

## 4/2012 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIONS

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## EDITORIAL



**Anne-Kathrin Kirchhof**  
Deputy Chair of the  
Germanwatch Board

Dear reader,

we are living through some interesting, decisive and formative times. We are calling for change – a Great Transformation. On a small scale, civil society and various stakeholders are already mobilising, sometimes quietly, sometimes more vocally. Alliances and partnerships are forming, adopting highly diverse approaches and networking on a national or international scale. The American environmentalist, entrepreneur and author Paul Hawken calls it "the movement with no name". Pioneering subglobal alliances are forming. People around the world can make contact with the help of Web 2.0 and are taking action. At local level, community initiatives are forming in cities and living out the vision of civic engagement in their own neighbourhoods. Our perceptions and communications are changing, networking and becoming more transparent. Information and engagement are only a mouse-click away. All this is a very reassuring sign.

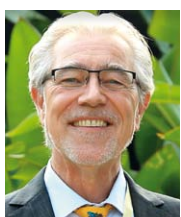
In this edition of Weitblick, you can find out how each one of us can take action, which alliances and partnerships are now needed, and which steps will bring us closer to a Great Transformation.

And if you would like to ensure that the voice of civil society is heard more widely, please support us – with a donation or a membership subscription. Thank you!

Yours sincerely,

*Anne-Kathrin Kirchhof*

## Why I find Germanwatch important



**Dr. Hans Rudolf Herren,**  
Winner of the World Food Prize,  
Founder and President of Biovision  
Foundation, Switzerland,  
and President of the Millennium  
Institute in Washington

One positive experience before and at the Rio+20 conference for the Biovision team was the constructive cooperation with other NGOs. That's why I welcome the initiative of Germanwatch to strengthen such collaboration. For our commitment to initiate a global change in agricultural policy towards sustainable ecological smallholder farming structures to ensure food security for all, we are dependent on reliable and committed partners. Together we are stronger!

# The Great Cooperation

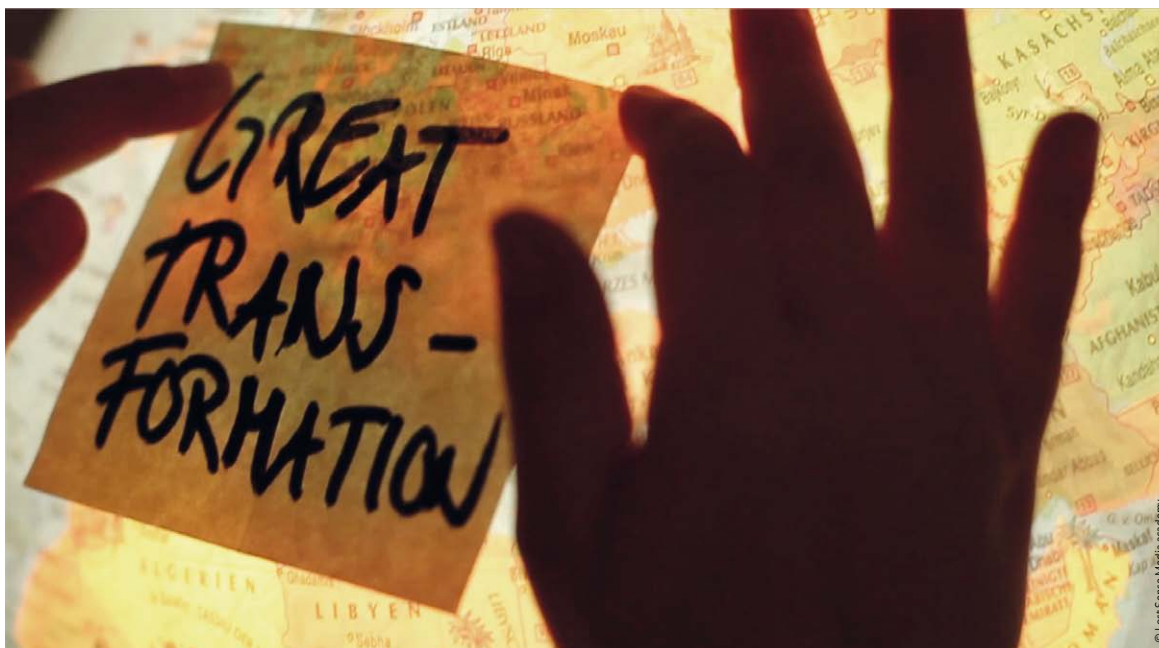
## Generating momentum for the Great Transformation

The Arctic sea ice is melting at record speed. Droughts in the USA, Kazakhstan and Ukraine are pushing up the prices of basic foods. The increasing scarcity of energy and mineral resources is creating economic and social risks. The worsening crises in the climate, energy/resources and food security nexus demonstrate, almost daily, that we are reaching the limits to our use of the Earth's resources – in other words, we are fast approaching its planetary boundaries. This has major consequences whose burden falls most heavily on the shoulders of the poorest and most vulnerable people in developing and emerging countries.

