

# 09

## GENERAL MEETING

of METRO AG on 13 May 2009

Speech of the Chairman of the  
Management Board of METRO AG and CEO,  
Dr Eckhard Cordes

Check against delivery!

## **Welcome**

Good Morning, Shareholders, my colleagues on the Management Board and I would like to warmly welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of METRO AG. I would also like to welcome shareholder representatives, members of the media and our guests. Finally, I would like to greet those people who are watching this speech on the Internet. We appreciate your interest in our company.

## **Metro in today's economic climate**

Ladies and Gentlemen, all of you are well aware of today's economic conditions. I will not bother to run down a laundry list of crisis-related data concerning the dramatic plunge of incoming orders, rapidly rising unemployment or the gigantic amount of new debt being piled up by governments. No, I would like to describe to you how a strong company, your company, is working its way through the crisis, how we are exploiting our opportunities, how we are systematically tackling our challenges and how we are maintaining a realistic perspective in the process.

What are we doing? To put it simply: We intend to intensify our focus on the customer. We intend to markedly increase our efficiency by reducing costs. We intend to become more entrepreneurial and decentralised. And we intend to continue growing intensively, particularly in our international businesses, even though we realize that the crisis will temporarily retard this work.

- As part of this effort, Media Markt is supposed to become the second sales division of METRO Group to enter the Chinese market. In 2010, we are planning to open our first outlet in Shanghai.
- In Europe, we intend to start an online business for our consumer electronics stores to complement the traditional chain store – the test countries are Austria and the Netherlands.

# METRO Group

- Metro Cash & Carry will start operating in Kazakhstan this year and in Egypt next year.
- Real will start doing business in Odessa, Ukraine, this August.
- In those areas where we have unfinished business to complete, working groups have rolled up their sleeves and tackled their assignments.
- If you want to solve problems, you must first acknowledge that you have them and openly discuss them. We have taken out the carpets under which such problems could be swept. Here is one example: Despite the success achieved by Metro Cash & Carry around the world, this business is not doing well in Germany. And it has been that way for a long time now. We have thoroughly analyzed the reasons for this – and we are taking action now.
- Forming a broad umbrella over these efforts, Ladies and Gentlemen, is “Shape 2012”. This is our sweeping renewal and restructuring programme that is designed to fortify our strengths and eliminate our weaknesses.

All of this work can be carried out only on the basis of a clear analysis of what is real and what is feasible. The entire world is in the grip of the sharpest financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression of 1929.

During 2009, the German economy is expected to shrink by 6 percent. You occasionally hear people who say that the world’s fifth-richest country is quite capable of putting up with shrinking economic performance. To such people, I have this to say: Talk about painless economic shrinkage is naive. I think it is impossible to absorb such an economic blow without citizens’ feeling some pain.

Business and political leaders share the responsibility for what has happened. As a result, the dictates of reason demand that they jointly lead the way out of the crisis. All involved– in business, politics and society – must contribute to this effort through their particular role.

# METRO Group

Today, METRO Group reaffirms its commitment to its important responsibility as a major employer. I pledge to you right here: Within the scope of what is entrepreneurially responsible, we will do everything we can to avoid redundancies. As one of Germany's largest corporations, it is our most pressing social responsibility – particularly in times of crisis – to provide employees with a feeling of trust and reliability. We need our employees, their commitment, their talents, their creativity and their motivation particularly when the going gets tough.

After all, success in the markets does not just magically happen. It is primarily our employees' interaction with customers on the job every day that determines the success of METRO Group. Trade and retail is a business by people for people. They make the difference. It is employees who make METRO Group strong. We would be ill-advised – also in terms of sustainable company management – if we did not highly value our most important resource, our employees.

Ladies and Gentlemen, compared with export-driven sectors, the waters of consumer-related retailers and wholesalers around the world are relatively calm.

End consumers apparently are not drastically altering their buying behaviour for basic needs, at least not yet. In our largest market, Germany, April's GfK consumer confidence index remained stable despite gloomy economic forecasts. It appears that consumers do not want to let their mood be quickly spoiled. A low inflation rate, reduced energy prices and rising pensions are apparently persuading people not to keep their wallets closed. Despite the dim macroeconomic prospects, the outlook for our company is far from troubling.

Metro Group's market segment has not been characterised by any extreme jumps in demand in recent years. As a result, it also has not and is not experiencing any dramatic contractions either. The sales divisions of METRO Group provide excellent services at exceptionally competitive prices – in boom times and in weak times. We will profit from consumers' increasing price consciousness.

