

## Adapting to the increased importance of post-Zeitenwende Africa

**The African continent will play a decisive role in shaping the 21st century – and thus also the future of Germany and Europe as a whole. Geopolitical, demographic and economic upheavals and changing dynamics are seeing African countries occupy an increasingly important position in the world. By the middle of the century, Africa will be home to a quarter of the global population. Similarly, more than a quarter of United Nations (UN) member states are on the African continent. On the other hand, the states and societies of Africa are particularly hard hit by the multiple different global crises we face – war and conflict, climate change, hunger and pandemics – and therefore play a vital role in helping us develop solutions.**

In today's Africa, the multipolar global order is already reality. The external relations nurtured by the continent's 54 countries are becoming increasingly pragmatic and you will find no support for bloc formation in Africa. Although the EU remains Africa's largest trade partner, relations with other states and actors have grown in importance. Nevertheless, Germany and the rest of Europe remain valued partners, not least because cooperation with them is multi-level and also includes civil society.

In light of these developments, it is more important than ever for Germany and Europe as a whole to build robust alliances, networks and partnerships in Africa, in particular those that focus on the participation of women and marginalised groups, for instance. The type of partnerships African countries enter into will not only impact the future of democracy but also global cooperation, which many countries around the globe depend on, especially Germany.

African states and societies have a legitimate interest in helping to shape global order. Given our pursuit of common goals such as fair internationalism and common security, this presents a real opportunity for international policy in Germany and in Europe at large. Similarly, rule-based multilateralism can only be upheld if Europe and Africa work together to reform it.

As neighbouring continents that are connected historically, geographically and culturally, Europe and Africa are predestined to be partners. The two regions have a strong interest in a reliable rule-based world order underpinned by the UN Charter as well as the effective implementation of Agenda 2030. Both the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) have pledged to promote democracy, security and stability. The majority of Africans – like Europeans – share the belief that democracy offers the best foundations for social participation and progress. Democracy has come under pressure from authoritarian forces on both continents. Strengthening human security by means of democracy is thus also a shared goal.

Cooperation with Africa is being redefined, influenced in particular by the current challenges shaping our future actions: Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine, the growing influence of authoritarian states on

the African continent, the climate crisis, the accusation of double standards that Europe is increasingly finding itself confronted with, and Africa's rapidly growing population.

- **To reflect Africa's increased importance and secure partners for the protection and reform of a rule-based multilateral order, we will be offering fair political, economic and social partnerships based on traditional social democratic principles with a view to reinforcing trust and confidence and helping sustain it in the long term.**
- **Moving forward, we will seek to define our geostrategic and economic interests in African countries more clearly, but will not limit ourselves to these areas. At the same time, our main priority will continue to be supporting a just economic and social transformation, including a sustainable climate and raw materials policy in a spirit of solidarity. This is essential not least to tackle the root causes of migration and provide prospects for the growing number of young people on the African continent.**
- **At the same time, our interests in Africa continue to be shaped by solidarity and by Agenda 2030, including the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The AU's Agenda 2063 will also provide important direction here. Only if all these interests are reconciled and operationalised in concert will we be able to establish the strategic alliances in Africa that we in Germany increasingly need in today's multipolar world.**
- **We are committed to supporting partnerships based on respect and reciprocity, partnerships which give serious consideration to and engage with African priorities. This includes reappraising Germany's past actions on the African continent.**

### **Decolonisation: Reappraising the past to shape the future together**

A crucial basis for closer cooperation with Africa is the reappraisal and acknowledgement of Germany's colonial history in Africa and the crimes committed during this period, as well as reconciliation and the return of appropriated items and ancestral human remains for reburial in their countries of origin. This is a prerequisite for Germany to be able to create a forward-looking partnership with its neighbouring continent – including beyond the former colonies.

