



**Toast by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier  
at a banquet on the occasion of his state visit to Ghana  
on 12 December 2017  
in Accra/Ghana**

If I had to name just one heartfelt passion that Ghana and Germany share – and I believe there are more than you might think! –, it would probably be our common fascination with the beautiful game. I'm talking about football, of course. Gerald Asamoah is part of my delegation – he knows best what I'm talking about!

Let me tell you a story: It was during the late stages of the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. The final between Germany and Argentina was a few days away. And my phone just kept buzzing! Colleagues from all over Europe sent me messages that said: "Now that Germany are the only European team left, we hope you will win the World Cup! You now represent all of Europe!"

And from what I hear, the same was true for Ghana in 2010, during the World Cup in South Africa! The Ghanaian half came to represent the entire continent in the final round of the tournament, all the way up to the quarterfinals. I've been told the streets of Accra were a non-stop party these days, and our embassies all over Africa reported Ghanaian flags everywhere. The newspaper headlines read: "Ghana, the pride of Africa." In my view, this is a very fitting description of Ghana's role on this continent.

What a pleasure it is to be in Ghana again! This is a visit to friends who share many of Germany's values and who strive to uphold the same ideals: democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and the great project of social and economic prosperity. Ghana is a beacon of stability in the region, as the peaceful transition of power in late 2016 has proven once again. I am impressed by Ghana's contributions in the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS. And Ghana is also key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda – with President Akufo-Addo acting as an official UN advocate of the Sustainable Development

Goals. I was very happy to welcome you, Mr President, as an old friend in Berlin last June.

Ghana is often named as an exemplary case in Africa, not least in economic terms. We all know that development co-operation may lead to short-term improvement in specific, targeted areas. But as President Akufo-Addo has recognised with his vision of "Ghana Beyond Aid", long-term success is built on the foundation of a strong local economy. African nations like Ghana should wear it as badge of honour when they can say that their reliance on foreign aid is shrinking. We are happy to support Ghana in this endeavour. During Germany's presidency of the G20, we launched the "Compact with Africa" initiative focusing on private-sector investment and the sustainable creation of jobs. Bilaterally, we are opening a new chapter of co-operation with the declaration of intent for a new reform and investment partnership that we signed today. Let me just say: I sense a new spirit and great optimism in these approaches!

Ghana has a vibrant and dynamic economy. So my visit here is an opportunity for me, as well as for our business delegation, to get a first-hand impression of what has already been achieved – and what can be achieved in the future. German companies are actively looking for opportunities to invest and to co-operate. And I am also very happy that we will have the chance to talk to young entrepreneurs and start-up leaders – because their efforts are key potential drivers of innovation and prosperity.

Young people are our future, both at home in Germany and here in your country. We owe them our best efforts to create a prosperous future. When we see thousands of young men and women making the dangerous journey across the Sahara and the Mediterranean, we know that their dreams are being exploited by ruthless criminals. Many of them lose their lives. And some of Africa's brightest and strongest – who are needed here to build a future for Ghana and all of Africa – even end up in the nightmare of modern-day slavery. We cannot let this stand, we need to do more.

We need to instil hope and create meaningful opportunities for young people, locally. Mr President, you made this point very forcefully in your recent statement with President Macron at the end of last month. This must be a local effort, but we are happy to help. When I look at the strong relations between Germany and Ghana in the areas of education and research, I am hopeful. We can be proud of well-established academic exchange programmes, and of new projects such as the Merian International Center for Advanced Studies (MICAS) in Accra. We will also continue to offer ideas for good, proven practices, for example in the area of Dual Vocational Training, which is an important factor in Germany's economic prosperity.

When Ghanaians celebrated their success in football in 2010, it was also an expression of Ghana's strong civil society and cohesion. I am deeply impressed by your country's culture of debate and its positive outlook on the future. Coming from a federal country with strong regions, I know that maintaining the balance and making sure that everybody is heard is not always easy. Inclusive growth and shared prosperity are very important, but let us not forget the need for a sense of common identity.

In this light, football is a particularly good example of everybody coming together in a positive spirit. So let me finish by pointing out that, during the last World Cup in 2014, our two countries played a two-all draw in Fortaleza. I would propose that this is an excellent symbol of the good ... and friendly relations between our two countries.

And now let me propose a toast. Please raise your glasses with me – to President Akufo-Addo and to the friendship between Ghana and Germany!