As a result of internationalisation, we are also profiting from varying degrees of market maturity in the world. Countries like China, India, Pakistan, Ukraine, Russia and most of Eastern Europe are characterised by first-time consumption behaviour. Many people in these countries do not yet have such things as a television. Such first-time purchases are put off much less frequently in such economies than by consumers in saturated markets.

Finally, we are using the crisis to sharpen our focus on the needs of our customers: in every sales division. This approach forms a bond between customers and our company, in good and bad times.

As a result, I believe that the year of 2009 will indeed be a challenging one for our company but that we will also effectively seize and exploit the opportunities arising this year.

Or to put it another way: While the crisis is leaving hurricane-like damage in many sectors, we are just being whipped by a storm with force 7 winds: It is noticeable, but not threatening. It will allow METRO Group to navigate in a future-orientated manner to extend our lead on competitors. Today, our sales divisions are already among the sector leaders in their individual markets.

Last but not least, the stock market. A reasonable evaluation of the Metro share's price cannot be done without considering last year's weak performance. But we are seeing that the capital markets are gaining increased faith in our new strategy. The performance of the Metro share has been particularly pleasing since the start of the year. It has significantly outperformed the DAX. It is also performing relatively well in a European sector comparison. Because METRO Group is working effectively during the crisis, we are confident that the positive trend will continue.

## Review of 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen, the year of 2008 was a challenging one for the entire economy and METRO Group as well. Nonetheless, I can say that fiscal year 2008 was a successful one for our, for your company, particularly against the backdrop of macroeconomic trends.

With currency-adjusted sales growth of 6.1 percent and earnings improvement as measured by EBIT before special items of 7.1 percent, METRO Group even set new records – in absolute figures. Sales climbed to €68 billion, and EBIT before special items rose to €2.2 billion.

METRO Group generated new growth in all regions. In our biggest market, **Germany**, sales increased by 2 percent to €26.7 billion – not least because of the good performance of Media Markt and Saturn as well as of Real.

Sales grew more strongly outside Germany. Group sales generated in international business climbed by 8.4 percent to €41.3 billion.

The highest percentage growth was generated in the **Asia/Africa** region. Here, METRO Group raised sales by 18.6 percent to €2.2 billion.

Sales grew dynamically in **Eastern Europe** as well. During the past fiscal year, they rose by €2.4 billion to €18.1 billion – despite a rapidly cooling economy. Today, the region of Eastern Europe represents more than one-quarter of total Group sales.

In **Western Europe**, we also achieved respectable results in fiscal year 2008. Here, METRO Group sales rose by 2.2 percent to €21 billion.

The international share of sales set a new record in fiscal year 2008 at nearly 61 percent. We opened 101 of 124 new stores outside Germany. This proves one point: We deeply believe in the long-range importance of international business to METRO Group – particularly in Eastern Europe and Asia. For this reason, our strategic goal is to systematically expand our position in these markets.

Let's now examine the EBIT of individual regions.

Earnings before special items in **Germany** rose markedly by 11 percent to €630 million. Just like sales, the earnings increase of €60 million resulted from improved performance at Media Markt and Saturn as well as at Real.

In **Western Europe**, earnings fell to €608 million in fiscal year 2008. The slowing economy was felt by consumer electronics in general and by Metro Cash & Carry in particular.

Our stores **Eastern Europe** were able to boost earnings by 28 percent. EBIT in Eastern Europe broke the one-billion-euro barrier for the first time. All sales divisions played a major role in this particularly pleasing development.

METRO Group also succeeded in improving earnings in **Asia/Africa**. EBIT in the region rose to - €33 million. The Metro cash & carry stores in China reached the profit zone. Other countries performed satisfactorily as well.

Overall, we can be very satisfied with last year's results. METRO Group was able to expand its market position as one of the leading international trade and retail companies.

## ***Key financial figures***

I will now turn to some other important figures.

Despite the favourable development of EBIT before special items, **net profit for the period** fell from €983 million in 2007 to €560 million in 2008. This decrease was primarily the result of extraordinary effects at Real related to the optimisation of the location network as well as one-time expenses related to the divestment of the Adler fashion stores recognized in earnings from discontinued operations.

**Earnings per share** from continuing operations and before special items stood at €3.05 in 2008 – an increase of about 10 percent year-on-year. As a result of the good performance in 2008 and the challenges that lie ahead of us, we are proposing a **dividend** of €1.18 per ordinary share to you. This corresponds to last year's level. As a result, the payout ratio will again amount to about 40 percent.

