**Speaking points -Andreas Gies**

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**Ladies and gentlemen,**

* **Natural disasters hit developing but also industrialized countries, as the recent example of Japan has shown. But the human, economic and environmental impacts are very different. Industrialized countries have far more economic and institutional capacities to cope with disasters. And statistics clearly show that poor countries face significantly more losses of human life.**
* **Disasters in poor and middle-income countries, like the earthquake in Haiti or the flooding in Pakistan, are a long-term threat to human and economic development. Hard-earned development gains can be ruined in a blink of an eye.**
* **Occurring disasters as well as their prevention are issues of the humanitarian aid sphere, as our colleague from the German Foreign Office has shown. In the middle and especially long-term perspective, however, disaster risk reduction becomes a development issue. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development, short LRRD, is the concept which has been adopted by the BMZ to build bridges between short-term humanitarian aid and long-term sustainable development.  Humanitarian aid, development-oriented transitional aid and development cooperation are all necessary and beneficial key concepts and instrument to cope with disasters, particularly in times of climate change.**
* **Because, disasters are likely to become more frequent and severe due to climate change.**
* **75 percent of today’s hazards are climate-related. They account for 45% of deaths and 80% of economic losses; numbers that are will increase. Especially poor countries will be confronted with flooding, landslides, hurricanes but also with droughts or shortage of drinking water.**
* **In developing countries the economy and livelihood are highly dependent on agriculture. It is the primary sector which is at risk. But also the critical infrastructure like schools or hospitals as well as low cost housing areas in fast growing cities are at high risk to be destroyed.**
* **But the destructive impact of climate change can be reduced and even prevented through disaster risk reduction as part of integrated climate change adaptation.**

**Key message:**

***Disasters and development are inherently inter-linked. Therefore, investing in disaster risk reduction is a secure investment and key for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in many parts of the world.***

* **As a signatory of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the German government has been supporting disaster risk reduction activities in developing countries for many years. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) either commissions stand-alone DRR projects or supports the integration of DRR considerations particularly into education, health, environment, decentralization, urban or rural development projects. Furthermore, as a member of the World Bank’s Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR), the BMZ provided 10 million Euros since 2009, which makes it one of the main donors for this global initiative.**
* **Similarly, the BMZ has progressively scaled up its commitment in the field of adaptation over the last years.**
* **As a signatory of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Germany has provided more than 250 Million Euros for climate change adaptation measures in particularly vulnerable developing countries, in 2010 alone. Germany is one of the largest contributors to multi-lateral climate funds. Recently, in January 2011 an important facility named Energy and Climate Fund has been established by the German government, which will focus on mitigation and adaptation to climate change.**
* **The BMZ also went a step ahead in its development cooperation policies. In January 2011, a new guideline was adopted by the BMZ. The guideline ensures that climate risks are systematically and obligatorily examined in the planning process of all bi-lateral development projects. If risks are detected, they have to be considered in the implementation phase.**

**Key message:**

***The German government considers disaster risk reduction in general and for climate change adaptation in particular, a crucial issue for development cooperation and is increasingly providing substantial amounts at bilateral and multilateral level.***

* **Disaster risk reduction at large provides crucial methodologies and instruments for climate change adaptation. There are a lot of commonalities:**
	+ **Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation activities both aim to reduce the vulnerability of affected populations to better cope with external shocks. Both intend to avoid disasters and to minimize the negative effects of disasters, if hazards occur.**
	+ **They often use the same or similar instruments, like risk analysis, early warning and contingency planning;**
	+ **Both approaches aim to cut across many different sectors at various levels, and involve a very similar set of actors.**
	+ **With regard to urban development and megacities, for instance, they further the establishment of Resilient Cities.**
* **This is why, increasingly, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation instruments are combined in German development projects:**
	+ **As for example in Mozambique: Mozambique is highly disaster prone and it is predicted that the risk of flood will increase significantly due to climate change over the next decades. In February 2000, some 800 people lost their lives in a flood disaster on the Búzi river. As part of a German development project, an early warning system was set up in conjunction with state authorities in the region of the Buzi river basin. This system enables swift and direct communication of weather information between the communities along the river as well as with the regional and national capitals and ensures that communities are ready to use this information. Between December 2006 and February 2007, heavy rains across northern and Central Mozambique, together with severe rainfall in neighboring countries, led to flooding along the Zambezi River Basin, but the measures proved their worth as there was not fatality! The population was prepared for the threat and will also be prepared more frequent and severe flooding in the future.**
	+ **Or in Viet Nam: For the last four years, the former GTZ, now GIZ, has been working in the Soc Trang province of the Mekong Delta on behalf of the BMZ to restore the ecological balance of the coastal wetlands. The province’s coast is affected by strong winds and currents causing erosion; an effect that will intensify due to climate change. In addition, large tracts of mangrove forest, which naturally protect the coast from erosion, have been cleared to make way for shrimp farms. With assistance from GIZ, to date more than 110 hectares of mangrove forests have already been reforested, as part of an integrated coastal zone management. This mitigates the impact of sea level rise and strong winds and waves today and in the future, plus it saves significant costs for dyke maintenance.**

**Key message:**

***Where it is applicable, creating synergies between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures makes sense: It avoids duplication and ensures sustainable risk reduction, which means: many lives will be saved and hard-earned development gains will be preserved, even in times of climate change. It is an investment that will pay off for all of us!***

* **However, many challenges remain. New innovative methods and instruments will be needed, like for instance in the field of insurance schemes. New actors have to be more strategically involved like the private sector, industries and regional organizations. Especially the latter plays an important role as disasters very often have a regional dimension.**
* **We also believe that disaster reduction as a tool for adaptation to climate change will have to consider environmental issues, like the protection of chemical stocks or fuel against flooding.**
* **We would like to thank the German Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction for this initiative. The previous presentations have clearly shown the importance as well as achievements in the field disaster risk reduction in times of climate change. It will surely be one of the challenging issues in the near future. BMZ will increasingly support adaptation to climate change as well as disaster risk reduction activities.**

**Thank you for your kind attention.**