

Speech of Mr. Huber (ZFA)

Your excellency, the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Pascher, director of Goethe-Institut Chennai, Mr. Karmegam from the Tamil Nadu Education department, dear Mr. Pallushek and Mrs. Rolf

Thank you very much for the invitation to the opening of the new German School of Chennai.

For me as the representative to India of the Central office for German overseas schools, a sub-administration of the German Ministry of External affairs, this is a great day. I am very pleased that our common efforts have finally led to the opening of a German school in Chennai. Ever since the IIT Chennai has been founded back in 1958 with German participation there has been a constant flow of scientific excellence from India to Germany and from Germany to India. The fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the IIT in 2008 opened a new chapter in this fruitful cooperation. The DAAD, the German academic Exchange service and the IIT Chennai have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a generously funded binational science college.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you may be asking yourself why I am talking about universities if we are here to open a school. Well, I have started with the noble head but a head noble as it may be needs a body to rest on and the body for scientific excellence are good schools. India has my excellent schools and so has Germany. The German School Chennai can be a combination of both. German language, German curricula, German teachers together with Indian teachers, German kids together with Indian kids and those of other nations will lay the foundation for even more cooperation in the field of education between our two countries.

Chennai, with its long tradition of Indo-German relations, is an excellent location for this project. Mr. Pallushek, who is a clever man, has been quick to realize that. More and more German companies, not only the big ones like BMW or Mercedes start working and producing in and around Chennai. The new school will provide a continuation of German education for the children of Germans, Austrians and Swiss nationals and the Indian students will get an excellent academic and cultural preparation for university studies in Germany. Germany is interested in Indian students, it is an explicit goal of the so-called "German external cultural policy (Deutsche Auswärtige Kulturpolitik) to attract more foreign students to study in Germany. To reach

that goal a lot of money has been invested by Foreign Affairs during the the last two years to promote German language teaching in Indian schools and develop German schools in India. I hope that we will soon see the results of that program in a substantial increase of the number of Indian students in Germany. Let's not forget, that the tuition fees for German universities are very low compared to those in English speaking countries.

I want to thank first Mr. Pallushek and Mrs. Rolf, for their enthusiasm and their tenacity in overcoming the initial difficulties. They are taking personal risks and I wish them and the school all the best. We have been working together from the start and the Central Agency for German Overseas Schools will continue to be a close partner, advisor and supervisor in the future. I also want to thank Mr. Sauerteig, the German Consul General and his team for their support. German overseas schools are an important part of the German external cultural policy and a large part of their budget goes into the school sector. Who gives the money commands, we say in Germany, so, thank you boss!

Tanks also to the Goethe Instiute Chennai for their valuable help and last bit not least to the Education department of the Government of Tamil Nadu. Without their support and collaboration the whole project would be impossible. Mr. Karmegam could not come today, but I hope or rather I am sure that you have taken the right decision in our mutual interest. The German School will add a new flavour to the school landscape in Chennai. It is still just a small baby and we will all have to nurse it to make it grow and become big and strong. But the first step has been taken. Victor Hugo once said: "Il n'y a rien de plus fort qu'une idée, dont le temps est venu", there is nothing stronger than an idea whose time has come. I think the time has come to start a German school in Chennai. I have brought a map with all the German schools worldwide on it and I am very proud today that thanks to Mr. Pallushek and Mrs. Rolf I can add a new red point to that map. With this symbolic act I warmly welcome the German School of Chennai as a new member of the family of German overseas schools.

Siegfried Huber
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