At 12.4 percent, the **return on capital employed** from the operational business was slightly higher than the previous year's level of 12.2 percent.

METRO Group again generated a distinctly positive **economic value added** in 2008. EVA totalled €613 million, compared with €538 million in the previous year. Metro Cash & Carry and Real significantly improved their EVA. Galeria Kaufhof covered its capital costs once again, and nearly doubled its EVA.

**Investments** at METRO Group amounted to €2.5 billion in fiscal year 2008. This was €0.3 billion above the previous year's level. The biggest share of these investments flowed into the continued international expansion of the sales divisions Metro Cash & Carry, Real as well as Media Markt and Saturn. They accounted for a large share of overall investments.

**Net debt** rose by about €300 million to €4.6 billion during the reporting year. The increase was primarily caused by the previously mentioned increase in investments.

Due mostly to exchange-rate effects, METRO Group's **equity ratio** fell by 1.2 percentage points to 18.0 percent during the reporting period.

That concludes the review of the Group. But what about the individual sales divisions?

## ***Sales divisions***

Each sales division contributed to the Group's success. This was particularly true of **Metro Cash & Carry**. Its **sales** rose 4.6 percent to €33.1 billion. As a result, it generated nearly half of Group sales.

We were especially successful in our **international business**. This business now makes up 82.9 percent of total sales at Metro Cash & Carry – this is a further increase since 2007. Sales generated outside Germany rose by 5.5 percent to €27.5 billion. I would like to draw your attention in particular to the results in Russia and Ukraine, where sales rose 20 percent and 24 percent, respectively.

Metro Cash & Carry also significantly boosted its **earnings** last year – and they rose even higher than sales. Earnings before interest and taxes climbed by 6.8 percent to €1.3 billion. The numbers impressively underscore the earnings strength of our cash & carry stores.

Even though the bottom of the economic downturn may not have been reached yet, we believe that Metro Cash & Carry will securely manoeuvre its way through the crisis. But Metro Cash & Carry can do more, and we want more. Our cash & carry stores will vigorously expand their market position. The sooner competitors drop out of the market, particularly in Eastern Europe and Asia, the faster this will occur.

Even in the mature markets of Western Europe and particularly in Germany, we at Metro Cash & Carry are resolutely tackling the growing challenges. This means for us: efficient processes, competitive cost structures and a systematic focus on our core customers – hotels, restaurants, caterers and small retailers. But this group also includes small businesses and offices for such people as physicians, craftsmen and solicitors. In this way, Metro Cash & Carry is evolving from a simple seller of goods to a provider of more comprehensive solutions.

We plan to markedly accelerate the buying process for our entrepreneurial core customers. By providing first-class customer assistance, we can ensure that

purchasing at Metro Cash & Carry can be done in a more targeted and faster manner. Time is money! This is something that we as a trade and retail company know well. For this reason, Metro Cash & Carry will offer further support to customers in order to optimise the buying experience.

This will include a delivery service that we are currently introducing in various countries, including Germany. We are also crafting a private-label strategy. Our goal is to boost our sales of private-label products from the current level of 11 percent to more than 20 percent.

In other words: We are doing our homework – and we are doing it everywhere! We are exploiting the opportunities that arise – and we are doing it in spite of the crisis! Metro Cash & Carry is systematically refining its unique selling proposition and is creating significant added value for customers.

We truly believe that the business model of Metro Cash & Carry will remain sustainably successful. Sometimes, though, it is necessary to make targeted adjustments to the concept. Frans Muller and his team will energetically move this process forward.

With “Shape 2012”, we have rebuilt the overarching structure of METRO Group – and this includes Metro Cash & Carry. The framework rests on an extremely solid foundation. The statics are stable. The job now is to design the individual stories – step by step, floor by floor. The new METRO Group is taking shape day by day. As a result, we are confident that a promising future lies ahead, and we are excited about it.

I would now like to talk about **Real**.

The positive effect that change can have is reflected by Real Germany. We announced that we would produce a turnaround. To all of those who initially doubted that we could do it, I have this to say: We have not reached our goal yet, but we are

well on our way to achieving it. The process management at Real Germany is the blueprint for the development of the entire METRO Group.