We accept our responsibility for the atrocities committed by what was known as the "German Protection Force" (*Schutztruppe*) against the Herero and Nama ethnic groups, atrocities that must be clearly acknowledged as genocide. For us, reconciliation with **Namibia** is and will remain an absolute necessity resulting from our historical and moral responsibility. Germany's Reconciliation Agreement with Namibia can only be the prelude to a joint process of reappraisal.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier's official visit to **Tanzania** in November 2023 was another important step towards acknowledging and re-examining German colonial guilt and responsibility in the Maji-Maji war and underlined the need to return unlawfully appropriated cultural artefacts and collectibles, as well as the reburial of ancestral human remains.

**We plan to press ahead with similar processes for Togo, Nigeria and Cameroon.** We will also need to scrutinise our cooperation with Africa with a view to potential colonial continuities. To this end, we plan to examine the extent to which structures, actions or ideas – such as structural racism, eurocentrism and paternalism – can be traced back to colonial thinking and preclude an equitable relationship.

### **Genuine multilateralism: Upholding and reforming the rule-based international order together with Africa**

In these times of growing global uncertainty, many African countries are focusing on a pragmatic foreign policy approach, avoiding one-sided relations, responding proactively to the alleged or actual double standards of Western foreign policy, and seeking new alliances. It would, however, be a mistake to

interpret the continued diversification in African countries' foreign relations as an indication of them turning their back on Europe. Instead, we should see this development as an incentive to further strengthen our joint work on fair multilateralism and offer better suited forms of cooperation.

Most African countries have no interest in reducing their foreign policy options. Consequently, Germany would be well placed to use its scope for action more strategically than it has done to date, more actively involving globally influential African countries such as South Africa or Nigeria moving forward. The German Chancellor's official visits to these countries can be seen as an important signal in connection with this.

Only if we show more willingness than in the past to push for the reform of the United Nations and the international financial architecture for the benefit of African countries can we count on their support in preserving the rule-based order. Democratising the international order in this way is thus in our interests, too. We therefore explicitly welcome the German Chancellor's actions and his consistent multilateral approach, as seen in his successful campaign for the AU's admission into the G20 and the invitation he extended to guest countries, including those from Africa, to attend the G7 summit in Elmau, Bavaria in 2022. The UN Summit of the Future, co-facilitated by Germany, as well as the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development scheduled for 2025 provide an opportunity to make urgent course corrections within the multilateral framework.

Another undertaking which remains important is the reform of the UN Security Council, a body in which permanent and better African representation is both vital and something we strongly support. This also includes more voting rights in the organisations of the international financial architecture with a view to achieving more equitable participation.

The public debt which some African countries have seen skyrocket as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine is an impediment to investment in the future of Africa. The international community must put forward a sustainable solution to the debt crisis. While a step in the right direction, the Common Framework established by the G20 is not yet enough to resolve the current situation. Our aim is to remedy this.

- **We call for a reform of the international financial institutions and the development of a new international consensus on debt management that is geared towards sustainable development rather than creditor interests. We welcome the World Bank reform which German Development Minister Svenja Schulze was instrumental in bringing about and which will strengthen investment in global commons such as the climate or biodiversity without neglecting the core mission of poverty reduction.**
- **The debt crises in Africa underline the importance of initiatives for a codified international sovereign insolvency procedure involving all creditors and implementing debt relief for particularly vulnerable groups of countries.**
- **Moreover, we must ensure that, during debt crises, the International Monetary Fund's programmes protect social participation and prevent inequality. We must not repeat the mistakes of the neoliberal structural adjustment programmes of the past. Here, too, the accession of the AU to the G20 Forum is an important step.**

## **Shared goals, new alliances: Strengthening democracy and daring to pursue pragmatic policy**

Future cooperation with African countries will build on a foundation of common goals and interests. The AU and the EU pursue common goals such as democracy, gender equality, a fair world order and climate change adaptation. Large majorities on the African continent continue to see democracy as the best form of government and reject illegitimate, authoritarian power relations.

