

SUMMARY REPORT

NETHERLANDS-GHANA BUSINESS & TOURISM EXPO

18-20 September 2025

The Hague, Netherlands

Partnership for Growth:
Trade, Innovation, and Sustainability



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Netherlands-Ghana Business & Tourism Expo 2025 – The Gate of Return II, held from September 18th to 20th, 2025, in The Hague, successfully brought together entrepreneurs, policymakers, innovators, and cultural leaders from Ghana and the Netherlands.

Organized by AfroEuro Foundation, in collaboration with the Embassy of Ghana in The Hague and the City Council of The Hague, the three-day event served as a platform to forge partnerships, explore investment opportunities, and deepen cross-cultural and economic collaboration between both nations.

Building on the success of the 2024 edition, the 2025 Expo combined cultural, educational, and economic dimensions under the central theme of “Building a Sustainable and Equitable Future Through Collaboration.” The program focused on mobilizing the diaspora, driving innovation in agriculture, and empowering youth as key contributors to Ghana’s economic transformation.

The Expo also emphasized the shared historical and future-oriented ties between Ghana and The Hague—fostering remembrance, dialogue, and sustainable development while advancing a renewed spirit of partnership and mutual growth.

INTRODUCTION

The Netherlands-Ghana Business & Tourism Expo, held from September 18th to 20th, 2025 in The Hague, successfully brought together entrepreneurs, policymakers, and innovators from Ghana and the Netherlands. The three-day summit was a platform aimed at forging partnerships and exploring investment opportunities under the central theme of building a sustainable and equitable future through collaboration.

Organized by AfroEuro Foundation in collaboration with the Ghana Embassy of The Hague, as well as the City Council of The Hague, the event focused on mobilizing the diaspora, innovating in agriculture, and empowering youth to drive economic growth in Ghana.

Objectives

The event was anchored on four key objectives:

1. Strengthening Trade Relations

The Expo served as a dynamic platform to deepen economic cooperation and bilateral trade. Highlights included: Strategic sessions and business forums that fostered collaborations in agriculture, cocoa, renewable energy, and technology as well as initiatives that connected diaspora entrepreneurs with key stakeholders and opportunities in Ghana and the Netherlands, promoting inclusive trade and investment.

2. Empowering Youth and Diaspora

Youth and diaspora communities played a pivotal role throughout the event. The Expo amplified the perspectives of African diaspora communities through panels on innovation, education, and entrepreneurship, ensuring their voices contributed to policy and development conversations.

3. Promoting Sustainable Development

Environmental sustainability and corporate responsibility were central themes as the event facilitated discussions on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD) and ethical supply chains, particularly in cocoa and agribusiness sectors. In addition, discussions showcased innovations in sustainable agriculture, including regenerative cocoa farming practices and climate-smart solutions shared by Dutch and Ghanaian experts.

4. Honoring Shared History

The event honored the historical ties between Ghana and the Netherlands, using cultural remembrance as a bridge for unity. It featured a cultural event called GhanaFest that Cross-cultural performances and art that celebrated resilience and strengthened mutual understanding between Dutch and Ghanaian communities.

DAY ONE

NETHERLANDS-GHANA PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT

The Expo commenced with a welcome message from Mr. Vincent Gambrah, director of AfroEuro Foundation, Ms. Wianda Visser, Director The Hague University of Applied Science and Mr. Don Cedar, member of the Dutch parliament, who set the tone by emphasizing the journey from a difficult past to a future of "equal trade," urging the diaspora to build tangible projects in Ghana.

Professor Jos Walenkamp highlighted a key challenge and opportunity: despite Ghana's rich resources, it imports approximately \$3 billion in food annually. He noted that with high unemployment, agriculture presents a significant avenue for job creation, especially if infused with Dutch technology and market access to attract youth.





Presentations throughout the day built on this theme. Mr. Mattijs Renden of the Netherlands-African Business Council (NABC) discussed opportunities across the broad agricultural value chain. A keynote address from Hon. John Dumelo, Ghana's Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture, detailed national initiatives like the "Feed Ghana" project to encourage year-round farming and strategies to combat the 30-40% post-harvest losses through new processing centers.

Panel Discussion: Practical Insights for Investors

A key session on the first day, "Doing Business in Ghana: Insights & Incentives," offered frank and practical advice for entrepreneurs looking to invest. The discussion yielded several critical takeaways:

- **Due Diligence is Essential:** Panellists repeatedly stressed that thorough preparation is the first stepping stone. One speaker advised, "It's very important for anyone who wants to do business in Ghana to first do their own research... do the background of the country."
- **Secure Land Acquisition:** The critical issue of land was a central theme. An official urged investors to "ensure that you are properly dealing with the right entities in Ghana," while also noting that government initiatives, such as a new land bank, are being developed to make the process more secure and tackle historical challenges.
- **A Stable Investment Climate:** For Dutch investors, predictability is paramount. As a representative for employers stated, investors "are looking for countries that are stable, that are providing a good investment climate and providing predictability... they're investing for the long-term."

