

German Federal President Steinmeier receives AFRIKA KOMMT! (17 July 2017)

30 young leaders from nine countries in Sub-Saharan-Africa have spent the last year in Germany as part of the AFRIKA KOMMT! program. Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier received the participants at Schloss Bellevue

- ✓ *Each of you stands for the experience of two worlds without which both cultural exchange and successful economic cooperation would be inconceivable;*
- ✓ *young leaders not only develop their personal potentials;*
- ✓ *a bridge between our two continents and important contacts for German companies in Africa;*
- ✓ *it is this business relationship that drives all of us forward and brings us closer to one another at the end of day.*

“AFRIKA KOMMT! means that Africa’s time is now!” – With these words, Federal President Steinmeier welcomed the 30 fellows of the fifth program year of AFRIKA KOMMT! and the company representatives. Federal President Steinmeier supports the initiative as a patron and believes in the potential of Africa: “Each and every one of you stands for these great opportunities for development in almost all of the countries of Africa: Each and every one of you stands for entrepreneurship, excellent qualifications and – what appears to me to be particularly important – **the experience of two worlds without which both cultural exchange and successful economic cooperation would be inconceivable.**”



At the reception also the CEO of B. Braun Melsungen AG, Prof. Dr. Heinz-Walter Große, the CEO of Robert Bosch GmbH, Uwe Raschke, the CEO of Voith GmbH, Dr. Hubert Lienhard, and the CEO of ANDREAS STIHL AG & Co. KG, Michael Prochaska, along with other company representatives took part. GIZ was represented by Ute Klamert, Head of Europe, Mediterranean, Central Asia, and Lydia Jebauer-Nirschl, program manager of AFRIKA KOMMT!

“The AFRIKA KOMMT! program has been a unique journey and learning experience for us. By having to leave my comfort zone - my friends, family and usual surrounding, I embarked on a journey of self-discovery”, summarized Akofa Bart-Plange and Alex Olengo the experiences of the group.

But the **young leaders could not only develop their personal potentials**, as Federal President Steinmeier emphasizes: “Above all, you are part of a network that has come into being thanks to the AFRIKA KOMMT! initiative. You have become **a bridge between our two continents.**” After the end of the program, the former participants become part of the alumni network. They are connected in regional alumni clubs **and important contacts for German companies in Africa.**

Some companies have already taken part in the initiative since 2008 and see the program as an inherent part of their Africa strategy. Federal President Steinmeier acknowledged the engagement of the German companies: “If some of those eternal know-it-all claim that these companies do this of their own accord, then they have simply not understood what this initiative is all about. **It is this business relationship that drives all of us forward and brings us closer to one another at the end of day.**”

The complete speech of the Federal President can be accessed here: [\(Link zu Rede\)](#)