The economy's fallback positions in response to the energy crisis often point in an unsustainable direction, such as the increased use of climate-damaging lignite or oil sands instead of the expansion of renewable energies. The search for solutions which merely treat the symptoms of the crises, instead of initiating radical and sustainable, whole-of-society change processes, does not bring us any closer to a "Great Transformation" towards a sustainable development (see article, p. 2). But the nexus of multiple crises, comprising development issues and planetary boundaries, is forcing us to rethink. Not only are we reaching the ecosystem's limits: the knowledge available about these limits demonstrates the remarkable scale of the social and economic challenges we face.

But some initial signs of successful transformation processes can already be discerned: the civic engagement by private citizens in renewable energy communities in Denmark, business models for urban farming in New York, political demands for feed-in payments for renewable energies in India, and low-carbon zones in China (see article, p. 4). In Germany, one person in every ten is now a vegetarian, and in German cities the number of car-owners in the population is decreasing, especially in the key group, namely young adults. These trends point in the right direction. However, they need enabling policy frameworks if they are to progress (see interview, p. 2).

A particular challenge for the trend reversal is posed by the "spoilers" – mainly those who profit from the current systems. Those who say "no" to transformation are resisting the change processes that are necessary – also by exerting po-



Scene from the film "What am I" by Ben Toussaint, one of the winners of the Germanwatch screenplay competition "Great Transformation" (see article on p. 4)

litical influence. But instead of seeking to build protective walls around their role as yesterday's winners, they should be developing their business models in such a way that they can utilise the opportunities afforded by the transformation of our energy systems. For Germany's four major energy supply companies, this is the major challenge. Winning their commitment and support is key to the success of the Great Transformation. Similarly, the car industry is clinging to its outdated business models. It is having difficulty switching to sustainable mobility services such as car sharing or transport mixes which include rail rather than relying on the car alone. Instead, they are blocking the adoption of the legislation that is essential to reduce fuel consumption, also post-2020. In the agro-chemical industry, too, the dominant business models achieve their success at the expense of smallholder farmers and make a stronger role for organic farming almost impossible.

The Great Transformation can only be successful through cooperation between diverse sectors and stakeholders. In order to further strengthen the new initiatives and mainstream the dynamics of the Great Transformation both nationally and internationally, also in the UN bodies, new strategies for action, communication and cooperation are required. In view of the changed power constellations and shifts in wealth, this means rethinking North-South cooperation. But it is no less important – in a world in which "growth", as the answer to major justice issues, is increasingly reaching its limits – to seek new solutions to these as well. The key issue that Germany and

the EU should address is to enter into alliances or partnerships, especially with the countries most affected by the current crises – the small island states and Africa – and with actors of particular geopolitical significance such as the emerging countries. In light of the growing willingness to take action, which is becoming apparent in some emerging countries, but also in view of the USA's incapacity to act, especially in the climate process, partnerships with the emerging countries – China and India, but also South Africa, the MENA region (see article on p. 4) and Brazil – are a particularly promising way forward for the EU. Topics addressed within these partnerships could include the transformation of energy systems, the Renewable Energy Sources Act, low-energy buildings, and emissions trading schemes. But it's not only the EU which has a role to play here: a growing number of South-South partnerships are also proving their worth.

So what does this mean for the international NGO landscape? How can it respond to global changes, redefine its role(s) and engage creatively for the Great Transformation? What seems certain is that NGOs must coordinate their positions on a Great Transformation across countries and continents and must pursue this transformation through a division of labour and old and new forms of action. Germanwatch supports this transformation through national and international dialogue and strategy processes which we are keen to share with you in this latest issue of our newspaper.

Rixa Schwarz, Stefan Rostock

## With a joint strategy and division of roles

Countless non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social movements worldwide are working for the transformation of energy and agricultural systems that is so urgently needed. On the one hand, there are the environmental groups which are committed to protecting the climate or the rainforests; on the other, there are the development organisations which promote fair access to energy and the rights to food and water. Here, there are the grassroots NGOs working with, and for, the most affected stakeholder groups; there, there are the NGOs which engage in professional lobbying and advocacy and manage to wrest – mostly small – victories from policy-makers and business. Faced with the climate and

food crisis, how can they coordinate their strategies more effectively?

