

Global partnership – thoughts on a new leitmotif for international politics

**Lecture given by former Federal President Horst Köhler
at the University of Tübingen**

Tübingen, 13 December 2013

English translation, original in German.

One week after the death of Nelson Mandela it is quite impossible to speak about international politics without calling to mind this giant of humanity. Nelson Mandela showed the world how peaceful change is possible, and what truthfulness, mutual understanding and reconciliation can achieve. My encounters with him strengthened my conviction that what the world needs is a general awareness of our common interests, and of how we can work together to achieve these, with people the world over united by shared objectives, values and rules. If there were more Nelson Mandelas in this world, I would not need to say so much today about partnership. As Kofi Annan put it, ‘As we mourn his passing and honour his memory, the task for leaders and citizens alike is to dare to follow his example – in every corner of Africa and across the world.’ So I wonder: what can we learn from the example of Nelson Mandela? Let us thus dedicate our discussion this evening to his memory.

When I came to prepare for this lecture, I realised that it has been almost exactly ten years since I gave my inaugural lecture here at the University of Tübingen in October 2003. Back then I spoke about ‘Orientation for better globalisation’. Much has happened since then. The insolvency of one international bank, for instance, triggered a global financial and economic crisis that is not yet overcome. And it is becoming more and more certain that climate change is man-made, and that the consequences are already disastrous: since the beginning of this still young century, natural disasters have caused more than 2.5 trillion dollars worth of damage.

Today I would like to look again at this interdependent world, but from a different perspective. I am considerably less patient today than I was ten years ago. I am not here today as Managing Director of the IMF (as I was then) or as Federal President (as I was later), but as a citizen whose work both in Germany and abroad has taught him one very important thing – the fate of the global community has become so inextricably interlinked, in economic, ecological, social and moral terms, and with such speed, that we urgently need a paradigm shift that at last takes account of this reality at political level. International politics needs a new spirit of togetherness, and a new leitmotif of cooperation. It needs the spirit and the leitmotif of partnership. And I am convinced that this is not only necessary, but also possible.

Let us step back and consider the world as it is at the start of the 21st century: in 1943, the year I was born, the total population of the world was 2.3 billion. In my lifetime this figure has more than tripled; today there are more than 7.1 billion people in the world. When my son is as old as I am today, in the middle of this century, the world will be home to more than 9

billion people. And not only are there more and more of us, we are also living longer: in 1950, when I had just started school, only 1% of the world's population had a life expectancy of over 70 years. Today 57%, more than half of the people of the world, can expect to live this long. This trend is the reflection of an incredible economic and social transformation: 2 billion people around the world already belong to the global middle class, and by 2030 another 3 billion people are set to join them. *The economic net that spans the world is becoming more and more finely meshed* and over the last few decades this has made possible the greatest surge in prosperity the world has ever seen.

But that is only half the story. Charles Dickens began his novel *A Tale of Two Cities* with the now legendary words, 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times'. Is that the motto of this millennium? The following facts and figures are also part of the great global panorama at the start of the 21st century: today, about one billion people still live in absolute poverty; one eighth of all people around the world still go to bed hungry every evening; almost one sixth of all children are still undernourished. The global gap between the extremely poor and the extremely rich is actually widening. In 2011, a total of 1,400 billionaires – only a few more people than would fit in this lecture theatre – had an income equivalent to those of the poorest 1.9 billion people together. Can anybody believe that this situation is tenable?

Now, we could of course say, 'What is the problem? There has always been poverty and inequality. Let's be happy about the progress made. We can tweak a little here and fine-tune a little there in our development policy, and just carry on ...'.

There are two fundamental points I would like to make against this kind of attitude.

