I am delighted to be here with you today at the University of Nairobi. This University has a special reputation as the oldest and largest university in the country and it is my great pleasure to be here as your guest. I would like to thank those in this room, and also those who were waiting outside, for the wonderfully warm reception.

As well as this university, Kenya has a considerable number of other seats of learning. I believe this demonstrates the importance attached to education in your country, and I can only add that one can sense the great opportunities awaiting Africa in the future. Like their peers all over Africa, Kenya’s young people want to seize these opportunities. They are committed to, and want to be actively involved in, the development of their country.

Young people take their inspiration from the digital revolution and the internet, from an increased efficiency in the use of natural resources and more environmentally-friendly ways of living, and not least from the way the countries of their continent are growing together. It is also clear from the way East African countries are moving towards the development of an internal market, with South Sudan now joining them. Of course new opportunities arise out of all these developments regarding the future of young people.

We can see how economic development is accelerating in Kenya. However, there are also perils. I shall use one word to describe these – disparities: internal disparities within a country’s own population but also disparities between countries. Such imbalances are always a touchpaper for social and political
unrest and conflict. Kenya, too, has had painful experience of this. Following the presidential elections at the end of 2007, the country was on the brink of civil war. I believe for many people the memories of that time are still very fresh.

Of course opportunities for economic upturn are important and must be seized. However, these opportunities are only one side of the coin. The other side is the duty to reform, to bring about more democracy, national reconciliation and national unity. Without sufficient economic, social and political participation – and I mean participation by all groups within the population – any economic upturn will always be very fragile. This means that, however important an efficient economy may be in forming the backbone to a strong nation, long-term, sustainable progress and prosperity are only possible when based on the principles of participation, understanding and reconciliation.

The political work of understanding and reconciliation has two dimensions. Firstly the work has to be done in the country itself, in other words at national level. Secondly, however, this work is equally important when it comes to relations between countries. The African continent – as you know so much better than I – has seen far too many conflicts. Many of the lingering problems have their roots in colonial times. Even today they frequently stand in the way of the goal of African unity. However, we are also experiencing times of radical political change in Africa, for example in North Africa – starting with Tunisia and Egypt. People there are striving for more democracy and the rule of law. They want to lead a better life and to see human rights upheld.

Kenya addressed these objectives last year by holding a peaceful referendum and adopting a new constitution. The pictures of the long queues of Kenyan citizens waiting to cast their vote have also left a strong impression on us in Germany. They moved us. Everyone who waited was aware that his or her vote counted and that the country’s future depended on each and every vote. The result of the referendum showed an overwhelming majority in favour of the new constitution.

Now it is a matter of making this vote work in reality. The first priority is to reduce ethnic tensions and regional and social imbalances. In my talks today with the President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Kenyan Parliament, I have repeatedly emphasized that Germany will support Kenya in this task. Kenya and Germany can rely on a partnership going back many years. Germany was the first country to recognize Kenyan independence in 1963. For many Germans their image of Africa is strongly influenced by your country. Many people know Kenya from their travels and from books and films.
During the crisis three and a half years ago the trust and confidence between our two countries did not falter. Germany was able to support Kenya then by offering you the benefits of our own experience of building a grand coalition. Whatever criticism of such a situation may be expressed in Kenya now, it should never be forgotten that it prevented further violence and bloodshed. Differences of opinion and the ensuing arguments are part and parcel of every kind of government coalition. It is precisely the task of politics to bring together time and again differing views and interests – to combine the different forces, to take note of majority opinion and find viable compromises. Finding compromises is no bad thing, but simply part of the democratic process. If everyone wants their stance to be incorporated in the decision, then as a rule there has to be a compromise. This compromise must then be accepted by all sides. The new constitution for which you voted sets down the way forward. We shall see whether and to what extent progress has been made chiefly in the next elections in 2012.

