



**Speech by the Federal President
at Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi
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If you walk down the street in Berlin, it doesn't take long to run into a little piece of India – be it an Indian restaurant, a film poster or an advertisement for a yoga course. You see Indian students, businesspeople and tourists. And each year there are more Indians to encounter in Germany. This year, 25% more Indians are studying in Germany than just a year ago. There's a lot more India to be found in Germany than one might expect. Innovative thinkers in India developed the software and hardware that is found in many German products. And in the past year Indian firms have provided 26,000 jobs in Germany, with investment growing.

Globalisation cannot move our countries closer geographically, but it has brought Indians and Germans closer together than ever before in our shared history.

Germany regards India with both respect and curiosity. This has been the case since the days when India was a British colony. In this regard I am an utterly typical German: I have brought with me to India – as you might have guessed – curiosity and respect. I know that after India gained independence, many voices predicted a swift end to the Indian nation. They have been disabused of this notion. I also know how many saw no chance for democracy in a country whose diversity is unparalleled – these naysayers, too, have learned better.

When I lived in the German Democratic Republic, a now-defunct state that denied its citizens democratic rights and freedoms, I spent many decades longing for democracy. Today, living in the reunified Germany, democracy remains a cause very dear to my heart. Democracies and their champions matter greatly to me. That is why I intentionally chose India as the destination of my first longer trip to Asia: because a democracy should receive the first presidential visit.

I say this despite the problems that democracies face, here as well as in Europe, as a glimpse at your diverse and thriving media amply demonstrates. This morning I spoke extensively with

representatives of Indian civil society. The main topic we discussed was the situation of women in India. This is a sensitive issue that has attracted a great deal of international attention. Our conversation also soon turned to other challenges such as child labour, freedom of religion, and protection of minorities, including sexual minorities. This discussion showed us clearly just how difficult the real-life implementation of the rights guaranteed to all citizens can be in the face of widespread traditional mind-sets.

My discussion partners did not mince words. The openness that I experienced when speaking with them today is not the usual case on my international travels. On the contrary, I often find that cultural taboos make my encounters with others more difficult. Here in India, however, I have got the impression that just about any criticism that a foreign visitor might voice has already been expressed frankly and openly by Indians themselves.

You all have good reason to be proud of this openness. Openness is what makes it possible to redress grievances and to shape change peacefully. Dissent and open public debate are a part of democracy.

This openness also has its enemies. Suspicion is merited when cultural or religious traditions are invoked in order to nip discussions of change in the bud. When those with different views are physically attacked, the state has a responsibility to step in to protect them. India has experienced many painful attacks on its openness – both from within the country and from outside. A democracy must be able to defend itself, but at the same time it must always remain vigilant against giving up in the name of security the openness and freedom that should in fact be defended.

All around the world, the champions of terror and violence have an easy job wherever people live without prospects, wherever they feel excluded or unjustly treated. That is why it is so important to make public goods such as education and health care available to as many people as possible. How to strike the proper balance between individual initiative and public programmes to meet basic needs is also a topic of perennial discussion in Germany. In Germany we have had very positive experiences with adding a strong social component to a market economy. We have found that democracy requires dependable social equity.

But however a state may choose to balance different interests, I consider economic participation an indispensable pillar of any successful democracy. Political participation alone does not bring prosperity. Where there is no appreciable improvement in living conditions, the opponents of open societies can much more easily rile up sentiment against them. The economic reforms that India launched in 1991 represent a major step towards greater economic participation. The consequences of these reforms have altered the country and the

world. I can only encourage you to keep focusing on participation and openness in the economic sphere.

On the eve of Indian independence, Jawaharlal Nehru said, "Freedom and power bring responsibility." Both of our countries, Germany and India, possess both of these things, freedom and power. Neither of us regard ourselves as globally dominant superpowers, but both of us must ask ourselves seriously what we can do to best live up to our international responsibilities.

It appears to me that the strategic partnership we have maintained since 2000 provides a good starting point for common action. This partnership exists not only on paper, but also in real life. Our cabinets meet regularly, which we take as a sign of closeness and mutual respect, a special form of partnership that we have with only a few countries outside of Europe.