- **Empowering Women Entrepreneurs:** The discussion highlighted a strong government focus on supporting women in business. The minister announced forthcoming programs, including a dedicated women's bank, stating, "Women are always the driving force and great potential." This was paired with an acknowledgment of systemic hurdles, particularly women's difficulty on access to land, which panellists agreed must be a priority for policy reform.
- **Partnerships and Value Addition:** The power of the "Dutch diamond" model—close collaboration between the private sector, public sector, and knowledge institutions like Wageningen University—was presented as a successful framework. The goal is to stimulate local industry, with one speaker noting significant tax holidays of "five to ten years" for entrepreneurs who invest in agro-processing and value addition within Ghana.

Audience Q&A: Addressing Core Challenges

- **Visa Facilitation:** This emerged as a major point of frustration and a significant barrier to business. Multiple attendees and panellists described the current visa acquisition process for both Ghanaians coming to the Netherlands and vice versa as "seriously annoying" and a hindrance to the spirit of "equal partnership." The issue of business people paying for flights only to be denied visas was raised as a costly and discouraging problem that needs urgent attention on both sides.

- **Knowledge Transfer and Logistics:** Audience members from the diaspora and potential investors raised crucial questions about the practicalities of doing business on the ground. There was a strong call for creating clear channels for knowledge transfer beyond just financial investment. Furthermore, concerns were raised about [Ghana's internal logistics infrastructure](#), particularly for moving perishable agricultural products across the country, and how Dutch expertise could assist in this vital area.
- **Scaling Up Agriculture:** The question was posed whether the time has come to facilitate "big agriculture" in Ghana and ensure there is a clear alignment of policy to support large-scale, modern farming operations.



DAY TWO

BUSINESS EXCHANGE & INNOVATION FORUM

The second day shifted from policy to practice, featuring investor pitch sessions and a powerful panel on "Youth-Driven Agriculture: Building Sustainable Livelihoods and Resilient Food Systems." The discussion was defined by candid stories of both failure and success from seasoned entrepreneurs.

Lessons from Experience: Start Small, Persevere

Successful business leaders, including Dr James Ato Condua Orleans-Lindsay, Chairman of JL Holding and Chancellor of Cape Coast Technical University (Ghana), shared his journey of building thriving companies from the ground up. The core message was one of resilience and vision. "If you don't try, how can you then? We're not trying, there's no success," one speaker urged, recounting his own 22-year journey in real estate.

Another entrepreneur shared his experiences with failed cattle and snail farming ventures. "You might fail, but what gives me hope is that everybody has to come from somewhere," he stated, explaining how these setbacks ultimately led him to find success in distributing fresh produce and adding value through processing.

The recurring advice for aspiring entrepreneurs was to "Start small, build up." Panellists argued against taking large, premature risks, advising youth to first test their business models carefully. "You want to make sure that all the businesses that should do this have a problem," a speaker noted, emphasizing that starting small is a strategy to gain experience and scale intelligently.

The Immense Opportunity in Agriculture

The panel framed agriculture not as a last resort, but as a sector with limitless potential. "Everybody eats," one panellist declared simply. "This demographic is one of our biggest assets. The panel highlighted the vast, untapped opportunities, particularly in value addition such as processing raw goods like ginger to multiply their market value and leveraging technology for everything from smart farming to logistics.

While acknowledging the challenges, including access to funding, with the advice to first seek support from "yourself and your family and friends", the overwhelming sentiment was one of optimism and urgency. As one veteran entrepreneur passionately concluded: "There's so much to do in West Africa... plug yourself... Success will come."



DAY TWO

CLOSED-DOOR DINNER MEETING

The exclusive dinner meeting convened a distinguished group of stakeholders for candid and strategic discussions on strengthening the economic ties between Ghana and the Netherlands. The attendees, representing a broad spectrum of government, business, and investment sectors, included: Peter Arensman (convenor & host), Minister of State (Ghana), Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Ghana), SDG (Sustainable Development Goals representative), NABC (Netherlands-African Business Council), Seed Company (representative), Ghana Embassy (representatives), Cocoa company (representative), VNO-MKB (Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers), Ghanaian Companies (Agriculture and Housing sectors), Sharenote company, Invest International, Business Consultants, Banana and Pineapples Importers company, WiFlex, AfroEuro, Dr. Lindsey, and The Deputy Head of Mission, Netherlands Embassy in Ghana.

The conversation delved into critical areas for fostering investment and mutual growth, with several key quotes highlighting the core themes:



1. Strengthening Bilateral Relations and Investment Security

Honorable John Dumelo, Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Ghana), reaffirmed Ghana's strong commitment to building a secure and attractive environment for Dutch investments. He emphasized that the Ghanaian government is fully dedicated to strengthening bilateral relations and ensuring that all investments made by Dutch partners remain safe, sustainable, and beneficial to both nations.

