



Munich, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008

## **Script of the speech delivered on video by German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel**

### **To the 52nd CIES World Food Business Summit**

#### **On: Growth and sustainability - Building profit with responsibility**

Mr. Corbett,  
Mr. Ackermann,  
Mr. McClay,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First let me wish you a very warm welcome to this 52nd CIES World Food Business Summit in Germany.

The theme for your congress – “Growth and sustainability” – is a very appropriate choice. Many of the major challenges facing us today – the food crisis, climate change and biodiversity depletion – illustrate how relevant this issue is to us all.

Because all these challenges are linked to the fact that mankind is living beyond its means. The appetite for limited resources is, and always has been, very hard to satisfy.

Nonetheless, towards the end of the 80s, a change occurred. Since that time, the notion of sustainability has become increasingly important in international debate.

Underlying this idea is the recognition that we must be aware of the limits of what our planet can tolerate if we want to be able to guarantee lasting economic prosperity and social well-being.

It is that sense that the notion of sustainability links economic productivity with ecological responsibility and social justice.

These three goals condition each other, as it is not possible to imagine any lasting economic growth based on predatory exploitation of nature or social injustice.

In recognising this, we demonstrate our ability to act responsibly not just vis-à-vis the present but also future generations. What we do today must not be allowed to deprive the generations that come after of the opportunity of enjoying an undamaged environment and economic prosperity.

The concept of sustainability runs throughout a very wide range of policy areas, both on the domestic and international level.

This means that we in industrialised countries also bear the responsibility for ensuring opportunities for people in other countries. We have no right to shift the social and ecological burdens of our prosperity to others.

Conversely, developing countries have a legitimate right to proper exploitation of resources. The same is true of a fair share in global trade. A swift and balanced conclusion of the Doha Round is therefore all the more important.

Production and trade of bio-fuels are becoming more and more significant. There is no doubt that the raw materials for bio-energy will also have to be produced in a sustainable manner. It therefore makes sense to set binding international standards for sustainability.

Sustainability is obviously not just the responsibility of politicians. All of us, with our decisions about what we do or do not do, for example through our consumer choices, can make a contribution every day.

This means that suppliers and retailers have a responsibility. Sustainability is in any case increasingly a decisive competitive factor.

Given increasing prices, it makes good economic sense to ensure the greatest possible efficiency in the use of raw materials and energy in production and organisation.

Moreover, compliance with social and ecological standards is becoming increasingly important for customers and consumers. I would therefore like to urge you to take a careful look at the social and environmental conditions under which your suppliers produce their goods.

Consequently, opting for a strategy of sustainability does not at all mean forfeiting growth and profitability, but rather achieving both in a different, more responsible way.

The result is that not only the organisations concerned are the winners, but each and every one of us.

It is in this sense that I wish you a very profitable at this discussion congress.

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