

Welcome Remarks of Heiner Naumann, Resident Representative of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), African European Party Dialogue, September 4-5, 2017

His Excellency, President of the Republic of Namibia,
Dr. Hage Geingob

Hon Nangolo Mbumba SG SWAPO Party

Hon Minister for International Affairs Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah

Former Minister of Justice of the Federal Republic of Germany Prof Herta Däubler-Gmelin

Comrades and Friends from 25 African and European political parties.

Excellencies and Guests

ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED

I have the honour and even more the pleasure to welcome you on behalf of FES to this African European Party Dialogue on ***How to Overcome Inequality as a Political Challenge***, which we have jointly organized with the SWAPO Party.

I must admit, that in the 35 years I have been allowed to work for FES, I never had the chance to address such an impressive assembly of political parties.

I assume I don't have to explain the work of FES in Africa to you. You all know how close FES is to the German Social Democracy, the European socialist and social democratic parties as well as all international bodies committed to our core values. Our national, regional and global projects (10.000) are designed to strengthen the network of those who strive with us to improve the living

standards of the majority in the countries in which we work.

2017 is a year in which the partnership between Africa and Europe has been strengthened by very relevant conferences and projects. These include among others: The G 20 meeting in July in Hamburg, The Africa-EU summit which takes place in November in Abidjan

But all these meetings would remain incomplete without a dialogue between the forces that shape and design visions and transforming them into policies for our countries.

It is, the ruling political parties, who determine the future policies of the countries.

As political parties are, unfortunately, not so visible on the international scene, the SWAPO Party and FES concluded that a dialogue among socialist, social democratic and democratic parties is long overdue. This dialogue introduces a formalized venue for enhancing relations among like-minded political groups throughout the 2 continents and, even more significantly, offers a platform to address challenges which we can overcome only jointly.

We should not forget:

that the forces of democratic socialism have successfully supported the process of decolonization in Southern Africa;

that we are the ones demanding and working for a social dimension of globalisation; and

that we are the ones who are trying to tame capitalism, striving to control the negative excesses of the neo-liberal economy.

Every era provides its own, unique new challenges. And one of the biggest threats for the future of our societies is the growing inequality between those who have and those who have not. We are all well-aware of the concerning facts and figures.

The studies from the British OXFAM studies cannot be quoted often enough.

The richest eight people in this world own as much as the poorest 3.6 Billion. As recently as 2015, it took the top 62 to own as much as the poorest 3.6 billion. In 2010, we needed the richest 388 to match the wealth of the lowest 3.6 billion.

Between 2010 and 2015 the resources of the 62 wealthiest individuals increased by 0,5 Trillion US (\$542 billion US \$), whereas the poorest half of mankind lost a collective 1 trillion dollars.

Generally speaking inequality segregates social power relations and opportunities, undermines democracy and political stability and intensifies alienation within societies.

I am deeply convinced that the future of this world will not be measured by the prosperity of the rich, but rather through the abolition of structural causes of inequality.

The policies of the SWAPO and President Dr. Hage Geingob in Namibia have shown that these processes can be reversed. The Gini Coefficient has been reduced in Namibia during the past 25 years and the political will to reduce it even further has been expressed consistently throughout the current leadership.

It is against this background that SWAPO Party and FES have chosen ***“How to overcome inequality”*** as the theme for this conference.

All political parties present here face the same challenge, but solutions can be found only on a global level. Let's not forget, that internationalism has been a characteristic of parties committed to the core values of democratic socialism.

The fact that The **SDG 10** :

Reduce inequality within and among countries

has become one of the sustainable development goals was only feasible through the joint efforts of countries governed by parties committed to our core values.

Allow me to quote only 4 Targets of SDG 10:

- By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average
- By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of

age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic status

- Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

And If one uses one of these internet search machine like google and searches for:

How to overcome inequality

you will find close to 20. Mio contributions.

By studying them one can see that the policies, strategies and solutions to overcome inequality are already discussed and developed.

- Check on illicit outflows
- Introduction of a Progressive income Tax
- Introduction of a Global Wealth Tax as proposed by Thomas Piketty
- A living Wage

Among others

But equally important:

It's the political will which needs to be strengthened.

I hope that this conference will become a milestone in order to strengthen the political will.

Allow me to conclude with these few remarks. I wish each of us 2 days of fulfilling deliberations which hopefully lead

to joint political initiatives. I hope that existing personal contacts are strengthened and new liaisons and friendships are formed.

But above all I encourage us all to remember, when we are back in our national environments, that we are not alone. We are part of a strong international family committed to Solidarity, Justice and Equality.

I thank you.