

Elevating China-Africa Community of Shared Future to a Historic Height

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The year 2018 is significant for China-Africa relations and can be regarded as China's "Year of Africa." In July, Xi Jinping visited four African countries during his first overseas visit after being re-elected as Chinese President, which was also his fourth visit to Africa as head of state. At the Beijing summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) on September 3-4, Chinese and African leaders once again joined hands in planning and leading the new development of China-Africa cooperation. The building of the China-Africa community with a shared future is making great progress. As the relationship between the largest developing country and the continent with the biggest number of developing countries, the Sino-African relations are not only one of the most important relations in the world today, but also a model for the continuous integration of material interests and spiritual civilization of mankind. Modern China-Africa exchanges and cooperation have made huge headway since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt in 1956. Entering the 21st century, the exchanges have seen unprecedented breakthroughs in terms of breadth and depth, boosting the countries' respective economies and wealth, and motivating both sides to seek trust and cooperation, jointly build peaceful orders, promote the democratization of international relations, and achieve the goal of mutual respect, mutual amity, mutual trust, mutual assistance, and mutual benefit. Both sides have overcome the short-sighted utilitarian logic of "only perpetual interests but no eternal allies" in the relations among

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Western countries, and closely combined the interests and future of the 2.6 billion Chinese and Africans who make up a third of the world's total population. As leaders from the two sides have repeatedly stressed, China and Africa have a common history of suffering and struggling in the past, and also share common strategic interests and development goals. As naturally good friends, good brothers, and good partners, China and African countries are now jointly building a close community with a shared future.

Path and Blueprint for a Community of Shared Future

China and African countries have been engaged in a constant endeavor to promote cooperation and draw a path and blueprint for a community of shared future by following the trend of the times and grasping historic opportunities.

Although Africa and China had no direct diplomatic relations for the past hundreds of years, both were colonies or semi-colonies of Western countries, exploited and suppressed by Western capitalist primitive accumulation since the 1500s and the 1840s respectively. Africa was subject to the exploitation and suppression for a longer period of time, so it has long taken Europe, the West, and the Western civilizations as the main and even the sole cognitive frame of reference. After the Second World War, the wave of national liberation and independence around the world initiated the successive rise of China and a vast number of African countries, as well as the beginning of China-Africa relations in the modern sense. Africa has thus gained a new frame of reference in the world landscape, demonstrating its value and status as an independent actor in international relations. Actually, it is the strong support from Africa that made the new China able to break through the iron curtain of the containment by Western capitalist countries.

The China-Africa relations have enriched international relations and promoted its democratization. The solidarity, cooperation and support between China and Africa in anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggles accelerated the disintegration of the old world order characterized by

oppression and plundering. Backed by China and other Third World countries and people, most countries in Africa had achieved independence by the early 1970s. The generous support of African emerging countries helped China restore its legal representation in the United Nations in 1971. During this period, China and Africa formed an international united front, and became de facto political allies.

Since the end of the Cold War and especially the beginning of the 21st century, the world political situation has witnessed twists and turns. Despite weak recovery of global economy and emerging anti-globalization sentiments, China and African countries have been exploring development paths that suit their own national needs and vigorously promoting their economic and political progress, thus becoming a magnificent example in global economic and political evolution. In the meantime, China and Africa firmly support trade liberalization and globalization that feature openness, cooperation and win-win outcomes while innovating their cooperation patterns with joint efforts. On one hand, the two sides strengthen communication and consultation on multilateral international affairs, and cooperate with and support each other on major international issues such as sovereignty and human rights of developing countries, regional security in Africa, United Nations reform, and WTO negotiations. By so doing, China and Africa have dampened the arrogance of power politics and hegemonism and seize the moral high ground of the international community. On the other hand, China and Africa step up cooperation on many international issues that involve themselves. While China has spoken out for justice on behalf of African countries as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, African countries have been sincerely supporting China on issues involving Taiwan, Tibet, human rights and WTO accession, as well as the bidding for Olympics and the World Expo. The two sides established the FOCAC as an important platform for collective dialogue and an effective mechanism for pragmatic cooperation, and have been expanding cooperation within multilateral frameworks of the BRICS, the G20, and UN agencies. As a result, the traditionally friendly relations between China and Africa are upgraded step by step, with their all-round strategic cooperation closely keeping pace with the times.

