

Joint Press Interaction by Prime Minister and the German Chancellor

May 31, 2011



Official Spokesperson (Shri Vishnu Prakash): A very good afternoon to everybody and welcome to the Joint Press Interaction.

Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh will be making an opening statement to the media, and next the Chancellor of Germany Her Excellency Angela Merkel would be addressing the media. May I invite the Prime Minister of India to please make his opening statement?

Prime Minister of India (Dr. Manmohan Singh): Your Excellency Chancellor Angela Merkel; distinguished Ministers; and members of the German delegation; ladies and gentlemen of the media.

I extend a very warm welcome to Chancellor Angela Merkel and to the distinguished members of her delegation. We are honoured to receive the Chancellor on her second visit to India since 2007.

Chancellor Merkel's visit coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Germany. It is fitting that this should be so. Chancellor Merkel has been an ardent advocate of our strategic partnership. I have always admired her leadership qualities and valued our partnership.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Chancellor Merkel on the conferment of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for the year 2009.

India and Germany enjoy a very close and multi-faceted relationship. There is enormous goodwill in India for the people and culture of Germany. There is admiration and respect for the advances made by Germany in engineering and technological development. The passion for quality, hardwork and innovation of the German people is admired by the people of India.

Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe and one of our most important partners for technological collaboration and joint research and development. It is also amongst the largest foreign investors in India. Our bilateral trade was more than 15 billion Euros last year, and is on course to reach the target of 20 billion Euros per year by 2012.

I have reiterated to the Chancellor our desire to have greater German investment in India, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, high technology, energy and basic and applied sciences. We wish to expand our production and R&D base and encourage more technology transfers.

India offers a stable and friendly investment climate and a large growing market. I welcome the progress that is being made on the issue of high technology exports from Germany to India. This will benefit both economies.

We have a lot to learn from Germany's experience in vocational training and skill development. I am happy that a Memorandum of Understanding in this regard has been signed today.

I am also very happy that agreements in science and technology and research have been signed between some of our institutions. These will encourage greater exchanges in areas such as biotechnology, nano-technology and material sciences.

Our discussions today covered views on the situation in West Asia and North Africa, including developments in Libya and how they impact on regional peace and stability. We reviewed the latest developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and will continue our discussions on these matters. We both recognise that terrorism is a serious challenge that has to be fought on all fronts and not selectively.

As members of the G-4, we have agreed to keep in close touch on the issue of the reform of the United Nations Security Council.

I conveyed to Chancellor Merkel India's interest in a strong, prosperous and open Eurozone that contributes fully to the global economic recovery process, in which Germany is playing a pivotal role. We will continue to work together within the G-20.

All in all, I have had very useful and wide ranging discussions with Chancellor Merkel. I thank Chancellor Merkel for her initiative in holding the first Inter-Governmental Consultations with India during her current visit.

I look forward to working with Chancellor Merkel to further strengthen our strategic partnership.

I thank you.

German Chancellor (Dr. Angela Merkel): (as per interpretation) Prime Minister; dear colleagues from both Cabinets; and ladies and gentlemen:

We are delighted to be guests here in India, this country that has enormous dynamism and where so many areas where you are trying to bring about solution to problems and forge ahead and promote development.

I am very pleased that we have been able to hold these first inter-governmental consultations between India and Germany. We had a very intensive discussion. We were able to see that there is already a very broad-based cooperation between our Ministries in foreign policy, in economics, in the environmental area, in education. After all education is one of the great challenges for India - educating, training young people and also shaping India into a science and research nation. There I think we have been able to put a lot of very interesting projects on tracks as could be seen by the sheer number of MoUs that were signed just now.

On the international stage, both internationally and nationally on international issues there is very good cooperation both bilaterally and multilaterally and also in regard to the energy policy, not only the political situation ...(Inaudible)... together but also the ...(Inaudible)... finance a greatest photovoltaic plant in the world has contributed firmness to it. And I think particularly in the area of renewable energy there is still a lot of scope for further cooperation.