A coordinated strategy can only be successful if it proceeds from two basic starting points. The first is the **right to development** – specifically, access to energy and the **rights to food and water**. Anyone disputing these rights is not only a cynic; he also has no prospect of success. The second consists of the boundaries which Planet Earth itself sets on the form and scope of this development. Among other things, this means avoiding dangerous climate change and protecting healthy soils and biodiversity. Anyone who fails to respect **planetary boundaries** will fail in the medium term at the latest.

Local grassroots action and national/international lobbying and advocacy are not opposites: they are mutually dependent. Lobbying helps to flatten out the ongoing uphill struggle which all of them face, including the local groups. At the same time, the work being taken at the grassroots level shows that the transformation is possible and is forcing politicians to act.

If these principles are accepted as the essential basis for progress, the next step is to discuss the division of roles under a joint strategy.

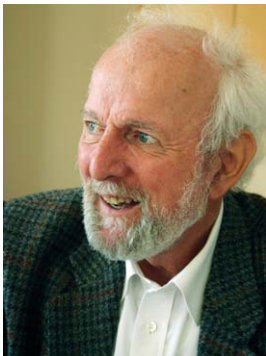
Christoph Bals



# Sustainable consumption must become rational and lucrative

## Interview with Prof. Dr. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker is one of the pioneers of energy efficiency and eco-taxes in Germany. Founding President of the Wuppertal Institute (1991-2000), he was key in formulating the *Energiewende* (energy transition) debate in Germany. Previously he was a Professor of Biology and University President (at Kassel University) and from 1998-2005 a member of Parliament for the SPD (social democratic party) in the German Bundestag. He there headed the Commission of Inquiry into Globalization and was chairman of the Committee on the Environment.



to raise the energy prices every year, matching the increase in energy efficiency in the previous year. With social tariffs for beneficiaries of the social welfare “Hartz IV” as well as revenue-neutrality for energy intensive industries. Such a decision would hardly cause any suffering, and it would trigger an avalanche of innovation and investment in energy efficiency, making the country richer and more competitive.

Which countries can provide a good example for the debate in Germany?

Japan, in the 1970s, under the shock of the oil crisis and a total dependence on energy imports, raised energy prices, making energy almost twice as expensive as in competing countries. The result was not the feared de-industrialization, but rather an explosion of technological innovation and a rapid strengthening of competitiveness.

The dynamics of economic development in emerging markets poses new challenges in the fight against the ‘slippery slope’. Do you see any successful policy approaches there?

The emerging and developing countries can, in fact, much less afford to waste energy than the rich countries. China makes energy more expensive. India and South Africa are also on this path. They expect much from German efficiency technology.

You established the concept that prices must tell the ecological truth, so that dedicated consumers would not have to constantly struggle their way up a ‘slippery slope’. In doing so, you have defined the need for a policy framework that would make sustainable consumption decisions become the norm. Where do you see signs that these ideas have been implemented in German politics?

In 1999, the Red-Green government introduced an ecological tax reform that has saved or created approximately 250,000 jobs and protects the environment. We have to pick up that thread once again.

What actions should politicians take to refine this legislative framework?

Ideally, there would be a political decision at EU level, and, if necessary, at the national level

# The aim: a Great Transformation

## Planetary boundaries provide the impetus

Since 2008, global crises have come thick and fast – affecting our energy, resources, climate, food security, and economic and financial systems. We are living through a time in which planetary boundaries are not merely a theoretical concept but are increasingly being felt on a real-life level. The issues that this raises have global significance – but they also affect each and every one of us.

How do we want to live? We must start with ourselves: more time for friends, more time for family, more time simply to be. It’s about creating space and scope for action – in the natural world, or through groups or associations. It means making our money count by shopping sustainably in a world where prices increasingly mirror political conditions and the social and ecological footprint left by the goods and services we choose. It means more sustainable mobility and perhaps less mobility – and fewer (long-haul) flights in particular. For more and more of the world’s poor, mainly in the developing countries but also in our own midst, it means, above all, the right to adequate, safe and healthy food and water. Both here and there, it means access to energy – renewable energy – and, ultimately, access to development.