The leaders of China and Africa, through frequent interactions, have worked to build the political foundation of China-Africa community of shared future. According to preliminary statistics, the exchange of visits between leaders of the two sides over the past 60 years reached around 1,000 times, of which more than 530 were made since October 2000. Martin Davis, Director of the Centre for Chinese Studies at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, exclaimed a few years ago, “This is unprecedented. I can’t think of any head of state, including (President of South Africa) Mbeki, who has visited so many African countries.”¹ Successive Chinese leaders have visited Africa; so far, Xi Jinping has visited Africa nine times, four of which were made after becoming head of state. The face-to-face contact and exchanges between Chinese and African leaders have enhanced mutual understanding and trust and promoted top-level designs for cooperation between the two sides. According to instructions of Chinese leaders, successive Chinese foreign ministers have for 28 consecutive years taken Africa as the destination of their first foreign visits.

Inspired by leaders of both sides, China and Africa have emphasized a dedication to sincere friendship and equal treatment since the early days of revolution and construction and thus formed a fraternity with shared future. Former Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai have visited Africa three times, and his visit to 10 African countries from the end of 1963 to the beginning of 1964 marked the first visit to the continent by a Chinese leader. During that visit, he put forward five principles guiding China’s relations with Africa and Arab countries based on opinions solicited from relevant countries. Learning that some African countries had received assistance from the United States and the Soviet Union which rendered them under control, Premier Zhou further elaborated on China’s eight principles for foreign economic and technical assistance, affirming that China would adhere to the principle of equality and mutual benefit and strictly respect the sovereignty of the recipient countries without attaching any condition or asking for any privilege. Premier Zhou’s announcement was well received among African countries and laid

1 As quoted in Dai Shaoan, “China-Africa Friendship: For Peace, For Friendship,” *People’s Daily*, September 27, 2006.

the foundation for friendly China-Africa relations. The basic principles of China's Africa policy and foreign assistance formed in this period has since been the guide for Sino-African friendship.

As China began its reform and opening-up with economic construction as its principal task in the late 1970s, China's relationship with African countries shifted from a purely political friendship to one that combines political ties and economic cooperation, with the latter adjusted from mere assistance to various forms of mutually beneficial cooperation. China adjusted the eight principles of foreign economic and technical assistance to guide the development of its relations with Africa under new domestic and international situations. Since then, China's assistance to Africa has placed greater emphasis on economic efficiency and long-term effects, as well as the diversity of cooperation patterns. In the face of political and economic transformation of African countries in the 1990s, China highlighted non-interference in other countries' internal affairs and respect for the independent choices of African countries. During his visit to six African countries in May 1996, then Chinese President Jiang Zemin proposed the establishment of a China-Africa comprehensive cooperative relationship for the 21st Century.

Since the beginning of the new century, China and Africa have been following the trend of modernization and globalization, actively exploring new paths and new models for promoting national rejuvenation and prosperity, and set the long-term goal of win-win cooperation and common development. With the sustained advancement of China-Africa comprehensive cooperation, at the proposal of African countries, the FOCAC was formally established in Beijing in October 2000. For the first time, China and Africa have set up a mechanism of collective dialogue and cooperation, which is also the first between China and other developing countries. In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and African countries, the Chinese government released its first Africa Policy Paper in January 2006. The document affirmed that strengthening unity and cooperation with African countries has always been an important part of China's independent foreign policy of peace, and that the Chinese government has proceeded from the fundamental interests of Chinese and African people to strengthen political equality and

mutual trust, economic cooperation and mutual benefit, and cultural exchanges and mutual learning, in order to develop a new type of strategic partnership with Africa. Since the announcement of a new type of strategic partnership by the two sides in November 2006, the policy paper has been fully and effectively implemented, guiding the all-round development of China-Africa relations.