Let's start with the **overall results** at Real: **Sales** climbed by 5.8 percent to €11.6 billion in fiscal year 2008. **Earnings** before special items rose by €37 million to €21million. Real posted a profit in 2008 – in every region. In Poland, the EBIT margin even topped 3 percent. You see that Real is a successful format when it is correctly managed.

This also applies to Germany. Today, just about everybody has heard the marketing slogan “One store. You won't need more.” that was launched across Germany one year ago. But more important than that: It works! In 2008, the hypermarkets had 3.5 million new customer visits. People again enjoy coming to Real!

Our new Real private labels have played a part in this change, too. Sales of Real Quality, Real Selection and Real Bio have risen significantly. The higher rate of repurchases by customers shows that the range of Real private labels is really appreciated. Our private-label strategy has been a real success!

Real also made good strides in Eastern Europe last year. We opened 11 hypermarkets there. The new stores in Poland, Romania and Russia are pacesetters for the entire sector. The result was a 25.7 percent increase in sales. Of course, the principle used by Metro Cash & Carry also applies to Real. During the crisis, we will draw on our position of strength and expand our market position, particularly in Eastern Europe.

## **Media Markt and Saturn**

In defiance of current macroeconomic conditions, Media Markt and Saturn are continuing on their success path. We have set an ambitious long-term goal for our consumer electronics stores: They are to become No. 1 around the world.

Divisional results for 2008 show that we are not illusionists: **Sales** grew by 8.9 percent to €19 billion. As a result of the high pace of expansion, international sales

even rose by 12 percent and now make up more than 54 percent of total sales. While sales in Western Europe increased by 7.4 percent, sales in Eastern Europe jumped by 32.8 percent.

At €603 million, **earnings** remained roughly at the previous year's level. High outlays for the strong expansion and earnings decreases in some countries of Western Europe were almost completely offset by improvements in Germany and Eastern Europe.

Today, Media Markt and Saturn are the market leaders in eight countries. In Spain, the consumer electronic stores gained market share even as sales slipped. In Italy, Media Markt and Saturn are now the largest non-food retailers in the country. The 750<sup>th</sup> consumer electronics store around the world was opened in Reims, France, in November. Media Markt also pressed forward with its expansion in Eastern Europe, particularly in Russia.

Now, let's look ahead. Ladies and Gentlemen, Media Markt and Saturn are planning to conquer the Internet. Soon, our customers will have the opportunity to order the entire range of products offered by our consumer electronics stores from their very own computers. We finally have a concept to actively use the Internet with an integrated strategy. The store and network will be intelligently combined.

As a result, we will offer our customers the best of two worlds. In future, the entire product range of Media Markt and Saturn can be purchased on the Internet as well as in the brick-and-mortar stores. At the same time, the brick-and-mortar stores will remain a critical contact point for service questions – no matter whether the customer makes a purchase online or in one of the numerous stores. A simple online retailer cannot offer this service.

I always believed that an e-commerce option for Media Markt and Saturn would sensibly complement the business of our consumer electronics stores. If you ask me, we were a little slow here in the past. We are now rectifying this shortcoming.

And while we are discussing the subject of IT, you should know that the Media-Saturn holding company is launching a strategic partnership with CISCO. Working together, we intend to offer our customers totally new options arising from the networking of end devices – like mobile phones, game consoles and televisions – in a project called “Connected Home”.

This is further proof that we are taking action during these times of crisis. We do not let good opportunities slip away.

Last but not least **Galeria Kaufhof**

In 2008, Galeria Kaufhof affirmed its concept and system leadership in the German department store business. In an extremely difficult market environment, **sales** of our department stores were 1.1 percent below the previous year’s level. However, Galeria Kaufhof outperformed its market in the strategically important textiles segment.

Galeria Kaufhof raised **earnings** by 5.8 percent to €113 million. For the fourth consecutive year, our department stores generated significant EBIT growth. A return on capital of 8 percent speaks for itself and is unparalleled in the market.

Galeria Kaufhof moved well ahead of its competitors. We set our direction at an early stage. Thanks to our hard work, we have turned this company into an extremely profitable operation. Against this backdrop, we would consider government support of competitors to be discriminatory intervention that would be extremely questionable regarding regulatory policy.

## Shape 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen, you see that METRO Group has good news to report, and we are really happy about it. But we should not let the figures from fiscal year 2008 go to our heads.