The Home Affairs Ministers and the Defence Ministers also had talks here so that our cooperation can be further enhanced because we face similar challenges - fight against terrorism on the one hand and on the other hand we are united in the wish that Afghanistan may become a state and take security matters in its own hands. India is very much committed to that and Germany very much so. In many areas we have also sent a military mission to Afghanistan to stabilize the country.

We have very close economic ties. The Prime Minister has just now outlined how dynamic this is. We would like to have 20 billion trade volume by 2012. We have reached 15 by now. We have growth rates of over 15 per cent. So, there is a very dynamic development there and still a lot remains to be done.

The Ministers that are responsible for Infrastructure and for Urban Development have yet again brought home to us what great potential there still is to build up roads, railways and also to build up waste management plants and so on. So, there is a lot of scope for further cooperation.

We are participating in a lot of very interesting economic projects. It is certainly not a secret that with the Eurofighter we made very good proposals and suggestions. Germany is very much interested in further intensifying its relationship with India.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank my Indian counterpart for the very good international cooperation we enjoy at a global level. We quite often, Prime Minister, also not only meeting in India and Germany but also at global meetings – G20 for example and other fora of this kind. Our Foreign Ministries do quite a lot to foster this relationship further. And in a global world I think we both share this conviction, we can only live well together if we abide by similar rules and if we truly define global rules in such a way that they are beneficial for the developed countries, for the industrialized countries, but also for those countries that still have a great potential for further growth.

Germany is very interested in seeing to it that India is its partner in forging ahead, to be at your side. You have a very long and proud tradition. We would like to support you in achieving the same degree of prosperity that we have been able to achieve in a spirit of partnership.

We are celebrating this year sixty years of diplomatic ties. I think that is a very good moment to show that we also have a very good future ahead of us. In many cities of India there are celebrations that are scheduled on the occasion of this year. Maybe this will drive home to other Indians what great potential we have for our mutual relations.

Thank you again for welcoming us...(Inaudible)...

Official Spokesperson: Thank you, Madam Chancellor.

The Prime Minister of India and the Chancellor will be happy to take two questions from each side. Please keep your questions brief and indicate to who the question is addressed to.

Question (German media): Mr. Prime Minister, to meet the growing need of energy for your country India is not only investing in renewable energies like solar, wind but also in nuclear power. You are pursuing a very ambitious plan to increase your ability to produce energy from nuclear plants. Can you tell us if you see it as the future of nuclear energy for India? Can you give us an idea about the capacity you are aiming at?

Madam Chancellor, how do you see the build up of nuclear energy here in India, in this country? And did you urge your partners, since Germany is now phasing out nuclear energy, that you would encourage your partners in India to follow along and follow in your footsteps so to speak?

Prime Minister of India: Nuclear energy today accounts for only about three per cent of total energy generated in our system. As of now, our capacity is less than 5,000 MW. We want to raise it to about 20,000

MW by the year 2020. Thereafter there are some projections but no firm decisions have been taken. One thing which is quite clear is that if India is to meet its emission targets, then nuclear energy along with renewable sources of energy, is a combination which we need. We will make every effort to ensure that safety norms in generation and utilization of nuclear power are world class, but we must have the option to make use of the nuclear energy, together with the heavy reliance on coal which is inevitable for quite sometime to come in our country.

German Chancellor (as per interpretation): *I think it is up to each and every country to decide what energy mix it wishes to use to supply energy. We from the German side will see to it and champion also at an international level that safety standards for nuclear power plants are very good. We ourselves have said we want to phase our nuclear energy over a period of ten years. But for many many years we also had an energy mix in Germany in which nuclear power had its share. We are cooperating with India in many ways, and in renewables, and also I think we can do a lot to boost energy efficiency. If I understood the Environment Minister correctly, on the one hand you have the aim of building up renewables but also building up very efficient coal-fired power plants where the Germans are already working with you, and also building up photovoltaic plants. Over the next two years 20,000 MW are supposed to be generated which is about the volume that we still have generated by our nuclear power plants in Germany. So, building up a very broad-based energy mix with renewables here in India is a policy where we can obviously support you all along the way. I think what will be very important is to see to it that renewable energies can supply the base load for the grid and that put together with biomass and wind energy one can come to very good results.*

Question (Indian Media): I have a question for each of the leaders. I would like to ask Chancellor Merkel if she can confirm that Germany is in fact now mediating between leaders of the Taliban as well as the Afghan Government in recent talks this month. And what, if any, is Germany's idea of India's role in Afghanistan even as it begins its pullout later this year?

