

VENRO STATEMENT

The terrorist attacks and the consequences: Where German development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) see a need for action

Bonn, 12th October 2001 – The attacks of the 11th September 2001 have fundamentally called into question the basic values of millions of people throughout the world. There can be no doubt that those responsible have to be called to account. However, we regard the bombing of targets in Afghanistan by American and British air forces as inappropriate since they are further complicating the isolation of the suspected terrorists from their supportive environment. New outbreaks of violence in the Middle East and other countries are likely. The plight of the Afghan refugees, which has already assumed dramatic proportions, is becoming more and more hopeless. Under all circumstances, it has to be ensured that the counter-measures are part of an overall political concept, do not clash with the principle of appropriateness and the security of innocent civilians is ensured at all costs.

It has long been realized that terrorism cannot be beaten with military means, but that it can only be overcome on a long-term basis, with internationally co-ordinated, political, economic and legal measures and strategies. Federal President Johannes Rau said in Berlin on the 14th September: *The best protection against terror, violence and war is a fair international order.* The breeding-ground of terrorism can only be dried out by reducing the lack of prospects, marginalisation and injustice throughout the world. Here, development policy can make a significant contribution, and its activities ought to be stepped up in this respect. What has to be achieved is to satisfy people's desire for social development in the framework of a human security concept and create the stable political, social, economic and ecological prerequisites required to this end.

In our opinion, the following measures are needed to cope with the current political crisis on a sustainable basis:

1. Combating terrorism in the framework of the United Nations

Combating terrorism is a task for the international community of peoples and nations. Therefore, it ought to be welcomed that the UN Security Council passed a resolution on the 29th September 2001 obliging all states to treat financial support for terrorism as a punishable offence in their national legislation and co-operate internationally in the field of combating cross-border terrorism. The United Nations represent a suitable international regulatory framework to reach further international law agreements on preventing and combating terrorism. In detail, this implies:

- ratifying the International Convention on Combating Terrorism passed by the UN General Assembly in 1999
- enhancing the political acceptance and raising the funding of the International Criminal Court
- stepping up measures to control trade in and trafficking of arms of all kinds, in particular small arms, and efforts to reach a world-wide ban on landmines.

2. Stepping up conflict prevention and solving regional conflicts politically

Since conflicts are an integral aspect of societal processes, it is important to boost the ability of societies to handle their conflicts without resorting to violence. Wherever possible, efforts to achieve a consistent prevention of crises ought to be supported. Here, thanks to their close proximity to the target groups themselves, non-governmental organisations are in a particularly good position to address conflicts at sub-governmental level. The international community ought to link its response to the terrorist attacks with an initiative to help achieve political solutions to conflicts that have got bogged down. Not only does the Middle East conflict urgently require defusing, but new political initiatives have to be launched to resolve so-called *forgotten conflicts* such as in Sudan, Angola, Kashmir, Colombia and Sri Lanka. In detail, this implies:

- compiling long-term concepts of conflict prevention and short or medium term concepts for the reconstruction of societies destroyed by civil war
- setting up forums for permanent consultation in order to develop solutions for the political, economic and humanitarian problems in the various conflict regions
- increased co-operation with non-governmental organisations in the areas of conflict prevention, disaster preparedness, food security, emergency assistance and aid to refugees as well as health care
- extending activities of the German *Civil Peace Service* and the promotion of peace alliances at civil society level.

3. Improving the global framework conditions

The gulf between the poor and the rich has grown in the course of globalisation. The current form of economic globalisation bypasses the needs of the majority of the world's population. In the developing countries, many people feel helpless, marginalised and inferior – sentiments that represent a fertile breeding ground for extremism and mobilise people for terrorist attacks. This is why the political and economic integration of the developing countries into the globalisation process and the responsibility of the industrialised nations for world-wide social justice, sustainable development, democracy and human rights are even more important than in the past. In detail, this implies:

- a reform and consolidation of the United Nations as well as the improvement of the representation of all states in the decision-making bodies of the international finance institutions

- a reform of the WTO rules, for example in the fields of TRIPS and food security
- extending the debt relief initiative (HIPC II) initiated at the Cologne G7 Summit to further countries
- improving financing for development, also by preventing money laundering and tax evasion as well as the introduction of new instruments, such as the Tobin Tax or a CO² tax.

4. Stepping up development policy and combating poverty

Following Willy Brandt's observation that development policy is the peace policy of the 21st century, development policy must be given a higher status. Security, peace and sustainable development cannot thrive in conditions of extreme injustice and inequality. More than 1.2 billion people have to survive on less than a dollar a day, and 800 million people go hungry every day. It is more important than ever to overcome poverty, put an end to social and cultural marginalisation and protect natural resources so as to ensure the livelihoods of all people. In view of the crises and conflicts world-wide, the additional 100 million € allocated by the Federal Government to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to combat terrorism is far from sufficient. Neither is it in any way comparable to the additional 1.5 billion € that the Defence Ministry is to receive for the same purpose. It is paramount to boost development policy as a central task of the future in German government policy and go ahead with implementing the *2015 Action Programme* resolved by the Federal Government. To this end, the BMZ budget has to be increased substantially, and new accents have to be set within the BMZ budget. In detail, this implies:

- a significant increase in the 2002 budget of the BMZ
- providing at least 0.15% of gross national product for the support of the poorest countries, as agreed at the LDC III Conference in Brussels in May 2001
- setting a binding schedule ensuring that the goal already agreed on internationally of providing 0.7% of gross national product for the support of the developing countries will be reached by Germany by 2010
- stepping up development policy educational activities to promote international understanding as well as an understanding of sustainable development.

5. Humanitarian aid must not be mixed with politics

Food and medicine was dropped simultaneously with the air-raids on military targets in Afghanistan. These food drops were referred to by those responsible as a *humanitarian* operation accompanying military action. We reject this linking of military objectives with humanitarian aid. Indiscriminate dropping of medicaments and food from military aircraft is entirely inappropriate and can expose the civilian population to considerable dangers. This strategy of campaigning for political support in Afghanistan and the rest of the world by dropping aid clashes with the very principles of humanitarian aid and makes it even more difficult for relief organisations to conduct their operations. In detail, this implies that:

- the countries bordering on Afghanistan have to be urged to open up their borders in accordance with the Geneva Convention. At the same time, the recipient countries must receive appropriate financial support. Refugee aid in Afghanistan ought to be followed by rehabilitation and development co-operation measures.
- civil, impartial relief organisations have to gain access to the refugees within and outside the borders of Afghanistan
- political independence of humanitarian aid has to be preserved.