



GERMANY

USCHI EID, Governor

Let me express my sincere thanks to the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the City of Istanbul and their people for their invitation and the perfect management of this year's annual meeting. Their hospitality shows that they live in the good tradition of this country and of this city, which have been a bridge between the civilizations of Asia and Europe for millennia.

Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you most cordially upon your unanimous election. Our heartfelt thanks go to your predecessor, Mr. Tadao Chino. His presidency has preserved good traditions of the Bank and introduced important new traditions—and this has happened in a period in which ADB has held an important position within the international community in the efforts for sustainable development and against political, economic and social crises in Asia.

On the other hand, many Asian countries' economies are flourishing—and ADB has played an impressive part in many of these success stories. In parallel, the partnership between Asian and European economies has developed very dynamically. The large investment flows from Europe and Germany to Asia, which had stagnated temporarily, are once more increasing. And more and more Asian investors, in turn, are beginning to show interest, for example, in Germany as a business location.

Just a few months ago, we were all deeply shocked by the tsunami disaster that had a devastating impact on parts of Asia. This was paralleled by great solidarity with the survivors on the part of people all over the world. In Germany, too, there is great willingness to provide sustained assistance.

Now it is vital not only to use resources as efficiently as possible but also for Indonesia and Sri Lanka to do everything in their power to resolve the conflicts in their countries peacefully.

ADB, too, has responded to the disaster in the way in which we expected this “main bank” of Asia to act: quickly and without red tape, yet based on a long-term perspective, and relying on innovative financing from reserves and net income. It is particularly important for the Bank to help with reconstruction and rehabilitation that leads to economic, social and ecological conditions that are better and more sustainable than they were before.

The reemergence of poverty belts along the coasts must be prevented.

Tsunamis and earthquakes are matters of fate, they are unavoidable. But Asia also has other problems of similar proportions, namely the deficits with regard to the achievement of the MDGs—and they are human-made.

I would therefore like to make three appeals to the Bank, to the member states, to ourselves:

- First, we must find common paths to “pro-poor growth.” Growth must always be socially balanced. Lacking that, economic success and prosperity are built on shaky ground.
- Second, the Bank, we all together must help reduce deficits with regard to non-income MDGs. As the respected “family doctor” of Asia, ADB must identify, not least, the social and political causes of deficits and call on member states to undertake efforts to eliminate them.
- Third, it has become imperative for many countries of Asia to embrace environmental and resource protection and sustainable development. Otherwise, high growth rates will increasingly turn into self-deception, or even self-destruction. The economic and social damage caused by environmental degradation, polluted air, hazardous water and by the cost of necessary remedial action can quickly cancel out part of the growth that has been achieved through hard work.

The Bank and its member states together must join the efforts to achieve this MDG. This is all the more relevant given that the 58th UN General Assembly adopted a resolution making 2005 to 2015 the International Water for Life Decade, which started on World Water Day on 22 March 2005. However, it is not enough to take committed action for sustainable development if it does not extend beyond one’s national borders. Such an approach would hit back at us like a boomerang, because environmental degradation and damage to the climate have regional and global impacts.

Mr. Chairperson, in his inauguration speech President Kuroda gave figures to describe how much catching up Asia has to do in terms of infrastructure investment. What we found encouraging in this context was his reference to the huge savings potential and abundant exchange reserves in this continent. This obviously makes it possible to eliminate the infrastructure deficit without having to neglect poverty reduction. President Kuroda is quite right in regarding ADB, in its role of the most important development institution of Asia, as a catalyst for this process. Mr. President, you have Germany’s full support in this endeavor.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.