

**Speech by Ambassador Stefan Duppel
on the occasion of the 45th anniversary
of the establishment of diplomatic relations
between Mongolia and the Federal Republic of Germany
on 01.02.2019 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia**

Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to thank you, Minister, for your warm words, and to extend to you, ladies and gentlemen, my own sincere welcome to today's reception.

As the Minister pointed out, German-Mongolian relations go back much longer than 45 years - and were we to celebrate the establishment of relations with East Germany, we would talk of 70 years next year...

Nonetheless, the year 1974 constitutes a special milestone in our joint history. In the early 70s, West German foreign policy, together with its partners in the West and in the East, set out on new paths to overcome the paralysis of a world separated into blocs and the division of Germany.

This policy, for which *Willy Brandt* received the Nobel Peace Prize, was christened "*Wandel durch Annäherung*", "change through rapprochement". This rapprochement included Mongolia and culminated in the establishment of diplomatic relations on 31 January 1974.

Looking back, we know that historically speaking it was only a short way – 15 years – from rapprochement to change, from 1974 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. And shortly afterwards, a democratic new beginning dawned for Mongolia, heralding in a new phase in our relations.

Even if not all those involved were aware of it at the time, 1974 the door was opened a crack allowing the winds of change, the winds of freedom to enter. That alone should be reason enough for us to be celebrating today!

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since then, German politics has been pursuing a clear goal. We want to support Mongolia as it continues along its development path shaped by self-determination, freedom and prosperity.

Promoting democracy, developing the rule of law and strengthening civil society have since become important pillars of our cooperation.

Beyond that, a network has developed that makes Mongolia a unique partner of Germany in this region. Just to name four examples:

1. Our close economic ties are bolstered by one of the few treaties on raw materials and technology Germany concluded worldwide; and it is our intention to further intensify these ties.
2. Our joint military operation in Afghanistan is unprecedented – for 10th years, the security of German soldiers lie in the hands of their Mongolian partners, as they secure the German camp in Masar-i-Sharif;
3. German development projects totalling 450 million euros make Mongolia per capita our number one development partner in the world;
4. An ever growing educational and cultural network comprises the German-Mongolian University GMIT, 12 schools, 12 vocational training centers and the Goethe-Institute.

It is the people who ensure that our relations thrive. One percent of Mongolians obtained their qualifications in Germany and speak German, a higher percentage than in any other country in Asia and beyond.

So when we remember today how diplomacy opened the doors in 1974, we should first and foremost thank these people – some of them are with us today - who have made active use of this opportunity.

They have overcome geographical and cultural distances to make the ties between Germany and Mongolia what they are today: an unparalleled bond of friendship.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To conclude, let me point out that in this anniversary year, through a large number of events in both Mongolia and Germany, we want to inspire in particular the young people to help shape our common future.

I look forward to seeing you at these events that will hopefully help us to write many new chapters of the German-Mongolian success story.

Thank you for your attention!