The emerging countries have, until now, often copied our Western consumption models. Sustainable forms of economic activity and lifestyles (now) barely exist. In these countries, Germany’s experiment with the transformation of its energy systems is followed with great interest. If it succeeds, Germany – as an industrial country with no nuclear power and very little fossil fuel use – could send out a clear message worldwide. At present, the lack of trust and confidence in the success of this transformation, the lack of a real-world example of a post-fossil industrial country, is paralysing international progress.

Making the transition from a fossil to a post-fossil economic system is a major challenge. However, in a Great Transformation, it merely marks



the switch, in one first sector, towards a closed substance cycle economy as a response to planetary boundaries. Definitive answers to social issues, such as intergenerational justice, must also be sought.

The economic and social scientist Karl Polanyi coined the phrase “Great Transformation” in 1944. He analysed how, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, the production factors, i.e. labour, land and capital – and with them, people too – had lost their embeddedness in a broader cultural context and were exposed to the forces of supply and demand. With their livelihoods and survival at risk, many people reacted by calling for a strong state – in the communist countries and in National Socialist Germany. The present situation in many affected countries is equally challenging, for the financial and economic crisis and the food crisis have made people into pawns of the market. The way out of the current situation is undecided, but it can be managed successfully. Now it’s all about re-embedding: the financial system into the economic system, the economic system into the socio-cultural system, and the socio-cultural system into the natural environment. No doubt about it – it’s a major challenge for our own and the coming generations.

Stefan Rostock

Due to an increase in production and consumption, efficiency improvements have hardly produced the desired savings in energy and resource consumption so far. Where should we begin the fight against this “rebound effect”?

The rebound effect is the biggest problem. In most countries it is not even perceived or identified as a problem, but rather celebrated as growth. What we must achieve is a situation whereby efficiency is progressing faster than growth. Although this is currently technologically possible, it will not come about however, whilst energy is cheap.

Let’s look at the demand side. How can the many successful civil society groups and initiatives form a critical mass, that is necessary to transform the market to fit sustainable production and consumption styles?

There are many encouraging initiatives for alternative lifestyles, such as the “Transition Towns” by Rob Hopkins. But these initiatives will remain a niche, unless the framework is changed, allowing sustainable consumption and production to become economically real, rational and lucrative.

Interview: Stefan Rostock

OP-ED ARTICLE

# Money is available!

## Removing harmful subsidies for the sake of sustainable development

Whether nationally or globally: the numbers are so shockingly high, it’s hard to imagine. Nine billion euros, for instance, is annually granted to German industry for electricity costs. Worldwide, subsidies are estimated at a whopping one trillion US dollars – subsidies that actually harm the climate, the people and the environment, instead of helping. When governments declare that they have no money for urgent investment into a social and ecological economy, this is more than hypocritical.

The money is there – it is just being given to the wrong people for the wrong things. For example, the millionaire-family Vidal from Spain use illegal fishing practices to empty our oceans, yet at the same time they pocket € 12.5 million in EU fisheries subsidies. Or how about the rich producers and users of fossil fuels, who, with an estimated \$ 750 billion per year, collect the lion’s share of harmful subsidies worldwide. According to the International Energy Agency, only eight percent of fossil fuel subsidies reach the poor.

There is another way. Costa Rica has introduced a tax on oil, whilst reducing and re-deploying its fossil fuel subsidies. Ethiopia has abolished subsidies for fossil fuels – and thereby reduced the import of kerosene (with a positive impact on the public purse). Why is it then that not more countries follow these models? The answer is easy to give and hard to overcome: It’s a question of power. Fishing and oil barons have undue influence over our governments. So they manage to defend their privileges and shift the social and environmental costs of their actions onto the community.

The overall social and environmental costs of electricity from lignite and coal-fired power plants, for example, add up to 15.6 and 14.8 cents per kilowatt hour respectively. For nuclear energy it’s even more – at least 16.4 cents per kilowatt hour are due. Yet for one kilowatt hour of wind power, the accrued costs are just 8.1 cents. Nonetheless, it suits the powerful energy companies to ensure that the discussion amongst leaders and in the tabloid press is limited solely to the supposedly “expensive” green energy, whilst they gloss over the fact that the true costs of electricity are not paid for by the companies, but by all of us.

Besides transparency, clear policy objectives (such as an elimination of harmful subsidies by 2020) and a tax system in which social and environmental “bads” are charged adequately, one thing is needed above all: In order to change the current subsidy and tax policy, the power of the large polluter-companies must be broken.

Who is being supported to do what is a question for democracy. Only when the people, not the industry lobby, determine the actions of our rulers, will the billions that flow today into the destruction of our future, finally fund poverty reduction and environmental protection.

