

**Speech by the German Federal President
at the opening of the
9th Africa Partnership Forum
on 12 November 2007
in Algiers**

I am delighted to be here today to open the 9th Africa Partnership Forum in Algeria with you, President Bouteflika. Algeria is a most appropriate venue for this major international conference: as one of the countries behind the launching of the NEPAD reform initiative, as an important emerging economy, as an African participant within the framework of the G8 and, most especially, as a bridge between Europe and Africa.

This is now the ninth Africa Partnership Forum. For me, the Forum is an expression of the positive culture of partnership that is developing between Africa, the G8 countries and the OECD countries. We are, after all, becoming increasingly conscious that, in our shrinking world, people's happiness, prosperity and participation can no longer be bought at the cost of others. They can only be achieved together. Globalisation means an interdependent international community. And that, to me, also implies an increased opportunity to work on finding common solutions that will benefit all.

I am particularly keen to see an open dialogue between Africans and Europeans. The aim of my Partnership with Africa initiative is to bring policymakers, the private sector, cultural representatives and civil society around the table. I also feel it is important that young people be included in that dialogue. And we have succeeded in that, for example at the meeting in Accra early this year. Just a few days ago, Africans and Germans met once more. Our experience has been that we learn more from each other every time we meet. That tells me that listening to each other is perhaps the most important step towards jointly finding the best answers.

In the course of discussions at our 3rd Africa Forum last week, a new side of Africa was revealed to me. A confident Africa, well aware of its own strength and its potential. But an Africa that is also aware of its problems – such as poor governance or the fact that Africans themselves still make far too little use of the opportunities for exchange, cooperation and integration within Africa itself.

African solutions to African problems: that is what the African Union is all about and what NEPAD, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, is all about. NEPAD's members have

pledged to pursue a remarkably clear set of goals: peace and security, democracy, the rule of law, good governance, regional cooperation and integration in the world economy. And they have set up a watchdog mechanism to oversee implementation – the African Peer Review Mechanism. The aim of this African initiative is to instigate a sweeping process of political and economic reforms that will bring lasting improvements to economy and society in many countries on the continent. I find it positive and innovative that Africans have resolved to learn from their own success stories.

Algeria's peer review was just completed this summer. It gives Algeria a largely clean bill of health and contains a long list of reform initiatives and successes. At the same time, however, it also addresses the problems that continue to dog the country. Algeria deserves our special acknowledgement for being the fourth African country to submit to such a review, thus leading the way for others. Perhaps we in Europe would do well to ask what we can learn from the African Peer Review Mechanism.

I also see NEPAD as an offer from Africa to the international community to work together as partners. It is an offer I very much hope the industrialised and emerging countries will accept. The members of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals together. Now they must work on achieving them together. That means each side taking an open and proactive approach to delivering on the commitments it made to the other. And Africa still needs active and committed development partners in the industrialised countries. For Germany, it was quite natural that representatives from Africa be invited to take part in discussions at the G8 economic summit.

The economic and social history of many countries, including my own, teaches us that integration in the global economy helps combat poverty. That works best when development cooperation is, first and foremost, about helping people to help themselves. That is why it is so vital now to have fair terms of trade for Africa. This must be reflected in the outcome of the ongoing trade negotiations, which should also include the dismantling of the industrialised countries' tariffs on processed goods. In order to create jobs and generate income in Africa, there must be far greater scope for its manufacturing sector to develop. And we need policies and verifiable procedures to ensure that Africa's natural resource wealth benefits, above all, Africa's own peoples.

The problems that confront all of us together can only be solved by all of us together. People across the world are bound together by a common destiny. We must do everything in our power to bind them together in a spirit of common responsibility and learning. Talking to each

other, listening to one another, tackling things together – that is what it is all about. That is how to build the necessary basis of trust. And that is what we need if our development policy for the entire planet is to prove successful.

The Africa Partnership Forum can play an historic part in that.

I hope you will all have frank and fair discussions in a spirit of partnership, thus making this a successful conference.