On Fostering our Relationship

Remarks by the newly appointed Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Mongolia, His Excellency Joern Rosenberg, on the occasion of the Day of German Unity 2019

When Frank Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, visited Mongolia as Foreign Minister in 2014, marking the 40th anniversary of establishing Diplomatic Relations, he said: “We have respect for and appreciation of the transformation Mongolia has undergone in the past few years. We are impressed by the strength of civil society and by the patience and resolve shown by those in positions of political responsibility as the country modernises.” I could not agree more with these words. What was true five years ago is even more the case today as we celebrate 45 years of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and Germany.

However, ties between our countries date back much longer. It is almost 100 years ago since in the mid-1920s the first Mongolians went to Germany to study, and still today our cooperation in the education sector proves to be a solid pillar in our bilateral relations. Currently around 700 Mongolian students are studying in Germany, many with a DAAD scholarship. Throughout Asia, Mongolian students are amongst the most successful in receiving DAAD scholarships. By reason of their outstanding German language skills which are one of the key factors in their success. Since my wife and I arrived here on our new post in August we were amazed by how well lots of Mongolians speak German. Around 30,000 people, accounting for roughly 1% of the population, speak German, while over 3,000 students are currently learning German in one of our 12 partner schools throughout the country. This number has almost tripled since the German partner school project was established ten years ago.

The cooperation in the field of education finds its logical extension in our cooperation in science. In particular, Germany and Mongolia have worked close together in the field of archaeology. For over 20 years the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), the University of Bonn and the Mongolian Academy of Sciences (MAS) have been conducting joint excavations in the ancient capital Karakorum which will commemorate its 800th anniversary in 2020. By all means, the presidents of both countries have served as patrons of this project since the year 2000. In addition to that, Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Mongolia in 2011, and together with former president Elbegdorj they decided to establish a joint German-Mongolian university in Nalaikh. Fortunately, this year the German-Mongolian Institute for Resources and Technology has already celebrated its 5 year anniversary and has seen its first class graduating.

Another important part in our relationship is our military cooperation. This cooperation goes back to 1995 when the first partnership agreement was signed to support the Mongolian troops in its transformation process to a democratically controlled army. For ten years Mongolian soldiers have been guarding the German camp in Mazar-i-Sharif in Afghanistan. As a token of appreciation for this cooperation I had the honour to award the vice-chief of the General Staff of the Mongolian Armed Forces, Major General Badarch, who is one of the architects of this partnership, with the Gold Cross of Honour of the German Army (“Ehrenkreuz der Bundeswehr in Gold”) the highest decoration the German Bundeswehr can award. In one of the most important aspects of our military cooperation German soldiers have been engaged in training fellow Mongolian soldiers who are highly recognised members of international peacekeeping missions.

A field of cooperation, especially important to me, are our economic relations. Germany already is the second largest European economic partner for Mongolia but there is certainly potential for improvement in this area. I have learned that exports to China alone account for over 90% of Mongolia’s exports while the trade volume with Germany accounts for just over 100 million Euros. Our partnership agreement regarding cooperation in the sectors of natural resources, industry and technology dating already from 2011, sets the framework for further action. It is on both sides to fill that agreement with new life. In order to foster our trade relations and to attract foreign investments, a stable and reliable political and legal framework for investors is crucial. I understand and highly appreciate the efforts made by the Mongolian government to further improve this framework and to make Mongolia an even more attractive place for foreign investors. With regards to this matter, I greatly welcome the remarks made by Gombojav ZandandBat, speaker of the Great Hural, on October 1st expressing the parliament’s commitment to fighting corruption and its willingness to welcoming further foreign investments. We are more than happy to cooperate with our Mongolian friends on this endeavour.

Relations between our two states are in better shape than ever. During my time as Ambassador I will dedicate my work to foster our comprehensive partnership, to further improve our trade relations and to foster ties between our countries and the peoples. To achieve that I reach out to all Mongolians during my vision.