The sense of dissatisfaction over the failure to provide basic services, inadequate state protection, the shortage of decent employment and lack of prospects for young people, as well as problems with corruption, however, are increasingly placing Africa's democracies under pressure. With this in mind, our aim is to provide stronger support for African democracies in future, enabling them to guarantee the social, economic and political participation of disadvantaged groups.

That being said, multiple global and regional security crises and the resultant geostrategic interests on the part of Germany call for dialogue and pragmatic cooperation including with countries whose governments currently do not share our values. Over half of Africa's population live in autocratic countries. For their sake, too, we must work on developing common solutions to shared challenges and ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches crisis regions. In order to create long-term prospects, especially for young people and women, feminist foreign, security and development policy remain imperative. We must continue to make sufficient funds available for this purpose.

In the Sahel region, in particular, we will need to find pragmatic ways of working together and of making sure that political transitions remain on the agenda. At the same time though, we must ensure that the channels for dialogue remain open, especially with countries that are important to Europe from a security, development and migration policy perspective, countries in which Russia and China are also becoming increasingly influential. The Sahel Alliance led by German Development Minister Svenja Schulze is instrumental in this. What is important now is continuing our coordinated approach and cross-departmental cooperation in the development and implementation of pan-European strategies.

- **Together we seek to collaborate with our African partners on development strategies that protect democracies the world over. This is the only way we can safeguard and strengthen democracies, both in Europe and worldwide, which are increasingly finding themselves under pressure.**
- **We are committed to working in close cooperation with African countries that support the objectives of feminist foreign, security and development policy. This approach seeks to tackle structural inequalities between men and women in particular and in society at large. This also includes being more aware of racist structures and colonial continuities in our cooperation and advocating for the rights of marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities, Indigenous groups or LGBTQI\* people.**
- **Our plan is to pursue these objectives building on Agenda 2030 and the proposals by feminist networks on the African continent.**

## **Facilitating security together and increasing the influence of civil society actors**

We support the AU's goal of peace and security in Africa. We firmly believe that human and military security go hand in hand. Foreign and development policy equate to a sustainable security policy because, whether directly or indirectly, they help prevent conflict. In the case of selective cooperation with military actors in autocratic countries, care must be taken that this does not negatively impact the human rights and security situations.

A more integrated security policy developed in collaboration with our African partners creates networks and alliances and strengthens multilateral cooperation in times of increasing confrontation over values and spheres of influence. There is no question that we will maintain our presence and remain active in crisis regions with a view to continuing to extend offers of cooperation, not least to prevent our autocratic rivals from having the opportunity to do so themselves.

This is particularly true of the **Sahel**. The region's population has been facing a worsening security situation since the respective militaries violently seized power in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Over the last few decades, Germany has been working closely with the EU and the UN in the Sahel. If Germany's

activities within the multilateral framework are influenced, indeed made more difficult, by the strong criticism from both governments and civil society, particularly with regard to France's actions, it is imperative that we make all the more effort to engage – from a security, foreign and development policy perspective – and pave the way for a time when international organisations will play an important role again. To achieve this, Germany must also advocate more strongly within the European Union for a coherent European approach.

Moreover, we recognise that the majority of armed actors exercising substantial control over territories in the Sahel region or providing services that the state is currently unable to guarantee, will, sooner or later, have no choice but to become involved in dialogue initiatives. Drawing red lines for dialogue and ceasefire proposals was a mistake we do not wish to repeat. The safe havens for violent actors will become fewer and farther between if we can effectively dovetail robust, regionally led components based on dialogue.

At the same time, the constant risk of escalation in **Libya** has influenced the stability of the entire region, although this is not the only reason we remain committed to continuing the Berlin peace process for Libya. Cooperation with the coastal countries of West Africa, which are threatened by spillover effects from the escalation of violence in the Sahel, will also be further strengthened.