First, we are currently experiencing a technological revolution, which, driven by the internet, is making it easier to access information around the globe. The poor people of our world are better networked with the rest of the globe than ever before thanks to television and the internet. Although only 4.5 billion people have access to a toilet, 6 billion have access to a mobile phone. This means that global differences, and the advantages of a comfortable western lifestyle, are plain for all to see, and most people find the latter attractive. But we can also see much more clearly in the opposite direction. When a factory in Bangladesh collapses, as it did last April, and 1,129 people lose their lives – people who worked for a pittance under inhuman and degrading conditions to sew clothes for us western consumers – the images of the dead flicker across our flat-screen TVs; the background is shared on Facebook and nobody can claim that they didn't know anything about it. When 359 people are fished out of the sea dead off the coast of Lampedusa, after drowning on the way to the promised land of Europe, we cannot see on our screens the shame that European leaders should feel in the face of their failure to provide help when it was needed, but we can see the bodies – and nobody can claim that they didn't know anything about it. Technological developments are making the stark contrasts that exist in our world plain to everybody, to those who reap the benefits and to those who suffer the consequences. *The technological and social net that spans the world is becoming more and more finely meshed.*

Secondly, the rise of the global middle class will bring our planet to the brink of disaster if we continue to follow traditional growth patterns. The demand for natural resources has never

been so high. To meet the needs of the world's ever growing population, we will need 30% more water, 40% more energy and 50% more food by 2030. Every year we lose about 13 million hectares of forest, mostly to provide more farmland, which is impacting massively on the global ecological balance. The historically unique scale of loss of biodiversity brings with it risks we can only begin to imagine. And if we are really to limit global warming to a rise of two degrees Celsius, between now and 2050 we cannot emit more than about 750 billion tonnes of CO₂ from fossil fuels into our atmosphere. But even if we were to keep emissions at today's level, we would exceed this limit by 2040. If we are to meet the target, we must cut emissions drastically, rather than increasing them as we have done to date.

Everything then leads to the question – on what kind of substance should this growth that brings us closer to the vision of a world of “prosperity for all” be based?

Our modern lifestyle is coming up against its limits. Climate change, perhaps the single largest problem we will leave to our children, is above all the greatest market failure in the history of mankind – because the individuals and the companies responsible are not called on to pay for the damage they have caused. In our ever smaller world there are fewer and fewer opportunities to pass on the consequences of our actions to other countries or future generations. If the entire world were to use resources and energy at the same rate as we do in Europe, we would need four planets in reserve. And, in the same way that decisions taken in the USA and Europe have ecological impacts on the rest of the world, in the very near future decisions taken in China, India and Brazil will have massive impacts on us. *The ecological net that spans the world is becoming more and more finely meshed.*

As Jürgen Habermas put it, the world has long been condemned to be an ‘involuntary community of shared risks’. Yet in spite of all economic, technological and ecological convergence, it is clear that the political response lags far behind developments, and that our politics is hardly able to manage and shape our globalised world.

II.

So that is what our world looks like. What do we do now? Various options are on offer: There are those that would simply close their eyes to the truth, asserting jovially that ‘it's always worked out so far’. There are the stoics, who shrug their shoulders and say, ‘That's just the way it is.’ Then there are those who would like to creep under what they see as the cosy blanket of local or national concerns, who try to curl up and keep their distance from the rest of the world; and when I look ahead to the next elections to the European Parliament, I cannot help but have major misgivings: Against the background of worldwide and global uncertainty, political extremists and demagogues are dangerously oversimplifying issues and spreading the illusion that a country would do better if it simply opted out of globalisation, ending partnership and solidarity with other nations. The fear of change can quickly turn into aggression against diversity, and self-doubt into nationalism. This ‘anti’ response, while differently packaged, can also be seen in other political camps. For example, we can see the emergence of what Peter Sloterdijk has mockingly termed ‘ecological Calvinism’, i.e. the dream of a radical departure from everything that belongs to our modern lifestyle, the renunciation of all the pleasures and sins of progress. Support for this path to a clear

conscience comes almost exclusively from the prosperous industrialised countries, where it is easy to preach self-denial in the form of not having a second car or not taking a second holiday every year. For many people in developing countries, by contrast, this sort of hypocrisy means giving up their second meal of the day, renouncing the chance of ever owning a second pair of shoes, or abandoning their dream of sending a second child to secondary school.

