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## Climate Lecture 2009: "The Economics of Climate Change"

Sperrfrist: 4. November 2009, 15.00 Uhr

### Prof. Dr. Kurt Kutzler, President of the Technische Universität Berlin

Your Excellency, Lord Nicholas Stern, Senator Lompscher,  
Mr. Hattaka, Professor Edenhofer, Professor Schäfer,  
Dear colleagues, Distinguished guests,

I would like to extend to you all a very warm welcome on the occasion of the Climate Lecture 2009, held at the TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN. The presence of so many of you here today underscores the significance of this event - and the high reputation of our invited speaker, Lord Nicholas Stern.

The origin of this climate lecture dates back to November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008: When Prof. Edenhofer held its inaugural lecture on the occasion of its appointment on the chair *Economics of Climate Change* here at the TU Berlin, the idea to arrange a lecture on climate change has been born. *Vattenfall Europe* has been gratefully picked up this idea – and made it a joint initiative of TU Berlin, the *Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research* and *Vattenfall Europe*. It was our aim to start a **series** of lectures with internationally renowned experts on the main challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *Climate Change* - and to, therewith, draw particular attention on this topic.

Therefore, we are very pleased to welcome Professor Nicholas Stern to present the first climate lecture here at the TU Berlin today. He is one of the most outstanding scientists in the field of climate policy who has changed the international discourse on climate policy in an unprecedented manner -

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and we are very proud to have the honour to award him the honorary doctorate of the TU Berlin (later on) today.

Thank you very much!

## Laudation: Awarding Honorary Doctorate to Prof. Stern

Ladies and Gentleman,

This is a day of particular importance for the Technische Universität Berlin. In the course of this event, the first climate lecture at the TU Berlin, I have the honor to award the honorary doctorate to Professor Nicholas Stern.

Professor Stern is one of the world's most influential researchers; his career is long, impressing and outstanding – as my colleagues impressively depicted!

With his brilliant work, he succeeded to bridge the gap between science and politics in the field of climate change. His research findings have been published in more than 100 scientific articles and 15 volumes. As chief economist e.g. of the *World Bank* and the *European Bank of Reconstruction and Development*, Professor Stern worked as a political adviser and gained international reputation.

His excellent research findings and his experience as political adviser resulted in the most important *Stern Review* (2006) that put climate change on the top of the international agenda. For the first time, an economist has analyzed in detail the “costs of climate change” and has therewith initiated a fundamental change in the international discourse on climate policy. The review describes with utmost clarity the economic impact of climate change. He shows in numbers the costs of “doing nothing” and the costs of preventing from a significant global warming with dramatic consequences.

Of utmost importance within Stern's review is the consideration of non-linear effects that may occur in the global climate system. Being shortly, the rise of the global temperature above a certain level bears a tremendous risk for the planet's ecological system. If the so-called *tipping points* are reached, changes in the ecological system may occur that are irreversible and, above all, are possibly exceeding the adaptability of the global society.

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Best examples are the *disturbance of the oceanic circulation in the North Atlantic, the increase and possible persistence of the El-Nino-phenomenon etc.*

Professor Stern's approach to this problem, the developed methodology, has put this critical topic on the agenda of many scientists, in particular economists.

Ladies and gentleman, we are all aware of the fact, that climate change is one of the most severe problems our society is facing today. We all agree on the scientific world's particular responsibility to identify problems and to offer solutions.

Prof. Stern meets this responsibility in an impressive manner. His review has raised high interest within all parts of the society. He has succeeded to open a wide discourse on the effects of climate change. Since the review was published in 2006, climate change becomes one of the world's most critical topics, influencing political decision-makers, media, entrepreneurs, managers and, for sure, scientists.

In fact, Professor Stern's research has also influenced our structural planning: Our decision to set a special focus on climate change has led to the establishment of a chair on the *Economics of Climate Change* at our university in 2008. It is a joint professorship of TU Berlin and the *Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research* that is promoted by the *Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection*. Professor Edenhofer, deputy director and chief economist of the *Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research* and co-chairman of *Working Group III* of the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* hold this chair whose focus is unique throughout the world.

We, additionally, have established further initiatives that will strengthen TU Berlin's competencies in the field of climate research. We have established the *climate lecture series*, and have gained *Professor Stern* to present the first lecture - one month before the *UN climate conference* in Copenhagen starts: no doubt this is of political relevance.

Next to the trend-setting professorship, *Economics of Climate Changes*, taken by Prof. Edenhofer, the TU Berlin has founded the innovations centres *energy* and *designing human settlements*. Several of their research clusters have set the focus on climate relevant topics. Within TU Berlin's focus on sustainability, research on climate change will definitely play a prominent role.

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To refer to Professor Edenhofer: without Professor Stern, without the Stern Review we would still not put such a strong focus on this topic.

Professor Stern is a brilliant scientist, a researcher of international standing, whose work on climate change – in particular the above mentioned 2006 Stern Review - has changed the world's view on this issue.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased that we now have the honour to award Professor Stern the honorary doctorate of the TU Berlin.