Similarly, we must focus our attention on the escalating violence in eastern **DRC** and the devastating civil war in **Sudan**. These two conflicts must not be neglected. In both regions, human rights violations must be documented and human rights protected. Sudan is on the verge of one of the worst famines in decades. It is therefore imperative that we pledge further humanitarian assistance to reinforce our efforts to end the crisis.

The **Horn of Africa**, too, is seeing existing security crises reach new heights. We also take a critical view of the influence on the Horn of autocratic states outside the region, the impact of which accelerates geopolitical competition and arms deliveries to the region, making peace processes more difficult. Stronger commitment than in the past, in collaboration with the UN and the AU, would be worthwhile for the Horn, not least because of the region's geographical location on the other side of the Red Sea, making it particularly important for international trade and migration movements. Through its participation in the "Horn of Africa Initiative", among others, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is contributing to stability and development in the Horn of Africa. We are dedicated to strengthening Germany's commitment in this region.

The German National Security Strategy, adopted in 2023, also addresses food security as part of a comprehensive approach to national and international security. This is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), which aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

### **Shaping security collectively**

What Africa's crises regions have in common is that they all lack a functioning system of collective security. More often than not, the individual regions and countries seek to establish security *against* rather than in cooperation with one another and the influence of civil society actors is limited. Time and again, states receive support from militias in neighbouring countries. This is why we support regional confidence building, the dialogue formats needed for this, conflict mediation, as well as increased involvement of civil society actors.

One thing we do know is that peace processes are more successful if they take feminist perspectives into account. In line with UN resolution 1325 on women peace and security, we are committed to the equal participation and full involvement of women in peace processes and their empowerment in situations of armed conflict and within the state armed forces as well as the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights. Our priority here is the empowerment of local women actors.

Moreover, in Africa's crisis regions, UN peacekeeping missions with widely differing mandates have been unable to provide adequate security, although the end result of the missions has, on balance, been positive. In keeping with the fundamental principle of regional ownership, in late 2023, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2719, strengthening the role of the AU in the future mandating, implementation and financing of Peace Support Operations in Africa, a step we very much welcome. In future, the UNSC and AU must ensure more coordinated planning when it comes to creating, reviewing and renewing mandates. All this is something that can now be more extensively funded by UN contributions.

Especially in the context of peace missions and elections, another issue we are increasingly seeing is the spread of disinformation in Africa by both local actors and external conflict parties such as Russia. Today, more than ever, it is important to look into the root causes of disinformation in social media and the wider media landscape with a view to preventing and purposefully countering false narratives.

- **In line with this, we plan, in future, to help the AU and African regional organisations to assume more responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of peace and security.**
- **The development and implementation of future mandates must be more streamlined and realistic, more context-specific, and, more importantly, more inclusive than they have been to date. And the only way that this can be achieved is if local actors and civil society are more closely involved in the development and review of mandates. In this context, our aim is to engage women and actors from marginalised groups.**
- **Exit strategies applicable once a country's state of affairs can be described as "good enough" are to be discussed upfront with greater regularity than in the past.**
- **Fundamentally, in future, it will be more important for peace missions led by the AU or the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to take proper account of the new conflict dynamics (resulting from climate risks, for instance).**
- **By sharing knowledge, resources and technologies, food security on the African continent can be improved.**

## **Supporting just economic and social transformations based on social democratic principles**

In large parts of Africa, the economy has yet to undergo the structural transformation that would promote local value creation and create decent employment. In many African states, economic growth is still not generating formal employment. The majority of Africans work in the informal sector, in which incomes are volatile, often well below national minimum wages, and where access to social security systems is limited or non-existent.

At the same time, government revenue sources are declining. Firms and individuals alike exploit loopholes in international tax laws. Instead of investing productively in their own country, certain government and economic elites transfer both private and public funds abroad, often via opaque and indeed illegal channels. Moreover, the urgently needed decarbonisation of global energy production is likely to result in the collapse of oil and gas exports for African countries which remain dependent on this source of revenue to this day.

