



Olam International's rice farm in central Nigeria/Photo: Olam International

MAKE AFRICA'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR MORE RESILIENT – GERMAN GROUP

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“Creating and maintaining secure access to food systems in Africa is crucial for the continent’s economic development,” said Stefan Liebing, Chairman of the Africa Association of German Business at the opening of the 7th German-African Agribusiness Forum (GAAF).

The annual event, organised by Afrika-Verein (German-African Business Association) and the German Agribusiness Alliance (GAA) and held in digital form on Tuesday (26 January), is the central platform of decision-makers from the agricultural sector from African countries and Germany.

“If we put more emphasis on creating profitable agribusinesses, together we will achieve food security on the African continent. We need to put more focus on agri-food cooperation with Africa and underline the outstanding importance of this sector,” Liebing added. “In addition, we need to further reduce trade barriers to facilitate the export of African goods to Europe. We warn against imposing new bureaucracy and new costs on our African partners and German SMEs with a supply chain law. This is the opposite of what is needed now.”

In her remarks, Germany’s Agriculture Minister Julia Klöckner said: “Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy in many African countries and thus at the same time the key to fighting hunger and poverty.”

“Especially in the pandemic, the strategic importance of agriculture has become clear. We need to strengthen agriculture – in order to survive future crises,” said Ms Klöckner added.

The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) is currently active in 28 African countries with projects to work together with local actors on the future of agriculture and the people, with almost 20 million euros available for this purpose. Since 2010, the BMEL has invested around 120 million euros in Africa.

Creating and maintaining safe access to food systems across the continent is crucial for the economic development of the continent, Afrika-Verein holds.

“However, the global Covid-19 pandemic had a considerable impact on Africa’s agricultural sector. It is therefore a pivotal time for world and industry leaders to harness the opportunities provided by the rich and diverse agriculture sector on the African continent,” the group adds.

“This is why we decided to focus this year’s forum on Making Africa’s Food Systems more resilient: how to align policy strategies and private sector engagement?”

Due to the special situation regarding COVID-19, the 7th edition of the GAAF took place online on Tuesday.

Felix Dappah with Afrika-Verein press release/Daniel El-Noshokaty