



Wittenberg Declaration for Entrepreneurial Spirit and Comparative Advantages in Africa

From May 29-31, 2007 a group of Young Leaders with diverse national, professional, and ethnic backgrounds came together at the Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics in Wittenberg, Germany, to advance the program Building Global Cooperation – New Alliances with Africa. In the deliberations on the principles of Global Ethics, comparative advantages and entrepreneurial spirit they discussed how existing mental models and conceptual methods in our global society can be rethought to enable cooperation for mutual advantage – not solely in Africa but beyond.

As a result, we, the Young Leaders, declare the following theses:

1. Entrepreneurial spirit and comparative advantages are the vital elements for development throughout the world.
2. Africa abounds with numerous examples of entrepreneurial spirit that are complemented by special comparative advantages that go beyond natural resources.
3. Africa grounds its comparative advantages in human, social, organizational and institutional resources that are worth investing in to achieve cooperation for mutual advantage.
4. Some traditional African values such as extended family structures and communal spirit based in these types of resources, have ambivalent consequences as regards the advancement of African development.
5. Despite the diverse nature of African value systems, informal structures and their common features, which could enhance entrepreneurial spirit and comparative advantages in Africa, are often neglected.
6. Understanding informal African value systems is the key towards a co-existence and mutual reinforcement of traditional and formal structures, and a precondition for building credible institutional mechanisms and capacity that promotes “Good Governance”.
7. Many opportunities exist for partnerships among African and international entrepreneurs; such partnerships require leadership, accountability and the recognition and integration of local know-how and ownership to facilitate cooperation for mutual advantage.
8. Africans must take ownership of their own development and invite current and future leaders in government, private sector, religion, traditional communities and academia as partners. Such partners develop a level-playing field by building capacity and accounting for local needs, international trade, transparent structures and corporate responsibility efforts.
9. Jointly developing such processes for encouraging ownership, knowledge-sharing and trust-building is the key to poverty alleviation, increased efficiency and fostering entrepreneurial spirit in Africa.
10. We, the Young Leaders, strive to continue the inter-generational dialogue with partners and stakeholders in order to develop innovative tools for implementation and to cooperate for mutual advantages.

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