

Press Release

DW Director General Bettermann: The ‘climate generation’ offers a new way of thinking

- **Opening ceremony of the Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum**

At the opening ceremony of the Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum, Deutsche Welle's Director General Erik Bettermann pointed out the media's role as "chroniclers and interpreters of the fight against climate change". "I am convinced we need a climate change in the heads of journalists as well. Reporting needs to be about more than just the day's news. It needs to drive people to action, while showing deficits, solutions and different perspectives. And provide hope." Bettermann said that what is needed are "media producers with imagination".

The theme of the three-day, international conference in Bonn is "The Heat Is On – Climate Change and the Media". Representatives from science, politics, business and the media will discuss what the media can do to create awareness for one of the major challenges of our time.

"Journalists need to tackle difficult issues with well-researched stories and show every individual that they can do something to help," said Bettermann. He went on to say that the Internet, blogs and Twitter are the new platforms for the exchange of ideas and opinions – and more and more people are getting involved in the conversation. "The "climate generation" is growing," said Bettermann. "They think differently, go in new directions and are committed to implementing global projects on location." He said the media must jump in and contribute as well. "They can create awareness for the unforeseeable consequences of climate change – for human beings and the environment. But they can also highlight the potential of moving towards green technology and ecologically friendly consumption and production. They can showcase creativity and innovation, new models of working and new fields of work – as well as a new quality of life."

Bettermann said that in industrialized countries, the media – and thereby the general public – often don't perceive developing countries as those making use of climate protection measures. "But these countries also need to catch up in terms of economic growth and prosperity – something that we often take for granted." He said that in many areas there is already a change occurring with regards to the environment and climate protection. "People there are experiencing climate change more directly than we do here in Europe," said Betterman. He went on to say that is the reason why they are doing so much to protect their future – often unnoticed by the local media. "It appears to me that these countries are ready to pass us," said Bettermann. "They aren't wasting time lamenting the risks of climate-friendly production and lifestyles, but rather realizing the opportunities that exist. Nevertheless, there has to be an increased public awareness in these countries and the people need more know-how and skills." And that is just another task for the media.

Approximately 1,500 people from 95 countries will be participating in this the third Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum.

Co-host of the Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum is the Foundation for International Dialogue of the Sparkasse in Bonn. The convention is also supported by Germany's Federal Foreign Office, the Family, Women and Integration Ministry of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, European Funds for Regional Development, the city of Bonn, DHL, the KSB Group and Faber-Castell.

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