The world of trade and retail has undergone dramatic change in recent years. Customer needs are becoming more and more diverse. It is impossible today to serve huge markets like those in Asia with a standardised range of products. New customer groups arise within a short period of time, dictate demand and sometimes simply disappear. Other products turn into mainstays – and sometimes these are products that one never expected to be so successful. Demand is no longer a predictable constant. For this reason, good business performance can be achieved only through maximum levels of flexibility.

As one of the largest trade and retail companies, we do not simply want to follow along in the footsteps of these market trends. Rather, we want to actively blaze a trail for them. For this reason, METRO Group initiated a comprehensive efficiency and value-enhancing programme called “Shape 2012” on 20 January 2009. The aim of “Shape 2012” is to ensure the company’s long-term profitable growth. The Group’s structures are being simplified to realise maximum growth momentum and customer orientation while significantly reducing costs.

The guiding principle of “Shape 2012” is: as decentrally as possible, as centrally as necessary. The responsibility for the operational business is being completely turned over to the sales divisions. The holding company is focusing on strategic management. This is not an end in itself. “Shape 2012” will help to better satisfy customers’ needs and wishes.

The programme has five pillars:

- New leadership model for more market and customer centricity
- Undivided responsibility for the sales divisions in the operational business
- Streamlined organisational structure for finance and compliance as well as strengthened human-resources focus
- Real estate portfolio as a profit centre
- Strict management through central return targets

You see one thing here: “Shape 2012“ is a very ambitious programme and requires the complete attention of Metro management.

I would like to make one point clear about this programme, particularly in terms of critical comments made occasionally that today’s economic crisis is the wrong time to take such a step: Right now is absolutely the best time for this programme because the crisis is acting as a spotlight that is illuminating hidden weaknesses. The time of concealing unpleasant truths is over. This Management Board takes action – with clear requirements and with a clear schedule on which employees can orient their work.

The conviction underlying our approach is this: This well-established company will never be subject to the dictates of others. Rather, we will set our own course by drawing on our own strengths.

Through “Shape 2012“, we intend to bring about a cultural change. Without exception, the customer is to become the focus of all considerations by each and everyone of us at METRO Group.

For this reason, we want to be as close as possible to local markets. The sales divisions, being the real experts on the subject of customers, will be able to manage their entire value chains. As a result, METRO Group Buying, which has been the

central procurement organisation in the past, will be integrated into the sales divisions. Beginning in 2010, the sales divisions will conduct procurement on their own. Ladies and Gentlemen, this will be a first major step towards a sharper focus on the customer!

By the end of this June, all employees will know where they will work in future at METRO Group. In this process, it will be impossible to avoid redundancies. But as I mentioned earlier: We will do everything in our power to carry them out in the most socially acceptable way possible. In times of great uncertainty, I view this as my responsibility as a business executive. The Management Board understands one point very clearly: We can achieve ambitious value-enhancing targets only by retaining good, capable employees for many years.

The details and implementation of all necessary changes are being worked out in 60 projects – with a clear, tight schedule that we will precisely meet. Our employees and you as shareholders can use it as a guide.

Perhaps you have noticed it on the ball-point pens and the notepads or the bigger and more eye-catching version shown in the short introductory film at the beginning of today's Annual General Meeting: METRO Group has a new claim. We think that such a sweeping repositioning, like the "Shape 2012" programme we initiated at the beginning of the year, needs to be externally expressed in the appropriate way. With the slogan "Made to trade", METRO Group underscores its self-conception as a natural-born retailer. It precisely reflects the Group's self-confidence, the entrepreneurial spirit flowing through all employees and the company's understanding of people and markets.

The German version "Zum Handeln geschaffen" also highlights our ties to our home market. METRO Group is indeed a global player but it is hardly a company without a country. I really believe that the claim of "Made to trade" and "Zum Handeln geschaffen" is the right one for the METRO Group of the future.

## **Social responsibility**

Ladies and Gentlemen, METRO Group takes advantage of chances and combines this approach with opportunities for society as a whole. We are pacesetters in terms of training. With an average proportion of trainees of nearly 9 percent in 2008, METRO Group once again assumed a leading position among companies that offer occupational training. More than 3,000 secondary school graduates began their training programmes at METRO Group across Germany – that is 2.6 percent more than the previous year. By providing occupational qualifications to young people, METRO Group is investing in the company's economically successful future while making an important contribution to society.