Then of course there is the option of simply resigning ourselves to our fate, capitulating in the face of the inevitable end of humanity as we know it, with the great Mephistophelean sigh ‘And ruin waits you in the end.’ There are two variations to this response – the *cheerfully* cynical and the *depressively* cynical. The cheerfully cynical have capitulated but want to party on to the bitter end, adopting a devil-may-care attitude. The depressively cynical variation can be found, for instance, in *Ten Billion*, a book written by the British scientist Stephen Emmott. The author explores the question of what a world population of 10 billion will mean – only to shrug his shoulders in the last sentence of the book and quote a friend and colleague who, in view of the challenges ahead, proposes to ‘teach my son how to use a gun’. So, does that take us back to Thomas Hobbes’ description of the state of nature of mankind *bellum omnium contra omnes*, literally the war of all against all? Learning to shoot to prepare for the future?

You will not be surprised to hear that I absolutely and passionately object to scenarios of this sort. There is a way to achieve a better, more equitable, more environmentally friendly world – a viable world that we can enjoy living in, all of us, in the north and the south, in the east and the west.

III.

Over the past year I have been reflecting on this precise issue along with 26 other individuals from around the globe. In August 2012, Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, appointed us to the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We were charged with drawing up an initial proposal for ‘a bold and practical’ development agenda beyond 2015. In other words we were to consider what common goals the international community should set itself for the decades to come. Back in 2001 a set of common goals was adopted, which became known throughout the world as the Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs. They concentrated primarily on reducing poverty, and on improving health and education. The best known of the Millennium Development Goals is MDG 1 – to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty. The MDGs were to be achieved by 2015, and although it appears that MDG 1 will be attained, primarily thanks to progress in China, the overall results are mixed. So what is to happen after 2015?

After months of consultations, discussions and dialogue with civil society, the academic and research community and the business community, we submitted a report in May this year to the United Nations Secretary-General laying out our proposals for a post-2015 development agenda. Although views diverged on some details, we all agreed that ‘business as usual’ is not an option, and that the enormous challenges of the 21st century call for a radical transformation of economies and societies across our planet. That means that the post-2015

agenda must be a universal agenda, with goals that apply to all nations; developing countries, emerging economies and industrialised states.

We believe that five big transformative shifts of attitude and action are necessary to drive global change.

1. Leave no one behind

We all agreed that it is possible to end poverty. Our goal must be not to reduce extreme poverty by some percentage or another, but to eradicate it completely by 2030. And we go even further: in the vision of the High Level Panel, we must reach for prosperity for all. This entails ensuring that everybody is supplied with drinking water, that they have access to irrigation and roads, energy grids, education facilities and health care. For this to happen, we need across-the-board gender equality, protection of minorities and human rights.

2. Put sustainable development at the core

My understanding of sustainability is that we leave our children a world in which they can enjoy at least the same degree of freedom that we have today. That will not be possible with our current patterns of consumption and production. Politicians must not be afraid to regulate if this means shaping market conditions to provide an incentive for businesses to operate in an environmentally responsible way, and ensuring that they cannot simply pass on the bill for the pollution they cause to the population as a whole. The principle that the polluter pays must be rigorously enforced around the globe. And massive investments are needed in the development of revolutionary technical solutions to drastically reduce the consumption of natural resources and energy.

3. Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth

The Panel urges everyone to gauge the usefulness of growth by whether or not it generates income and jobs for all. By 2030 there will be 600 million more people on the global labour market than there are today, looking for perspectives.

The components of inclusive quantitative and qualitative growth are no secret: they are above all education, research and development, investment in infrastructure and the general transformation of economies such that resources are extracted and utilised in an environmentally sound manner. Resource-rich states must stop earning their money purely by exporting raw materials. They must build up processing industries at home. Growth that generates jobs presupposes entrepreneurial freedom, the rule of law and vigorous steps to stamp out corruption.

4. Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all

For a long time, we did not fully appreciate the importance of sound institutions for peaceful progress. And freedom from violence and conflict is not only a fundamental human right, but also the foundation on which prosperity is built. At the same time, more and more people worldwide are increasingly calling for transparent, open governments that are accountable to their citizens. Access to justice, freedom from discrimination and unlawful persecution, and

the right to be heard on decisions that affect them – these are both development goals per se and the preconditions for development itself.

