

## Speech by President van Zeller

Follow business leaders,  
EU Commission and African Union guests,

I thank you for coming to Lisbon today for this very successful conference. I can tell you that this has been a wonderful conference for us to host because of the enthusiastic participation from business leaders from all across Europe and Africa.

I send my special thanks to the **BUSINESSEUROPE** member federations, our partners from the Pan African Confederation and the **UMCE-BUSINESSMED** and the EU Africa Business Forum which also worked so hard on the Forum declaration following up on Accra.

It is of course difficult to summarise all of the useful exchanges and commitments made by the business leaders here today but I think that we have learned many good lessons.

First, we thank our governments in EU and African Union and especially the Portuguese President Mr Socrates for having the vision to organise the EU Africa Political Summit. This relationship needs more political support and we, Europeans and Africans want to work more together. The EU-Africa Joint Partnership is a historic event for a new kind of partnership based on equal commitments and responsibilities. It is a new and mature foundation for working together on all issues – but most importantly for us here today – on economic cooperation.

Second, EU and African business needs opportunities to exchange views and to cooperate. There are many opportunities for real business deals to make a bridge between our continents. But for business to thrive, we need stable conditions to work, to invest, to trade. Business federations like AIP, CIP, BUSINESSEUROPE, UMCE-Businessmed and the Pan African Confederation want to build up partnerships to promote better regulation and conditions for companies. We need to share our experiences and help one another achieve real reforms.

Third, there are many policy issues that need to be clarified for business. On trade, we need stable conditions. We cannot accept a failure of major trade negotiations like the WTO or EPA negotiations. Otherwise, EU-African trade will be put at risk. So we call on leaders to work hard to reach rapid conclusions.

Fourth, African business needs better conditions to become major players in international trade. This includes better access to financing and trade promotion, better trade related infrastructure like roads and ports and better knowledge of trade rules and how to deal with Non tariff barriers. We hope that the EU commitment to 1 billion euros in aid for trade will deliver on those needs.

Fifth, business wants to invest in Africa because there are many opportunities in many sectors – sustainable resource development, infrastructures, industry and services. But we need to work to find better conditions to make investments secure. I understand that the EU is

prepared to push for improvements to aid policies and to the policies of lending institutions like the European investment bank to provide more incentives for business development. We welcome that and will follow up on these ideas.

Sixth, we need to continue this close cooperation between business. I hope that the EU Africa Business forum will continue its very hard work in this field. On behalf of AIP and CIP, I am pleased to announce that we will create a special regional business forum focusing on the Portuguese African Speaking Countries – known as PALOP.

Now, you have before you the joint conclusions of this Summit. I thank all those involved in drafting it. Im not going to read out the recommendations but I can summarise that it strongly supports the EU Africa Joint Political Partnership and that it focuses on five key issues

1. Trade liberalisation and promotion
2. Infrastructure development
3. Information            Communication            Technology  
development and deployment
4. Private Sector Development and Entrepreneurship
5. Resource development, energy and climate change

These messages will be presented on Sunday to the EU and African political leaders by our federations and the EU Africa Business Forum. We count on our leaders to implement these good recommendations.

Thank you business colleagues and I look forward to seeing you again in Lisbon.