

What's New in Germany's Cooperation with Africa?

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Abstract: Germany has gradually increased its investment in Africa. In addition to promoting traditional economic and trade cooperation, Germany has paid more attention to security issues in Africa and to improved cooperation in defense, immigration and counter-terrorism. As Germany explores new models of development aid and encourages renewable energy and environmental protection in African countries, German capability and willingness to cooperate with African nations are on the rise. While Germany welcomes the African consumer market, historic problems centering on value differences and the European Union's diplomatic constraints obstruct German-African cooperation over the short term. Germany promotes trilateral cooperation with China and Africa but encounters several challenges within its forward momentum.

Keywords: German-African cooperation, international responsibility, development aid, trilateral cooperation

Long-term German-African foreign relations, as envisioned after Germany's G20 presidency, seek to build on Africa's accelerated development and strategic position, but issues of immigration, terrorism and climate change are inseparable from future success in strong, lasting cooperation with African nations. The beginnings of this trend are emerging. The German foreign office and other foreign service sectors have launched the Germany and Africa—Concept of the German Federal Government. The German government has policy guidelines for Africa. Its education and economy ministries have separate Africa policies to follow.

German and African leaders have continually engaged in talks, and the focus on Africa was a tenet of the G20 presidency in 2017. To work well,

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Germany's trilateral work with China and African countries needs stronger cooperation.

That Germany's political relationship with African countries is low, their trade only a minor share of German foreign trade, happens to be the current reality. Development aid offered by Germany is a part of its international responsibility rather than integral to foreign policy, but Africa's recent rise shows that it is positioned to be the continent of the future. African countries have strategic significance in political and economic terms, and Germany, to promote a positive image, will increase diplomatic investment and expand economic cooperation. It seeks African cooperation in trade, security, new energy, development aid and environmental protection.

The New Cooperation

Security cooperation is vitally important in German-African cooperation although previously the emphasis was placed on trade and energy. During her 2011 visit to Kenya, Angola and Nigeria, German Chancellor Angela Merkel put forward an equal economic and energy partnership with Africa, but now the priority is on security issues. Merkel visited Mali, Nigeria and Ethiopia in 2016 with the aims of controlling immigrants, boosting defense cooperation, and building a greater logistics base in Africa. Merkel's trip to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in May 2019 focused on security, primarily Libyan issues, regional anti-terrorism and equipment assistance.

Germany supports the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Established in 2002 as a long-term structural response to peace and security challenges on the African continent, APSA put a brake on weapons of mass destruction proliferation in Africa. Berlin called on the African Union (AU) and African countries to jointly combat terrorism. Merkel pledged counterterrorism action at the G5 Sahel summit and more financial assistance for African countries to deploy military intervention. Germany advocated building a Peace and Security Partnership between the EU and African countries.

The major shift in Germany's Africa policy is an increase of military deployment there. Western allies criticized Germany because of its refusal to send troops to Libya during the 2011 Jasmine Revolution. Since then, Berlin expanded participation in African military operations. Germany will

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have some 1,000 soldiers in Mali taking part in the UN peacekeeping mission,¹ and since 2013 has been involved with soldiers or police officers in UN peace missions in Western Sahara, Somali and Darfur. Financial support from Germany in Africa includes some for improved military training and equipment. It assists Niger to fight against drug and human trafficking, and the illegal weapons trade. Germany works with Ethiopia to cooperate in police training.

Incapable governments and turbulent political situations in some African countries pose indirect threats to European security. Since, from the German government's perspective, only a higher level of African national governance will relieve the security crisis, Berlin promotes dialogue and cooperation between German and African nations' parliaments and judiciary. The flow of African migrants and refugees into Germany has resulted in agreements with Libya and Tunisia to address human trafficking of refugees. Germany's intent is to improve security through democratization in Africa.

