



AFRICAN YOUTH FOUNDATION
Afrikanische Jugendhilfe e.V.
Fondation de la Jeunesse Africaine

Keynote Address

by

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Your Excellency
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Distinguished Speakers,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The days of parenting Africa is gradually getting exhausted, likewise are the days of hairdressing, cookery, drumming and dancing events as the sole progressive activities for Africa, taking their own special place along the way. In the year 2008, it has become evident that Africa doesn't only need to export its human resources as an economic source, but rather, with better management of its natural resources in the form of responsible bilateral trade terms, this blessed and lovely continent will be able to solve most of its problems.

When it comes to trade, Africa is unfortunately always reminded about its bad governance, but if I may ask, how can African countries have good governance when the rules outlined for this very governance are bad? Who makes these rules and to the advantage of whom? Are the very people who are supposed to abide by these rules involved in the process of the making of these rules? To prove that bad governance is nothing more than bad rules, we can just take a look at one country, which doesn't peg its trade and investment projects on good governance rules and is still very successful: China.

China has surprised everyone. It has created a fait-accompli, not storming Africa as would have been expected, but with all the sins of Africa, meeting words with deeds on the continent. So what are these bad governance rules which has become a necklace around the necks of African countries? If the powers that be are interested in progress, of course there will be progress as seen in 2007, when China dwarfed the World bank's 2.5 billion dollars moneyflow into Africa with 91 billion dollars, prompting the world bank to persuade Beijing to partner with it in financing African projects, which so far is to no avail.

This example demonstrates that, it is doable if we are willing to make it happen. It is in this very stance, that the African diasporas who have become the link and the bridge to both continents, wants to be part of such lawmaking bodies, to be involved in issues that are related to them, take action and bear the consequences that arises.

What unfortunately is still not recognized is that, some of the African Diasporas today are the richest in the world when we refer to knowledge, talents and skills. We have top financial executive, scientists, social scientists, medical doctors, teachers and hard unskilled workers. Most of these diasporas have had the opportunities of working in top institutions, both in the public and private sectors, as well as experience from the motherlands; yet at places where it matters most, that is in making the rules and regulations of the said countries, these very same diasporas, are those who are left out.

Such are the concerns that led to the formation of the **African Business and Entrepreneurship Network (ABEN)** in 2007, of which our theme for this year is: **TRADE AND INVESTMENTS IN WEST AFRICA**. This intended Business-2-Business roadshow event will start from Berlin through Frankfurt and end in Bonn.

The aim of the **African Business and Entrepreneurship Network** is to serve to connect the African Diaspora business community with law makers on both continents, other Professionals, investors, businesses, Entrepreneurs and students, to secure exposure and gain insight in business and investment opportunities in Europe and Africa.

A platform which enables diasporas identify and invest funds especially in Africa, to create a ***Culture of Ownership*** by buying into companies that are being privatized and setting-up new businesses which will replace a culture of dependency on foreign aid.

ABEN is a new development paradigm, based on broad participation of the masses in market driven economic activities. This paradigm will contribute to how continental and Diaspora Africans can offer a road map to the creation of entrepreneurs and business asset owners through education and investments.

In our Berlin event on TRADE REGULATIONS AND RULES, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ECONOMIC POLICIES, it will be in our interest to identify methods as to how best NGOs, such as AYP, can play a more active role in enhancing trade and investments not just in West Africa, but also more broadly.

The discussions which will be taking place here in Berlin, which is meant to be on trade and investments within the area of trade regulations and rules, economic growth and economic policies, is however not expected to be exclusively economic, but an interdisciplinary, linking economic, legal, business, as well as international relations concepts to guide our focus. This may provide Participants with an in-depth and comprehensive overview of our overall theme and the sub-theme.

Mr. Moderator, may I take this opportunity to welcome participants from other towns who travelled long journeys, to join us in this meeting. Like the usual caveat, I urge you to be very critical in reviewing the AYP concept and forthright in sharing with us your own valuable insights in tackling similar issues at home. I hope that you will feel very much at home in the warm heart of Berlin, the historic city of Germany!

Our sincere gratitude to the institutions who made this event in the different towns a reality, namely: the InWEnt gGmbH, Capacity Building International on behalf of the Ministry for Intergenerational Affairs, Family, Women and Integration NRW; the JANERO Consultancy GmbH, Bonn International Conversion Centre, Leoxls and The African Courier Magazine.

Last but most significantly, I am very pleased to welcome our panelists. The success of this meeting depends on them. Thank you and again a warm welcome to you all.

*Paulyn Jansen, PhD
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