



Press Release

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A bridge across the continent for start-ups – Minister Zypries opens the Start-up Night! Africa

Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Brigitte Zypries is today opening the Start-up Night! Africa at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. The Start-up Night! Africa is the latest event to take place as part of the successful series of Start-up Nights!, a string of business-matching events hosted by the Federal Economic Affairs Ministry designed to bring young businesses and established companies together – this time with a focus on Africa.

Economic Affairs Minister Brigitte Zypries said: “Aside from all the challenges that it has to tackle, Africa stands for creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. Digitisation plays a major role in this. Digital technologies are making it possible for Africa to leapfrog entire stages of development. In places where there is no cable infrastructure, wireless technology automatically becomes very important. We do well to see and to discover Africa as a continent of opportunities. By doing so, we support Africa’s economic development as well as improving projects for the African population. Digitisation creates great potential for cooperation between Germany and Africa. We therefore want to identify opportunities for working together with Africa more closely. And we are starting today by building a bridge across the continent for our start-ups. This is based on cooperation between equals.”

The Start-up Night! Africa is being partnerd by the African start-up network Lionesses of Africa. Founder and CEO of the network Melanie Hawken said: “One of the biggest challenges facing Africa’s women entrepreneurs is getting access to markets and access to opportunities to grow their businesses. At Lionesses of Africa, we are committed to helping to change that situation. We are partnering with leading global organisations and companies to create powerful access to market programmes, tools and platforms that will showcase these high growth potential women



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entrepreneurs to the world. Our exciting new Kukua Women's Entrepreneur Development Programme is the highlight of this strategy. Our partnership with the BMWi on the Start-up Night! Africa event in Berlin is a great example of the power of partnership to make a practical difference. It is creating a real opportunity to present leading entrepreneurs from the Lionesses of Africa community who represent an exciting new wave of African women-led digital start-ups. They are harnessing the power of technology for social good, developing high impact digital solutions to key challenges in Africa that are also relevant and scaleable for the rest of the world. We hope this showcase will inspire more German companies and organisations to partner with Lionesses of Africa to empower women entrepreneurs to become the new socio economic drivers of the continent.”

The Start-up Night Africa offers eight entrepreneurs from Africa the opportunity to present creative, digital and marketable solutions that are also of interest to the German market. Start-up entrepreneur Brenda Katwesigye, for example, has developed a mobile App called Wazi Vision that enables children in remote areas to be supplied with glasses – providing eye care in an accessible and affordable way. At the same time, eight German start-ups have the opportunity to present their digital business models in order to reach the African market. The Learning Lions and Start-up Lions, for example, support young people in Africa in training and in starting up a business in the digital field. They bring IT courses to young people directly, providing them with new career prospects and local opportunities in the region. In addition to this, four established companies from Germany will present their cooperation with African start-ups. In an exhibition accompanying the event, other multipliers and companies are providing insights into attractive opportunities for cooperation between German and African businesses. In these ways, the Start-up Night! Events offer start-ups, established companies and multipliers an opportunity to meet with potential partners.

Start-up Night! Africa is part of the Pro! Africa initiative run by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. This initiative aims to mobilise more private capital and investment for Africa and to establish cooperation as equals.

The focus is on projects and initiatives in the field of new technology, innovation and digitisation, tailored to local needs and different regions. In order to achieve these aims, Germany's



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tried and tested instruments to promote foreign trade and investment will be boosted, our political cooperation will be deepened, and successful funding programmes will also be oriented towards Africa.

For more information about the event and on those taking part, please go to:

<http://www.de.digital/DIGITAL/Redaktion/DE/Veranstaltung/2017/2017-10-26-start-up-night-afrika.html> or

<http://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/DE/Artikel/Aussenwirtschaft/initiative-pro-afrika.html>