Daniel Mittler, Political Director of Greenpeace International

Further Information:  
“Greenwash+20”  
[www.kurzlink.de/Greenwash20](http://www.kurzlink.de/Greenwash20)  
“Was Strom wirklich kostet” (German only)  
[www.kurzlink.de/FOES\\_Strom](http://www.kurzlink.de/FOES_Strom)

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Of course, you can also make a donation directly to Germanwatch.

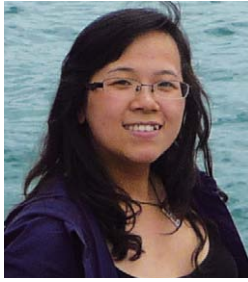
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# A dual challenge

Interview with Lina Li, policy officer at “Greenovation Hub”, China



**Is there a debate about the potential role of China regarding the necessary global transformation towards low carbon and food security?**

There is certainly debate, both domestically and internationally. Increasing concerns about energy security, rising environmental damage, and pressure to maintain the nation's competitiveness, are all pushing in this direction. At the same time, as a country of the largest population (half still in rural area) in the world, with limited arable land and resources, China has long history of striving for securing sufficient food for feeding its people.

The huge gap does exist in recognizing and addressing the multiple and interlinked crisis of climate change, food, poverty and inequality in a holistic and integrated manner, and a fundamental transformation required towards a sustainable and just society, which ensures sustainable energy and right to food for all, as such it also means transformation of its development model.

**How does Chinese civil society reflect the gap between the need for economic growth for social stability and development on the one side and the growing environmental and social challenges on the other side?**

It was and is not a gap between the two, but actually a dual challenge – again then, the economic and governance system behind need to be analyzed and taken into account as part of the solution, since it is part of the problem. More citizens and stakeholders need to be informed and mobilized, into a broader debate and corporative solution-exploration journey.

**What are the most promising proposals for effectively reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emission growth in China in the next decade?**

The difficult change that's required is so deep and vast, that to some extent, those who have concerns over its cost (short term loss) are not surprising. As such, there is no silver bullet(s) for it; though, shift energy structure (reaching the peak of coal consumption as soon as possible), improve energy efficiency in all sectors (industry, building, transportation), and tremendously enhance the deployment of renewable energy are standing as key proposals. To achieve these, governance including electricity and energy price system, and institutional system need also reform, and more effective policy tools (e.g. carbon pricing) need to take root, in a manner that fits the national and local situations.

**Do you see, and if so, where successes, best practices, political directions to move towards a post-fossil energy system in China?**

The 40-45% reduction of carbon intensity, with which the energy and carbon targets in the 11th and 12th Five Year Plan aligned, is key political direction to move towards a post-fossil energy system in China. Top down policies and measures have also somehow succeeded in bringing down growing pace of energy consumption. Interesting experiments including carbon market, low carbon urbanization and distributed energy system etc, are also of great potential to leverage the change. Determination and policies seem to be in place, yet implementation and paradigm shift still need enormous efforts at all levels and time.

**What international new alliances are needed which help to bring the necessary global transformation forward?**

The new alliances need to be forward thinking, cross-boundary, cross-issue, and at all levels.

*Interview: Stefan Rostock, Rixa Schwarz*

# Cooperation, not conflict

EU, China and India can generate momentum

The international community's performance at this year's United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro was disappointing and the outcomes were lacklustre. At the UN climate negotiations, too, countries are still failing to commit to the ambitious action that is needed to achieve compliance with the 2 °C limit. This inaction, which has a number of causes, and the continued adherence to a “business as usual” approach, especially by the influential countries, are awakening fears that confrontation, not cooperation, could increasingly prevail – not only in relation to the ever more urgent issue of access to energy and raw materials, but also in diplomacy on climate change and food security.

Despite ongoing climate change, water scarcity and increasing world food insecurity, can the multilateral system master this challenge on the basis of partnership? Or will the modern concept of security, defined as international stability, take a retrograde step towards individual-state security? That could happen if we fail to utilise the current momentum to expand diplomacy and cooperation between countries.

The European Union, which has just been announced as the winner of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize also in recognition of its tireless commitment to peace and multilateralism, has a particular responsibility in this context. It should enter into pioneer alliances with the regions and

countries worst affected by climate change, and with leaders in this field and particularly relevant countries. Besides the small island states and the group of least developed countries, these include the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa), China and India, but also South Africa.