The African continent urgently needs national, regional and international investment to make progress with structural transformation, undertake climate change adaptation measures and establish the pan-African free trade area. The challenges in this context are the high interest rates for both governments and private firms in Africa, which increase the cost of investment and accelerate debt crises.

**We support the mobilisation of German and European private and public investment in Africa.**

More than in the past, the Compact with Africa must prioritise investment that results in the creation of decent jobs in Africa and boosts demand on African markets. We therefore expressly welcome the fact that the German Chancellor regularly hosts the Compact with Africa. Other important aspects are debt management and the strengthening of the social safety net this brings. The development of comprehensive social security systems is socially just and gender equitable, generates economic demand and improves the stability of local economic cycles.

**We aim to provide stronger support for the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), making attractive and coherent proposals as to how African countries can access the EU market.**

When it comes to discussions on the structure of the African free trade area, trade unions, which increasingly represent the informal sector in Africa, have earned a place at the negotiating table, too. Not least in its capacity as one of the largest international donors, Germany is committed to the free trade area, something we welcome very much. This support must continue.

If we want to get partners on board in support of shared goals, it is essential we have an understanding of the unique historical experience of African countries and their current priorities. This also includes overcoming existing asymmetries in cooperation between Africa and Europe. In trade and agricultural policy, the promotion of local value creation is crucial when it comes to issues of justice and respect for our partners. **We therefore expressly welcome the fact that the German Chancellor is calling for an end to extractivism, supporting states both within and outside Africa in their endeavours to develop materials processing and value-added steps that go beyond mining for raw materials.**

**Urbanisation: Identifying opportunities and tackling challenges together**

Combined with demographic change, Africa's rapid urbanisation will be the key catalyst for transformation on the continent over the next 50 years. The future of Africa will be decided in its rapidly growing cities. Urbanisation and urban development which is socially just, gender equitable and sustainable, as well as being geared towards political and social participation, must therefore feature more prominently in Germany's Africa policy.

The multitude of different protests Africa is seeing today, led by its young and increasingly urban population, will only increase in response to debt crises, poor economic prospects and a lack of access to basic services. To some extent, the political movements and protest groups found in the continent's cities form its future leadership and political elite.

**We must therefore, with the help of our social democratic principles, find new ways of establishing credibility in the eyes of the young people who might be protesting today but in the near future may very well be in positions of political responsibility.**

**Shaping a sustainable environment and climate policy based on solidarity together**

When it comes to tackling the climate crisis, the industrialised nations shoulder a historical responsibility. After all, they account for the majority of emissions. Today, close to 20 percent of the world's population lives in Africa, yet these people produce less than five percent of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The African continent has contributed least to the changing climate, yet is hit particularly hard by the impacts of climate change.

Of all groups, perhaps the hardest hit by the climate crisis is the majority of people working in agriculture – a large proportion of them women –, increasing the likelihood of violent conflicts and related migration movements or internal displacement. Thus, the climate crisis limits the development and self-fulfilment opportunities of current and future generations in Africa more than anywhere else in the world. Moreover, much of the continent's rural areas have no energy supply, with firewood or coal often used to manufacture products, the health of women in particular often suffering as a result. Sustainable and agroecological farming must be promoted in order to make production more efficient and environmentally

compatible. Agroecology offers an integrative model that combines environmental sustainability, social justice and economic viability.

The global climate crisis is also exacerbating the water crisis on the African continent. Efforts must therefore be made to promote water management in order to improve access to clean drinking water and protect against natural hazards. The water scarcity seen in many countries is already having a negative impact on development and food security today. In addition, the costs of urgently needed adaptation measures are rising and can often not be met due to a lack of funding. However, this is a particularly sensitive and problematic issue, given that African countries suffer disproportionately from the effects of the climate crisis despite their negligible contribution.

