

The many plans of German Africa policy. Is it moving forwards?

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Yet another plan, and another plan, so many plans – the various German ministries have been highly active, publicly presenting four different Africa concepts within a three-month period; all of which have to be harmonised for the G20 summit in July, 2017. In Hamburg Chancellor Merkel will look to convince the G20 countries of the need for a new Africa policy. Only the German government has several Africa plans, which are far reaching and not necessarily compatible. The four plans are the BMZ's so-called Marshall Plan, BMF-coordinated Compact with Africa, the BMWi's Pro! Africa initiative, and the Bundesregierung with Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung Afrikas – Herausforderungen und Optionen.

The BMWi wants to base the implementation of its Pro! Africa initiative on deeper cooperation and more private-sector engagement and to create more employment prospects. Among other things, it will look to make Hermes guarantees – which the federal government uses to secure export credit – more attractive. It also envisages the expansion of the Chamber of Foreign Trade and the promotion of company-based training through a technical staff scheme and has plans for a start-up financing fund, which will facilitate networking between local entrepreneurs in selected African cities and German businesses. Generally, the BMWi catalogue aims at promoting German investors in Africa. From 2018, EUR 100 million should be available for implementing the catalogue of measures – though this sum has not yet been accounted for in the budget. There is possibly the idea that the BMWi is now also active in development cooperation and that money can be transferred from the BMZ to the BMWi since Pro! Africa wants to take on duties currently performed by the BMZ. Because the BMZ is extremely unlikely to agree to such a transfer, the BMWi will have to wait until the government is reorganised and then take up the fight with the BMZ over the transfer of money. Thus, the Pro! Africa initiative is more so a concept which was written for the well-intentioned public, but its implementation will have to wait.

The Compact with Africa is the only document which has already been formulated for the G20 summit. Thanks to the skill of the IMF, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the finance minister's Sherpa this concept, agreed on by the G20 finance ministers, can go into the G20 summit preparations at an early stage and has been made public. The Compact with Africa deserves the name 'concept paper', because it focuses on the fundamental challenges faced by the continent of Africa (and not primarily on the interests of the G20 countries). It asks how development in Africa can progress, how investment in Africa can be increased, how growth can be sustainably promoted

through infrastructure development. The Compact with Africa examines three basic lines of argumentation and in its macro-economic part reads like an old edition of the structural adjustment programmes of the 1990s. Its business framework identifies the most important obstacles to business development in Africa as well as measures to eliminate them. Its financial framework deals with how to mobilise private financing for the infrastructure measures.

Table 1: Who does what in German Africa policy

Chancellor	German G20 Africa paper	
Federal government	- The Federal Government Policy Guidelines for Africa (2014) - Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung Afrikas – Herausforderungen und Optionen (2017)	The 2014 resolution is an important document on uniform German action on the African continent, which was largely development-cooperation heavy and will not be further pursued through the new initiative. The 2017 document is on promotion of German investment.
BMF	Compact with Africa (2017)	Coordinated the Compact with Africa – a comprehensive document geared towards infrastructure and investment – with the G20 finance minister, which was drafted by the AfDB, IMF, and World Bank Group
BMZ	Marshall Plan with Africa (2017)	Drafted a comprehensive document with a broad measures catalogue, covering all areas of development cooperation, without additional funding sources; BMZ has large degree of influence due to extensive budget and implementing organisation; should have a coordinating roll but is increasingly losing its influence since the Foreign Office, BMF, BMU and BMWi are playing an increasingly political role in the large institutions
BMWi	Pro! Africa: Promoting the prospects, taking the opportunities, strengthening the economies (2017)	Document on the promotion of German investments; no reference to future EU trade policy with the ACP countries (post-Cotonou)
Foreign Office	The Federal Government's Strategy for Africa (2011)	Rather low-key in public discourse
BMBF	The Africa Strategy 2014–2018. Africa as a Partner in Education and Research (2014)	Bilateral cooperation in science and technology
CDU/CSU Group	Policy Paper on Africa (2016)	Concept papers; numerous events on German Africa policy
SPD Group	A progressive policy towards Africa – African countries as global partners (2016)	Concept papers; numerous events on German Africa policy
Political foundations	Policy papers, documents	Numerous events with the participation of African institutes; conceptual preliminary work for parties
BDI/DIHK	Policy paper: Außenwirtschaftsförderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit stärker verzahnen (Enhancing external aid and development cooperation) (2017)	Lobbying; influential in the BMZ, BMWi, BMF, and Federal Chancellery
Sub-Saharan Africa Initiative of German Business (SAFRI)		Lobbying; events on the promotion of the German economy in African; links to African institutions.
German Africa Foundation (DAS)		Numerous events in cooperation with parties and foundations
German Development Institute (DIE/GDI)	Numerous publications on Africa, the Marshall Plan and the Compact with Africa, and the G20	Blogs on Africa and the G20 summit; G20 Policy Research Group, which accompanies the G20 process through research, policy advice, and training; coordinates the T20 think-tank network together with the Kiel Institute for World Economy
GIGA German	Publications on the Marshall Plan	Events on Africa politics and the situation in Africa