During his first visit to Africa upon taking office in March 2013, President Xi Jinping proposed the principle of “sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith” and the concept of “community with a shared future” for China and Africa, which pointed out the direction for the development of Sino-African relations. During the FOCAC Johannesburg summit in 2015, which marked the Forum’s 15th anniversary, the Chinese government issued the second Africa Policy Paper. The document further clarified China’s firm determination and goodwill to develop friendly and cooperative relations with Africa, and comprehensively expounded on new ideas and new proposals in China’s Africa policy under the new situation, such as upholding justice and friendship and pursuing shared interests, practicing the guideline of “sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith,” developing the Sino-African comprehensive strategic partnership, and consolidating the China-Africa community with a shared future, in order to guide the future exchanges and cooperation in various fields. At the summit, under President Xi Jinping’s proposal, China and Africa announced the upgrade of China-Africa relations from a new type of strategic partnership to comprehensive strategic partnership, demonstrating that the two sides are determined to work together to strengthen and consolidate the “five pillars” of political equality and mutual trust, economic cooperation and mutual benefit, cultural mutual learning and exchanges, mutual assistance in security, and solidarity and coordination in international affairs. The idea of “sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith” and the concept of upholding justice and friendship and pursuing shared interests, both put forward by President Xi, were written into the Declaration of the Johannesburg Summit of FOCAC. During the G20 Hangzhou summit in 2016, with the promotion of China, the project of supporting the industrialization of Africa and least-developed Countries (LDCs) was upgraded to the level of global governance and global sustainable development for the first time. The G20 Action Plan on

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was also adopted on the occasion, which further promoted China-Africa cooperation to help build Africa, benefit the people of both China and Africa, and achieve common development for all mankind. Through unremitting efforts of both sides, China has established or resumed diplomatic relations with 53 out of the 54 African countries, and established different types of partnerships or enhanced bilateral relations with 14 African countries since the 2015 Johannesburg summit. China has also appointed an ambassador of the FOCAC under the Foreign Ministry, and more than 40 African countries have appointed their coordinators for implementing the results of the FOCAC summit, to ensure effective implementation of China-Africa “Ten Cooperation Plans.” During the FOCAC Beijing summit in September 2018, President Xi Jinping announced that China will launch eight major initiatives in close collaboration with African countries in the next three years and beyond, to build an even closer China-Africa community with a shared future in the new era. The eight initiatives include industrial promotion, infrastructure connectivity, trade facilitation, green development, capacity building, health care, people-to-people exchange, and peace and security. China will also extend US\$60 billion of financing to Africa in the form of government assistance as well as investment and financing by financial institutions and companies. In addition, for the LDCs, heavily indebted and poor countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states that have diplomatic relations with China, China will exempt the debt they have incurred in the form of interest-free Chinese government loans due to mature by the end of 2018.² At the roundtable meeting of the FOCAC Beijing summit, Chinese and African leaders exchanged in-depth views on the development of China-Africa relations and international and regional issues of common concern, and adopted the Beijing Declaration - Toward an Even Stronger China-Africa Community with a Shared Future and the FOCAC Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021), which set new directions, portrayed new blueprints, and laid out new plans for the development of China-Africa relations.

2 Xi Jinping, “Work Together for Common Development and a Shared Future - Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation,” September 3, 2018, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cgct/eng/xwdt/t1591598.htm>.