He stated:

"The Government of Ghana is committed to deepening our partnership with the Netherlands by creating an enabling environment for investors. We are strengthening our policies to ensure that all investments are secure, productive, and contribute to the growth of both our nations."

This set the tone for discussions on how to enhance trust and facilitate more robust investment flows. The presence of entities like [Invest International](#) and [VNO-MKB](#) further emphasized the focus on concrete investment opportunities.

2. Reducing Import Dependency and Boosting Local Agriculture

A significant "task" was presented by the Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture to the gathered investors, especially those from the Seed Company and the Banana and Pineapples importers company.



Honorable John Dumelo, Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Ghana), encouraged Dutch investors and Ghanaian diaspora partners to support local agricultural production and reduce the country's dependence on food imports.

He stated:

“We are working tirelessly to promote year-round agricultural production in Ghana. I urge all of you—whether involved in cashew, cocoa, or shea—to also invest in education, technology, and local processing. It is important that we strengthen the entire agricultural value chain to reduce our dependence on imported products such as tomatoes and onions, many of which currently come from the Netherlands.”

He further emphasized the need for collaboration in irrigation infrastructure, saying that Ghana has vast arable land and significant water resources that, if properly harnessed, could transform the nation's food security.

“With the right irrigation systems in place, we can expand cultivation and make Ghana more self-sufficient in food production,” he added.

This message underscored his call for investment in sustainable agriculture, technology, and value-chain development — a clear directive that resonated strongly with the Ghanaian agribusiness representatives present.

3. Addressing Visa Challenges and Facilitating Business Travel

A particularly animated part of the discussion, led by Dr. Lindsey and the facilitator, Mr Kojo Frempong, highlighted the significant challenges Ghanaian businesspeople face with visa applications to the Netherlands. Dr. Lindsey passionately expressed frustrations on the processes.

Mr. Frimpong also echoed these concerns, specifically addressing challenges related to visa acquisition through the Dutch Embassy. He stated:

“If there is an opportunity to intervene regarding visa issues, I believe this group could help raise the matter. In Ghana, the Netherlands is often perceived as one of the more difficult European countries when it comes to granting visas.”

In addition, he highlighted the typically long visa processing time of 4–5 weeks, and emphasized the need for intervention even in cases involving high-profile individuals. He remarked,

“If it hadn’t been for the efforts of Mr. William Malfoy, I’m not sure the visa would have been processed—it normally takes about 45 days.”

With representatives from the Ghana Embassy and business consultants present, this became a key point of discussion, as streamlined travel processes are vital for fostering business relationships. The Deputy Head of Mission acknowledged these concerns, noting ongoing efforts to expedite procedures for legitimate business travelers and mentioning that visa approvals for Ghanaians have increased, despite current complexities.

The dinner concluded with a shared understanding that addressing practical barriers such as visa access and mobility, must go hand-in-hand with seizing broader economic opportunities. Participants emphasized that effective bilateral relations require not only high-level policy alignment but also efficient and accessible operational processes.



DAY THREE

GHANAFEST CULTURAL CELEBRATION

The Expo ended with the vibrant GHANAFEST, a cultural festival celebrating Ghanaian heritage through music, food, and art. This closing event served as a powerful reminder that strong community connections and a shared cultural foundation are essential for building lasting and meaningful business partnerships. It reinforced the event's message of promoting sustainability and diaspora engagement in a festive, community-focused atmosphere.



A Vision for the Future

The Netherlands-Ghana Business & Tourism Expo successfully laid the groundwork for concrete collaborations. The clear emphasis on creating well-researched business plans, mitigating investment risks, and leveraging the unique position of the diaspora as catalysts for growth provided attendees with tangible next steps.

The energy and innovative ideas presented by youth participants signalled a bright and sustainable future for Netherlands-Ghana partnerships. The conversations and connections made are set to continue, promising new ventures in agriculture, technology, and tourism.

OUR PARTNERS



Embassy of Ghana
The Hague



Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend
Nederland



Den Haag



JL PROPERTIES





AFROEURO FOUNDATION

AfroEuro Foundation is a Non-Governmental Organisation established in 2003. The organisation seeks to build a positive image for African diaspora in Europe and mobilize the capacity and resources of African diasporans for economic development in Africa. With “Building Bridges” as its motto, AfroEuro builds and facilitates understanding and learnings between developed economies and Africa.

AfroEuro subscribes to the NEPAD principles and works in collaboration with African diaspora professionals and networks, governments, and youth towards Africa’s participation in global health, economy, commerce and trade. We also bridge the gap between the African diasporans and their hosts countries in Europe by promoting policy influence, empowerment, education, capacity building and knowledge and transfer.





CONTACT US

Have questions or need more information about the Netherlands-Ghana Business Fair? Reach out to us today!



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