In Eastern Europe as well, METRO Group is ensuring that its workforce gains young employees and is assuming social responsibility. Since 2000, our training programme "Metro Education" has been passing the latest knowledge about trade and retail on to young people and has been providing them with their first practical job experience. We initially offered this programme successfully in Poland, Russia and Romania. In 2008, it was introduced in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The fact that responsible action has become a critical success factor for companies is now being reflected in corporate ratings. The rankings of WestLB recently combined traditional key figures with such criteria as the environment, social affairs and company management. METRO Group received the highest rating, A+, and finished among the leading trade and retail companies. With this excellent performance, your company underscores its desire to be an important actor in the area of corporate social responsibility.

We are also applying this win-win situation for society and our company to energy efficiency and, as a result, environmental protection. Thanks to professional energy management, energy consumption at our Metro locations is decreasing – even while sales grow! As a result, METRO Group is clearly a leader in an international comparison of competitors.

# METRO Group

This is also reflected by the appearance of METRO Group on a ranking of the five most admired German companies compiled by the U.S. business magazine Fortune.

## Q1 2009

In closing, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to say a few words about the company's work in the first quarter of 2009.

In a difficult macroeconomic environment, METRO Group performed strongly in the first three months of 2009.

Group sales did indeed decrease. But when adjusted for this year's calendar effects, they were at last year's levels. These calendar effects included the late Easter business season and one fewer sales day following the leap year in 2008.

Negative currency movements had a particularly large impact. They shaved 3.6 percent from our sales growth. We anticipated this result and announced it. As a result, we are holding fast to our overall strategy.

Furthermore, the results in April were positive. The critical Easter business for retailers was even slightly better than last year. The overall results of the first four months of the year clearly show that we at METRO Group are not experiencing a business lull. We remain on course – despite the crisis.

In recent months, our analogy about the “fog bank” has been repeatedly quoted by other people and companies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I used this image even before we entered the fog bank. Today, we are in the middle of it, and the good news is that we are negotiating our way through it pretty well. We are confident that we will be the first to have a clear view again and will then press on with our journey in a strengthened position. We have enough water under the keel. Our radar is in excellent shape and has not

identified any barriers that could pose a danger to us. For this reason, we expect that the current fiscal year will not be a disaster.

The opposite is actually true: In **Germany**, sales in the first quarter of 2009 rose by 0.6 percent even without the Easter business. As a result, METRO Group performed exceptionally well in a difficult market environment. Overall, retail sales dropped in the first quarter of 2009 – also because of calendar effects. METRO Group, your company, broke away from the general market trend in German retailing. And when we look at trends in other sectors, we have every right to say this: METRO Group is not part of the economic downturn.

In **Western Europe**, Media Markt and Saturn increased their sales. But Metro Cash & Carry suffered a calendar-related decrease. The sales gain at Media Markt and Saturn could only partially offset this drop.

In **Eastern Europe**, METRO Group proved performing power once again. Sales in local currencies rose by 5.6 percent. We still truly believe in the favourable long-range growth opportunities of this region. The strong countries will soon resume their race to catch up. Their strong structural fundamentals remain in effect despite the fiscal policy mistakes made in the past. Eastern Europe will certainly find its way back to its old strengths.

At the same time, the crisis will inevitably lead to a market shake-out, particularly in this region. There are already increasing signs of this. As a strong company, METRO Group will use this trend to systemically bolster its positioning.

You see: We identify opportunities and exploit them!

Even during the difficult year of 2008, our sales in Eastern Europe rose by more than 15 percent and our earnings by 28 percent. We will pick up on these trends and continue them over the short and long term.

We have a similarly positive view of **Asia**. In the first quarter of this year, for instance, we generated sales growth of nearly 13 percent. In China alone, Metro Cash & Carry is envisioning a chain-store network of up to 100 outlets. The demand for food and non-food articles is just that strong there.

Here, too, we will identify our opportunities and exploit them!

## Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have the power to make fundamental changes. In future, we will react even faster to customer needs and new market developments. These are the central goals of METRO Group.

These goals are unalterable. As a result, they apply in times when business is running smoothly as well as in times when dark clouds appear over it – like today.

Not all companies will survive this crisis. METRO Group will not only survive it, but also emerge as a winner from it. I am convinced of this.

With “Shape 2012“, we are providing the company with a new overall structure that will sharpen METRO Group’s customer focus and help us to tap hidden reserves.

I hope that I have convinced you that we are people who take action: Media Markt entering China next year, Real in the black and with extremely good prospects as well as a much stronger focus on the customer at Metro Cash & Carry.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you are owners of a future-proof company that is determined to exploit a world of opportunities!

Thank you for your attention!