In-Depth Cooperation Providing Strong Support for the Community of Shared Future

China and Africa, by adhering to independent development and self-reliance in their cooperation, have been providing a powerful drive for the building of a community with a shared future. Seen chronologically, cooperation between the two sides, in terms of both form and content, has gradually become more diversified, involving both bilateral and multilateral patterns. From the 1950s to the 1970s, China-Africa cooperation was mainly trade and one-way assistance. In the 1980s and the 1990s, it turned to assistance and mutually beneficial cooperation. In the 21st century, it was further upgraded to high-quality and large-scale assistance and cooperation, focusing on promoting Africa's independent development. Actually, China's assistance to Africa has shifted from "blood transfusion" to "blood making." In addition to the improvement of people's livelihood and infrastructure construction, China is making increasingly greater efforts to training human resources and sharing development experience such as building economic and trade cooperation zones in Africa.

Since the FOCAC's establishment, China's development assistance to Africa has grown by more than 10 times, with the focus gradually shifting to poverty alleviation, health care, education, infrastructure, human resources development, clean energy, environmental protection and other aspects of people's livelihood and capacity building, and the coverage expanding to basically all African countries. Especially since the Belt and Road's implementation in 2013, African countries have increasingly begun to synergize the initiative with their respective national development strategies, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and its first Ten-Year Implementation Plan. While carrying out capacity cooperation with China and accelerating construction of industrial parks, the countries have also sought China's help in infrastructure construction, financing, technology introduction, business operation and management, production and processing, and trade to promote their industrialization within a broader area.

At present, China has about 100 industrial parks completed, under

construction or under planning in Africa, which cover almost all countries that have diplomatic relations with China. More than 30 of them have started operations, and about 400 enterprises have moved into the industrial parks. With cumulative investment and total output reaching about \$5 billion and \$13 billion respectively, an industrial scale effect has taken initial shape.³ According to preliminary statistics of the Commerce Ministry, China has built about 25 economic and trade cooperation zones in 16 African countries, with more than 400 enterprises entering the zones and a cumulative investment of more than \$6 billion that involves energy and mineral resources, light industrial construction materials, textile manufacturing and household appliances. With around \$18.9 billion of output, \$900 million of tax paid to host countries, and about 41,000 local employees, China has helped promote Africa's economic development and industrialization, create job opportunities, and reduce production costs of Chinese enterprises while enhancing their competitiveness.⁴ These industrial parks and economic and trade cooperation zones, like the special economic zones in the early days of China's reform and opening-up, have become important vehicles for African industrialization and China's economic cooperation with Africa.

In a broader range of fields and at a deeper level, China-Africa cooperation has expanded with even richer connotations and delivered comprehensive economic and social benefits. Through trade ties, China has provided African countries with marketable, high quality and affordable products, diversifying the sources of their major consumer goods. As their economies develop, African countries have witnessed the growth of imports and exports as well as people's consuming power. As a result, the trade volume between China and Africa has increased from \$765 million in 1978 to \$170 billion in 2017, up by 200 times.⁵

3 Zhang Hongming, ed., *African Development Report (2016~2017): Industrialization in Africa and China's Construction of Industrial Parks in Africa*, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2017.

4 "Ministry of Commerce: China's New Measures of Pragmatic Cooperation Will Focus More on Fostering Endogenous Growth Capacity in Africa," *CNR*, August 28, 2018, http://china.cnr.cn/NewsFeeds/20180828/t20180828_524344435.shtml; "Minister of Commerce Zhong Shan Attends FOCAC 7th Ministerial Conference," Chinese Ministry of Commerce, September 2, 2018, <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/ae/ai/201809/20180902781916.shtml>.

5 "Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong Attends 7th China-Africa Think Tanks Forum," *People*, July 5, 2018, <http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0705/c1002-30129354.html>.

