

## *Shaping a Fair Globalization for Social Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*

### *Social Democratic Perspectives from Germany*

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Honorable Excellencies,  
Friends and partners of the foundation,

Shaping globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for social progress is not only a task for official German foreign policy. As we subscribe to the view that international relations are too important to be left to governments alone, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung has elevated the shaping of globalization to one of its 3 strategic objectives. We realize that the profound changes and transformations societies are undergoing require an open mind if one wants to understand their causes. To fulfill the expectations citizens set in political leadership, it is imperative to think ahead of time and to devise strategies to deal with globalization's manifest and likely consequences, while giving people a voice in that process.

In order to be able to shape complex phenomena, it is indispensable to have a strong point of reference as well as a compass that will serve as a guide into uncharted territory. For us, this reference are the values and principles of social democracy.

It is our firm belief that we need to combine economic growth and development with social progress and social justice. We cannot afford to leave a significant part of our own and of the world population behind, outside of enjoying the most basic human rights. This does not only violate our sense for justice - it is also a recipe for instability, conflict and social disintegration.

Social democrats in Germany have thus recently, in their new party platform, the Hamburg program, renewed their commitment to strive for equal opportunities as well as for human and social security. Our model of society is one in which citizens have not only the formal right but the material capacity to actively participate in community affairs, through economic opportunities and through involving themselves in political and civic affairs. We realize that in order to achieve a just society, the state needs to be proactive in the provision of life chances to everyone. It can and must do so by providing public services and by organizing a system of social security, which is not meant to subsidize the lazy but to cover risks such a sickness, old age, disability, and unemployment.

Working for a free and just society, social democrats contribute to peace within our country but also beyond our borders. Not only because we realize that borders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are more porous and instability elsewhere affects us directly or indirectly. It has been the desire since the founding of our political movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to work for and contribute to a peaceful world order.

Today, we aim to contribute to a more peaceful world in a cooperative approach by giving primacy to the work with multilateral organizations. Rules-based institutions are the best guarantee that the rule of law, not the rule of the strongest will prevail. Germany strongly believes in cooperation, and we place high hopes in our regional cooperation project, the European Union. Transcending national boundaries is an imperative if we aim to build a strong community towards maintaining peace, building prosperity and involving ourselves in global governance.

Our approach to international relations is dialogue. Not only since Willy Brandt's policy of engaging the former Eastern bloc through dialogue do we, as social democrats and through the work of the foundation, subscribe to such a cooperative approach. Just as we did in the past, we continue to aim at engaging countries, state and societal actors.

This holds true for the rising world powers whom we want to meet as dialogue partners in shaping the world instead of containing them. We also want to open doors for communication and exchange of views, even in reclusive countries such as Myanmar. This does not translate into straying from our principles. Engagements such as this needs to be firm on non-negotiable values and principles but still offer perspectives.

Please allow me to highlight 3 specific areas in which we believe we can shape globalization: peace and security, the social dimension of (economic) globalization, democracy promotion

### Peace and Security

Peace is only possible when there is a fair balancing of interest. In other words: when the legitimate interests of the other side are taken into account. In the traditional field of security policy, that means negotiations and, in the modern world, working through rules-based multilateral institutions and through dialogues and diplomacy. Non-complying actors who violate basic principles of the UN need to feel pressure, but dialogue and diplomacy has to be the preferred option to the use of threat and unilateral action.

Today's notion of security has been expanded to not only include state security but also economic, social and cultural aspects, thus, giving the individual a greater role as reflected in the term human security.

Today, the world pays attention to new questions such as: How will the limited supply of energy resources affect security? What are the (human) security implications of climate change? These question belong to a policy field with global dimensions, which we can all proactively shape. On the one hand, there is a lot we can do unilaterally, such as in the reduction of energy consumption and in the developing of alternative resources, which, by the way, is an attractive option for building new competitive industries and creating jobs. On the other hand, we rely on and need to actively engage in international dialogue and negotiations, such as the succession of the Kyoto-Protocol, in order to address these global challenges.