Institute of Global and Area Studies, Hamburg	and the Compact with Africa, Germany's Africa policy	
German Institute for International and Security Affairs, SWP, Berlin	Publications on the Marshall Plan	Events on Africa policy and the situation in Africa
Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau		High-level events on the Compact with Africa
Federal Academy for Security Policy (BAKS)		Events on Africa policy

Sources: CDU/CSU Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag (2016), Afrika-Politik. Beschluss vom 15. März 2016. www.cducsu.de/sites/default/files/2016-03-15_positionspapier_afrika_002.pdf; SPD (2016), Progressive Afrikapolitik – Die Staaten Afrikas als globale Partner. Positionspapier der SPD-Bundestagsfraktion, <http://www.spdfraktion.de/system/files/documents/positionspapier-progressive-afrikapolitik-20092016.pdf>; Bundesregierung (2014), <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Anlagen/2014/05/2014-05-21-afrikapolitische-leitlinien.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=1>; BDI und DIHK (2017), *Außenwirtschaftsförderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit stärker verzahnen*, Berlin.

The Marshall Plan with Africa aims to jointly develop an agenda with the countries of Africa. However, as no African states participated in the plan's conceptual development, it has hitherto been a 'plan for Africa', showing how the BMZ intends to contribute to sustainable economic growth. The plan pays little attention for the level of diversity on the continent. It is important to develop a joint strategy with individual countries or groups of countries that reflects the varying speeds at which changes are occurring. This, however, is inadequately reflected in the plan. When the BMZ presented the Marshall Plan in March 2017, one might have thought it would spark an intensive discussion leading to the development of a uniform African policy for the entire federal government. So far, however, there is little evidence of that. Nevertheless, one trend is the shift in importance towards the BMF (and thus the G20 finance minister) and the BMWi, which wants a part of the ODA cake.

What can be said about these various proposals?

1. The quintessence of all the plans is that there is hardly any money left for the respective institutions; therefore, the BMZ, the Foreign Office, and the BMWi are making plans without further funding. In order to implement the Marshall Plan (which is in any case impossible due to the large number of measures required), the BMZ must redeploy funds, which is a process that normally takes years. Thus, the BMZ must wait until September 2017 for the decisions of the new government; in the meantime nothing will change.
2. The multitude of papers and the various interests they express point to a hidden increase in power for certain actors. The BMZ, however, is being weakened due to (1) the discontinuation of the traditional development cooperation model and (2) the fact that the Foreign Office and the BMWi want more money for their activities, which can only come from the BMZ and might even be recognised as ODA.

3. Chancellor Adenauer's once-enforced rule of conducting international cooperation activities through a single ministry, the BMZ, is being further undermined.
4. There has been a shift within cooperation towards more foreign trade, investment, education cooperation, and security policy.
5. In principle, the documents follow a clear path, but it should not lead to the erosion of international standards. Thus, in the BMWi's documents and the Compact with Africa there is absolutely no mention of the climate agreement or the Sustainable Goals. Such a context requires the engagement of political foundations and NGOs, which have hitherto had a minor role in the discourse.
6. It may also be the case that election campaigns are looming. For example, the BMWi's late attempt to influence Germany's Africa agenda through Minister Zypris was certainly motivated by election purposes. Moreover, the high-profile activities of the development minister, Gerd Müller, are also probably aimed at the electorate.

Literature

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