

**Hans-Dietrich Lehmann, Head of Directorate-General 1 of the  
BMZ**

**Speech celebrating the 40th anniversary of dvv international,  
the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult  
Education Association (DVV)**

Mr Rossmann,  
Professor Bélanger,  
Professor Hinzen,  
staff, friends and guests of dvv international,

- Everybody enjoys a chance to celebrate. And 40 years of dvv international is an occasion definitely well worth celebrating. I am delighted to have been asked to join you in marking such a momentous birthday this evening. It is both a **pleasure and an honour** to have this opportunity to address a few words to you.
- I have very pleasant memories of **the conference on migration and integration you held a year and a half ago**, where I joined Professor Süßmuth and Mr Bélanger on the panel.
- But **today's event is an even more joyful one** – for an institution at any rate. People, of course, often approach their fortieth birthdays with somewhat mixed feelings. Yet dvv international seems to be in anything but a midlife crisis! Instead, it is truly in its prime! So I think we can say **unreservedly** that its **fortieth anniversary** is cause for **celebration**.
- Over the years, the institute has metamorphosed several times – from a small unit within the German Adult Education Association (the DVV) to its time as the IIZ, the Institute for International Cooperation of the DVV, to its current guise as dvv international. So the institution has grown along with its remit but has always remained true to the field of

adult education. The fact that it has now reached its **fortieth birthday** is the **best possible proof of its success!**

- In hosting this birthday dinner, the institute is also fitting into two different contexts. And it is quite typical that the **invitation to today's event** feels **almost like a footnote** when compared with the **ambitious conference on "Financing Adult Education for Development"** and the events currently being held here in Bonn as part of dvv week.
- As people who are **truly committed to adult education and lifelong learning**, it is fitting that you should integrate your anniversary celebrations into a conference on that topic.
- Not least because, in organising that conference, dvv international has once again drawn on its **excellent network of international contacts and its specialist skills**. When CONFINTEA, the planned major UN adult education conference, was cancelled in May at short notice and postponed until the end of the year, it no doubt presented you here in Bonn with quite a challenge. But instead of letting yourselves be discouraged you simply changed the focus of your conference so that, instead of providing a preview, it would offer more of a review. Well done to you for that!
- Yet this birthday party not only falls within your programme of events on adult education. This whole year, in fact, is one of **significant anniversaries**. Exactly a month ago, a major ceremony was held in Berlin to mark **60 years of the Federal Republic of Germany**. And in November, we will be celebrating the **20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall**. Today's 40th birthday celebrations for dvv international are therefore one of a number of events marking major events in Germany's post-war history.
- And when I say that I do in fact mean it – at least partly – seriously! Because, **by the 1960s, German post-war society had reached a stage at which it was able to look beyond its own borders**. And it

was then that the **foundations were laid for what we today know as development cooperation**. Many of the civil society organisations that are today engaged in international cooperation can also trace their roots back to the 1960s. From A, like amnesty international, to G for Greenpeace and all the way to the German organisations Welthungerhilfe and the Ziviler Friedensdienst (known in English as the Civil Peace Service). The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is itself a child of that period. And indeed its **work together with the DVV goes back 46 years**, predating the founding of the dvv international institute.

- **In 1969, the BMZ** was in fact one of those **involved in the birth of the institute when it became an organisation in its own right**, known back then as the "specialist unit for adult education in developing countries".
- The **close cooperation** that began back then **between dvv international and the ministry continues to this day**. But that tiny unit we founded back then has long since developed into a successful and internationally highly regarded institution with some 140 members of staff spread across the world. So, in those terms at least, the BMZ's aim of working together with dvv international, namely that our projects should **help structures grow**, has been a clear success!
- But joking aside – the BMZ has continuously supported the institute in its development. Because we share the same conviction in our work – that **education is a human right**.
- Education is absolutely vital if people are to be able to harness the opportunities available to them, to take part in development processes and to live decent lives. It was with good reason that, in **2007**, the **German government** invested ODA of **around one billion euros in education**.
- Because, ultimately, education is also a crucial **factor in sustainable development**. And that is why the UN's Millennium Development

Goals address education from two angles, dealing with basic education for all (MDG 2) and equal access to education for women and girls (MDG 3).

- Yet **education and global learning** are by no means the sole preserve of children and young people; they are **also of concern to adults**. Because it is they who are constantly taking major decisions about the family, their work and their everyday lives and who take the responsibility for those decisions, be it in our partner countries or here in our own country. Education, then, is **truly a life-long, international task**. And dvv international provides exactly the right answer. By basing your approach on **adult education as a process of mutual learning and a driving force behind the development of society**, you not only make a highly respected contribution to German development cooperation in this field – **you in fact play a major role in shaping it!**
- Now, 40 years on from the founding of the institute, it would seem to be a good point at which to take a **first look back** over its history. Because, just as official development cooperation has evolved considerably over the last four decades, dvv international has also gone through a **long process of learning and development**.
- These processes are now more important than ever, because **in recent years global challenges have become larger, more numerous and more pressing**. We need only think of the current economic and financial crisis, of our efforts to save the world from the dramatic impact of climate change or, very simply, of the continued growth in the world's population. We have, of course, **not simply stood idly by during the last 40 years as these rapid developments and global changes have taken place but have learned a great deal and have proactively developed new instruments** to enable us to tackle these challenges. That is also true of dvv international and of the entire field of lifelong learning, because it

is undoubtedly one of the major keys to managing the challenges currently confronting us.

- dvv international has proven that it is itself open to such **learning processes** – as evidenced by the way it has recently **addressed** such issues as **monitoring and evaluation**.
- So, over the past 40 years, the institute has not only stood the test of time but has in fact **equipped itself with the tools it needs to continue its important and successful work**. And it is ultimately you, the **staff** of dvv international both at head office and in the field, that we have to **thank** for that. Nor should we forget **the many people who are your partners** in your projects in a wide range of countries, without whose commitment your institute would be able to achieve very little, even with the quite comfortable level of funding it has today. All of them deserve our most sincere thanks.
- You may rest assured that the BMZ will remain dvv international's most important partner and a loyal one at that.
- **They say that good things come in threes**. So I would like to close by making 3 wishes for the future of dvv international as it celebrates its birthday today:
  1. Firstly, I hope that **your area of special focus**, adult education, will remain **high on the agenda**, even after the forthcoming CONFINTEA conference.
  2. Secondly, I wish you continued **growing success and recognition for your work**, as reflected in your success in attracting third party funding. And, in the near future, a number of evaluations and completed projects will deliver concrete evidence of the impact of your efforts!

3. And my third wish is that you continue to be as **successful in selecting skilled and committed staff, partner organisations and partners.**

- Thank you for your attention.