



**Speech by Federal President Frank Walter Steinmeier
at the dinner in honour of the Heads of State and
Government attending the G20 Africa Conference in Berlin
in Schloss Bellevue
on 13 June 2017**

I am absolutely delighted to welcome you here to Schloss Bellevue. You are my first guests from Africa since I took office. As you know, I haven't been in office for very long – not even for 100 days – and so you won't be surprised to hear that you are my first guests from Africa. I am pleased about that, and I am happy to receive you here as neighbours. A very warm welcome indeed to you!

Africa and Europe – our fates are closely intertwined, not only through a long and, in the past centuries, sometimes difficult history, but also most importantly in the future. The G20 partnership with Africa has brought you all here to Berlin. This partnership expresses our joint desire to rethink how we work together. We need a free and frank exchange of views and more effective cooperation in politics, business and between our societies.

That is why my main aim this evening is to hear your views. What do you see as the development priorities for your countries? How can Europe be most useful in this regard? How and in which sectors can closer cooperation best be achieved?

During my eight years as Foreign Minister, I visited many countries in Africa, some several times. And that is why I am particularly happy to share a table this evening with old colleagues and interlocutors whom I know well from previous meetings.

My message to the people of Germany was always that they should get used to the idea that Africa will play an even greater role in the future. I am not someone who plays down the challenges of the future. Curbing crises and conflicts will remain a major task requiring African engagement and leadership, as we recently saw in Gambia. But you are not alone here! You are aware that Germany is particularly active in Mali, South Sudan and Nigeria. Only together can we shape

globalisation more sustainably and fairly. Only together can we tackle climate change, which affects you in Africa in particular.

Only together can we ensure that fewer young people risk their lives crossing the desert and the Mediterranean. Immigration to Europe can only be a way for a comparatively small number of Africans to find work and better opportunities for the future.

What can we do to improve these opportunities in your countries through education and training? In a strategy paper published at the start of the year, the African Union spoke of the need for an "education revolution". We all know how difficult it will be to put that into practice – it would be difficult for us and of course it will be difficult for you, too. In my opinion, however, education is a key, if not the key, to a good future for Africa and to the good and productive neighbourly relations with Europe, that you want and we want.

We do not think that as Europeans we have the answers to the challenges facing Africa. Only African solutions can truly foster progress on the continent. However, we want to be a friend and partner to Africa.

We want to help in times of need, such as the current food crisis. But we would also like to work with you in the long term to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

The message of our meeting today is that only together can we succeed in making this world a better place. And we need to do more together than we managed to do in the past. We believe in the partnership between our countries. We see the opportunities that arise from a closer partnership. I am grateful to have this chance to speak with you and look forward to hearing your experiences, ideas and suggestions, and perhaps also the first results of your talks yesterday.

And in this spirit of optimism and mutual friendship, I would like to raise my glass and propose a toast to the health of your peoples, to the friendship between our peoples, and to the friendship and partnership between Africa and Europe.