Cooperation between the EU, China and India could generate fresh momentum for practical climate action and the transformation of energy systems, both within the countries concerned and in the UN climate process. The US's incapacity to move forward in the international climate process seems set to continue for many more years. Compared with only a few years ago, however, more and more stakeholders in China and India are willing to talk about the issue and enter into cooperation with the EU.

The potential cooperation between the EU, China and India on a sustainable energy supply could facilitate the attainment of three goals: firstly, bilateral and trilateral activities could promote energy efficiency and support the expansion of renewable energy systems and emissions trading schemes. Secondly, it could generate fresh momentum in the UN climate negotiations. And thirdly, the countries could work together to define sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the post-Rio period.

*Rixa Schwarz*

# NGO strategy dialogue on energy and climate, agriculture and food security

The food, climate and finance crises have affected millions of people on this planet. But they have also forced governments to confront the fact that “business as usual” is no longer an option. Yet much still needs to be done to reconfigure the economic structures that have led to these crises. Civil society actors have a critical role to play in making this vital transition. The NGO-Dialogue on Transformation, organised by Germanwatch with support from IATP, brings together civil society actors from around the world to address the critical issues of food and energy security in a world that must effectively and urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Key questions that the Dialogue addresses include:

1. How can universal access to energy be achieved while effectively tackling climate change?
2. How can we make the right to food a reality, especially for more than 870 million people currently suffering from hunger? And how can we do it in a way that respects global ecological boundaries?

Agriculture is the human activity most affected by climate chaos. And it is the source of livelihood for billions of people, primarily in the South. The climate problem must be addressed in an equitable manner, not only between the North and South, but also within both the North and South. Agriculture adaptation for small producers is central to this effort. A transition

towards ecologically resilient farming systems and one that shifts us away from harmful industrial practices will not only help small producers adapt, but also contribute to mitigation efforts.



The NGO Dialogue on Transformation takes these issues seriously and initiates a dialogue among civil society organisations from the Global South and North. It seeks to develop strategies for the necessary transformation of the energy and agriculture sectors in a way that respects global boundaries, the right to food and universal access to energy.

The Dialogue is being developed by an international steering group of the highest caliber. It will have strong representation from all regions of the world, especially the global South, and it should provide a good space for constructive discussions of how to move forward together in a way that is both equitable and effective. I hope the NGO Dialogue on Transformation will build a strong basis for the “Great Transformation” we urgently require.

*Jim Harkness, President, IATP*

**Please see:**  
**[www.dialogue-on-transformation.org](http://www.dialogue-on-transformation.org)**  
**for further information**

## ACTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Reduce your footprint,  
enlarge your handprint!



HAND PRINT™  
action towards  
sustainability

Saving water, switching electricity supplier, buying fair, organic & regional products, donating for a good cause, car sharing with the neighbors – many people already do it. But there are other possibilities for everyone to expand the own contribution to sustainability. Activities requiring positive personal engagement – such as volunteer work, letter writing, street theater, or actions in the Web 2.0 – are an effective addition. These activities not only reduce your carbon footprint, but also increase your “handprint” for a future worth living.

Get involved through individual, family and neighborhood circles and even further in the school, university and work context, or in the urban environment, as well as in policy at the regional, national and global level. You can sup-

port energy cooperatives, united agricultural initiatives or environmental groups. Whether alone or in a group, you can initiate competitions for energy saving ideas within your company, or a vegetarian day once a week in the cafeteria.

The Centre for Environment Education (CEE), India, developed the concept of “Handprint” 2007 ([www.handsforchange.org](http://www.handsforchange.org)) as an open concept, provided to everyone to use and to further develop. Germanwatch uses and supports the “Handprint” as a tool in education, to identify potential courses of action.

Germanwatch also has ideas on how to increase your handprint, available at: **[www.germanwatch.org/de/aktiv-werden](http://www.germanwatch.org/de/aktiv-werden)** (in German only)



Events

- **Berlin, 06.11.12:** Panel discussion "Climate Protection in a Wasteland? What to expect from the Climate Summit in Qatar", with Sven Harmeling. More info: [www.fes.de/GPol/en/](http://www.fes.de/GPol/en/)
- **Greifswald, 07.11.-20.12.12:** Photo exhibition "Mensch Macht Milch". More Info: [www.germanwatch.org/de/5520](http://www.germanwatch.org/de/5520)
- **Bonn, 13.+14.11.12:** Bonn Symposium 2012 – "Paradigm Shift 2015. Towards a New Sustainable Development Agenda", with a workshop organised by Germanwatch. More info: [www.germanwatch.org/de/5399](http://www.germanwatch.org/de/5399)
- **Berlin, 15.11.12:** Symposium "From Consumer Kids to Sustainable Childhood", with a workshop organised by Germanwatch. More info: [www.germanwatch.org/de/5523](http://www.germanwatch.org/de/5523)
- **Vallendar, 12.12.12:** Tackling global challenges. Germanwatch seminar for youth organisations. More info: [www.germanwatch.org/de/5400](http://www.germanwatch.org/de/5400)

