

PRESS RELEASE

ReThinking Africa - new approach to development and partnership with Africa

ReThinking Africa (RTA) is a new German economic initiative with a European approach, that was presented to the public on Tuesday in Berlin. At the Bundespressekonferenz founding members spoke out in favour of a change of perspectives in Germany's view of Europe's neighbour Africa. With pragmatic solutions, they want to move away from the stereotypical cliché of development aid for Africans in need and towards direct contacts on an equal footing with African trading partners. The economic initiative demands that this redefinition of relations must also be taken into account at the upcoming Africa investment summit in Berlin.

RTA is in favour of a turning point, if it comes to relationships between African and German companies and investors - so that Germany won't end up a late-comer in the international context. Apart from China nations like India, Turkey, France or even Japan have discovered Africa as an important and attractive trade partner in the meantime. Germany's vision of Africa however is still marked to a large degree by old stereotypes. A gradual change only has happened over the last years when it comes to the energy sector - especially if it comes to green hydrogen.

Founder of the new platform is a group of insiders specialised on Africa as well as members of the German export industry, having been gathered around long time CEO of Afrika-Verein der deutschen Wirtschaft, Prof. Dr. Stefan Liebing, as well as the former president of the German association for wholesale and retail (BGA), Dr. Holger Bingmann or the former parliamentary state secretary, Norbert Barthle. Together with a core team of a dozen members of the economy, academia, tourism or media the group has passed successfully already some test runs in order to check, if their model works. One of the items was the modernisation of the port of Douala in Cameroun, the other one dealt with the energy sector in Malawi. Both initiatives generated investment project worth 250 million euros.

The initiative aims to directly link protagonists from both continents in order to kick-start bilateral investment project. Liebing: "The efforts of the German government still focus far too much on debates around strategies or organize conferences and visits of political delegations. But that's not enough in order to see German companies succeed in Africa. The new initiative gets experienced and influential come together in order to volunteer in balance this disadvantage; and they contribute in a way, that our partners in Africa are longing for since long: investment and new jobs on the ground."

In the light of a growing urbanisation, a growing middle class as well as a growing infrastructure RTA sees Africa as a continent full of chances, that might increase its attractiveness from the mere export of raw materials. Apart from the innovative start-up scene in the digital sector RTA is relying on the African free trade zone (AfCTA). After the abolishment of still existing trade obstacles it is supposed to enable important incentives for the economic integration of the continent. German companies could play an important part in it.

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ReThinking Africa Foundation is based in Berlin (<https://rethinking-africa.com>). It's a foundation according to German law (Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung/GmbH) working in order to enable direct economic contacts between German and African companies.