

Opening statement by Minister of State Katja Keul at the German-African Business Summit 2022 (06.12.2022)

I am happy to welcome you on behalf of the German government to the German-African Business Summit 2022.

Minister Habeck is still in Cape Town and will only arrive tonight. But he is very much looking forward to seeing you all tomorrow.

Africa is one of the fastest growing places in the world. Germany is Europe's biggest economy.

The German-African Business Summit brings us together.

The GABS has become a good tradition since it first took place in 2015.

After editions in Germany, Kenya and Ghana, this is the first time that the GABS is held in Southern Africa, one of the most vibrant regions on the continent.

Let me thank our South African friends and partners for hosting us in this fascinating city!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Challenges to our economies in both Africa and Germany are severe.

Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine is sending shock waves through the global economy.

It is not only a blatant violation of international law but also an economic and a humanitarian catastrophe.

In Germany, we face a lot of challenges because of a 10% inflation and exploding gas prices.

In many African countries, prices are even 50% higher than last year.

The war in Ukraine is not only a European problem. It affects all of us.

To face all the global challenges Europe and Africa need each other more than ever.

To defend our multilateral system and our rules based international order; and also to face the enormous challenges of climate change.

I have recently visited South Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya. There was no rainy season for the fifth time in a row.

25 Mio. people are threatened by famine.

Climate change is endangering all of our livelihoods.

It is essential that we work together in fighting it.

Almost three weeks ago, the international community concluded the COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh.

During this “African COP”, the Global North and Global South have jointly decided to address Loss & Damages and to establish a new fund to support the most vulnerable countries.

Germany was among the strongest promoters of this fund.

This is a huge success.

But the truth also is, that we could not achieve substantial progress in the area of decarbonisation.

We could at least avoid a step backwards in comparison to COP26 in Glasgow.

But it will be increasingly difficult to meet the 1.5-degree objective of the Paris Agreement.

Germany has committed itself to reducing its carbon emissions to zero by 2045.

Many African countries have similar goals.

We can and should learn from each other.

During my visit to Kenya last month, I realised, more than 90% of their electricity comes from renewables.

We all have the same challenge: Reducing carbon emissions and phasing out coal-fired power plants.

The Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) we concluded with South Africa a year ago is a crucial step in this direction.

We need to create incentives for private business to engage in the green transformation.

This is one reason why we initiated the EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package together with our European partners.

One of its key priorities is to support private investment into green energy and infrastructure.

Many African countries have excellent conditions to produce green hydrogen, both for domestic supply and for export.

To support this endeavour, the Federal Foreign office has established two hydrogen offices in Angola and Nigeria.

I am glad to see that this topic is also high on the agenda during the GABS.

But there are also many other areas with a huge economic potential.

German and African companies are already cooperating in plenty of ways:

- be it in producing motor vehicles here in South Africa,
- in building up vaccine production facilities in Rwanda
- or in providing access to electricity in Nigeria.

Your presence at this summit is proof of how diverse and broad our economic ties already are.

As a government, we stand at your side when it comes to strengthening these ties.

And we will continue to promote the rule of law, legal security and good governance which are essential for the ease of doing business.

Just as much as a better participation of women in all economic branches and leadership positions.

During my visits to Africa this first year in office, I have met many leading African women and their impressive networks.

Especially the African Women Leaders Network is something all companies doing business in Africa should have heard of.

African economies are already setting important impulses for economic growth.

With the African Continental Free Trade Area, African states initiated the process to become one of the biggest integrated markets globally.

Africa's youth and its striving middleclass are drivers for technological change.

Germany is an ageing society. We need more qualified employees from all over the world.

We therefore have to improve labour mobility.

But also more exchange between our civil societies.

We want to step up our efforts to teach German as a foreign language in many African countries.

We need to intensify our scientific exchange, our cooperation in technical training and education.

And we want to improve our capabilities to issue more visa.

We also have to make progress in dealing with our colonial past.

Because to build a better future together we all need to know where we come from.

We already see a growing and dynamic cooperation between our museums and civil society, which creates positive energy from a difficult past.

Please be assured: As a government, we will do all we can to support you.

Therefore, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Our Embassies, our ministries and our associations will do all they can to support you.

Many of our ambassadors in Africa are present at the GABS and will be happy to discuss with you on how to seize economic opportunities in their respective countries.

My big thanks go to all who have made this summit possible:

- our South African partners
- the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry,
- the Federation of German Industries,
- the Federation of German Wholesale,
- the Foreign Trade and Services,
- and the German African Business Association

I wish you all two interesting and fruitful days.

And I hope that you will depart from Johannesburg with a lot of new contacts, new ideas and business opportunities.

Thank you!