

### **The United Nations in Bonn – For Sustainable Development Worldwide**

Bonn has managed over the past decade to shape for itself a new profile as the German City of the United Nations and a centre of the international dialogue on key issues of the future. The Bonn UN Campus is a visible symbol of this development. Since July 1996, Bonn is entitled to call itself a UN City. Ten years later, in July 2006, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel was able to hand the new branch office of the United Nations over to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The Federal Government had invested EUR 55 million into refurbishing the high-rise building which used to accommodate MP offices and is widely known by its nickname “Tall Eugene” (after the first name of a former President of Parliament). Almost all UN units residing in Bonn are assembled under its roof. The other, older MP office building is being rebuilt as an ecological pilot project to serve as the future seat of the UN Climate Secretariat (UNFCCC) and can go into service in spring 2012.

“The UN in Bonn – for sustainable development worldwide”: this is the common denominator of the UN units in Bonn. They are:

- the United Nations Volunteers Program (UNV)
- the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS)
- the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (UNEP/AEWA)
- the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (UNEP/ASCOBANS)
- the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats (UNEP/EUROBATS)
- the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe - Liaison Office in Germany (UNRIC)
- the UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC)
- World Health Organisation – Regional Office for Europe. European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO-ECEH)
- United Nations University. United Nations University Vice Rectorate in Europe (UNU-ViE)
- United Nations University - Institute for Environment and Human Security of the United Nations University (UNU-EHS)
- United Nations University – International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (UNU-IHDP)
- United Nations University – Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP), Operating Unit SCYCLE
- United Nations - Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC)
- United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction – Bonn Office (UN/ISDR)

- Consulting Unit of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation on Tourism and Biodiversity (UNWTO)
- United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER).

The UN Campus provides to all of them ideal working conditions and an environment rich in synergies. A special advantage is the close neighbourhood to the World Conference Center Bonn and to many other important partners. This is an excellent environment for co-operative action and for short-cut contacts. UN organisations, Federal Ministries and Federal Agencies, about 150 Non-Governmental Organisations, Research Institutions and the resident economic Global Players determine the character of Bonn as an international location. Increasingly, the city is turning into the hub of a network whose actors focus on the issues of sustainable and humane development.

Conference activities in Bonn are equally geared towards themes of global sustainability. The German United Nations City provides new platforms to constructive dialogue on the national, international and supranational levels. Time and again, fresh momentum emanates from Bonn and its actors on the road towards worldwide sustainable development. Whether climate, desertification, water, soil, biodiversity, or early warning – Bonn has developed into the German competence centre for environment, development and health. This synergy network of sustainability is reinforced by numerous partners from the areas of politics, organisations, industry, science, culture and NGOs of international scope. Among the latter are not only German organisations engaging in international issues and activities but also approximately 20 international Non-Governmental Organisations which have established their headquarters in Bonn since 1990. A few examples:

- The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) commits itself worldwide to the conversion of resources formerly used for military ends into resources for civil purposes, performing vital work in areas of crisis.
- The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has been co-ordinating the Paralympics, the Olympic Games for disabled persons, from Bonn since autumn 1999.
- Fair Trade Labelling Organisations International (FLO) co-ordinates and supports the work of the national Transfair Organisations
- The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international NGO striving for worldwide sustainable forest management by means of forest certification on the basis of comparable standards

As a conference location Bonn was able to prove its competence many times. To cite a few examples: the Conferences of the Parties to UN Conventions such as the Climate Summits in 1999 and 2001, the Petersberg Afghanistan Talks, the International Conference on Fresh Water in 2001, the International Conference on Renewable Energies in 2004, the International Early Warning Conference in 2006 and the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in May 2008 or the conference of the United Nations Department for Public Information and NGOs (DPI/NGO Conference) in September 2011.

So Bonn's central theme is sustainability – and the City practices what it preaches. It joined the city network ICLEI and the Climate Alliance of Cities. It affiliated itself to the United Nations Global Compact in 2011. The city has developed a concept of international co-operation and maintains sustainability-oriented project partnerships in addition to traditional city twinning, among others with Minsk (Republic of Belarus), Ulan Baatar (Mongolia), Bukhara (Uzbekistan), La Paz (Bolivia), Cape Coast (Ghana) and Chengdu (China). Due to competence acquired and successful networking, Bonn was able several times to organise, in co-operation with other partners (eg. ICLEI, GIZ), international local government pre-conferences on the eve of major international conferences, up to now on the issues of desertification, renewable energies, early warning and, most recently, biological diversity, as it has become increasingly evident that the approach and the experience of local governments are able to add substantial elements to the international debate. So Bonn does not only hold the role of an international location but is itself an actor for sustainability.

The foundations for today's international profile of Bonn were laid in the Berlin-Bonn Act of April

26, 1994, which stipulates as a central task to develop Bonn into a centre of development policy and a location for national, international and supranational organisations. This German location of international relations was further enhanced by the transfer from Berlin to Bonn of important organisations of development policy such as the German Foundation for International Development (DSE), the German Development Service (DED) and the German Institute for Development Policy (DIE). Moreover, Bonn became the principal seat of the GIZ when InWent, DED and GTZ merged. Together with the approximately 150 governmental, semi-governmental, church and private organisations, this resulted in yet another enhancement of this central theme. Worldwide contacts on issues of environment and of development co-operation are equally maintained by working-groups dealing with these topics and by industrial associations.

There are, moreover, science and research organisations as well as scientific institutions entertaining an intensive international exchange such as the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG – German Research Council), Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK – Association of Directors and Presidents of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions), Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service) and the Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation (AvH).

The Compensation Agreement also enhanced the field of science and added international accents. The foundation at the University of Bonn of the Centre of Development Research (Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung – ZEF) and the Centre of European Integration Studies (Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung – ZEI) was sponsored by funds from the Compensation Agreement. The ZEF above all entertains a close co-operation with development organisations, building a bridge between science and practical experience. The new IRENA Innovation and Technology Center (IITC), which is currently being established in Bonn, perfectly fits the city's international scientific profile.

So Bonn as an international location and platform of international dialogue is not a meaningless concept. Bonn makes excellent use of its opportunity to become the German Competence Centre for issues that will determine our future, and to bring together many partners of international scope to that end.

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