

WASCAL
11th GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
19th OCTOBER, ACCRA

Honorable Minister,
Executive Director of WASCAL,
Members of the Board,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for inviting me to this event. It is an honor and a pleasure for me to be here today.

Germany is a proud supporter of WASCAL. This Science Service Center is an important pillar in our Strategy to deal with the effects of climate change. After all, climate change and adapted land use are key challenges in our joint quest to ensure development for everybody on this planet. They are of key importance for making our food supply secure.

Agriculture is the foundation of the livelihood of large parts of the West African population. Soils and climate have so far been good, so that millet, maize, and other important crops thrive well. But climate forecasts predict greater fluctuations in precipitation, aggravating existing problems of water availability, food security and poverty control.

Such predictions indicate the need for consistent and high quality data, such as the water cycle, land use change, biodiversity or vegetation. WASCAL is developing a state-of-the-art satellite-based monitoring system that records rainfall and the changing use of agricultural land. This allows small-scale, concrete adaptation measures to be developed.

Large parts of West Africa have always been particularly affected by droughts and floods. Food supply in this region is constantly in peril.

Climate change caused by human intervention is an additional problem and threatens the livelihood of whole nations. Rising sea levels, changes in ocean currents and rain fall patterns endanger the livelihoods of millions. Humanity has – mostly - recognized this problem and has started to deal with it. Last year's Paris Agreement, also known as COP21, is an important step towards a Carbon-neutral future. Ghana was among the first nations to ratify this agreement!

No country can deal with this challenge alone. Neither in Europe nor in Africa nor anywhere else on this planet.

Africa needs to build its own competences to deal with climate change. With this research center we have jointly taken a big step towards creating the knowledge bases on climate change in West Africa.

The systematic establishment of an own climate research competence is also important in order to contribute to an African scientific standpoint in the international climate battles.

COP23 is just around the corner, starting on November 17th in Bonn, Germany. While Germany will not be the host country - for the first time it will be a small island national threatened by rising sea levels, Fiji - Germany is proud to be the facilitator of the conference.

We are grateful that you, Hon. Minister, will lead Ghana's delegation and that you have agreed to follow a cooperative approach, taking civil society on board.

I am very happy that Germany via GIZ together with partners will host a pre-COP climate festival at the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences next Tuesday, which will also be opened by the Hon. Minister.

German research policy has been oriented towards international cooperation for decades. Since the beginning of this twenty-first century, we have put more and more emphasis on the internationalization of education and research in order to tackle problems of mankind together with more partners all over the world. We have therefor broadened the field of research partners beyond our traditional cooperation with Europe, North America and East Asia. Africa has become an important partner for us. The 2014 Federal

Ministry of Education and Research "Africa Strategy" reflects the strengthening of our research cooperation with our neighboring continent.

It is obvious that research on Climate change and adaptive land are key priorities for guaranteeing the livelihood of mankind. That is why Germany supports two research and service centers: WASCAL and the Southern Africa Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land-use (SASSCAL).

WASCAL is an excellent example of the German commitment to education and research cooperation with African countries. The center was set up in 2012 with a German contribution of 50 million euros from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) towards its construction. It is a central project of ~~the BMBF~~ within the framework of its Africa strategy to establish long-term scientific capacities for climate change and dealing with the impact on land use in Africa. What's even more important: It is a regional approach, bringing the Western African countries together to address issues which all of them are confronted with. With its competence center in Ouagadougou, the headquarters here in Accra and doctoral and master's programs in all 10 partner countries, the center shows how a regional research and teaching concept can be successful.

^{Germany}
~~BMBF~~ has supported the WASCAL Graduate Studies Programme with over 16 million euros. So far more than 250 students and researchers have benefitted from this programme. This is a great success.

The West African countries agreed to continue to operate and finance the research center on their own. To this end, the countries will make their own contributions and will integrate the Center into the structures of ECOWAS.

Let me use this opportunity to ask our partners to respect their obligations and to pay their contributions to WASCAL. German Minister of Education and Research, Prof. Wanka, has addressed this issue in her recent ~~letter to you, Hon. Minister, dated 7th of April 2011,~~ pointing out that the center will only strive if all partners respect their obligations and that the center's financial sustainability will be called

into question from 2019 if partners do not provide their agreed contributions on time.

Before I conclude, let me mention that beyond the cooperation in research, adaptive land use is also at the core of our regional and bilateral development cooperation. Sustainable economic development and the promotion of agriculture are key elements of our development strategy, not only in Ghana.

Dealing with climate change is also a key element of our efforts to develop business with West Africa. The German Chamber of Commerce here in Accra is organizing the West African Clean Energy & Environment Exhibition and Conference for the sixth time this year, starting from 7th of November. There will be, among others, a pavilion of 13 German companies supported by the Federal Ministry of Economy displaying state-of-the-art renewable energy technology.

Thank you once again for inviting me to this board meeting.

Thank you.