

### **... And next year in Berlin**

A short preview of the W20 2017 in Germany

Xi'an, May-26th 2016

Dear hosts of the W20 2016, dear colleagues,

First of all, I'd like to sincerely thank the organisers of this year's W20 for this second successful highlight in our still-young outreach group. I have met truly wonderful hosts, received incredible input and got to know exemplary women here in China. The W20 is a lively and powerful dialogue forum!

I'm here in dual capacity – I travelled to Xi'an to take part in this important conference on behalf of the Verband deutscher Unternehmerinnen (Association of German Women Entrepreneurs). But at the same time, I am also representing the Deutsche Frauenrat (National Council of German Women's Organizations), which follows this dialogue process just as closely but unfortunately could not send their own representative this time. On behalf of both of our associations I'd like to say how pleased and how proud we are to play a part in this international women's politics civil society dialog.

Both of our associations were heavily involved in the first W20 conference in Turkey because we want to support the aim of the Women's Economic Empowerment with full conviction. We consider it both important and right that the G20 has created this new dialogue forum for women's issues and interests. We want to make an active contribution by establishing this dialog network between representatives of female civil society, making it sustainable and strong.

This is why I am extremely pleased to be able to present the following outlook for the coming year:

The German Federal Government will next year take over the presidency of the G20. Women's Economic Empowerment is especially important to our head of government, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel. She therefore wishes for a productive, and forward-thinking dialog with the female civil society during her presidency. As early as March of this year, the Deutsche Frauenrat (National Council of German Women's Organizations) and the Verband deutscher Unternehmerinnen (Association of German Women Entrepreneurs) were mandated to take over the implementation and content alignment of this dialog process in the coming year.

We see this task as an honor, and one to which we are devoted with commitment and enthusiasm. We hope for support and cooperation from dedicated women such as all of you here today and from your successful organisations, in order to continue with the W20 dialog process started in Turkey and here in Xi'an under the Chinese G20 presidency, leading it successfully into the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our two associations during this forecast for the coming year, for those who don't know us already.

My association, which I lead as managing director, has represented the interests of entrepreneurial women in society and the economy for over 60 years. As a nation-wide business association across all sectors, our most important aim is to empower women in the economy. Recognition and equal participation, more women in leadership positions and better conditions for family and career compatibility are our key concerns. The president of our association is an ex officio member of the Board of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände, BDA), the most important economic umbrella organisation in Germany. As a member of the International Governing Body of the Female Entrepreneur Association (Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises Mondiales, FCEM), we have built up a varied and international network over the course of decades. A delegation visit to Norway is currently underway, and previously, the VdU female entrepreneurs have also visited Brazil, India and China in 2010.

Our co-operation partner, the National Council of German Women's Organizations, is an umbrella organization of more than 50 nation-wide women's associations and organizations, thus representing the biggest lobby for women's rights and gender equality in Germany. One of the German National Council of German Women's Organizations main focuses lies in the area of economic support and participation for women. As an active founding member of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the National Council of German Women's Organizations has an extensive European network. It has special consulting status on the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the United Nations and regularly takes part in sessions of the UN-Women's Rights Commission in New York. The organisation is also active in the regular preparation of shadow reports for the CEDAW committee.

Together we form a strong advocacy for women's rights and gender equality.

We are very pleased and proud that we can take on the organisation for the upcoming W20 conference from our Chinese colleagues. After the first successful W20 in Turkey, you have set yet another important benchmark here in Xi'an to promote Women's Economic Empowerment in the context of G20.

All of us here agree that the main task for the W20 is to securely establish the topic of economic participation and support for women as a permanent, cross-sectional task in G20's targets. At the same time, we will also build on the pioneering experiences from the previous W20s in 2015 and 2016 in order to develop a sustainable and democratic dialog format. Our goal is a continual and constructive exchange of female civil society with the respective governing of the G20, to provide a strong political presence for women's interests and issues.

We want to make as many concrete and binding commitments to improve as we can in the central documentation and targets of the G20. We are therefore focusing on incorporating our agenda and priorities into the preparation phase of governmental consultations. This includes communication and networking with the other outreach groups (from Business 20, to Labor 20 and Youth 20, to name but a few).

At the same time, we are also trying to gain momentum for women's politics beyond the G20 for other international actions, especially the implementation process of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development from the UN, which in its fifth target "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" explicitly mentions the economic empowerment of women.

A functioning and forward-looking network for economic development concerns regarding gender perspectives is to be created between all organisations taking part in W20 and their members. This network will allow us to establish the W20 as an important and evolving international dialog process for women's politics.

We have big plans – and have so much more to achieve. But we are relying on your support and your suggestions. We will keep you up-to-date. So stay tuned.

Zai jiàn, see you and Auf Wiedersehen 2017 in Germany!

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