Germany's new models of development aid in Africa are designed to address socioeconomic problems and create a new era for German-African relations. Under the framework, Berlin shows a willingness to transfer experiences with EU integration to African integration. In trade partnership with West African economies, Germany can offer professional advisory services through the design of an African Customs Union and African Continental Free Trade Area. Germany supported African countries to establish a new trade order under WTO rules. Private investment is encouraged to supplement official development aid. Since traditional development aid has been denounced due to hindered private investment, few choices of assistance and even political purposes, the German government began communicating with African governments and offering guidance for German enterprises in Africa. In October 2018, twelve African leaders met Merkel in an investment forum in Berlin. The German government announced the creation of a 1 billion euro fund encouraging small and medium-sized companies to

¹ "Germany to Deploy Helicopters, More Soldiers to UN Mission in Mali," VOA News, January 11, 2017, accessed September 5, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/germany-deploy-helicopters-more-soldiers-un-mission-mali>.

grow their presence in African countries, having learned from the experiences of previous development aid that it is essential for African countries to foster their own growth. In mid-2017, Germany launched the Compact with Africa (CwA) initiative, under the G20, promoting private investment. So far, 11 African countries have joined: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia. The initial phase focused on a better investment environment, the finance industry, job creation and people's income.¹

German values emphasize new energy and environmental protection, but factors such as high fossil fuel dependence and high water pollution create a complex, vulnerable ecological environment in Africa. Among Western countries, Germany has provided the most financial support to bring new energy systems to Africa. Its Africa renewable energy initiative committed 1.3 billion euros in 2016,² and it was the largest bilateral donor of the group in 2016. German companies are encouraged to participate in infrastructure construction such as power plants, LNG projects, and solar and wind power systems in Africa. Germany and other EU countries expect Africa could generate excess electricity that could be exported to them. African research facilities and new technologies are essential to improve the ecology and living standards. For instance, Germany has cooperated with 15 African countries to build climate change and land management research centers and to train African technology talents. Annually since 2012, 500 million euros are allocated by the German government to protect African forests and other ecological systems and to maintain biodiversity.

Germany's Strategy

What motivates additional German cooperation with African countries is economic growth since Germany's export-oriented economy views parts

¹ Christine Lagarde, "Realizing the Potential of the G20 Compact with Africa," October 30, 2018, accessed September 5, 2019, <https://blogs.imf.org/2018/10/30/realizing-the-potential-of-the-g20-compact-with-africa>.

² "Africa Renewable Energy Initiative Climate-friendly Energy Solutions for Africa," accessed September 5, 2019, https://www.bmz.de/en/issues/energie/international_energy_policy/Africa-Renewable-Energy-Initiative-AREI/index.html.

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of the Africa continent as offering trade opportunities. The recent strong economic growth in Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania, averaging between 6 and 7 percent in 2018,¹ are attractive. Although direct investment in Africa accounts for less than 3 percent of global FDI, it increased significantly in recent years. South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and other newly rising African countries have attracted more foreign investment.² Africa in 2016-2017 registered a 6.2 percent growth in inward investment projects.³ Four sub-Saharan countries, Djibouti, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Rwanda, have no table improvements in Doing Business 2019.⁴ The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) took effect on May 30, 2019, and economic integration has entered a fast lane. Policymakers and experts recognize the potential of Africa's demographic dividend, as annual population increases on the continent will exceed 42 million by 2050, and total population will have doubled to 2.4 billion, according to the UN.⁵ These new consumers will provide broader markets for foreign countries and Africa could also export labor to replace the aged industrial European workforce. Skilled workers from Libya and Tunisia have won recognition in Germany.

Germany has other in-depth strategic considerations for recent investment in Africa.

An aspect of German foreign policy is dealing with the security situation involving terrorist attacks. Fears of further violence and xenophobia are used by the German extreme-right populist party, an effort which has dented Merkel's leadership. Middle East turbulence, African nations' underdeveloped

¹ World Bank, "Sub-Saharan Africa," *Global Economic Prospects*, January 2019.

² Makhtar Diop, Yuan Li, Li Yong and H.E. Ato Ahmed Shide, "Africa Still Poised to Become the Next Great Investment Destination," June 30, 2015, accessed September 5, 2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2015/06/30/africa-still-poised-to-become-the-next-great-investment-destination>.

³ "African FDI Recovers—in Line with Stronger Economic Growth," October 2018, accessed September 5, 2019, <https://www.ey.com/za/en/issues/business-environment/ey-attractiveness-program-africa-2018>.

⁴ World Bank, "Doing Business 2019," October 30, 2018, accessed September 5, 2019, <https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/reports/global-reports/doing-business-2019>.

