A world without hunger and malnutrition as well as sustainable food systems – these are among the greatest challenges for mankind.

While progress in many parts of the world, including parts of Africa, is encouraging, more needs to be done. Business as usual is not an option.

Africa’s rural areas clearly deserve higher political attention. 440 million young Africans will enter the labour markets by 2030. If poverty and hunger, high rates of youth unemployment, protracted crises, environmental degradation and climate change come together, terrorism and conflicts and forced migration can take root easily.

We need to make sure that this situation does not prevail. The young people have the potential to become “leaders of change” for inclusive rural transformation. But they need support and a conducive environment to use this potential. We need to ensure that the rural areas are not left behind, are not the losers of globalization.

Germany launched the One World No Hunger initiative four years ago. With about 1.5 billion euros per year invested in agriculture, food security and rural development, Germany has become one of the leading donors in this field.

In 2015, under German presidency the G7 agreed to help 500 million people on their way out of hunger and malnutrition. This was an important step to make sure that food and nutrition security stay high on the global agenda.

This year, again under German presidency, the G20 launched a remarkable initiative on rural youth employment. The G20 Leaders highlighted the topic in the Communique and included an agreement on specific numerical targets related to rural development and youth employment: enabling 5 million young people to benefit from training opportunities and creating 1 million jobs for young people by 2022.

More than 1000 participants, in particular young people, gathered in the G20 Future of the Rural World conference in Berlin in April this year. Civil society, the private sector and science adopted the Berlin Charter on creating opportunities with the young generation in the rural world. The enthusiasm, creativity and commitment of the numerous young participants – women and men – were striking.
It is very encouraging to see that many African countries have made progress, and it shows that we can achieve a world free of hunger and malnutrition. The Government of Germany’s One World No Hunger initiative and the G20 Declaration highlight our commitment to work alongside African governments to achieve these goals. As leaders in our governments, we must make the effort to share evidence about the interventions that work in order to meet the target of ending hunger by 2030.

Germany stands ready to support Africa’s rural development and shaping of a sustainable food system. Let us do this in real partnership! A partnership, in which both sides share a vision and a set of global goals: the Sustainable Development Goals.

Far-reaching rural transformation instead of just fine-tuning the status-quo requires political will to reform: reform, for example, to overcome the urban-rural divide, to empower the African woman and to empower the next generation, the African youth.

This political commitment to reform is key. African ownership must become stronger. Africa needs African solutions to African challenges. The Agenda 2063 of the AU Commission and the Malabo Declaration can serve as good starting points.

Against this background, the partnership we offer is a genuine reform partnership. Finance is crucial in this partnership. All three sources of finance are important:

- Domestic public resources necessary for the provision of public goods;
- Private sector investment;
- Official development assistance with a growing catalytic role in mobilizing private sector flows.

The link between shared goals, African ownership and donor support to reform processes is the essence of a European Marshall Plan with Africa that has been proposed by Germany. Sustainable rural development is one of the cornerstones of this Marshall Plan.

The commitment to rural transformation, reform and partnership calls for highest-level dialogue based on evidence. In particular, three key questions need to be addressed in a coherent way:

- How to increase productivity and create jobs in the rural economy?
- How to make sure that no one is left behind and that everybody has access to affordable nutritious food?
- How to use ecosystems and rural resources in a sustainable way?

The Malabo Montpellier Panel plays a decisive role in supporting this dialogue. Germany is very grateful to the Panel for providing a platform for exchange among African policy makers at the highest level. This is exactly what is needed to achieve sustainable food systems in Africa.