With an annual growth rate of 30% in recent years, China has been Africa's largest trading partner for nine consecutive years. Through investment, aids and other kinds of cooperation, China has focused its resources on stadiums, schools, hospitals, roads, railways and other service projects concerning production and people's livelihood. There are over 1,000 complete sets of aided projects, covering industry, agriculture, infrastructure, public and civil building, culture, education and health care. To strengthen Africa's "blood-making" capacity, it has been a highlight of cooperation to develop Africa's human resources and improve the technical skills of its labor force. According to statistics, a total of over 350,000 Chinese sci-tech workers have been sent to Africa in different periods to provide technical support for local people's production and construction. Since 1998, training courses on economic management, health, network communications, agricultural technology and environmental protection have been organized specially for African countries, benefitting over 160,000 technical personnel from various professions. More than 43,000 training opportunities in China have been provided for Africans, besides over 20,000 government scholarships and over 1,300 places for degree education.⁶

Accelerating Africa's agricultural modernization has been a pillar of China-Africa industrial cooperation. China has helped Africa in building farms, agricultural technology demonstration centers, and agricultural technology experimental and promotion stations. In addition, China has conducted introduction experiments of hybrid rice and maize, built water conservancy projects, and provided agricultural machineries, product processing equipment and related supplies. Since the FOCAC Beijing summit in 2006, agricultural cooperation between the two sides have been increasingly diversified, and Chinese agricultural investment in Africa has achieved stable development. Since the 2015 FOCAC Johannesburg summit, China has launched more than a hundred agricultural projects on the continent to improve people's livelihood, sent over 50 teams of agricultural professionals to support cooperation between agricultural research institutions of the two sides, and constructed a number of demonstration

6 "China and Africa Walk Hand in Hand in New Stage of Cooperation," *People.cn*, June 18, 2018, <http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0618/c1002-30064151.html>.

zones for agricultural cooperation. At the same time, multiple batches of emergency food aid have been provided for 18 African countries.⁷ Moreover, the Chinese government has actively participated in South-South cooperation under the Special Program for Food Security launched by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Broadly welcomed by African countries and highly praised by the FAO, China has sent a large number of professionals and technicians to Africa. These Chinese have demonstrated and promoted more than a thousand practical agricultural skills in water conservancy, crop production, husbandry and aquaculture, and product processing, trained over 100,000 people, which helps achieve a 30-60% growth in annual production of rice, maize, fruits and vegetables.

In addition, China has over the decades sent medical teams to over 50 African countries. A cumulative total of 25,000 person times of Chinese medical personnel have checked and cured over 300 million person times of African patients.⁸ The Chinese side has also exempted over 300 interest-free loans for more than 35 African countries, and contributed production and living materials, technical assistance and cash aid urgently needed by beneficiary countries.

Driven by bilateral cooperation, Chinese investment in Africa started from scratch, and has grown continually since China's reform and opening-up. With an annual growth rate up to 40%, the current stock value of Chinese investment in Africa is \$110 billion, which is a hundred times larger than that in 2000. The number of Chinese companies operating in Africa has also surpassed 3,200.⁹ As discovered by researchers in Western countries and international organizations, Chinese investment in Africa has put increasing emphasis on projects that generate social effect, such as infrastructure construction and technology and knowledge transfer, in the purpose of raising the poor's living standards and encouraging employment. However, Chinese investment in Africa, despite a higher growth rate, still lags behind some Western developed countries in terms of total value

7 "Minister of Commerce Zhong Shan Attends FOAC 7th Ministerial Conference."

8 "Director-General of Foreign Ministry's African Affairs Department Talks about President Xi's Africa Visit and China-Africa Relations," *China News Week*, No.29, 2018.

9 "Director-General of Foreign Ministry's African Affairs Department Talks about President Xi's Africa Visit and China-Africa Relations."

and overall quality. While there is saying that China is attracted by Africa's natural resources, the proportion of Chinese investment in the area is in fact no higher than that of Western investment. Specifically, the service sector hosts almost 70% of China's investment in Africa, while the manufacturing industry takes up over 20%.¹⁰

China's assistance and commodity trade in the early days had helped emerging independent African countries get out of the difficult period when everything was pending reconstruction. Since then, the continuously upgraded cooperation featuring mutual benefits has enhanced African countries' productive technology and independent production capacity, providing momentum for sustainable economic development, and improving the living conditions and creating hundreds of thousands of jobs for local people. According to Jeffrey D. Sachs, who was an advisor to the UN's Millennium Development Goals, China, proceeding from its own development experience and economic success, has played an effective and vital role in helping African countries increase food production, eradicate infectious diseases and strengthen infrastructure construction, thus significantly stimulating Africa's economy.¹¹ For China, the economic and trade cooperation with Africa has provided a valuable source of raw materials, an enormous market for products, and a huge venue for investment, which is conducive to capacity transfer and industrial upgrade. By effectively synergizing China's and Africa's development, it will facilitate China's deeper and more extensive engagement in globalization and win-win cooperation, as well as the realization of the Chinese Dream of national renewal.