At any rate, I consider Kenya’s willingness to address the events that followed the last presidential elections exceedingly helpful and admirable. In my view it is also a question of humanity and justice. The country owes it to the victims and their families. That is why I have stated repeatedly today that we welcome Kenya’s commitment to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court. This has meant recently that the cases of six Kenyan nationals could be heard before the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Germany and Kenya are both among the States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We strongly favour and support the principle of subsidiary universal jurisdiction under international criminal law. Prosecution by an international court is imperative in certain situations in the interests of peaceful society and national unity. This applies not only to Africa but to all parts of the world. In my view such a situation arose during the unrest in Kenya three and a half years ago. The proceedings in The Hague are an opportunity to put an end to impunity for perpetrators and to be able finally to prosecute the politically and ethnically motivated violence of that time.

Administration of justice is one thing, but what is also needed is the desire for reconciliation, the will to overcome the ethnic divides that have split the country. All the political parties, institutions and various ethnic groups have a great responsibility to build bridges – but each one of you also has a share in that responsibility.

I think it is fair to say that after centuries of war – I’m thinking for instance of Germany and France – we Europeans have learned to live together in peace, without war. This required persons of great stature, who had the courage to declare – contrary to the instincts of many – that the only way forward is the way of peace, which we must tread together. If you in Kenya could succeed in treading this path it would
have a considerable knock-on effect for the whole of Africa. For other countries, too, are confronted with the task of preventing social, religious and ethnic disintegration. Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire are examples here, the latter having just recently survived a crisis.

Libya is also an example. It is utterly reprehensible that Gaddafi has neglected to promote understanding and cohesion between the different Libyan tribes and regions. Quite the contrary: his response is brutal towards those who want to free themselves from decades of repression and authoritarian control. However – and this is also my own personal experience – the fundamental human desire for freedom cannot be repressed in the long term. This will also be true for the countries of Africa, not least for Libya.

That is why it is important, and indeed imperative, that supranational regional alliances consider in the early stages what they can do to snuff out smouldering conflicts, achieve reconciliation, encourage democratic development and along with it social cohesion. The African Union plays a major role here, as well as regional alliances such as the SADC, EAC – the East African Community, IGAD or ECOWAS. We in Europe have enormous respect for the African states when we see their increased determination to take joint action. There is much more readiness today to mediate on behalf of one another in cases of conflict and we acknowledge this immense achievement.

At this point I would like to take as an example the involvement of the African Union in Sudan. You know, of course, that civil war raged in that country for many decades before a peace process between north and south could be successfully wrought. This finally led to the referendum on independence for what is now South Sudan. Kenya, too, played an important role in this process. And the peace process in Sudan would have been unthinkable without the involvement of the United Nations and the African Union. Their joint commitment through the mission UNAMID also calmed the situation in Darfur. There is, of course, much more to be done. Here I am thinking of the difficult situation in your neighbouring country, Somalia.

Following independence for South Sudan – Germany has recognized South Sudan as a sovereign state – the country continues to face many challenges. This young state needs help in order to develop a stable community. Let me say that Germany and the whole of Europe want to assist in this task.

This new African engagement has also been fruitful in Côte d’Ivoire. The crisis there was a test case for the credibility of elections. The fact that President Ouattara took over leadership of the government sends a message even beyond the borders of Côte d’Ivoire that in democratic elections the will of the
electorate must always be respected. Without the committed and constructive role of the African Union and the regional organization ECOWAS during the crisis, this would hardly have been imaginable. Both organizations made it quite clear that the African community recognizes, protects and defends the results of legitimate elections and will not tolerate any illegal takeover of power.

Europe – and Germany especially – stands squarely at Africa’s side when it is a question of preventing or overcoming conflicts, working together with the regional organizations and the African Union. It is for this reason that we wish to support the development of these orga-niza-tions. To give an example, we – the Federal Republic of Germany – are currently financing a new Peace and Security Building for the African Union Commission. We are also contributing to the development and training of the police component of the African Standby Force. Our overall aim is to develop a growing community of shared responsibility with the countries and regional organizations of Africa.

This leads me to another question. How can Europe and Africa work together better to tackle the global challenges that confront us? The piracy problem off the coast of Somalia is a good example. It affects us all – German ships, American ships and ships from many other countries besides. Freedom of movement on the open seas is vital to all countries. The United Nations Security Council has stated this in several resolutions. For this reason Germany is taking part in Operation ATALANTA, led by the European Union. This mission is helping to secure shipping routes, allowing relief supplies to Somalia including transports by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to get through. This is an example of how the African Union and European Union are working closely together.

