



Deutsche Afrika Stiftung e.V.
Fondation Allemande pour l'Afrique
German Africa Foundation

Summary

Reception in Honour of the African Diplomatic Corps

8 July 2026, Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft, Berlin

Background

German-African relations are unfolding in a geopolitical environment marked by growing tensions and a reordering of the global economy. Supply chains are being realigned, trade issues are gaining security-policy relevance, and competition over markets, technologies, energy and critical raw materials is intensifying.

This was the focus of this year's reception in honour of the African Diplomatic Corps, hosted by the German Africa Foundation (DAS) together with the Sub-Saharan Africa Initiative of German Business (SAFRI) and, this year, in cooperation with the North Africa Middle East Initiative of German Business (NMI).

Highlights

- Economic development, security and stability need to be more closely integrated in German-African relations.
- German Africa policy needs greater ambition: Africa currently accounts for only around two percent of German trade in goods, while German direct investment remains low.
- African states should be perceived as political and economic actors, as well as providers of concrete opportunities for cooperation.
- Global Gateway, Compact with Africa and investment promotion need to be implemented more quickly and aligned more closely with the needs of companies and partner countries.
- Greater market knowledge, flexible procedures, financing and political support are needed to facilitate German engagement in Africa.

Video message

Thomas Schäfer

Chairman of the Sub-Saharan Africa Initiative of German Businesses (SAFRI)

Welcome Remarks

H.E. Igor César

Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps

Dr Volker Treier

Head of Foreign Trade and member of the Executive Board of the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK)

Dr Uschi Eid

President,
German Africa Foundation

Keynote Speech

Serap Güler

Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office

Discussion

H.E. Eskindir Yirga Asfaw

Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

H.E. Dr Mohamed Abd El-Sattar Elbadri

Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Gesa Bräutigam

Director for Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel at the Federal Office

Leandro Fernandez

Managing Director and CEO, INZAG Germany GmbH

Moderation

Sabine Odhiambo

Secretary General,
German Africa Foundation



Discussion

Untapped potential continues to shape German Africa policy. With its young population, dynamic markets, natural resources and the African Continental Free Trade Area, Africa is a key political and economic actor. Yet the continent accounts for only around two percent of German trade in goods; German direct investment also remains low, at around one percent of all German foreign investment. This points to a considerable need for action.

More ambition and less hesitation

True partnership should neither serve short-term interests in raw materials nor create new dependencies. What is needed are long-term forms of cooperation that promote local value creation, technology transfer, training and high-quality employment. Where German companies hesitate, other international partners are making use of existing investment opportunities. Instruments such as Global Gateway, Compact with Africa and investment promotion should therefore be applied more quickly and more practically.

African priorities and concrete opportunities for cooperation

Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area represent economic transformation and regional integration. Specific areas of cooperation were mentioned, such as energy interconnections, logistics, industrial production and strategic trade areas. A one-size-fits-all approach falls short here: Africa is not a single market. Successful economic activity must be tailored to the conditions and objectives of individual countries.

Security, Development and Infrastructure

Jobs, social inclusion and a reliable framework can promote stability and facilitate investment. Disruptions in the Red Sea highlighted how regional conflicts affect global supply chains and European markets. Regional challenges primarily require African solutions, but can be supported by partners such as Germany. Water and food security, as well as infrastructure, were also discussed as the foundations of economic and social resilience.

The private sector, vocational training and local value creation

The private sector has a key role to play. German companies possess technological expertise, industrial experience and know-how in vocational training, but often underestimate the dynamism of African markets. A lack of market knowledge, financing problems and regulatory uncertainties continue to hamper their involvement. There is also great potential in vocational training, youth employment and local processing capacity, so that more value added remains in the countries of origin.

Economic diplomacy and the multilateral context

With 45 diplomatic missions abroad, German economic diplomacy is able to advise companies on the African continent, establish contacts and support projects. 'Team Germany' stands for closer integration of foreign policy, development cooperation and foreign trade; the African diaspora can act as a bridge.

The evening demonstrated that whether Germany becomes the partner of choice for African states depends above all on concrete investment, political support and a willingness to make African priorities the starting point for relations.