I don't know how politicians, businessmen and intellectuals in Bangladesh comment on the recent phenomenon of globalisation, but in Germany people differ in opinion on this issue. While a certain section, mainly internationally operating companies, draw attention to the advantages of an increasingly inter-linked "global economic village", large parts of the labour force fear the negative repercussions caused by reallocation of production sites and outsourcing of supplementary services and activities.

Two examples may illustrate this point, both related to the globalisation strategy pursued by the German airline Lufthansa:

- Lufthansa has shifted its computerised data processing of passenger booking and accounting to a large degree to Southern India, where well-qualified cheap computer professionals are available;

- Lufthansa has also set up one of its Global Call Centres in South Africa, where multilingual service professionals can be employed at lower wages. If you dial a certain Lufthansa service number in Germany and enquire about
flight connections, you will be automatically linked with this South African based Call Centre. Your phone call is registered under a domestic number in Germany, but you actually speak with someone in South Africa without realising it.

In technical terms, the reallocation has been facilitated by the so-called “revolution in information technology”. Globally standardised data-processing software and hardware like communication satellites offer fast and cost-effective links.

However, in terms of profit and job opportunities, the blessings of globalisation are unequally distributed. Private companies like Lufthansa raise their profits due to the lower wage level in industrialising countries. The national economies and professional labour markets of the so-called “threshold countries” in the Southern Hemisphere benefit from the growing demand of well-trained specialists, resulting in higher national revenue. But the home countries, in the case of Lufthansa, Germany, suffer from reduced revenue, loss of job opportunities and raising unemployment rates.

As demonstrated by the Lufthansa example, the effects of globalisation have to be assessed in a rather differentiated way. The same applies to the interrelation between globalisation and development policy.

II

EXPERIENCES WITH GLOBALISATION, DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND THE CONCERNED NATIONAL ACTORS

Rather different political and economic factors and divergent interests figure in this complex system of
interdependencies, adaptations, corrective measures and national interests. What are the constituent elements?

Firstly, we observe a far-reaching transformation of the international system called globalisation, which only seems to be a new phenomenon at first glance.

Secondly, we have to reckon with a well-established institutional network of local, national and multilateral organisations serving the main purpose to correct socio-economic imbalances between peoples and states in the international system. Development policy and its related institutional network have been set up long before the "revolution in information technology" and thus the recent globalisation process started. We should not blink the fact that this institutional network has turned into a new category of "vested interests". It has always been prone to be instrumentalised by the various participants in the overall process of adjusting socio-economic standard of living and politico-social norms between different political, economic and religious-cultural systems.

Finally, we have to take into account the broad range of local, national and multilateral actors. Their interests may converge on certain issues, but quite often they tend to compete with each other, thus impeding the overall common goal. Let me differentiate the experiences gained so far with development strategies in the transforming international system.

1. Globalisation

Three general conclusions can be drawn with regard to globalisation:
Firstly, globalisation is basically an economic phenomenon; the rules of the game are determined mainly by international private companies or multilateral financial institutions, while national governments, be it the German or the Bangladeshi one, have only a limited say and are forced to react to the changing conditions. Thus, national actors suffer from a partial loss of directive powers and may be left out with heading off the worst distortions in their national economy;

Secondly, by reallocating production sites and service centres to industrialising countries, the international company introduces, either voluntarily or on the insistence of the national host government, a certain minimum standard of labour regulations, social insurance schemes and safety measures at the new locations; these standards may be lower than those at the original production site, but higher than the national average in the host country;

Thirdly, as a consequence, we can observe a transfer of norms in labour law and social security schemes, which – in the long run – will positively affect the working conditions in industrialising countries.

One can rightly object that repercussions such as partial loss of directive powers and transfer of norms, are not unique consequences of the globalisation process. This is true since the same effects have been caused by the increasing "internationalisation" of economic relations during the last three decades.

The global economy, as we see it today, has indeed being determined by newly emerging and increasingly inter-linked
global markets and growing interdependencies between national economies for quite some time. Therefore, globalisation is not a new phenomenon, but rather an acceleration of decade-old developments.

However, what is new today is the speed with which national economies are getting more and more inter-linked and integrated into the "global economic village". This is, to a large degree, accelerated by the "revolution in information and communication technology". Thus, not the basic trend, but the rapid pace of this development can be described as main characteristic of the globalisation process. The reverse side of this process is that national governments face difficulties in adjusting fast enough to the imbalances caused by the rapid transformation.

Not a direct consequence, but a political coincidence is the fact that the globalisation process has taken off at a time when the ideological rivalry between two economic systems – i.e. market economy and state-ruled communist economy – has been overcome with the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the former Soviet Union has paved the way for introducing principles of market economy on a global scale. Thus, positively speaking, social and labour norms of the market economy and, negatively speaking, crude mechanisms of an unregulated capitalistic system also penetrate national economies which have been bypassed by the slower process of internationalisation.
2. Development Policy

From its very beginning, development policy has been part of the general framework of internationalisation and functioned as one of its policy instruments. One of its specific purposes has been to counterbalance adverse affects of market-regulated economic relations and to help weaker national economies to become more competitive in the world market. For two reasons it has always contained a strong normative and ideological component:

- Firstly, as a matter of principle, local and national traditions and modes of production – both in the politico-social and economic spheres – had to be changed in order to initiate or accelerate the industrialisation process in less developed economies; in this context, the crucial issue was how to achieve this aim and which set of socio-economic norms should be merged with the indigenous traditions of the developing countries;

- Secondly, during the Cold War, development policy was strongly influenced, used or even misused as normative instrument by the leading actors of the two antagonistic systems; therefore, development strategies were prone to have been burdened with ideological intentions.

