

Welcome Address, given by Mayor Jürgen Nimptsch, on the Occasion of the Opening Session of the 3rd Global Media Forum on Monday, June 21, 10.00 h, WCCB, Bonn

Mr. Bettermann, Executive Secretary de Boer, Mr. Piccard, Mr. Scheer, Climate Ambassador Felix, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A few years ago, an idea was born here in Bonn: to establish a conference that would address the media worldwide as well as a platform to talk about the role the media play on our way towards sustainable development worldwide.

Bonn turned out to be the perfect venue: the United Nations have concentrated their endeavours for sustainable development here, surrounded by a cluster of German federal ministries, development agencies, science and research institutions and non-governmental organisations. Not to forget the media, of course – and namely Deutsche Welle.

The concept has proven to be successful. It does not only attract the media, but also organisations and high-ranking experts from all over the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Deutsche Welle, and in particular to Erik Bettermann – and I would also like to thank the State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia with whose support this event benefits from European funding.

Today, we open the 3rd Global Media Forum. Many of us may feel disappointed about the course the climate negotiations have taken since Copenhagen. Still there is hope and motivation. Hermann Scheer and Felix Finkbeiner, for instance, have devoted themselves to new approaches, to new lifestyles. There are alternatives. One only needs to convince people to adopt them.

In September, Bonn will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Right Livelihood Foundation and we are looking forward to the visit of at least 80 awardees of the Alternative Nobel Prize.

Only recently, a new foundation has been established here in Bonn and I have the honour to serve as chairman. It is a small foundation with a smart idea, addressing people, citizens, neighbors, families and trying to get them aboard as “climate ambassadors”. Students like you, Felix – and even young children. Professionals, artists, CEOs, journalists – people like you and me. We want to spread the word for a climate-friendly lifestyle, to raise money and to fund projects in the field of climate education – here in Bonn and also in cooperation with our project partner cities all over the world.

The media are of essential importance when someone tries to spread whatever word. So they are born partners to any pro-climate campaign and also to any prevent-the-worst initiative. Globally speaking, I know, that climate change will affect any area of life. We will need a global and interdisciplinary alliance to cope with existing impacts and to prevent further damage. The media have a crucial role and responsibility in that alliance: they reach out to people.

This Global Media Forum is entitled “The Heat is On”. We did literally experience this here in the past years: heat waves in summer will happen more and more often. In

the South, long draughts are leading to land degradation, desertification and extreme poverty.

It is no longer the question, whether we should act. We only have to ask ourselves: where is my place in the pattern, where I can be most efficient to support our common goal!

Most of you might know that I am also Vice Chair of the World Mayors Council on Climate Change. It is also in this capacity that I advocate a new kind of pro-climate alliance. This conference is one of the major occasions to elaborate such an alliance! So please accept my best wishes for your mutual exchange and joint endeavours. And I hope that you will enjoy your stay in our beautiful city on the banks of the Rhine.

Thank you.