

## **Protocol - Expert Talk on the EU Task Force Rural Africa**

11.07.2019 – Eschborn, Bonn, Skype for Business

*Organizer:* Tobias Gerster

*Speakers:* Albert Engel, Prof. Dr. Christine Wieck, Dr. Inge Baumgarten, Dr. Ulrich Sabel-Koschella, Christel Weller-Molongua

*Moderators:* Max Baumann, Marc Nolting

GIZ hosted an expert talk on the EU Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA) that received strong interest with more than 130 attending the digital meeting. Two members of the TFRA Prof. Dr. Christine Wieck (University of Hohenheim) and Albert Engel (GIZ) presented the recommendations.

Directorate General Agriculture (DG Agri) and Directorate General Development and Cooperation (DG Devco) launched the Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA) in spring 2018 under Commission President Hogan. The TFRA consists of 11 high-level experts and specialists in agriculture and rural development in Africa and Europe, including Tom Arnold (Ireland), Céline Bikpo (Ivory Coast), Kees Blokland (Netherlands), Albert Engel (Germany), Chinwe Ifejika Speranza (Nigeria), Bruno Losch (France), Baudouin Michel (Belgium), Joseph Owona Kono (Cameroon), Francesco Rampa (Italy), Christine Wieck (Germany) and Mashiri Zvarimwa (Zimbabwe). With the purpose to come up with concrete recommendations for positive rural transformation and an inclusive and sustainable development in the agri-food sector. In his speech on the state of the Union 2018, Commission President Juncker named the new alliance between EU and Africa.

The TFRA published a [Landmark Report](#) in March 2019, which was calling for an African-EU Agenda for rural transformation. The central recommendations of the report include the buildup of a strong African-EU partnership for inclusive and sustainable development of rural economy and agri-food sectors. This is to be achieved on three levels: people-to-people, business-to-business and government-to-government. As a third recommendation a multi stakeholder dialogue between African and European societies, business communities and governments should take place. Further details on the work of TFRA and the results of the Landmark Report can be found in the presentation of Albert Engel and Christine Wieck.

Christine Wieck also underlined the importance of sustainable regional agricultural value chain issues, also promoted by the third AU-EU agricultural ministerial conference in Rome. The focus on African food industries and markets is important, as urbanization, a growing middle class and raising incomes fuel rapidly expanding markets. This provides huge employment and income opportunities along the food value chain. In consideration of strategic challenges, key areas of action can be identified. These include, for example, increasing the competitiveness of the economy and private sector investment, promote value chain development and cooperation between Africa and the EU as well as tackle trade barriers. Feedback from African

farmers organizations as well as civil society was taken into account. During the AU-EU agricultural ministers conference nine concrete actions were identified as a short-term framework.

Max Baumann added, that aside of the implementation groups on ministerial level, DG DEVCO will reach out towards the EU member states to explore options for synergies and cooperation in implementation of the report's recommendations beyond the action agenda.

During the fishbowl discussion Christel Weller-Molongua underlined the similarities concerning the working areas of the TFRA and GIZ under the "One World - No Hunger" initiative by BMZ. Mr. Engel introduced the idea of the European Commission to create other Task Forces, for example on digitalization, agriculture and Africa. DG DEVCO is looking for EU member states partners. As the GIZ is well connected with African countries and has a deep rooting network on operational unit, Ulrich Sabel-Koschella called for using this opportunity jointly.

The third speaker Inge Baumgarten began her intervention with the common slogan for the AU and EU – two Unions, one Vision. She sees the report as a valuable and comprehensive tool but also names criticism. The partnership between EU and AU needs to be on equal footing, and more often the African perspective has to be adopted. There are some points which should be more highlighted in the report, for example AfCTA, gender sensitivity, more engagement beyond agricultural sector. Additionally the expression territorial approach should be replaced by an integrated corridor approach.

As a closing remark, the message beyond the report was underlined: The desire of the two continents to make a difference together.