Who we are and what we want to achieve

Goals of Germanwatch

Germanwatch is an independent environmental and development organisation. Since 1991 we are committed to global equity and the preservation of livelihoods. Our topics are Climate Protection and Adaptation, World Food, Corporate Accountability, Education for Sustainable Development and Financing for Climate and Development / Food.

With our activities we focus on the politics and economics of the North with their worldwide consequences. The situation of the marginalized people in the South is the starting point of our work. Together with our members and supporters as well as with other actors in civil society we intend to represent a strong lobby for sustainable development.

Dedicated dialogues with politics and economics, science-based analyses, education, publicity and campaigns are central to our way of working. To this end, we are closely connected with organisations and individuals from the South as well as with development and environmental organisations worldwide.

To ensure its independence Germanwatch relies on the support of its members and supporters. Join in! Thank you!

**Contact**  
Berlin: Germanwatch e.V., Schiffbauerdamm 14, D-10117 Berlin  
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Bonn: Germanwatch e.V., Kaiserstr. 201, D-53113 Bonn  
Phone +49(0)228 604 92-0, Fax +49(0)228 604 92-19  
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# Middle East and North Africa at the crossroads

## Energy partnerships such as DESERTEC encourage a rethink

The impetus required for a worldwide future-proof, post-fossil social and economic model will only be generated if regions which until now have not been engaged with sustainable development models to an adequate extent, if at all, can be encouraged to make progress in this field. In this context, besides India and China, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is a strategic regional priority for Germanwatch.

On the one hand, the Southern riparian countries of the Mediterranean are known to be particularly impacted by climate change and the associated water and food security crisis. On the other, climate change is still a new topic on many MENA countries' political agendas. They lack comprehensive mitigation and adaptation strategies, and regional partnerships aiming to address these issues are still in their infancy. In fact and up to this date, many Arab countries have focused on protecting their fossil resources and obstructing an ambitious climate protection regime at the international climate negotiations.

The expansion of renewable energies in the region and the development of integrated solutions to address climate, energy and food/water security issues – one of the objectives of the proposed energy partnership between the European Union and the MENA region within the DESERTEC concept – could mark

a significant turning point and soften the region's blockading position at the international climate negotiations in the future. Already, the impending energy crisis has encouraged numerous Arab states to rethink their energy plans and promote ambitious renewable energy targets through the implementation of various forms of renewable energy, mainly major solar thermal power plants and photovoltaic systems in the deserts and wind farms along the coasts.

Coupled with decentralised energy generation, large-scale centralised power plants could assist MENA countries to transform their fossil-based energy systems towards a low-carbon future. Furthermore, there are plans to export a proportion of the renewable-generated electricity to Europe and use its economic returns to further promote the renewable energy transition in the region.

In order to facilitate the successful transformation of the energy systems and capitalise on the opportunity to avoid the expansion of nuclear power in the region by harnessing its renewable energy potential, it is, however, essential to ensure that DESERTEC also benefits the local communities in the vicinity of the planned power projects. Centralised and decentralised energy generation should not be played off against each other, and safeguards must be in place so that most of the electricity generated in North Africa is consumed locally and not

used for exports to Europe. A further key prerequisite is an equitable approach to property issues and participation. Against this background, Germanwatch is working to ensure that appropriate guidelines and sustainability criteria are developed for key renewable energy projects in the MENA region through which DESERTEC could evolve into much more than just an energy infrastructure project.

Boris Schinke

## ¡Enhorabuena! Chilean fisherman win legal battle against E.ON

It's a David and Goliath scenario: the tiny fishing village of Totoral in the Atacama desert in northern Chile takes legal action against powerful energy companies – and wins! German energy giant E.ON, in a joint venture with a Brazilian partner company, had planned to build a gigantic 2,100 megawatt power plant there. The "Castilla" project would have been South America's largest coal-fired power plant and would have increased Chile's carbon emissions by 40 per cent. But in a ruling handed down at the end of August, the country's Supreme Court halted the 4.5 billion dollar project. Local people had brought the action due to fears that the plant would harm health and the environment.