⁵ Joseph J Bish, "Population Growth in Africa: Grasping the Scale of the Challenge," January 11, 2016, accessed September 5, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/jan/11/population-growth-in-africa-grasping-the-scale-of-the-challenge>.

economies and weak governance, and religious discord create conflict and some potential for violence. More than 665,000 refugees are living in Ethiopia, most having come from Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.¹ Countless refugees come from North Africa to Europe. In addition to a security investment in Africa, Germany intends to improve national governance in Africa countries and to engage in more economic aid and development to reduce refugee flows.

Africa policy is a priority in Germany's positive foreign policy. In terms of participation in international affairs, Germany earned a high reputation after it joined international negotiations on the Syrian issue and played a role in the Ukraine crisis and Iran nuclear deal. A *New York Times* headline said that: "Angela Merkel may be the liberal West's last defender."² With Middle East peace progress and Africa's development high on the global agenda, Berlin's reputable political and diplomatic means of addressing disputes created positive conditions for security in the Middle East and Africa. Germany has shouldered more international responsibility for promoting renewable energy resources, eradicating poverty and infectious diseases, and strengthening humanitarian relief, but Germany, as compared with the UK and France, does not have as close an African continental relationship. Only 2 percent of 2017 German exports went to Africa and 1.8 percent in 2018.³ To increase that requires solving several problems.

Because German demand for energy and raw materials is growing, as its land is small and resources scarce, Germany will highly depend on traditional energy and imports of raw materials. More than a quarter of Germany's oil, gas and coal was imported from Russia, but since the Ukraine crisis, Berlin foresees an energy threat. The need for diversification in

¹ Sulaiman Momodu, "Refugees Turn to Ethiopia for Safety and Asylum," April 2015, accessed September 5, 2019, <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2015/refugees-turn-ethiopia-safety-and-asylum>.

² Alison Smale and Steven Erlanger, "As Obama Exits World Stage, Angela Merkel May Be the Liberal West's Last Defender," November 12, 2016, accessed September 5, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/13/world/europe/germany-merkel-trump-election.html>.

³ "Deutscher Afrikahandel 2018 entt uscht," February 18, 2019, accessed June 19, 2019, <https://www.gtai.de/GTAI/Navigation/DE/Trade/Maerkte/suche,t=deutscher-afrikahandel-2018-enttaeuscht,did=2226298.html>.

energy supply drives the attention to African energy imports. After adopting policies in 2010 for energy and raw materials, and the next year launching the Germany and Africa—Concept of the German Federal Government, Germany subsequently established energy and raw materials partnerships with South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Nigeria, and Angola.

Challenges and Opportunities

The German government sees that Africa has a huge economic and strategic potential and, through increased investment in Africa, it can participate in African affairs more positively. Germany played a lead role in the EU and its economic strength is important to its positive foreign policy. After it recovered from the global financial crisis and European debt crisis and regained its economic momentum, as an export-oriented economy, Germany's surplus amounts to almost 8 percent of GDP.¹ According to 2018 statistics, the core and extra budgets of the public budget amount to 53.6 billion euros.² What matters now is how to increase the investment efficiency in Africa.

Keeping a low profile on the world stage is more about mitigating historic crimes and promoting a common understanding, but Germany has ambitions to become a normal political nation. Nowadays the world is full of conflict and uncertainty. Berlin is willing to participate in international affairs, and the world has expectations on Germany to shoulder more responsibility. The Marshall-style plan for Africa has been welcomed among African countries. The president of Niger wished for a sooner adoption of the plan, seeing in its implementation closer cooperation between the two countries. With a vision rooted in its belief in civil power and pacifism, Germany has enjoyed a good image in Africa. Its strategic cooperation advocates Africa following its own development path. Its active involvement in the African peace progress contributes more public goods for global

¹ Sebastian Heilmann and Guntram B. Wolff, "Germany's Export-oriented Economic Model Is Caught in a US-Chinese Squeeze," April 30, 2018, accessed September 5, 2019, <https://bruegel.org/2018/04/germany-export-oriented-economic-model-us-chinese-squeeze>.

² "53.6 Milliarden Euro öffentlicher Finanzierungsüberschuss 2018," April 5, 2019, accessed June 19, 2019, https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2019/04/PD19_134_711.html.

security. To meet the demand of African countries, the package of plans emphasizes sustainable growth, more policy coordination, efficient cooperation and a higher level framework.

Admittedly, both sides face short-term challenges. First, it is difficult for Germany to catch up with other countries in cooperating with Africa countries. Its past official development aid to Africa was not that flexible nor acceptable, but now the German federal government encourages the enterprises to join in. Germans did fear that an ambitious “Marshall plan with Africa” would be seen as neocolonialism and German hegemony. The plan’s slow implementation has disappointed African governments.