5. Forge a new global partnership

And that brings me to the title of my lecture. We asked whether we need a new paradigm for international politics, whether we need a leitmotif for the post-2015 development agenda that at last takes account of the strong interconnectedness of our planet. Our answer was clear and unanimous: yes, we need a new paradigm in international politics. In other words, we need more than just a new or different list of development goals. The Panel agreed that the post-2015 agenda must be underpinned by a new spirit of solidarity, cooperation for mutual benefit and mutual accountability. This spirit must be based on a common understanding of global wellbeing and global ethics. We term the *political realisation* of this spirit the ‘global partnership’. It is based on two principles: firstly, national policies must take into account the imperatives of the global common good – i.e. think globally, act locally. Secondly though, and conversely, national governments must identify multilateral solutions to many problems that affect them at local level but can only be addressed at international level, i.e. ‘think locally, act globally’. These two principles must be the common thread running through all political action in the 21st century – as new leitmotif of international politics, as global partnership.

On the basis of the five big transformative shifts laid out by the Panel, we identified 12 illustrative goals, which specify what the international community should achieve by 2030. Each goal has certain targets, for which various indicators have been drawn up; these can be used to measure the extent to which the goal has been achieved. The report produced by our Panel (which is available online) is to be used to stimulate discussion in intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 agenda. The United Nations General Assembly is to make a final decision in September 2015.

IV.

If you’re still with me, you might now be thinking that it’s very nice that Horst Köhler and the High Level Panel have so much political imagination, that they believe in all that is good in people and that they think that a better world is possible. But, you might say, is this ‘global partnership’ not utopic, a beautiful vision, the reflection of forced optimism, all in all entirely unrealistic and thus incapable of carrying us forward? Or, even worse, does this sort of rhetoric not seek to mask the actual asymmetries in the world? Is it more than a verbal fig leaf for the strong, behind the cover of which they can pursue their old power politics? I must admit, these are all concerns that have gone through my mind too. That is why I jotted down my thoughts on this new leitmotif, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to share them with you here today. I can start by telling you the conclusion I came to: I firmly believe that the global partnership is not the brainchild of naïve idealism. No, it is a demonstration of *realpolitik* because there is no other way we can resolve our problems.

My deliberations start with the assumption that our politics, in Germany, Europe and throughout the world, is still based on a political conception of the world that is now far removed from reality, and that this fundamental misunderstanding is an obstacle to genuinely cooperative policies. I have therefore focused my thoughts about a global partnership on four key concepts of politics. As a guiding leitmotif for international politics, a global partnership

demands firstly that we take a new look at the *principle of sovereignty*, secondly it must explore the *legitimacy* of a new understanding of sovereignty, thirdly it must look at *national interests* in the light of global wellbeing, and fourthly it must ask *what common values are to underpin the partnership*. Now, that all sounds very abstract. I would like to break down each of these four key issues, come closer to some of the paradoxes that a leitmotif of this sort will bring with it – in the hope that people who are cleverer than myself will have more to add.

Let us look first at sovereignty. Even the muscle-flexing of power politics, as waning and emerging superpowers attempt to leave their mark on the global stage, can hardly conceal the fact that the sovereignty of the nation state, defined as the absolute state monopoly over the use of force within a given territory, combined with the absolute freedom from intervention by any other state, is increasingly becoming an illusion. Open markets, open societies and open technologies transcend even the best protected national borders. Pandemics, natural disasters, international terrorism, migration, climate change, international financial crises, world trade – you name it... the greatest global problems can only be addressed at a level above that of the individual nation state. Peter Sloterdijk puts the great irony of this development in a nutshell, ‘Paradoxically, globalisation develops an impact that directly contradicts its own fundamental direction: by pushing back borders across the board it forces restrictions across the board’.