Climate change also impacts global health. Progressive climate change and the loss of biodiversity are closely connected to the health of people and animals. With a view to an equitable exchange of research findings with and capacity building in African states, it is essential to continue promoting local production capacity for vaccinations, medicines and diagnostics as well as to support local research with a focus on the spread of neglected tropical diseases and zoonoses. The same applies to climate research and innovation in the field of climate adaptation. It is not only our historical responsibility, but is also in our own interest to help African countries, both financially and by providing know-how, to achieve the Nationally Determined Contributions they themselves agreed on as part of the Paris Climate Agreement.

**In line with feminist foreign and development policy, one of our main focuses is the creation of women's employment in rural areas.** Women account for the lion's share of the agricultural workforce but only a small fraction of them actually owns land or is employed in the formal sector.

Our aim is to mobilise support, particularly when it comes to financing adaptation measures, both bilaterally and via the adaptation funds under the auspices of the UNFCCC or by paying into the newly created Loss and Damage Funds. We are also committed to ensuring that the Green Climate Fund is regularly replenished as an instrument for international climate financing and that these resources are made more readily accessible to all states. We expressly welcome the fact that the German government is taking a lead role both when it comes to international climate financing in general and in the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund more specifically.

Industrialised nations are producing more waste than ever before. Electronic scrap, plastic waste and used textiles are exported to Africa where they pollute the continent's air, soil and water. The refuse of the affluent society is seriously damaging people's health. We must stop outsourcing our waste problem to other countries. We therefore continue to advocate for an efficient sustainable circular economy in Germany, for better monitoring and control of waste shipments and against illegal disposal practices. We also support Africa in establishing waste disposal and recycling structures.

At the same time, African governments have a responsibility to provide their population with decent living conditions and protect their own ecosystems. By preserving and restoring the continent's diverse ecosystems as well as protecting indigenous species, an important contribution can be made to preserving biodiversity and natural climate protection. In addition, African countries also contribute to climate adaptation, maintaining a normal hydrologic balance and providing protection against climate disasters.

In this context, access to power is not only crucial for development but also a basic human right. We acknowledge that, on a continent where 600 million people have no access to electricity, there will be a certain need to use existing gas reserves – and this is something that has to be accepted provided it serves as a bridge to climate neutrality and is in line with the 1.5 degree threshold. Of course the expansion of renewable energy sources also has to factor in environmental compatibility and the preservation of biodiversity, which is where the "Just Energy Transition Partnerships" the German government played a role in negotiating come into play. This cooperation mechanism focuses on both the expansion of renewable energy sources and on ensuring that the social impact of the transition is



cushioned. We consider the agreements a groundbreaking approach to a just global climate policy, not least because they involve trade unions.

We also support instruments such as the international Climate Club, established on the initiative of Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who recognised its potential for shaping a just international climate policy. On the African continent, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco and Mozambique have already become members of the club, which is instrumental in ensuring that free trade and economic development are not at odds with ambitious climate action.

- **The principle of shared but distinctive responsibilities requires Europe to act first and foremost as a role model, demonstrating that, by reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions and decarbonising our economies in a socially responsible but consistent fashion, climate-neutral economic development is a viable option.**
- **This also means that vulnerable groups, women and civil society, as well as trade unions, must be granted the right to participate effectively in processes of adaptation and in the search for solutions.**
- **Given the significant opportunities for economic development in Africa provided by the EU's trade agreements, we are also keen to ensure that climate policy aspects feature more prominently. This includes a common position formulated by the SPD parliamentary group to be incorporated into an evaluation of the economic consequences of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism conducted by the European Commission.**

### **Promoting a sustainable raw materials policy together**

The demand from Germany and other European countries for the raw materials that are critical for the expansion of renewable technologies relates in particular to the substantial reserves of lithium, copper and rare earth elements found in Africa. As a result, African countries are becoming increasingly important trade partners with huge potential for the development and export of renewable energies (including green hydrogen, solar and wind energy) and critical raw materials processing (e.g. for lithium, coltan and copper).

