



Rat für
NACHHALTIGE
Entwicklung

Press release

Hauff: Aid for Opel only with a radical change in strategy

Chairman of the Council calls for a commitment to climate protection

Berlin, 26 February 2009 The chairman of the German Council for Sustainable Development, Volker Hauff, has called on the German government and state governments only to offer a bailout package to the ailing carmaker Opel if the company commits itself to a climate-friendly change in strategy.

"The state should not finance bailout packages for technologies and business models that have no prospects for the future," says Hauff. "Aid for carmakers and automotive suppliers has to be dependent upon whether these companies can present sound investment programs for a significant reduction of fuel consumption and emissions."

German carmakers will only be able to survive today's global competition over the long term if they devote themselves to strategies that are climate-friendly and conserve resources, says the former Federal Minister for Research and Technology. Hauff says that the German automotive industry has potential, but has some catching up to do when it comes to electric propulsion, and hybrid and fuel-cell technology.

"Under these circumstances we cannot continue with business as usual," says Hauff. "It would be appalling and embarrassing if we realized 10 years from now that we had used tax payers' money to help the automotive industry become obsolete."

Background

The German government and a number of state governments are considering granting state financial aid to Opel, the German subsidiary of American carmaker General Motors. One of the options under consideration is that the state would buy a stake in the company. The decision on state aid will depend on the soundness of the restructuring plan that Opel is currently compiling. Opel has approximately 25,000 workers in Germany.

The Council

The German Council for Sustainable Development makes proposals and submits recommendations for the sustainability strategy and policies of the German government. Dr. Volker Hauff is the Chairman and Prof. Dr. Klaus Töpfer is the Deputy Chairman of the Council. In May, 2007, German Chancellor Angela Merkel newly appointed them and 11 other Council members from various areas of society. Additional information: www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de.

Sustainability

Sustainable development means giving equal weight to environmental goals alongside economic and social objectives. Sustainable business concepts mean that future generations are left with an intact economic, environmental and social setting.

Contact:

German Council for Sustainable Development,
Gst c/o GTZ
Dr. Günther Bachmann
Potsdamer Platz 10, D-10785 Berlin, Germany
[T] +49(0)30 408190.121
[F] +49(0)30 408190.125
[E] guenther.bachmann@nachhaltigkeitsrat.de
[W] www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de

Press inquiries:

German Council for Sustainable Development,
Gst. c/o GTZ
Christian Schaudwet
Potsdamer Platz 10, D-10785 Berlin, Germany
[T] +49 (0)30 408190-233
[F] +49 (0)30 408190 22-233
[E]: christian.schaudwet@nachhaltigkeitsrat.de