### Social dimension to globalization

A potential and, in some instances, actual source of conflict is the international economic and financial system. We are aware of the contributions that economic opening and integration has brought to a great number of people and countries, particularly in Asia. At the same time, we see the imbalances that the current economic world order has created or cemented.

It is through fair access to markets and equitable policy regimes that economies and societies can develop. We accept markets but are firm in our belief that they need to be embedded and regulated to serve the people.

Recent developments in the international finance market show the imperative for more transparency and the regulation of the international financial system. Here again, a rules-based multilateral approach will provide the greatest benefits for participating countries – as long as it is democratic and includes economic, social and ecological sustainability, human rights and the rights of working people.

By integrating the concept of decent work and, in particular, the Core Labor Standards, there will be a greater chance to create prosperity for all. It is encouraging to note that, finally, these aspects have found their way into the recent G8 declaration of Heiligendamm. Also, multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank take these issues more seriously.

It is not without pride that I mention the contribution the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung has made to providing a social dimension of globalization. Through our “track two” engagement, FES took on the role as midwife in the birth of a social dimension to the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM). In this inter-regional dialogue forum, the social dimension has been institutionalized by convening regular meetings of the Ministers of Labor and

Employment of the 45 member states. Tackling issues such as social protection, training and employability as well as labor migration, we can all learn from each other through open dialogue.

Through ASEM, we are able to come to a better understanding of Asian countries as well as the ASEAN integration. Let me assure you that we take interest in the ASEAN integration process. From our own experience, we know the challenges in building a community and, at times, in ceding national interests to the greater common good.

The success of such a process is peace on the one hand and, as embodied in the slogan adopted by the Philippine government of “Building a Caring and Sharing Community”, attempting to better meet the aspirations of the people. The latter includes giving voice to the people and to work towards a social dimension to regional integration. ASEAN has been successful in setting the right tone: its Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers constitutes a starting point for an ASEAN that takes the interest of its people as its yardstick.

Our own experience in Europe tells us: Migration and the integration of migrants is a continuing challenge. While on the one hand, migration can significantly contribute to economic development, cultural exchange and understanding of one another, it can also create problems if rights are not respected and integration into host communities is not encouraged.

It is clear for everybody that migration is here to stay. Developed countries need labor, and for a country like Germany, due to demographic reasons, it is a precondition to maintaining competitiveness. In our search for qualified workers, we realize we contribute to what is called “brain drain”. Hence, as partners in development, it is in our interest to devise ways for brain circulation and the transfer of knowledge back to countries of origin. We therefore congratulate the Philippines for its proactive engagement to contribute to this vital issue by hosting the Global Forum on Migration and Development this coming October. It is my understanding that our foundation aims to contribute to the success of this forum by supporting a dialogue between governments and civil society.

That brings me to my last area: Democracy Promotion

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung is convinced that a fair balancing of interest is not only imperative to the long-term development of any society but that it is only possible through open, rational and sincere dialogue. The involvement of stakeholders in all aspects of governing society as well as the building of appropriate institutions and processes is part and parcel of our notion of democracy.

We are aware of the challenges that are thrown to democracies and we see the seeming success of non-democratic countries and regimes. Yet, we hold the firm belief that it is in the long term interest of any society to build lasting consensus on the basic principles of peaceful coexistence, of building a just and humane society.

We therefore look with great interest to the Philippines, a country with a strong tradition of democracy. I am impressed by the conversations I had the privilege to enjoy these last 2 days. They have convinced me that the democratic spirit of the Filipino people will ultimately bring about a society that has freed itself from poverty and striking social injustice.

That your country is on the right track can be seen from the advances that you have made in bringing about more gender justice. I must congratulate you in having overtaken Germany in the Global Gender Gap Index that indicates equality among the sexes. I commend the countless women who have fought for this significant social progress, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung is proud and looking forward to contributing to your quest for peace, democracy and social justice.