Alongside the empirical view, a normative perspective exists. The erosion of the sovereignty of the nation state that we can observe is not only the manifestation of growing global interconnectedness, but also the result of the *moral* pressure that is increasingly coming to bear on the principle of sovereignty. We need only think back to Rwanda and Srebrenica, where sovereignty – in terms of the right to non-intervention by external forces – was abused to cover up genocide and offered as a cheap excuse for the failure of the global community to take action. On the basis of this bitter experience, an understanding of *sovereignty as responsibility* has emerged (the thinkers at the United Nations term it ‘responsible sovereignty’) based on two fundamental premises: firstly, only states which respect and protect the fundamental rights of their citizens may invoke full sovereignty, and secondly, the responsibility to protect the population will be transferred to the international community if a state cannot or will not meet this responsibility, which can as a last resort entail the duty to intervene militarily. In 2005 this concept was recognised by the heads of state and government present at the General Assembly of the United Nations. This marks a radical shift in the way states understand sovereignty – even if this is the point that sparks the most controversies, and although we are still a long way from answering all questions, including the danger of arbitrary action or the interests of power politics linked to military intervention. I cannot explore the concept of ‘responsibility to protect’ in detail here today, but I believe that this discussion is necessary and that it can generate important impetus in efforts to define state sovereignty in this millennium.

Should we not push further the idea of ‘sovereignty as responsibility’ and look at it in a more comprehensive context? In our interconnected world, states today have a responsibility not only towards their own citizens, but also towards the global community. They ought then to be required to exercise their sovereignty in such a way that it does not have any adverse impact on the sovereignty or liberty of *other* states. This would imply that sovereignty would

have to help protect and provide – rather than undermine – global public goods, including the environment and security. As Jürgen Habermas put it, ‘In this interdependent global society, congruence between those *acting* and those *affected* is increasingly rare.’ Perhaps a state can only claim full sovereignty if this congruence is achieved in full. Where it does not exist, for instance in climate policy, the old logic of sovereignty as a blank cheque for nation states can no longer apply.

Is the departure from the traditional understanding of the sovereignty of the nation state not equivalent to capitulation, a tacit realisation that a state cannot take action? Forced to their knees by the dynamics of globalisation, should nation states effectively commit suicide because they fear death? No. It is not a question of ‘scaling back the state’. The paradox of sovereignty in the 21st century could be that, by relinquishing certain sovereign tasks or sharing these with other states, the nation state in fact retains its ability to act. Climate policy is the best example. Any discussion of a new understanding of sovereignty must, however, demonstrate an appropriate level of respect for the cultural diversity of different peoples.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of a new understanding of sovereignty is the *legitimacy* of political decisions in the international context, and I freely admit that I too am still seeking the answer here. This century, at least, there will be no world government to resolve our global problems, no global Leviathan, and I resoundingly reject the authoritarian phantasies of many critics of growth, who believe that the global transformation of our societies to achieve sustainability is only feasible through force. No, we must take *international law* seriously, we must strengthen it and develop it, because the global partnership will be all the stronger in the long term the more it builds on the primacy of law between peoples. Over and above this, we must become cleverer and more innovative in the development of solutions where international cooperation and national policies intermesh and inspire one another – one example could be the post-2015 agenda as a framework for common objectives of the international community with substantial voluntary national inputs. And finally, we can help enhance the legitimacy of global politics by raising the quality of global discourse, involving more people, and making the various consultation and decision-making processes more transparent.

Legitimacy, though, is not only a question of the *process* – of how a decision is made – but also a question of the *substance*. What exactly, for instance, is the wellbeing and welfare of the German people that German cabinet ministers, chancellors and indeed federal presidents in their oath of office pledge to promote? And that brings us to the next key concept in my thoughts on the leitmotif of the global partnership – national interest.

One of the greatest obstacles to achieving a world in which cooperative solutions shape the future is, I believe, an incorrect or at least obsolescent understanding of national interest, which self-styled ‘realists’ see as the driving productive force behind egoistic state actions. They see the world as an ocean on which every state rows its own boat, while international politics is charged with ensuring that everybody can row unhindered and that the boats do not collide.

Yet I believe: we are all in the same boat, and have been for some time. But so many people in the boat are so busy defending and taking care of their own oars that nobody can or wants to deal with the leak that is plain for all to see in the middle of the boat ...