In terms of security, cooperation between the two sides has demonstrated that a China-Africa community with a shared future would enhance African people's wellbeing by effectively safeguarding Africa's peace and security. China has made great efforts to facilitate the reconciliation of regional hotspot issues involving South Sudan, Somalia and Burundi, and actively participated in the

10 Wenjie Chen, David Dollar and Heiwai Tang, "Why Is China Investing in Africa? Evidence from the Firm Level," Brookings Institution, August 2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Why-is-China-investing-in-Africa.pdf>.

11 "UN Officer Claims China's Assistance to Africa Practical and Effective," *People*, August 15, 2006, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/8198/69754/69755/4738915.html>.

UN's peacekeeping operations in Africa. As the second largest financial contributor to the UN's peacekeeping operations and the largest personnel contributor among the permanent members of the UN Security Council, China has sent over 30,000 officers and soldiers to Africa. Currently, there are more than 2,000 Chinese peacekeepers deployed in five mission areas in Africa.¹² At the UN General Assembly in 2015, President Xi announced that China would provide \$100 million of free military assistance to the African Union in the next five years to support the establishment of the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis. Under the peace and security plan in the "Ten Cooperation Plans," China and Africa will continue cooperation in enhancing African countries' capacity of maintaining peace and security, and resolving disputes and conflicts. China's contribution to safeguarding peace in Africa has been highly recognized by international media. As a successful practice of its military diplomacy, China's participation in African peacekeeping missions has offered operational opportunities for its military strategic planning, honed Chinese soldiers' strong will and spirit of unwaveringly safeguarding peace, and displayed the image of a peaceful and responsible major country and an "army of strength, civilization and peace."

People-to-People Exchanges Energizing the Community of Shared Future

The China-Africa cooperation attaches great importance to cultural communication and promotes people-to-people exchanges, which has constantly energized the China-Africa community with a shared future. The history and reality of China-Africa relations are actually practices of each sides' diplomatic thoughts, which epitomize the essence of their historical tradition, cultural heritage and humanistic spirit. With similar historical sufferings and development processes, people from the two sides feel strong connections to each other and share weal and woe. Therefore, relations between China and Africa have always been based on the principle of equality and mutual respect. China never imposes

12 "Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong Attends 7th China-Africa Think Tanks Forum."

its will on others, and its Africa policy has explicitly highlighted non-interference in other countries' internal affairs. China's assistance to Africa, as well as economic and technological cooperation, neither attaches political preconditions nor seeks any privilege. At the FOCAC Beijing summit in September 2018, President Xi further clarified the spirit of sincerity, friendship and equality in China-Africa cooperation into a "five-nos" approach, which China hopes could be followed by every country in African affairs: no interference in African countries' pursuit of development paths that fit their national conditions; no interference in African countries' internal affairs; no imposition of China's will on African countries; no attachment of political strings to assistance to Africa; and no seeking of selfish political gains in investment and financing cooperation with Africa. "For China, we are always Africa's good friend, good partner and good brother. No one could undermine the great unity between the Chinese people and the African people."¹³ As a modern rendition of Chinese ancient thought "Do not do unto others what you would not have others do unto you," it wins the heart and mind of African people. In Africa, China is considered to have always stood on the side of Africans, and the deep friendship of the Chinese people has been deeply felt by local people, who have offered sincere return for China's assistance, support and cooperation. In international affairs, many African leaders have provided generous political, moral and legal support for China, repeatedly denounced the Western fallacy of Chinese "neo-colonialism" in Africa, and highly praised China as a friend, brother, partner and ally. The African people also extended sincere help when China was in a difficult period. In the wake of the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, Equatorial Guinea, with a population of less than two million, donated two million euro to China. The Republic of the Congo, as a heavily indebted and poor country, contributed a total of three million US dollars after China's Wenchuan and Yushu earthquakes. These gestures demonstrated the bond and friendship between African and Chinese people.

