



NEWS

from the Federal Republic of Germany

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Speech of the German Ambassador, H.E. Peter Linder, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Ghana

Ladies and Gentlemen,

it is a great honour and a pleasure for me to address you on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ghana. It is indeed a birthday worthwhile celebrating. I am very much impressed by what has been said about the foundations contributions in Ghana. From what I have heard I appreciate the kindness of all of you, the expression of sympathy and the appreciation for the activities over 4 decades.

40 years ago the Konrad Adenauer Foundation started her first project in Ghana – today the KAF has developed a far reaching network within the Ghanaian society and cooperates with about 20 partners to strengthen democracy and to support the development of our host nation Ghana.

To honour the work and the visions of KAF I would like to briefly go back into German history to highlight the role political foundations play in German policy and society.

Democracy could not exist without people giving life to this noble vision on a human and just way in organizing society. Long before political foundations came into existence Germany's first democratically elected president said in 1920 : "Democracy needs democrats". After the experience with the first German Republic, which failed exactly for a severe lack of democrats within German society the young Federal Republic of Germany after World War II was well aware of the crucial importance political culture and political education have in the process of developing a functioning democracy. That was the hour of birth of the concept of political foundations as transparent activists for democratic values and determined promoter of political education.

Exactly today, there is another birthday: it is a very special day for Germany: 57 years ago on 23rd of Mai 1949 the German Basic Law which is our constitution came into force, setting out the fundamental legal and political order for the Federal Republic of Germany. During the difficult times when Germany was divided the day of the promulgation of the Basic Law served for the western part of Germany as something like national day.

It is the German Basic Law which gives the state a mandate to promote political education.

Political foundations play a key role in political education in Germany. Independent from Government they represent the democratic pluralism in Germany, being close to but also somehow independent from the political parties. Their funding is provided by the German parliament, which ensures a high degree of autonomy. Funding is proportionate to their actual representation in parliament in general, but calculated in detail according to a complicated mix involving criteria over several legislative periods.

As development organisations German political foundations have supported capacity-, state- and nation building since the early sixties through a network of offices worldwide. Independent from both the parties and the government, the German political foundations have a high potential for long-term cooperation with partners sharing the same values.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, named after the first German Chancellor, started working with the Christian Mothers Association in Ghana in 1966 with a women education project. Promoting gender equality has ever since remained a cross cutting task for the KAF.

Since then the Konrad Adenauer Foundation has focussed mostly on the support of Ghanaian democracy , empowering civil society participation in political decision-making, supporting decentralisation, strengthening the rule of law and supporting socio-economic reforms.

Each of these fields of cooperation comprises a wide range of activities with many partners involved, so empowering civil society means cooperation with the Christian Mothers Association as well as with the Tamale Ecclesiastical Provincial Pastoral Centre and the Ghana Association of Small Scale Industries. This is just to give an example on the wide range of activities of the foundation.

And to give another one: Strengthening the rule of law means for example cooperation with the Parliament of Ghana, with Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice or the National House of Chiefs. The KAF is actively involved in the NEPAD process in accompanying the APRM Process in Ghana in cooperation with the APRM secretariat.

The KAF has created a wide network over the years and has made friends with so many Ghanaians. It is a pleasure to see so many of her cooperation partners gathered here today to celebrate 40 years of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ghana. Let me say, that I consider the accomplishments of the foundation over 4 decades as a great success, as a great contribution to the democratic process in this country and as a mayor activity in the entire bilateral relations. The foundation has always played a significant role in the concert of the other political foundations active in the country.

Independent from the German government - even if our present chancellor, Mrs. Merkel, is the leader of the Christian democrats, the party the KAF feels close to - the KAF is giving a very important contribution to German foreign and development policy in Ghana.

In the name of the Federal government I would like to thank the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for her work and commitment and wish her and her partners much success for the next 40 years in Ghana.