But that's enough metaphors for the time being. The following simple conclusion makes the 21st century so fundamentally different from all previous centuries: in our interconnected world there is less and less a national interest that is worth defending against other nations in the long term. There are, of course, very real conflicts of interest, and these will always exist. However, we would be making excellent progress if we could recognise two things: firstly, conflicts of interest along nationally defined lines are becoming increasingly rare. The winners and losers in the wake of certain decisions are not entire states and entire populations, but specific groups or branches of industry within these states. Any actor blocking a cooperative global solution in the name of national interests is often acting against a great many interests within that nation. Secondly, and this would seem to me to be the most important point for constructive political action: most 21st century conflicts are not about 'us' and 'them', but between us and our grandchildren, between short-term and long-term interests. In the long term our fates are so inextricably linked that the further we look into the future, the more the interests of different countries converge. No country, no matter how rich and powerful it is, can maintain its prosperity in the long term if it fails to take into account the prospects and wellbeing of other countries. Here is one example: the British economist Sir Nicholas Stern has calculated that taking decisive action to halt climate change could cost us 1% of the gross domestic product of every country on the planet. The long-term costs of failing to act, however, would be much greater for all of us – they would be *absolutely stupendous!* In this case humanity cannot afford to wait to learn from experience.

When I talk about the global common good and global interests, I do not mean everyone agreeing on everything, an ominous globe-spanning *volonté generale*, a general will which we must all accept and then everything will be all right. There are always going to be divergent objectives, and dilemmas; they are one of the fundamental constants in politics. A concept of global partnership does not attempt to negate these conflicts. Rather our aim must be to lend greater weight to the global, long-term perspective, and to make sure this standpoint is heard. To put it another way, it is not the fact that conflicting objectives exist that is the problem, but the way we deal with them. And it would be a huge step forward if the trade-off between today and tomorrow were clearly stated when decisions are made, if we openly presented our own interests and perceived the concerns of others as *legitimate* interests, and if we dealt more openly with the question as to who are the winners and who are the losers of certain decisions – and I mean both in the short and in the long term. If we create space for openness, honesty and mutual understanding, cooperation and partnership can grow. I am convinced that, if we deal more openly with conflicting objectives, political ingenuity and the spirit of technical innovation of the human race can reconcile a great many apparent contradictions, and identify solutions that are sound in both the short and the long term.

And that brings me to my fourth key concept, the global values that are to underpin the global partnership. Now, having looked at interests, we could maybe draw a line under our deliberations and say that a policy of global partnership is in our own interests; it is quite simply the *most sensible* option. I do not believe that this goes far enough, however. The

global partnership will only be viable in the long term if it can agree on a set of common values. The enormous political challenges facing us can, in my opinion, only be mastered if we have a moral power and clear concepts behind the reasons for taking a united path and the goal we are aiming for. This calls firstly for an ongoing dialogue between different cultures on the shared foundations of humanity, and secondly for more self-critical reflection on the values which we claim guide our actions.

In terms of the first of these, Hans Küng has carried out some invaluable work with his concept of a global ethic, so I will be brief. I would like to quote from the declaration 'Towards a Global Ethic' of the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, which has its roots here in Tübingen, 'We affirm that a common set of core values is found in the teachings of the religions, and that these form the basis of a global ethic. We affirm that this truth is already known, but yet to be lived in heart and action.'

The two principles which underpin the global ethic are humanity (every individual has the right to be treated humanely) and reciprocity (we must treat others as we wish others to treat us – the Golden Rule).

I am certain that even just making the effort to understand the point of view of others can carry us forward. But we need more. If we are to become more than just a world community forced by circumstances into solidarity – if a genuine global awareness is to emerge – then our interconnected global family must urgently develop a collective empathy on the basis of shared values. It is my hope that the new media in particular can bring us closer than ever to this awareness.