We can see there is progress, despite the vast area in question. However, the battle against piracy will not in the end be won on the high seas. We have to address the problem at its roots – and these roots are deep in terra firma. This is why we are part of the EU Training Mission (EUTM) Somalia, training Somali soldiers in Uganda, and this is why we support international projects aimed at developing judicial systems in the region. For one thing is clear: violence and instability thrive on lawlessness, in areas where there is no rule of law. Therefore our approach must always be broad and interconnected. This includes developing and strengthening rule of law structures whilst at the same time protecting security.

I would like to take as a second example the fight against international terrorism. The people of Nairobi are all too familiar with terrorist threats. Many African countries find themselves confronted with the terrorists’ contempt for human life. If we want to root out terrorism, we must start by addressing the root causes. This means we must develop access to education and work so that prosperity can follow. In short, we must offer people – and as far as possible every single person – a future. People need to be able to have confidence in that future. This, in turn, depends largely on the issue of sustainability.
The sustainability principle is indeed based on the convergence of economic efficiency, social responsibility and the protection of natural resources. Nairobi is the African location when it comes to issues relating to the environment and sustainability. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has its headquarters in Nairobi. Germany and Kenya share the same aim – to upgrade UNEP to an independent specialized agency of the United Nations. Our hope is that this will enable us at last to make headway in the battle against global warming.

You in Africa feel the effects of climate change keenly. This is why Europe and Africa are striving together towards a new, legally binding climate agreement. All our actions must be directed towards the goal of limiting the extent of global warming to a maximum of two degrees Celsius. If we exceed this limit our ability to control the effects of climate change will be seriously weakened.

One thing is undisputed: up to now it is the industrial countries – far more than any other countries – that have been responsible for climate change. Therefore it is they, of course, who should do the most to restructure their industries and sustainably manage their economies. However, emerging economies and developing countries, too, need to change their ways. The principle that applies here is one of shared but differentiated responsibility between the industrialized, newly industrialized and developing countries. We need to reach a consensus as to how we distribute the burdens of climate change fairly and also choose the right path to success.

A fair approach would be to put the question: how much CO2 per capita should people be permitted to produce? A definitive answer to this question will not be found quickly. At any rate, we cannot expect a clear answer to emerge from the Climate Change Conference in Durban. Nonetheless the Durban conference is vital. If we want to continue on the path taken in Cancún, Mexico, last year, then the challenge for the Durban conference is to overcome more of the obstacles standing in the way of a new international climate agreement.

Germany is aiming towards a legally binding agreement by the end of the Conference. However, there are still many obstacles blocking the path to such an agreement, with several countries – primarily China and India – refusing to enter into any legally binding commitment. Germany wants to push ahead with climate protection, and that is why we seek very close cooperation with regard to renewable energies and energy efficiency in your country, Kenya.
Ladies and Gentlemen, cooperation between Europe and Africa today extends far beyond the management of crises. It also extends far beyond development cooperation projects. Rather, we believe in the immense opportunities your continent holds. The success of Africa’s development also depends, of course, on how far Africa is integrated into the global markets. The German economy is very keen to see closer and increased cooperation between Germany and Kenya. It is also clear that with more growth, with better progress overall, Africa’s weight will increase on the international stage. It is for this reason that Germany is also calling for a stronger African presence in the UN Security Council.

Ladies and gentlemen, Europe and Africa are neighbours. The history of our relationship as neighbouring continents down the centuries was frequently – indeed, all too frequently – marked by conflict, to put it mildly. However in recent decades new opportunities have presented themselves, to which you, the young people of Kenya, can look forward: opportunities through increased exchange – whether via the German Academic Exchange Service, study exchanges or learning the language – and opportunities to gain knowledge abroad and subsequently bring that knowledge back to your own country.

I am here today in person to tell you that Germany would like more of you to be able to take up these opportunities. Germany would like to be Kenya’s partner, Kenya’s friend, lending you a helping hand. Which is why I am pleased to be here and look forward to the discussion with you.

Thank you.