the activities undertaken by domestic organisations.