

Show solidarity: Continue German-Nepalese cooperation!

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) intends to end bilateral cooperation with Nepal as part of its BMZ 2030 reform process.

Overall, cooperation with 24 countries worldwide is to be terminated as part of this reform, including nine countries that belong to the Least Developed Countries, i.e. the poorest countries in the world - including Nepal!

The criteria used to select the countries have not yet been published transparently by the BMZ. In media reports, the criteria include success in fighting corruption, good governance and respect for human rights. However, it is precisely in these areas that Nepal has seen positive developments in recent years, as the state has managed the transition from a constitutional monarchy to a federal democracy.

We appeal to the Federal Minister to continue the long-standing ties with Nepal and bilateral cooperation in the future.

Germany's good relations with Nepal will be jeopardised by the withdrawal from bilateral cooperation. Apart from the diplomatic, political and humanitarian implications, German official development cooperation in Nepal cannot and should not be replaced by the exclusive involvement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private initiatives.

This petition was initiated by the German Nepal Friendship Association and Long Yang e. V. and is supported by many NGOs.

Especially in view of the current global corona crisis and the devastating effects on the population in Nepal, we appeal to solidarity and community spirit and hope for your support.

Justification

The following reasons speak for the continuation of the commitment:

- Bilateral development cooperation with Nepal has decades of tradition and has so far been very successful.
- Nepal is currently in a particularly vulnerable situation as a result of political change, the earthquake of 2015 and the current Covid-19 pandemic.
- Nepal, as a young democracy, has made great efforts in the areas of good governance and the fight against corruption with the federalism reform and has made corresponding progress.
- Bilateral cooperation already includes many of the new priority areas of the BMZ Strategy 2030 and offers excellent opportunities for further involvement.
- As one of the most important donors in Nepal, Germany is in a special position and has a special responsibility to further stabilise this situation. Withdrawing from bilateral development cooperation now sends a disastrous political signal to the Government and other development partners.
- A withdrawal by BMZ would also mean the end of the successful bilateral programmes already underway, which are supported by BMZ with funds of around EUR 25 million annually.

Germany's good relations with Nepal will be jeopardised by the withdrawal from bilateral cooperation.

This not only affects state relations, but also has consequences for civil society involvement and the work of numerous NGOs active in Nepal. These NGOs should not be forced into the role of filling any gaps that might arise from the withdrawal of bilateral cooperation.

Nepal and Germany have enjoyed close friendly relations for decades. This is reflected in the number of travellers from Germany (over 30,000 in 2019 alone), but also in the commitment of the over 100 German NGOs active in Nepal, as well as in the successful bilateral cooperation that has now lasted for over 60 years. This cooperation

focuses on the areas of health, renewable energies, sustainable economic development and peace work, which over time has led to a relationship of trust and successful cooperation with the Nepalese partners.

Current situation and challenges

Following the successful transition to democracy, the two earthquakes in 2015 set the country back years in its progress. Reconstruction was not yet complete and now, with the Corona crisis, there is another setback, which, in addition to the health effects, also has economic and social consequences that can already be observed on a drastic scale. These are putting the country, and especially the already young democratic system, to an enormous test.

Germany is one of the most important bilateral donors to the international community and makes the largest financial contribution within the EU states. At the political level, withdrawing from bilateral cooperation would also send a signal for the withdrawal of the European Union as a strong partner, since Germany is the only important EU donor in Nepal besides Finland. **This can be understood by Nepal's neighbour China as a political signal and encourage it to further expand its supremacy in the region.**

Nor can and should German Official Development Cooperation in Nepal be replaced by the sole commitment of civil society and political foundations.

Call for solidarity

The breathtaking mountains of the Himalayas, the diverse and rich culture of the country and the special hospitality of the Nepalese people inspire many Germans - every year several tens of thousands of tourists from Germany travel to Nepal. Over the years, deep friendships have developed and numerous initiatives have been founded which are committed to Nepal.

Nepal is close to the hearts of many Germans and their personal commitment has been an excellent complement to bilateral cooperation over the past decades.

All this speaks for us to now also commit ourselves to continuing the successful cooperation at all levels - in the private, civil society sector as well as at the state level.

So please support with your vote the appeal to the Federal Minister to reverse his decision, show solidarity and continue bilateral cooperation in the future!

(unofficial translation by Karl-Heinz Krämer)