We aim to help African countries strengthen raw materials extraction and processing, make their processes more sustainable by means of know-how transfer, and promote local value creation with a view to generating local jobs, manufacturing industries, and ultimately comprehensive supply chains. Essential in this context are compliance with human and employee rights as well as due diligence obligations, with the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act and the EU Supply Chain Law serving as key instruments for implementation. Moreover, the rights of Indigenous and tribal peoples must be guaranteed, as set out in the ILO Convention No. 169, for instance. Raw materials extraction and processing must go hand in hand with compliance with ambitious environmental standards. Raw materials extraction must not come at the cost of the environment, soil and water quality and quantity.

Our raw materials partnerships are different from the raw materials policies of our competitors in that we do not just extract raw materials and ship them to other regions of the world where they are processed and refined for various purposes, but what we seek to do is make a sustainable contribution to the development of the local economy, society and environmental regulations. International cooperation on the promotion of hydrogen trade must be part of sustainable, comprehensive development partnerships that support the development and decarbonisation of economies in our partner countries.

### **Root causes of migration and opportunities for regular immigration**

There are a multitude of reasons behind migration in Africa, the most common being war, the climate crisis and autocracy. Environmental changes resulting in declining agricultural yields and food scarcity are others. Supporting political participation and peace processes as well as helping countries adapt to the consequences of increasing climate extremes can therefore be seen as a means of addressing the

root causes of irregular migration in general. This is also why dedicated foreign and development policy cooperation with Africa is so vital.

The movement of refugees within the African continent caused by war and displacement poses major challenges to the host countries. It is therefore important to acknowledge what many African states have achieved when it comes to protecting refugees, not least because the vast majority of refugees and displaced people in Africa remain in their home countries or migrate to neighbouring states. Germany must continue to show solidarity with these countries and help them provide for the refugees under their care. In this context, it is important for the specific needs of women refugees to be both recognised and addressed. German foreign, security and development policy also supports stability and resilience in African countries as well as economic development. Doing so creates local prospects for the people living there and alleviates the pressure on them to leave their home countries.

The African Union's migration policy also aspires to advance the free movement of people on the continent in order to tap into the huge development potential of migration and mobility. We would be well advised to support the AU in this. Measures taken as part of the externalisation of migration control to Africa and cooperation with African autocracies on migration policy – including at the EU level – must be continually scrutinised to ensure that human rights are being protected.

- **Opportunities for regular migration to Germany and other European countries, for instance for work and education purposes, must be increased. To this end, we need to foster education and research cooperation, the development of scholarship and exchange programmes along with our commitment to easier and fairer visa procedures. The migration advice centres, such as those established in Nigeria and Gambia, are also supporting this process.**
- **In collaboration with our university partners, research, funding and intermediary organisations, we plan to continue to drive the development and expansion of education and research capacity and “innovation hubs” in the many regions of Africa. We also aim to increase the visibility of these international cooperation projects.**
- **Another important instrument is the negotiation of migration agreements. These agreements must serve Germany's interest in regular migration and, at the same time, also be attractive to African countries.**
- **The idea that Europe is depriving African countries of its skilled labour in a neo-colonial move must be firmly countered.**

## The strategic partnerships we propose

*“The conflicts of our time can only be resolved if we treat our partners' views with respect – not with moral superiority. It is important that we permit differences and at the same time are in a position to identify shared interests” (Lars Klingbeil, 18 March 2024).*

In a multipolar world, closer strategic cooperation with Africa's 54 countries will become even more important for Germany and the rest of Europe. Unlike other countries, however, Germany offers cooperation not only to Africa's governments but also its societies. This is increasingly becoming a geopolitical and comparative advantage which sets Germany and the rest of Europe apart from other geopolitical actors. We strongly believe that, given our geographical proximity to Africa and our mutual dependence across many areas – be it climate and migration policy, energy and health policy, or common foreign and security policy interests and values – Germany and Europe as a whole will continue to be attractive partners for Africa in many different respects.

