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Press release

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Africa and Germany working together for the future

Africa Days pay tribute to 30 years of successful cooperation in education and research / Minister Wanka says: "We are rethinking trust and cooperation."

Germany and Africa are cooperating in education and research more closely than ever before. Cooperation today involves partners from 39 African countries. More than 500 education and research activities have been implemented in Africa over the past seven years alone. For example, Germany is currently establishing two regional science service centres for climate change and adaptive land use in Southern and Western Africa together with African partner countries and is investing up to 100 million euros for this purpose.

"Germany and Africa are linked by a partnership in education and research which has developed over more than 30 years in a spirit of trust and mutual respect. We now want to go a step further by jointly rethinking and reorienting our cooperation", said Johanna Wanka, Federal Minister of Education and Research, at the Africa Days in Berlin. Approximately 700 experts from Germany and Africa discussed the further development of cooperation in education and research at this event organized by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The discussion focused on topics such as environment, bioeconomy, health, resources management, social and political transformation processes as well as the cross-cutting topic of innovation. At today's closing event, the German and African experts presented their recommendations to Federal Minister Wanka, who said: "We are following up on successful cooperation and drafting the first Africa Strategy for Education and Research. We want to address research issues jointly and at the same time promote sustainable development and innovation in African countries. This includes the development of research capacities and support for young researchers as well as the introduction of practically

oriented elements in African education and training systems. The recommendations provide additional inspiration which we will gladly take into account when organizing our future cooperation."

Professor Horst Köhler was greatly committed to German-African relations during his term of office as Federal President. As former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, he is an outstanding Africa specialist. In his keynote speech on the inability to talk about Africa, he emphasized the geopolitical importance of the African continent: "The inability to talk about Africa must not leave us speechless. On the contrary, we must determinedly set out on new pathways of dialogue and cooperation. What we need in our relations with Africa is a new modesty in what we say and a new passion in what we do. We need a change of culture in our Africa policy which acknowledges the historic changes currently taking place on this continent and which finally takes Africa's global importance seriously. Such a change of culture makes great demands on us: It requires a self-critical attitude, an ability to differentiate, patience, a little bit of courage – and the political will to ensure that action reflects this change of attitude."

The African Union Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, Dr. Martial De-Paul Ikounga, stressed in his speech that support for Africa is based on Africa's own self-articulated priorities and home-grown framework solutions to engender Africa's social and economic development. "The Commission of the African Union appreciates the German support strategy that has taken into account Africa's own homegrown frameworks in the areas of education and research as well as in science, technology and innovation. Thus the support will help to advance the key initiatives expressed in the AU strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (STISA-2024), the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa including the Pan African University, as well as Post 2015 Agenda. This is a welcome departure from erstwhile practice by international agencies and donor countries to develop and support parallel programmes that do not optimally contribute to Africa's collective vision of peace, prosperity and integration."

Thomas Silberhorn, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, emphasized in his address: "Education is a focus of our development cooperation with Africa. The African continent holds great potential. Education is the key to making the most of these opportunities."

For further information concerning the German-African Partnership in Education and Research and the recommendations of the BMBF Africa Days please visit <http://www.bmbf.de/de/11541.php>.