A second precondition is, however, that we take a self-critical look at our own actions, and that we change these where necessary. It will not come as a surprise to any of you that I also see the West deep in debt in this regard, with its proclivity to preach human rights and universal values. "You gotta walk the talk", or to quote Erich Kästner, 'Nothing good happens unless you do it.' I don't refer here only to such dramatic examples of hypocrisy as Guantanamo and Lampedusa, which are so blatantly at odds with western rhetoric; I also mean our entire unsustainable lifestyle. If we apply Kant's categorical imperative to our own times, it would read, 'Live such that your lifestyle could be assumed by all people on our planet.' The reality is, though, that it takes four litres of water to manufacture a one-litre plastic water bottle, while 2,700 litres of water are needed to make one bar of chocolate. In view of the fact that one billion people have no access to safe drinking water, this should of course outrage our sense of justice. But more importantly, it would be quite impossible for the entire human race to use natural resources at this rate – think back to the four planets ... The German-American philosopher Vittorio Hösle wrote that, since universalism is the principle of modern ethics, the fact that our lifestyle cannot be universalised can only mean – measured by the very own criteria of modernity – that it is immoral. This is in no way intended as a criticism of universal values, only of the fact that our lifestyle so blatantly contradicts these values. Not only does this rob us of all credibility in the global dialogue, it also jeopardises our entire future. Because in view of the economic and ecological interconnectedness of our planet, the genuine adoption of a global ethic based on humanity and reciprocity, and thus on the realisation of universal ideals, has become a question of survival.

V.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Those then were my musings on how we must continue to refine our understanding of the concepts of sovereignty, legitimacy, interests and values to pave the way for a global partnership. What I have said here should not be taken as a blueprint of how to save the world, or as a panacea for all global problems. There is no silver bullet. But I don't want to take the easy way out with an excuse like this, either. I would like to share with you three brief ideas as to *how* we could help achieve a breakthrough for this new leitmotif of a global partnership.

Thought number one: Perhaps the most valuable resource in international politics is not oil, or water, or cash – it is trust. Trust is the foundation on which every partnership is built, whether within a family, in business or between nations. I think that decision-makers still massively underestimate the importance of this resource, and that they invest far too little in trust. Without more trust, the global partnership cannot work.

There are two sorts of trust in international politics: the first of these – game theorists would term it 'strategic trust' – emerges when Country A is in possession of specific information about Country B, and this information points to the fact that a cooperative solution is in Country B's own interest, as a result of which Country A trusts Country B. The problem with this sort of trust is that it is limited to one specific situation – the situation in which one actor has information about the interests of its counterpart. No conclusion is reached as to the inherent trustworthiness of the other party, but a prediction is made as to the expected actions of that party under the given circumstances.

The second sort of trust, let's call it 'generalised trust' – to borrow the term coined by the American political scientist Brian Rathbun – makes more optimistic assumptions about the other party. In this case, Country A assumes that Country B is fundamentally interested in dealing harmoniously with it, that it will respect agreements and that it does not aim to cheat. My trust does not need to be rewarded in the short term for me to go on trusting; a positive future is anticipated. As Niklas Luhmann puts it, it is a down-payment on success. That means that generalised trust is not a form of naïve altruism. It is the expectation of reciprocity over a longer period – not situation-specific, but in the long term. If you cast your minds back to the problems I outlined earlier of having long-term interests accepted, you can begin to appreciate the great importance of the temporal generosity of generalised trust if we are to resolve the global problems facing us. The more often this trust is rewarded, i.e. the down-payment reimbursed, the better the preconditions for new and more intensive cooperation. I believe that we must invest a lot more political capital to set in motion a 'virtuous circle', an upwards spiral of trust, and to magnify this such that ever larger down-payments for ever-longer periods become possible and so that more and more actors are pulled into the system.

But what generates trust? Credibility and fairness. A global culture of fairness that applies to the big and the small alike, and ensures that states too respect the Golden Rule, this would be a valuable start to generating more trust. Nothing kills more trust than the double standards we see everywhere in international politics. Credibility, which generates trust, thus includes

the admission of our own shortcomings and an open dialogue about our own interests; perhaps we could term this ‘political truthfulness’. This is not always easy, and sometimes it is painful, but the trust gained is all the more productive for that. Let us not give up the hope – and the work to realize this hope – that more political truthfulness is possible.