I am well aware of the discrepancy in the size of our countries. I am speaking not only as a German, but also implicitly as a European. And as a European I can say that on a continent that is growing ever closer together, Germany accepts its responsibility for Europe's well being and is playing a key role in resolving the European crisis. Like the Indian people, we Europeans do not hide our problems from the outside world. We do not sugarcoat anything. But at the same time I would like to ask you not to be led astray by prophecies of doom and gloom. Do not look at Europe exclusively through the lens of the eurosceptics, even if today's finest work in the field of apocalyptic predictions is being published in the English language. This crisis has given Europe an opportunity to re-orient itself. Ireland was the first Eurozone country to receive support from European Union and International Monetary Fund loans, and it has now returned to the market. Others will follow. Europe is on the right path. And we remain steadfast in our commitment to the common European currency.

In these times it is especially apparent how imbalanced and precarious the world's economic development remains. Whether in Europe or in India, we should soberly analyse structural problems and their causes rather than letting the symptoms of crisis lead us to hasty conclusions.

In recent years we have seen afresh how difficult it is to implement reforms. Only with political will and societal acceptance as well as time can reforms have an impact. Democratic societies in particular are accustomed to brokering among different groups and negotiating compromises. This may appear to slow down the reform process, but in fact it helps to anchor it within a society.

You in India also have a wealth of experience in establishing changes and reforms within a democratic discourse. We all know that India too faces further major economic challenges, that much more

remains to be done for a robust economy, sound finances and a stable currency.

Every country should play its part to overcome structural weaknesses and foster stable economic development. In international bodies such as the G20 and the International Monetary Fund, Germany advocates unwavering stability policy. India has made significant progress in recent decades, and I am confident that India can continue on its course of modernisation.

My confidence is rooted in the conviction that openness, domestic participation and democracy are the necessary conditions for development and progress. We should therefore also champion these principles as cornerstones of the world order.

I am happy that important Indian thinkers such as Nobel laureate Amartya Sen have pointed out the Indian roots of the concepts of self-governance, participatory decision-making and separation of powers. Democracy has many faces around the world. Its advocates are united by the fundamental notion of responsible people taking their destiny into their own hands and seeking to help shape the destiny of their nation. I welcome India's international profession of its values and rebuttal of those who would frame democracy as an exclusively "Western" idea. Indian thinkers also took part in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a declaration to which we remain bound to this day.

So how can we best support democracy and human rights around the world? I can very much understand that India's colonial past has given it a keen sense of when countries are forcing their own will upon others in the name of their values. At the same time, we have seen for decades how dictators and other authoritarian rulers use the allegedly "Western" heritage of human rights to qualify or negate their universal validity. Our two countries could work together to think more about how we can promote democracy and the universality of human rights worldwide. We could also consider how we can best bolster those who must fight, often at the risk of their own lives, for the rights that citizens of our countries can take for granted. And finally, we can also think about how these standards can be preserved even when it does not serve the interests of realpolitik. I know that this creates problems in encounters with many a country's leaders. But decades of experience in the domain of Soviet Communism taught me the importance of providing moral support to those who are taking a stand for freedom.

I have been following the development of the BRICS countries with keen interest. It is astonishing how a word coined by one British analyst at an American bank has become such a globally resonant political grouping – one whose common bond sometimes appears to be not the group members' shared interests, but rather their criticism of

existing global institutions. But even on this matter the group members do not share a consensus – just consider the matter of reforming the Security Council. I completely understand the criticism of inherited structures. But wouldn't it be better to renovate the global house together so that as many people as possible can feel comfortable in it rather than to build a new house next door?

The renovation of this global house will require compromises from architects and builders on all sides. Germany and India will be able to play an important role in designing it. Here I would like to name three areas in particular: security, development and climate protection.

Within the framework of the United Nations, Germany works worldwide on behalf of security. The first purpose named in Article 1 of the UN Charter is "To maintain international peace and security". We currently support this goal as the third-largest financial contributor and troop provider. India's engagement in United Nations peace missions is likewise significant. Time and again Indian soldiers have sacrificed their lives – most recently in South Sudan, where three Indian soldiers have been killed in the UN mission there. In the line of duty, far from home, these young men made the ultimate sacrifice for peace.

In view of the fact that India is operating in a far less secure neighbourhood than Germany, this commitment commands my greatest respect.

In today's world, conflicts between states are only some of the threats to peace and security that we see. Many conflicts play out within states. There are abuses by state security forces, but there are also human rights violations by non-state actors. Each situation is different, and must be judged on its own merits. It is clear to me that new concepts such as the global "responsibility to protect" have not yet matured enough to be accepted everywhere. We find ourselves in a field of tension between what we want and what we can do, between realpolitik and double standards. Responsibility to protect must not become the pretext for a new interventionism. At the same time, in our globalised world, all of our responsibility is growing – there is no more uncharted territory on the global map when it comes to massive human rights violations.