Germanwatch congratulates the people of Totoral on their success and has nominated E.ON for the 2013 "Public Eye Award" ([www.publiceye.ch](http://www.publiceye.ch)) for its behaviour in relation to the Castilla project. The prize is "awarded" every year during the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos to companies whose social and ecological misdeeds have been particularly flagrant. E.ON's advertising claims that it is investing in the "future of energy" and it is a shareholder in the DESERTEC Industrial Initiative (DII). That being the case, E.ON would do well to invest in solar energy generation, not in dirty coal-fired power, in the sun-rich Atacama desert.

## Winners of the screenplay competition "Great Transformation" awarded

This summer, Germanwatch announced a screenplay competition on the theme of the "Great Transformation". The aim was to find a film script that addresses the need for a post-fossil fuel economy and a socio-cultural as well as an economic change towards sustainability. From a total of 13 entries from around the world – including India, Nepal and Sierra Leone – four screenplays were selected as being the most innovative, and received cash prizes.

The 3rd place, and a prize of 250 euros, went to Kanu Bharti from Ahmedabad, India, for the screenplay titled "The Power of One". The 2nd place winner, with a prize of 500 euros, was Jan Wilde from Hamburg

with his submission "Parabola". Because there were two thoroughly outstanding entries in the competition, the Germanwatch jury decided to award two script writers the 1st place: Michael Hennemann from Cologne for his screenplay "Impulse" (1200 € prize) and Berlin's Ben Toussaint with "What am I" (5000 € prize). These two screenplays are currently in the implementation phase and the films are presented at the opening of the conference "Dialogue on Transformation", to be held in Bonn from the 1st-3rd of November, 2012. Both realizations will be available for viewing on the Germanwatch website in the aftermath of the conference.

Boris Schinke

# China and the energy transition in Germany

## Synergies and cooperation on low carbon development

The People's Republic of China faces massive challenges. It must develop and implement effective strategies for equitable, sustainable, low-carbon development. Average per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in China have now increased to 7.2 tonnes – close to the European level. The country is experiencing a construction boom, which will intensify as a result of the influx of an estimated 350 million people into China's cities by 2020. Furthermore, by 2030, China plans to build more power plants than are currently connected to the grids in the USA, the UK and Australia together.

This rapid and sustained economic development and urbanisation in China requires rigorous implementation of low-carbon and climate policy strategies. The Chinese government has already achieved some notable successes in this area in recent years. Compared with 2006, China is now achieving the same economic output with 20 per cent less energy input. The country is now the world's renewable energy leader, installing around 36 new wind turbines every day. It is developing a grid network which transports renewable-generated electricity from western regions to the major cities along the eastern seaboard. At the same time, it is rapidly expanding its long-distance rail network and is converting its entire local

public transport system in some cities to hybrid vehicles and electromobility.

Under the current Five-Year Plan, the Chinese government has introduced binding environmental targets and initiated pilot programmes for low-carbon development for a full 25 per cent of the population in cities and provinces. These low-carbon development pilot regions in China and the transformation of energy systems in Germany are currently the major experiments for necessary low-carbon restructuring which are receiving the most attention and critical acclaim worldwide. If these two countries are able to combine a model for prosperity with a resolute low-emissions pathway, this will have major worldwide significance.

China can be an important partner in the transformation of Germany's energy systems. Both countries have strengths which can be harnessed to mutual benefit. The major opportunities for partnerships and synergies must be developed and utilised at the various levels.

In Germany and China alike, the cities and municipalities are key to the successful transformation of energy systems and implementation of low-carbon development pilots. The success of these programmes will crucially

depend on positive experience being gained at the local level. Here, emission reduction targets and strategies must be adapted and implemented with the involvement of citizens, companies, initiatives and local institutions. This is the only way to create ownership of the process.

Developing city partnerships into climate partnerships is a very promising approach in order to expand cooperation and promote knowledge exchange about practical strategies at the local level, build trust and confidence, and place climate protection firmly on the agenda. The City of Bonn is an important example. Together with its partner city of Chengdu, capital of the Chinese province of Sichuan, it plans to expand dialogue and the exchange of experience between decision-makers and experts from the administration, academia, civil society and the business community from Chengdu and Bonn, with a focus on climate protection and sustainable urban development. The partnership between the two cities can thus generate synergies and cooperation in support of the transformation to a low-carbon development pathway in the two cities and initiate mutual learning processes.

Dirk Rommeney