My second thought follows on from this first one: trust is good, but so are institutions. Institutions provide a framework within which trust can grow, or they at least offer a context within which reciprocal control can be exercised where mistrust reigns – because this is obviously sometimes going to be the case. Now, there is a lot that could be said about the entire structure of international institutions, but I would like to look at only one institution here – the United Nations. For all its shortcomings, it is the only place in the world where the entire international community meets, where the wolf dwells with the lamb, where even North Korea has a seat. The United Nations must be the heart, and perhaps also the brain of the global partnership. To this end, though, the UN itself will have to become more credible and more effective. Many of the reforms that have been proposed have been on the table for some time; some were already cited in the Millennium Declaration in 2000. These include, for instance, a reform of the Security Council, strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme and undertaking a radical spring clean of the fifty or more special organisations and sub-organisations of the United Nations, some of whose mandates are as entangled and overlapping as a bowl of spaghetti.

A credible and self-confident UN could help make global regulations more binding, but part of its charm is also that it could open doors and, even more importantly, *open eyes* to the shared interests of the human race. The United Nations as a constitutive, creative force for a new spirit of partnership – that is a vision worth investing in!

The process towards a post-2015 agenda and new global, sustainable development goals could prove a great blessing. If we manage, within the scope of this process, to generate new trust in one another, to lend credibility to our joint efforts, and to awaken a new awareness of the global perspective, a lot will have been achieved – quite apart from the achievement of specific objectives.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I freely admit that this all seems very far away – trust in international politics, the United Nations as the catalyst for a global partnership ... That is why I would like to dedicate to *you* my third thought on how to make the leitmotif of a global partnership reality. Because you see, it won’t work without you. Saint Augustine once said, referring to the power of the individual, ‘Bad times, hard times, this is what people keep saying; but let us live well, and times shall be good. Such as we are, such are the times.’ To put it quite clearly: in the first instance the global partnership is the task of states and governments, which are called on to bring their policies into line with the new realities of our interdependent world. Nobody can release them from this responsibility. Yet the global partnership must also, and perhaps more importantly, grow from the bottom. Political change and ethical conduct on the part of individuals bear fruit when they dovetail, and complement one another. The global transformation will have very concrete impacts on each and every one of us, and thus, we must all support it. To enable us to take more account of the global common good and the long-term impacts of our actions, political decisions will be called for

that will not always be easy, that will produce winners and losers – and that in some cases will ask voters to accept a lot. When you vote then, do so not only in your own interests, but also in the interests of your grandchildren.

To be even more specific, global transformation towards lasting peace and prosperity for all within the planetary boundaries will call for a change in our lifestyle in industrialised countries. We can start today; we do not need to wait for the major policy shifts. Today we can already demonstrate that it is not a question of force or blind self-denial. It is a question of consuming *differently*. We can do this if, for instance, we harness technological progress in the field of energy-efficiency and resource-efficiency in our daily lives, and if we manage to define prosperity and quality of life not only in terms of ‘more and more’ in a material sense. Let us take a hard and honest look at some of our habits in the light of their global impacts. Did you know that global CO₂ emissions could be reduced by 2% if we all used only LED lighting? Or that global meat consumption is responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than global traffic and transport?

And finally, get involved in the global dialogue on interests and values – help build trust between peoples by developing empathy for those who you think are alien to you, by learning to understand the interests of others, by listening and asking questions. And don’t take things at face value. Invite intellectuals from Africa, or artists from Asia or research scientists from Latin America to Tübingen, and ask them to challenge what you have learned so far. An exchange of this sort might help us not only to understand others, but also to understand ourselves a bit better.

VI.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Charles Dickens’ novel *A Tale of Two Cities* continues, ‘It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness’. I will leave it up to you to decide whether the vision of a global partnership as proposed by the High Level Panel and as I have tried to explore it here today, is wise or foolish. But I would not be standing in front of you today if I were not utterly convinced that it is feasible, that wisdom can prevail over foolishness, long-term reason over the temptations of short-term satisfaction, imagination over a lack of ideas, the courage to be truthful over the comfort of hypocrisy, general wellbeing over egoism, clever questions over over-hasty answers.

I am very well aware that it is not an easy task. I would like to quote one of my colleagues on the Panel, Tawakkol Karman, the courageous human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate from Yemen, who in her speech on presenting the report to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, ‘...governments will have to choose whether they adopt this new paradigm of global partnership. The temptation for political leaders to pull back, to retreat to a safer, more conventional approach, will be strong.’

We can all help keep this temptation at bay.