Weert Börner, German Ambassador to Brunei 10th November 2026

Ambassador's Speech at the German National Day Reception 2026

(Day of German Unity)

12th November 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Royal Polo Club, Jerudong, Bandar Seri Begawan

Pengiran Pengiran, Pehin Pehin,

Dato Dato, Datin Datin,

Honourable Deputy Minister of Education Dato Dr. Haji Norarfan,

Dear Permanent Secretaries,

Dear Representatives of the Ministry of Defence and the Royal Brunei Armed Forces,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Distinguished Guests,

Selamat datang kepada anda semua!

Globally speaking, we are all living in rough times. Several old strongmen politicians are endangering global peace and security. They are undermining international cooperation based on rational, balanced terms. They are heavily damaging the rule of law. They are threatening our respective prosperity. And – what may be the worst in the long run -, they do not care for the ongoing impacts of climate change and for the highly threatened biological diversity of our wonderful planet.

Germany as a middle power as well as Europe as a whole have an existential interest in keeping up a rules-based order and the rule of law. We do not want to fall under the rule of strength of any super power. We have an existential interest in fair world market conditions, in free-trade agreements and in the free exchange of ideas, knowledge, science and innovation.

The same, I am sure, is valid for Brunei and many other Asian countries.
In such times, countries like Brunei and Germany – as different as they may be – have to join forces, have to cooperate more than ever. Our respective well-being - our peace, our freedom, our prosperity – depend on a rules-based international order that limits the power of the strongest, that respects territorial integrity and that holds up the right of self-determination of each people.

If we want to have a bright future, all states have to implement the Paris Climate Agreement. All of us have to strengthen, not weaken the United Nations. All of us have to respect the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. And we have to work on more bilateral as well as regional free-trade agreements.

Distinguished Guests,

Germany, 36 years after our peaceful and happy reunification, is facing multiple challenges, both because of international crises and because of domestic developments. Why are we supporting Ukraine so much against Russian President Putin's war regime? - Because the people of Ukraine deserve it, and because it is also about our own security, freedom and prosperity.

Germany is trying hard to regain sustainable economic growth after several years of stagnation, with some industrial sectors even having faced decline.
Latest figures and moves give hope: The general growth forecast 2026 for the German economy increased from 0,6 % at the beginning of this year to now 1,3 %. Exports have risen again, including core industrial goods such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals and metal products.

Meanwhile, 60 % of our high electricity demand is covered by renewables, tendency constantly growing. - Germany experiences a new boom of start-up foundations and innovation, including industry applications of artificial intelligence.

In 2026, the European Union, Germany included, signed new free-trade agreements with the Mercosur countries in Latin America, with India, with Indonesia, with Australia and with New Zealand. The free-trade negotiations with the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia have progressed well; we should get to final results within the next two to twelve months.

Germany is restructuring its social welfare systems due to an aging society. We are in an ongoing process of a complex energy transition and of fighting the impacts of climate change.

Many of these challenges are the same in many countries of Europe and Asia: aging societies, rising costs of living, not enough adequate or affordable housing, deficits in education, too high levels of youth unemployment, an uncertain future. Not just our governments, our whole societies have to tackle these issues. And we have to cooperate, we have to learn from each other in order to find the best solutions for these challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just one word on the ongoing global energy transition that, I think, is so relevant to any country represented in this room: Of course, every country has to find its own best energy path and mix of energy sources. However, what everybody should know: Currently, four to

five times more capital is invested in the build-up of renewable energies than in new coal, gas or nuclear power plants together.

Even in the USA with the current President promoting “Drill, baby, drill!”, 93 % of all newly planned electricity capacities will rely on solar, wind and battery storage. Whether China, India or Pakistan, whether Morocco, Nigeria or Uganda, whether Brazil, Chile or Uruguay, whether ASEAN or Europe, the renewables are on a constant rise for very good reasons, namely environmental and economic reasons.

Therefore, Germany can only support Brunei on its own diversification path, including the build-up of renewables and the introduced changes in electricity tariffs.

Distinguished Guests,

The last 18 months have been a very bright phase of our bilateral relations.
To mention just a few highlights:
In February 2026, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul visited Brunei.
Bruneian Foreign Minister II Dato Erywan travelled to Germany to participate in the Munich Security Conference – as the first Bruneian politician ever.
End of April 2026, German Deputy Foreign Minister Florian Hahn travelled to Brunei for an ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting.
On invitation of German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah paid his fourth official visit to Germany in May of this year, visiting both Berlin and Hamburg.
Sponsored by the German Foreign Office, three mid-career Bruneians participated in specific training courses in Germany.
A couple of months ago, the South East Asia division in the Foreign Office in Berlin declared: “So much of Brunei has never been on our desks!”

And now the outlook:
METI Minister Dato Haji Abdul Manaf is planning to visit Germany mid-January 2027. On invitation by Germany’s Agriculture Minister Alois Rainer, he wants to participate in the 19th Global Forum on Food and Agriculture and visit the so-called Green Week, an international top exhibition on food and agriculture in Berlin.
His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, His Royal Highness Foreign Minister Prince Mateen and Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence Minister II Pehin Halbi have been invited to take part in the next Munich Security Conference in February 2027.
And His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah received an official invitation to visit Germany – dates still to be fixed.

Dear Guests,

We have tried to capture at least part of the recent bilateral encounters in a 6-minute video: “Bruneian-German Relations 2025/26”. You may have seen it already on this screen. Please

feel free to have another look. Today is the premiere of this production. Thanks a lot to you, Allen Shim, and your team for the excellent cooperation on this video.

Business-wise, you have already seen that a couple of companies agreed to showcase their German-Bruneian activities in the Foyer of this wonderful Berkshire Hall. I highly appreciate the participation of Muara Maritime Services, TYC / Audi, Jati / Mercedes-Benz, QAF / BMW / Porsche and Airbus. ( )

The German Embassy is very grateful to its financial sponsors who contributed to this evening:

- Lufthansa Technik, based in Hamburg and, for the time being, providing the largest group of Germans living and working in Brunei,
- National Insurance in association with Germany's largest insurance company Allianz,
- ThyssenKrupp Industrial Solutions, the German company that built the factory for Brunei Fertilizer Industries BFI,
- QAF Group, representing the German automotive brands BMW and Porsche in Brunei, and
- Medetech Sdn Bhd (Sendirian Berhad), since more than 30 years providing Brunei with high-quality medical equipment from German companies such as Siemens Healthineers, Dräger, Fresenius and others.

In closing, my wife Imke and I would like to express a big thank you to the team of our mini-Embassy:

- to my new Deputy Ms. Britta Petersohn,
- to my Assistant Ms. Jane Marcelo - who has been with the German Embassy for 30 years already!
- to Ms. Fabianna Wong, to Ms. Elizabeth Mapili, to Ms. Jessica Guerzon, and – last but not least – to Mr. Rey Macaspac.

Dear Guests,

Enough of this monologue. Let's get back to dialogue!
Thank you so much for joining us for the Day of German Unity Reception 2026!
Enjoy the evening!!!
Terima kasih!!!