



**Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier
at a reception for scholarship holders of "Afrika kommt!",
a German business initiative for young professionals from
Africa
at Schloss Bellevue
on 21 October 2022**

Whenever the reception for "Afrika kommt!" crops up in my diary, I look forward to this day: to hearing about the experiences, esteemed fellows, that you have made in Germany and in the German business world – entirely in the spirit of the Swahili saying "elimu haina mwisho". Translated literally, it means: education never ends. There's a saying in English for this: you're never too old to learn.

And that is what the programme you complete within the framework of "Afrika kommt!" stands for: you learn from the companies in which you work for eight months, and the companies profit from your expertise. Let me bid all of you – fellows and companies – a warm welcome to Schloss Bellevue! My thanks go to all partner companies, to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Federal Foreign Office and the German embassies in Africa for making this programme possible for the tenth time now.

Elimu haina mwisho: Mr Kikwete, you likewise promote this goal. We held discussions with each other just now. And I'm delighted that we both recall our meeting in Tanzania eight years ago. Back then, you were your country's President and I was Germany's Foreign Minister. Today, you are active as Chair of the Global Partnership for Education. Your goal is to enable children anywhere in the world to attend school, particularly in the poorest countries. I am grateful that Germany is supporting this engagement, both in terms of content and financially, and that you, Mr Kikwete, are able to be here at this reception today.

With "Afrika kommt!", you, esteemed fellows, build networks: a network between you and your partner companies; a network of fellows across many African countries with more than 200 alumni, many of

whom I have seen in this room over the past few years; a network between Germany and your countries of origin.

These networks have already given rise to a number of impressive success stories. For example, several "Afrika kommt!" alumni have jointly founded a West African branch of the medical technology company B. Braun. And in East Africa, Patrick Okello is a distributor for STIHL agricultural equipment, helping farmers to increase their yields in this role. And you, Mr Fischer, along with the representatives of other companies here in this room, doubtlessly have yet more success stories to relate. Esteemed fellows and company representatives, please take advantage of the potential these networks offer! I look forward to hearing many more "Afrika kommt!" success stories when your successors convene here.

Esteemed fellows, you yourselves have laid the foundations for these successes, with the excellent qualifications that you bring with you to Germany. And I hope you will use your personal business acumen to continue to promote education and vocational training on your return to your countries and to reach still more people. You can all serve as role models, as multipliers, as coaches, as employers; you can pass on your experience and your expertise – and thereby create new prospects for other people and in your countries of origin.

Education generates hope. And we are badly in need of hope at the moment as a great number of crises are afflicting our world.

These crises are affecting both our continents with considerable, albeit not equal force – that applies to climate change in particular. African countries have low CO2 emissions, but are being hit especially hard by extreme weather events, with huge economic and social consequences. Our global obligation is and remains to slow down and limit the impacts of climate change all around the world as far as possible, so that our children and our children's children can enjoy a world worth living in and so that, at the same time, we create economic prospects for them. Sustainable and green growth – the countries of Africa in particular need this opportunity.

Global crises such as climate change require global solutions. However, these solutions are currently being hampered by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Let us not be driven apart. We know that only by joining forces can we counter Putin's violence and destructive fury. And that only together can we mitigate the global impact of Russia's war, particularly rising energy and food prices; we must prevail in this not only in terms of extending the agreement on grain exports from Ukraine. Furthermore, we must continue to do a great deal to tackle hunger in many African countries.

For this, we need strong global partnerships, not least between Germany and African countries. Partners don't always have to agree on

everything. But we must pursue our joint interests jointly. All of us need reliable international rules. And we must all have an interest, wherever conflicts emerge, in resolving them by peaceful means. We must all have an interest in ensuring that economic development does not come to a standstill, but that we promote it. We need global responses to global crises, and this applies to climate change above all.

Africa and Europe are neighbouring continents. Our continents, our countries, are mutually important partners in trade and investment and not only in development cooperation. And I can assure you that we in Germany and we in Europe stand ready to grow with Africa in a spirit of partnership and with the objective of strengthening each other. This is what I promote on my visits to Africa – as I did on my last trip to Kenya before the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic and during my first major trip this year, which took me to Senegal.

The “Afrika kommt!” programme and all of you help make it possible for us to develop and strengthen such reliable partnerships, to create prospects, to continue to learn from one another. For one thing applies to all good partnerships: elimu haina mwisho – you’re never too old to learn!