In order to maintain this situation, however, we must build trust and confidence and be more strategic in our approach to the partnerships we are offering. We have a responsibility to make fair offers of

cooperation which are mutually beneficial. This applies to climate policy as well as to economic, trade and security policy.

We do not expect African countries to work exclusively with us. Our aim is to present proposals for alliances with African states and societies that are more strategic and pragmatic than before, provided these serve our common interests. For us as social democrats, these interests are never solely economic or geopolitical in nature, but always involve “a solidarity of interests” as well. This is also why we continue to pursue the goal of strong development policy cooperation with African partners – whether they be state institutions or societies. Development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, specifically in fragile states where hunger and poverty need to be fought, remain a priority for Germany as part of our coordinated or integrated approach, as it is here that our humanitarian interests and commitment to stability come together.

At the same time, not least out of respect for our African partners, we must define our economic and geopolitical interests, not only more clearly but also more honestly than we have done in the past. This is expected of us. A considered and precise examination of our own colonial past is another important prerequisite for a fundamental shift in our cooperation with the African continent.

In our international engagement, we must ensure that, in the future, the specific political offers we make to our neighbouring continent are better aligned with the political priorities of our African partner countries. These include the following:

- Partnerships in the field of energy supply, such as the Just Transition Energy Partnership;
- A fair trade policy that is based on the new free trade area established by the AU and is thus in the interests of both sides and promotes local value creation;
- A migration policy that tackles the root causes of migration and promotes mutually beneficial regular migration aimed at circular migration;
- Aligning our activities in the region with local strategies for the future, particularly focusing on supporting young people;
- Supporting the development of processing capacities and the expansion of local value creation, especially in the field of strategic raw materials but also other products, such as in the agricultural sector;
- Security policy engagement which is better coordinated with the AU and which results in the development of integrated approaches between foreign, defence and development policies.

#### **What does this all mean?**

Our aim is to involve African partners more actively than ever when it comes to solving global and regional crises beyond individual regions. To this end, we will seek to deepen the exchange with our African partners with a view to establishing peace in Europe and the Middle East, especially with regard to how we tackle security crises, as these partners have access to actors with whom our own contact is very limited.

Since the *Zeitenwende*, it has become more important than ever that we see Germany's Africa policy as a collective endeavour and not the responsibility of just one department. Many of the challenges Germany is facing in its cooperation with African countries relate to foreign, security, development, economic, energy and climate policy at the same time.

We aim to engage more with those countries that strengthen multilateralism and that, following elections, have firmly established a change in government – South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, Cape Verde, Gambia and Senegal, in particular. These countries will be particularly important partners for deeper cooperation. The shared desire for a fair and predictable multilateral order in an increasingly multipolar world is a promising departure point for further cooperation.

In African countries where autocratic tendencies are becoming more entrenched in the long term and a political opening up is not foreseeable, even in the medium term, our aim is to focus more intensively on instruments of multilateral and non-governmental cooperation. We also seek out dialogue and pragmatic cooperation even with those countries whose governments currently do not share our values. At the same time we are working on fostering long-term credibility among those who hope for political transition, those who are already protesting on the streets of Africa today and who will also be assuming political responsibility in the foreseeable future. A feminist foreign, security and development policy makes a significant contribution to more credible cooperation with actors beyond the ruling governments.

Germany and Europe's principal partner in Africa remains the African Union, including for any future security policy engagement in conflict regions such as the Sahel or the Horn of Africa. In the medium to long term, it is vital that we continue to strengthen the AU and regional institutions with a view to them assuming greater responsibility for security policy, including in the field of peacekeeping.

**Our goal is to forge ahead with exchange and cooperation with our African partners – whether within state institutions, society or industry. These partnerships are more vital than ever as we move towards a bright and positive future in Europe, Africa and the world.**