I would like to ask Prime Minister Manmohan Singh if during your discussions you talked about who the next IMF Chief should be, and if there was any agreement on what the nationality or who that choice should be.

German Chancellor (as per interpretation): *I already said that India and Germany share the same goal, Afghanistan has to develop an independent security architecture, taking its security into its own hands because this is a better possible protection against the terrorist attacks. We in Germany are of the opinion and we said this very clearly that we do not think a military solution alone is an option. We need a networked security architecture. This is why Germany for example will host the next Afghanistan Conference by the end of this year. The Afghan President and my Government agreed on part and parcel of reconciliation in the country... (inaudible)... reconciliation of all the forces if they fulfill the conditions for example renouncing the use of force and other conditions of this nature. So, Afghanistan Conference too will have as its motto again the transition of responsibility but always under the provision that reconciliation in the country is obviously part and parcel of this. This will only be possible with the Afghan forces and not against the Afghan forces.*

Prime Minister of India: The question that Suhasini addressed to me relates to the next Managing Director of the IMF. Quite honestly we have not had a discussion on that subject. Our view is well-known that the best available person, regardless of his or her nationality, should be selected for such a prestigious post.

Question (German media): *A question addressed to the Chancellor. You spoke about discussing the Eurofighter. Chancellor, did you receive any positive messages from the Indian side? And very briefly, you came here on the flight that was a bit bumpy in the sense that you were not allowed overflight initially over Iran. Will this have international consequences?*

German Chancellor (as per interpretation): *On the second issue let me say I am very glad that I arrived safely here in India, everything has turned out excellently. We have been able to hold Indo-German Inter-Governmental Consultation and that is the most important part of this.*

On the other issue, we only mentioned the Eurofighter here, but obviously procurement procedures are very transparent here in India as they attempt to be the world over. We are convinced that we have the best product on offer as our competitors do too. We will certainly not exert any kind of influence on this process. We wish this to be a very transparent process and a smooth one. We are aware of the fact that we have a good product and we shall wait and see.

Question (Indian Media): Dr. Merkel, Germany is now speaking of an interim solution for the UN Security Council permanent seats. Is that a departure from the G4 consensus? And what does Dr. Singh think about it and what is India's position on this?

German Chancellor (as per interpretation) : *First I should say that Germany still holds the view that we all at G4 do canvas for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. I think the good thing is that something happens at all because the structural reform is obviously very necessary. And it is very good that Germany and India currently can work from their non permanent seats in the Security Council together on this. And we are actually aligning our policies as to how we can bring about reform. There is one thing that we would say that the current format and composition of the Security Council no longer reflects the current state of affairs. It still harks back to the days after the World War II. So, I think we should focus our energies and our capacity for speeding up this process which after all has already started a long time ago. Maybe together we can bring something about.*

Prime Minister of India: The Chancellor has given a reply with which I am in agreement. Germany and India are members of the G4. We have been arguing for a long time that the global system, particularly the composition of the Security Council and its methods of working, need to be brought up to date in line with the contemporary realities because the world of 1945 is a world which is no longer existing and the new realities of the global scene have to be taken into account in looking at the reform of the structures of global governance. India and Germany have been partners in this exercise. I sincerely hope that this partnership will persist, that it will yield positive results.

Official Spokesperson: Thank you, Sir.

This brings the media event to a close. Thank you for your presence.

(Concluded)

**New Delhi
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(Text in italics was spoken in German and is official interpreter's version on the floor)

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.