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## **Between Rationality and Idealism – handling climate change in areas of conflicts**

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Since 1900, worldwide energy consumption has risen by an inconceivable factor of 18, while the world's population has risen by a factor of five to around seven billion people in the same time period. Today about 80 percent of the people live on less than 10 dollars a day and over 1.5 billion people do not have access to electricity. Topics like climate change, energy, and environmental policies are contributing more to the discussion within the economic sector as well as in society, but the discussions vary. Seeing the cold winter in the past years, one would think that there is no need for the discussion about the climate change and it is only driven by some green idealists; however, it is necessary to distinguish between short term, local, weather phenomenon and long term, global change of the earth's system as a whole. Global Warming is not happening for the first time in history, but for the first time with such dynamics and with 6.7 billion people who are living on earth – estimates show that by 2050, nine billion people will live on earth, which will drastically increase the consumption of existing resources.

Three main developments will tighten global challenges: global industrialization, growing global population and cumulative urbanisation.

These megatrends are spotlighted by real policy and development poles of companies.

Therefore goals have to be set, goals of achieving greater development in a sustainable way.

Scientific research is based on absolute evidence and has difficulties with concrete definitions of development scenarios.

On one side that's good, because the results are indeed valid, but the political

discussion is getting more difficult because of the existing uncertainties.

But the climate change, the influence of greenhouse gases (and their carbon dioxide equivalents) as well as the contribution of human action, is validated by 97 percent through the science sector.

We shouldn't be discouraged in thinking that we can not stop climate change, because it is nature's character to constantly be changing. But we should make sure that the human component is as small as possible because as emerging markets may grow, they need not make the same mistakes that western countries did. We now have the knowledge about the interaction and should react accordingly.

The high scientific reliability and visible facts should be convincing enough, as there is no need to explain the last few per mill of human influence on climate change or to forecast the melting of the glaciers for the exact month.

The trend is crucial and it is definitely characterized by global increase of temperatures and the increase of intensity of extreme incidences since the beginning of industrialisation.

Many people argue that the increase in the average earth temperature by only two degrees is insignificant, but if we consider our own body, it is easy to realize the effects and dramatic risks.

Our today's actions will influence tomorrow's world. As we consider the effects of Carbon Dioxide and its exposure time of over 100 years, there is no time available for long discussions about the pros and cons of climate change.

The discussion, especially the political one, resembles the discussion of two men have metaphorically: A woman is swimming in the sea and has been attacked by a shark. Two men see it and want to help her. First, they begin discussing whether it is a shark or a



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barracuda. In the mean time, the woman is getting pulled under water and dies. This metaphor demonstrates that if there is an accident, we probably wouldn't ask whose fault it was, but rather help the people as fast as possible before something worse might happen.

Perhaps one should emphasize that the hundred thousandth windmill in Germany doesn't solve the challenge of climate change. Additionally, the price increase of electricity by ideological driven reservations against nuclear power and carbon capture and storage, as clean coal technologies, will weaken our one-sided economy and in the end nobody has any benefit from this behaviour.

More, we should look forward and consider technologies for growing emerging markets, like China and India, because joint initiatives will come from Europe and the US and in these countries, energy for growing isn't produced on a preindustrial level.

In many cases, one can read of the positive regional effects concerning development of tourism, energy costs and general quality of life. Sure there are such developments, but one should not underlie the assumption, that this will free us from dealing with climate change.

This thinking would be short sighted. Our agriculture will feel the squeeze of missing water and vermin might endanger forestry because of milder winters.

At the same time, migration movement from the so called "third world" will affect us as well. .

Extreme incidences, like floods, storms or forest fires frequently affect those in these regions. Migration movements of so called "climate refugees" are estimated up to 25 million people by the middle of the century. If one were to judge the costs-by-cause principle, the U.S. has to take care of as many as 25 percent of these people.

We feel these movements already now and they already arrived in Europe, as the dramatic Mediterranean-crossings of

African refugees to Italy and Spain show. In addition, wars are waged over resources (fossil fuels and water) as is the case in Sudan. We'll have to expend more finances for issues like securing our energy supply, international aid, and the respective accommodation of refugees, as well as food-production – funds which will be missing in other fields.

Every enterpriser, who follows the approaches of the moral philosopher Adam Smith, brings its company on the road to success by implementing cost reduction programs, raising the innovation ability, increasing labour productivity and by minimising the risk and design of the supply chain. At these facts, policy should be oriented in this way. For instance green technologies companies in the Free state of Saxony (Federal State in Germany at the border to Poland and Czech Republic) share over six percent of GDP, their growing rates are twice that of the rest of the industrial sector, and secure over 18.000 jobs (4.2. million inhabitants)

These are developments, done by pragmatic real policy, which should designate our decisions.

In many political meetings and discussion forums with green idealists there is no plausible answer on the question of where electricity should come from, especially if we don't want to apply coal and nuclear energy tomorrow. Every day a new nuclear power plant must be built to reach fixed international climate targets

The Discussion, directed by blinders and ideologues, condemn nuclear power and carbon capture and storage because they include other risks. Our society likely today as tomorrow would relinquish coal and uranium, but for the base load we need reliable and storable energy supply, which RES, except biomass and (particularly) water, (still) cannot provide in comparison.

Policy cannot face climate change with only one instrument. It is necessary to consider this debate with a mix of



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instruments and to take international and regional divergences into account. In political discussions, technology policy is a suitable communication tool, as it generates general understanding for the needs and at the same time demonstrates positive effects, like cost reduction or effects on labour policy.

Authors feel that international emissions trading (by connecting several (trans-) national emission trading systems) can help, bringing forward innovations in technologies, by generating financial resources, which can be allocated to research on alternative energy supply and consumption solutions. This market based mechanism should work significantly more efficiently than the implementation of fixed carbon taxes, which won't generate incentives for innovation.

But we need a binding and concrete international agreement after the end of the Kyoto protocol by 2012, to put these efforts on a larger platform and to design them.

Necessary pressure for this purpose should be built up by international institutions, like the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The conference of participants on climate change in Copenhagen, in December 2009, showed that this platform is too weak to reach the goal.

What can we as the society do? What policy can work?

We have to take people with us on the way to sustainable development. Primarily, this happens through education and explaining the interdependences of resources worldwide; therefore, we should begin with children early and exemplify this to them throughout their lives. We should refer to our opportunity as the "country of engineers", where innovative technologies for the accomplishment of climate change are getting vigorous enough to be exported. We need to attract leaders in the science field to bring forward international research on these issues with a good basis. We needn't burden our economy on one side. Leadership is the right place to start, but should be followed by a sense of proportion and not distort global competition. Exceeding incentives of technologies, where the market already generates different prices necessarily extracts innovation on the financial basis.

As long as international import restrictions exist (e.g. for solar panels in the U.S.), we shouldn't keep up man-made incentives on a high level, instead of implementing temporarily taxes for solar panels from China as well. We do not secure national jobs by steady high and one-side national sponsorship; International free trade has to be pushed forward on equivalent policy level, whereby Germany can profit through its leadership in technology.

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