It would be gratifying if Indian experts joined in more in the discussions of what the international community could do together when crises are first emerging to prevent them from escalating. The greater the international consensus, the more effectively we can exhort governments to uphold their responsibility to protect their own population.

Back at home in Germany I encourage the notion that my country take on more responsibility in the world. Germany and India

share the hope for a reform of the United Nations Security Council. The Security Council should reflect the realities of today's world, not those of 1945. It would send an important signal about the legitimacy of the United Nations if some progress were finally made on this front by the UN's 70th anniversary at the latest.

This leads me to the second point, development. The Indian Government has explained to me just how massive the challenges of combatting poverty remain. While I am here in India I will take the time to get a first-hand view of life outside the major cities. The reports and statistics are stark: according to the World Bank, nearly 70% of the Indian population lives on less than two dollars a day. The Global Hunger Index, which addresses malnourishment among adults and children as well as child mortality, categorises India's situation as 'very serious', comparable with countries such as Niger and Mozambique.

This makes it only too understandable that the framework conditions for development and combatting poverty play a vital role in India. Germany is one of the world's leading donors – only the US and the UK make larger contributions. We will undoubtedly continue our commitment to development cooperation. We will also continue our bilateral cooperation with India. Germany is, after Japan, the second-largest bilateral donor, and on top of this come German contributions to European Union programmes. The fact that the new Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development has accompanied me on this visit is a sign of how important cooperation with India is to us.

International trade is important for India's development – even more important than aid money. It is encouraging to see that the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization has, after a long standstill, finally reached a series of decisions again. In future rounds, our two countries should work to keep shaping world trade to take different interests into account. Transparent, fair norms are important: they must be enforceable if need be, and all parties must submit to them. Our common goal should be an open trade system where all participants have free access to resources, not a system apportioned into exclusive spheres of interest.

When it comes to imports and exports, India is increasingly looking to the East. This is understandable in light of the potential for growth there. At the same time, though, the European Union remains India's most important foreign trade partner after the United Arab Emirates. Would it not be advisable to inject fresh impetus into the free trade agreement with the European Union? A high-level business delegation has accompanied me on this visit. German businesses have a keen interest in India, and together we have a great deal of untapped potential. But in order to harness this potential, we would like to see India strengthened as a business location. When deciding on

their commitments, companies look very closely not only at the size of the market and the production costs, but also at the level of legal certainty, patent protection and transparent administration.

Now to my third point, climate protection. The potential consequences of global warming pose an immediate threat to the people of India. Floods and droughts are already a bitter reality for many Indians, and it is difficult to imagine what will happen if they keep becoming more frequent. Historically speaking, the main causes of climate change do not lie in India, but India's emissions carry global weight and will continue to rise. In view of the great challenges of combatting poverty, I understand that India does not want to allow its economic development to be too tightly restrained. But an internationally binding system cannot succeed without the participation of the country that produces the world's third-most carbon emissions. The world can only hold climate change in some sort of check if there are binding rules for all of us. It is profoundly important for us to work together on solutions for our climate.

Germany is taking an ambitious and difficult step for a highly developed country by phasing out its use of nuclear energy in the medium term while at the same time striving to reduce its harmful emissions significantly. Some international observers have criticised this move, but we believe that an economy's environmental sustainability and its growth need not be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, we regard the combination of both as the formula for future success. The sustainable energy sector is already creating many jobs.

Renewable energy and energy efficiency are an important part of the Indian-German agreement on development cooperation that is being concluded as part of my state visit. This agreement offers India the opportunity to avoid today the mistakes that other countries made in the past in their use of resources. The creativity and innovative strength of our countries' best minds can help us to bring the renovated global house which I previously mentioned up to the highest standards of energy efficiency.

Because I began my political career relatively late in life, I have been heavily influenced by other experiences. When I see that domestic and foreign policy today is not shaped exclusively by state actors, I am pleased that citizens are using the spaces open to them to work for their visions of a more just world. I consider the people who participate as civil society actors to be an essential part of a vibrant democracy. I am just as pleased when I see dedicated people crossing international borders to make contacts, dismantle prejudices and forge alliances – for example, to protect our climate. The world's well-being is far too important to be left exclusively in the hands of governments.

Students have always been an important wellspring of change at the national level. Thanks to global interconnectedness, they can now

also provide important impetus internationally. Whether in a future government office or as engaged citizens, all of you can help improve and renovate the global house – regardless of whether you've studied architecture. I am confident that our house will benefit greatly from as many joint German-Indian building components as possible.