

Bo. Wittig

Buchvorstellung Prof. Brauch, 23.3.2011

**Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Prof. Oswald-Spring,
Dear Dr. Brauch**

- **It is my pleasure to welcome you all and to convey to you the very warm regards of Ambassador Wittig, PR of Germany to the UN, who unfortunately and on short notice was not able to attend this very important book launch event today.**
- **I am very happy to take this opportunity to welcome Prof. Ursula Oswald-Spring and Dr. Hans Günter Brauch, editor of three volumes of the “Global Environmental and Human Security Handbook for the Anthropocene”. They are representing at today's event the 164 authors who have worked on this impressive handbook. “Coping with Global Environmental Change, Disasters and Security”, which they will present to us in a moment.**
- **The three volumes are not only valuable handbooks with a lot of expertise. But they are also remarkable because of two characteristics: First it deals with the whole range of issues covering the current discussion on environmental challenges: climate change, food security, desertification, water management, health, disaster resilience. And it does not stop at elaborating the challenges from a scientific point of view: it develops strategies for the international community to cope with these challenges. That is what makes this book so extremely valuable.**
- **And second, may be more important, it brings together many authors from all over the world, many of them are experts and scientists from developing countries, enriching the academic and political debate.**
- **There is of course a very close link between this book and our work as diplomats in New York: Scientific input is indispensable for our day-to-**

day work. Without the input of academics, informed debates within the UN on very complex subjects would not be possible.

- **As you can see this impressive book which has more than 1500 pages is challenging. To my mind this adequately reflects the complexity of the problems at stake:**

Big problems require big thoughts !

- **Let me pick out briefly one issue, which is very much in the focus of our interest and of Germany's policy within the United Nations: The security dimension of climate change:**
- **Over the last years, the impact of climate change on our ecosystems and on security has become more and more visible. Recent extreme weather events have shown that environmental disasters caused by climate change are becoming increasingly frequent and more intense. Scientists predict that the sea-level could rise up to 2 meters until the end of this century, affecting the habitat of millions of people, putting in danger the existence of entire states and causing large-scale population movements.**
- **Due to climate change and resulting desertification, increasing floods and degradation of soil, crop yields worldwide could decline significantly, dramatically challenging food security and worsening hunger. Today, food prices are on the rise again and almost at the all time high of 2008. The potential consequences for peace and security are apparent: historical as well as recent experiences have shown how such situations could cause political instability in whole regions and reverse partially the progress made in terms of human development.**
- **Climate change and security has been subject to an open debate in the UN Security Council during the British Presidency in 2007. The report presented by the UN Secretary-General in 2009 on "Climate change and its possible security implications" identified both possible threats to**

security and ways to reduce these threats. The General Assembly addressed “Climate Change and its possible security implications” in Resolution 63/281 of 11 June 2009 and invited all relevant organs of the UN to intensifying their efforts in considering and addressing climate change, including its possible security implications. Germany thinks that the increased importance of the issue justifies the Security Council examining it once more.

- Therefore, Germany as a non-permanent member of the UN-SC for the years 2011 and 2012 is envisaging to organize an open debate strictly focusing on the security implications of climate change during its presidency in July 2011 within the SC’s mandate to address threats to international peace and security in a preventive manner.
- We feel this is a very important issue. For many countries adapting to climate change is a crucial issue. It has serious consequences on regional stability and security. We need to act now, and be aware of the consequences if we don’t.
- Fighting climate change is at the heart of Germany’s international climate diplomacy. But we are also very ambitious at home: We intend to reduce our emissions by 40% by 2020 in order to give a good example. To conclude let me once again congratulate all authors for this outstanding book. I am very optimistic that it will find its way in many libraries and serve researchers, scientists, libraries, institutes, international organisations - as well as diplomats and negotiators - as a standard reference.
- Thank you very much !