Second, a difference in values is a barrier to closer German-African relations. The core element of German foreign policy is human rights, democracy and good governance while refugee control and counterterrorism are usually required as preconditions to releasing development assistance. This platform has been questioned by some African leaders.

Additionally, as an EU member, Germany should look at the big picture to coordinate foreign policy with other member states. In Africa it faces competition with France, Italy and the United States. French-speaking African countries are seen as France’s post-colonial backyard. Italy exerts influence on Libya and other North African countries. German military actions are under the control of EU, NATO and even the United States.

Measures taken to solve problems could involve the option of trilateral cooperation. Germany and Israel were committed to further implementing the Africa Initiative, as agreed upon by Prime Minister Netanyahu and Merkel in 2012. Israel, Germany and Kenya signed a project agreement in 2012 to upgrade the commercial fishery and wastewater purification systems on Lake Victoria, Africa’s largest. A project of wastewater treatment facilities by Germany, Ghana and Ethiopia was widely praised. Berlin cooperates with China and Japan in certain areas, and the G20 and other multilateral systems provide platforms for more cooperation.

Future of Cooperation

Opening a chapter for trilateral cooperation is Germany’s bilateral cooperation with China in Africa. China enjoyed special political relations

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with African countries during the Cold War. Opinion surveys have shown that most African countries view China favorably, both in terms of its influence and its contributions to the continent's development. Germany's joint efforts with China have the potential to create a good image in Africa.

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Africa cooperation has focused on infrastructure and transportation connectivity. The Mombasa-Nairobi railway, opened in 2017, is the largest infrastructure project since Kenyan independence. Djibouti, located on the Horn of Africa, opened the first phase of its Chinese-built international free trade zone, which creates a regional port and commercial center. Despite its outstanding manufacturing sector, Germany has had few infrastructure projects in Africa. It expressed its wish to join the Belt and Road infrastructure building to accumulate experience.

Africa depends on the international community to address security problems, environmental pollution and poverty-related issues. There are common interests between China and Germany in promoting African development. Merkel has publicly indicated that the potential for China-Germany cooperation in Africa is huge. In October 2018, Germany Trade and Invest, the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the German-African Business Association published their report on "China in Africa" that notes the large number of German corporations that would like to participate in triangular projects and recognized existing projects under construction. Germany could learn from Chinese enterprises, which have developed a mature, innovative model in energy and infrastructure cooperation.¹

The UK and France have sometimes accused China of "non-transparent" projects in Africa. As an EU member, Germany, through cooperation with China, resolves the suspicion by other EU members. Helping countries improve their economic performance is a global mission, and China remains open in working with other countries.

There is a long way to go in the full implementation of China-Germany-Africa

¹ China in Afrika—Perspektive, Strategien und Kooperationspotenziale für deutsche Unternehmen, S. 14, DIHK, Berlin, Oktober 2018.

cooperation. If the following barriers could be overcome, greater results will be achieved. First, there is inherent doubt among German corporations in Chinese enterprises. The different standards in labor, environmental protection and project quality cause friction between China and Germany. The China in Africa report points out that at least one-third of the interviewed German companies find it difficult to deal with import-export policy divergence, different contract standards, and Chinese companies' violation of guidelines.¹ As competition between Made in China and Made in Germany is more fierce, German companies fear technology sharing agreements with Chinese firms would result in the creation of new rivals, so they have little faith in infrastructure and manufacture cooperation with China.

Poor communication and coordination has undermined trilateral cooperation. It is difficult to coordinate efforts due to different requirements, cultures, and rules and also because no single agency is responsible for coordinating under a triangular system. Donor countries must respect African sovereignty and self-esteem since unilateral development aid without Africa's consent is unacceptable and unwelcome.

Germany misunderstands China's presence in Africa. Accusations against China in the German media are about environmental pollution and resource plunder, and about support for authoritarian dictatorship, so the misperception of China's image among the German people is deeply rooted. For better trilateral cooperation with Germany in Africa, China should be connected to international practice in environmental protection, project quality, professional training and labor rights. Both sides can find more room to integrate standards and perceptions on the way to targeted cooperation. Significantly more communication and experience continue to be essential for smooth cooperation in the future.

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¹ Ibid., S. 17.