

## Accra Post-2015 Africa-Europe Entrepreneurs' Dialogue, 24-26 June 2013

### The FINDINGS

*The recently published report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda "A new global partnership: Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development" recognizes human development within the boundaries of our planet as the major challenge. The report acknowledges business as essential partners. At the initiative of the High-level Panel members, H.E. Prof. Dr. Horst Koehler, former President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ms. Betty Maina, Chief Executive of the Kenya Association of Manufactures and Prof. Fulbert Gèro Amoussouga, Head of the Economic Analysis Unit of the President of the Republic of Benin, African and European entrepreneurs came together to exchange views on entrepreneurial spirit, sustainable business opportunities and creating new partnerships. Our key findings are summarized below. We invite others to follow suit on our approach and to share their experience and visions with us.*

#### Reliable, motivated partners in enhancing a new global partnership

Entrepreneurs have reached the center stage in promoting sustainable development. Their experience and innovative business approaches will support the structural transformation that is required to create more good jobs, to better use the limited natural resources and to consider global and local interests.

A new global partnership should be based on entrepreneurial culture and a common understanding of our shared humanity, underpinning mutual respect and mutual benefit in an interconnected world. Business is an essential partner that can drive economic growth. African and European entrepreneurs exchanged their experiences and interest. They came to the conclusion that partnering is a powerful engine to realize the potential of growth and job creation in Africa.

Strengthening African-European entrepreneurial partnerships provide win-win-opportunities for example by facilitating access to markets, resources, technologies and finance.

#### Enabling Environment for private business

"It is not government's business to do business."<sup>1</sup> But the government has an important role to play – namely to create an enabling environment to do business. This includes for example,

- A decentralised system of financial services that ensures access to finance in particular for start-ups and small and medium enterprises, the main providers of jobs. It is often not the big money that is lacking, but finance for especially those companies who wish to upscale their businesses and are no longer eligible for micro finance credits (missing middle).
- The provision of adequate infrastructure and a reliable energy supply. Under certain circumstances there is a business case for developing the necessary infrastructure. By doing so, entrepreneurs provide access to energy or water also for adjacent communities.
- The elaboration and development of structured industrial policy that promotes value addition and builds on Africa's natural resources, especially agriculture.

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<sup>1</sup> Haruna Iddrisu, Minister of Trade and Industry

- Closer market integration within Africa for increasing competitiveness by overcoming the restrictions of local markets and reducing barriers with regard to taxes, cost of border procedures and customs.

National governments also need to create an enabling environment for doing business by strengthening the rule of law, transparent decision processes and accountability. Likewise, the international community of states has to intensify its efforts, be it to create a resilient global financial system that serves the real economy, an open and fair trading system, fighting climate change, as well as stopping illicit financial flows. Europe should play an active role in this matter. A fairer access to the domestic markets of industrialized countries and true regional integration are vital for African businesses to thrive. The negotiations of the Doha Round should be taken up again and concluded as soon as possible. Tax evasion and illicit financial flows from Africa have to be efficiently reduced by policies in both sending and receiving countries.

### **Empowering the youth and women as responsible workers and entrepreneurs**

Africa has all the talents to realize its potential for growth and prosperity. Women and youth play a central role. What is urgently needed is to provide more access to and improved quality of education, also to enhance vocational and entrepreneurial skills. "Africa's job problem is mainly a skill problem. A very high percentage of the unemployed young people are unskilled. Beyond the need for a profound transformation of the economies, this means that employment is also closely dependent on addressing the skill gap."<sup>2</sup> It is also important to enhance the confidence of the people in being able to become entrepreneurs. Educational institutes, governments and private businesses should encourage innovation and entrepreneurial spirit among the youth. Young people, in turn, should be active citizens, curious and eager to learn in order to make best use of what is offered to them.

Entrepreneurial culture should build on openness for innovation, fairness, and integrity. It prevents corruption, which is a major obstacle for progress in many countries. Moreover, it is the basis for sound private sector development.

### **Seeking solutions and exploring opportunities to promote sustainable development**

Entrepreneurs are deepening and further developing new resource-efficient and social ways of doing business. Considering not only economy, but also ecology, culture/education and regulations makes business sound and sustainable - for example by the provision of health care, canteens, or training for the staff.

The drive towards green and inclusive development opens up new business opportunities. Entrepreneurs are increasingly investing in new technologies, enabling growth with limited natural resources and providing services for people at the base of the pyramid - for example, by the provision of solar energy, mobile banking systems, diversification or enabling the local supply-chain.

There are good opportunities for green and inclusive business also in Africa. In order to explore them, long-term perspective, a bit of patience and courage are needed otherwise entrepreneurs could miss these opportunities. These new paths of development will allow economies to grow and create good jobs for a growing young population.

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<sup>2</sup> Betty Maina, Chief Executive of the Kenya Association of Manufactures (KAM), Kenya.