As a result of both the factors, development policy passed through different phases, was revised and again revised according to new ideological slogans. Those of you, who have been directly or indirectly involved in negotiating or implementing bi- and multilateral development strategies in Bangladesh, will be quite familiar with these transformations.
Since you know what I am referring to, let me cut short this general review. Instead, I would like to ask where do we stand today and from where do we take off in an era of rapid globalisation, subsequently forcing the various actors to adjust their development strategies once again.

III

WHERE DO WE STAND TODAY?

• Firstly, development policy has grown up indeed. In spite of all the well-known criticism and the above mentioned ideological proneness of development policy, today development projects and programmes are professionally planned and implemented, aims and means are co-ordinated as optimal as possible, evaluation control has been introduced. The following assessment by Horst Breier fittingly sums up the current situation: “Development co-operation has been implemented in a solid craftsman-like manner, but without much imagination”.

• Secondly, new topics have been included as legitimate aims of a revised development policy such as maintaining the global ecological balance and using natural resources with consideration. What is needed most urgently is to give a new impetus to the political dialogue between many actors, from the top level of multilateral aid consortia down to the project level in small villages.

• Thirdly, even after the Cold War, development policy will remain an instrument of strengthening global security. In order not to raise the controversial question on how to define “security”, I replace the new term “broader concept of security” with the new catchword “global challenges”. By
this I refer to global tasks such as reducing or preventing fast-spreading diseases, poverty-induced migration, ecological imbalances, irreversible changes of the global climate, conflicts on water-sharing of large river systems etc.

• Fourthly, globalisation has, indeed, contributed to reducing prosperity imbalances between industrialised and industrialising countries, yet on an unequal basis; the so-called "threshold countries" and more advanced industrialising countries have benefited more from and participated to a higher degree in global market integration than less or least development countries; Bangladesh can certainly testify in favour of this observation.

• Fifthly, in view of the growing importance of transnational actors, be it private companies or global financial institutions, national governments face more and more difficulties to correct the increasing, though differentiated, socio-economic imbalances.

• Sixthly, while concluding my stocktaking of the current state of affairs, I strongly argue in favour of an even closer political co-operation and joint revision of development policy.

IV
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

• Firstly, globalisation can be expected to further increase and accelerate. One significant reason is that the systems rivalry has been decided in favour of market economy and
its related political framework of democratic institutions and norms.

- Secondly, underdeveloped regions and least developed countries are endangered to remain isolated from the global economic transformation, unless they set up the appropriate politico-institutional framework.

- Thirdly, as experience has shown, the sooner industrialising and developing countries are willing to provide the required political framework for development, the higher their chances are to benefit from economic globalisation and to correct socio-economic imbalances. In this respect, "good governance" has been identified as a key element.

- Fourthly, since new and far-reaching information and communication technology is the driving force of globalisation, the People in developing countries cannot technically and will not politically accept to be cut off from the global political and economic transformations. Communication satellites and reports from migrating family members or village neighbours disseminate information, thus raising political awareness of socio-economic discrimination.

- Fifthly, even if national governments are fully justified to ask for a considerate and culturally adjusted transfer of politico-institutional norms, they should realise that they pursue a preventive policy by adopting norms of democratic consensus-building. If, however, they allow the "expectation gap" to broaden uncontrolled in their
societies, they may undermine their own power base. Unfulfilled expectations and deepening political and economic frustration are fertile breeding grounds for radical, undemocratic forces, whose ideological attraction and organisational strength may eventually lead to toppling elected, yet ill-performing governments.

V

CONCLUDING QUESTION

Since I have come here as a student of Bangladeshi politics, I want to conclude my presentation with a question, which has intrigued me for quite some time. Why has the so-called "rule of hartal", i.e. resorting to street power and boycott of parliament, obviously been considered legitimate by all major political parties?

It seems that the civil society in Bangladesh is divided on this issue. One section argues that the current crisis in Bangladesh has been caused by antagonistic perceptions of the political system. Accordingly, undemocratic power of the street is legitimised as political means. Thereby, the government should be forced to accept a democratic mechanism, integrating it in the constitution. Street power is claimed to be a people's movement, fighting for a change of the political system. The other section, however, argues that it is not a systemic conflict, but rather a power struggle between political parties and two hostile party leaders.
However, many agree that resorting to street power could encourage undemocratic forces and undermine the still weak democratic institutions. In addition, hartals are seen as severely impeding economic recovery and urgently needed uplift of low standards of production and living. Since both major parties have repeatedly taken to the streets, they are criticised for not giving topmost priority to developing the country.