While China unwaveringly offered assistance to Africa during its own difficult times, it did not forget Africa after rapid development. African people

13 "Work Together for Common Development and a Shared Future - Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation."

have discovered new development models and successful experience from China's emergence and success in lifting 800 million people out of poverty, and gained confidence in fighting its own way out of poverty to achieve prosperity. To meet the need of African people to learn from China, China and Africa have frequently held exchange activities and academic seminars on education and training, employment guidance, investment and business operation, economic development and state governing. Topics such as the Chinese model, sustainable use of resources, consultative democracy and poverty eradication are hotly debated. Particularly, the experience exchange activities on state governing between party and governmental officials, started at the end of 20th century, were institutionalized and incorporated into the FOCAC framework in 2006. Cultural and people-to-people exchanges such as China-Africa youth festival, think tanks forum, media cooperation forum, movie and television broadcasting, theatrical performance, art exhibition and fashion show have continuously sprung up. From 2015 to 2017, over 100 such events and more than 200 people-to-people exchange programs were held annually, involving almost every African country and every Chinese province and municipality. These activities have greatly promoted the communication of ideas and emotions. As the saying goes, "Amity between people holds the key to sound relations between states." Accordingly, the China-Africa people-to-people exchanges are increasingly frequent with more diversified approaches and content. At present, rough statistics show that the number of Chinese living in Africa and Africans living in China is over two million and more than 100,000 respectively. The amount of annual personnel exchange has reached over two million person times, and the number of Chinese and African tourists traveling to the other side has reached over one million and 600,000 respectively. There are 133 pairs of sister provinces and cities between China and Africa, and over 80 Confucius Institutes and classes operating in 41 African countries. Also, 27 African countries have sent news correspondents to China.¹⁴

African countries' insistence on independent development and strength

14 "Director-General of Foreign Ministry's African Affairs Department Talks about President Xi's Africa Visit and China-Africa Relations."

through unity strikingly resembles the Chinese spirit of national salvation and rejuvenation since the modern times. The development of China and Africa is inseparable from each other and the Chinese Dream is interconnected with the African Dream. Moreover, similar values of family, interpersonal relations, health and reciprocal customs have led to an early awareness of a China-Africa community with a shared future. As stated by President Xi, Chinese and African people enjoy a natural sense of closeness. Because of this feeling of closeness, the stable development of China-Africa cultural and people-to-people exchanges is possible and the bilateral friendship withstands the test of time and grows even stronger, despite the fact that China's overall trade, investment and loan exemptions to Africa are less than those offered by the US and European countries.

Contrary to common Western perceptions, most Chinese investment does not go to the raw material and natural resource sectors, but instead focuses on the service sector. Different from their Western counterparts, Chinese investors do not make their investment decisions based on the governing capacity and political environment of the targeted countries.¹⁵ For example, following the conclusion of Angola's civil war in 2002, while most Western oil companies were unwilling to invest there due to unstable local situation, China contributed \$3 billion to Angola's infrastructure reconstruction in exchange for oil of equivalent values. Likewise, contrary to some Western countries, China does not seek high profits by taking advantage of the unequal international system to depress the export prices of African raw materials. Instead, China is engaging in trade with Africa through open, transparent and reciprocal transactions. As a result, African countries are more inclined to cooperate with China owing to China's sincerity and friendly attitudes. It is the brotherly friendship rather than profits that comes first in China-Africa economic and trade cooperation. Therefore, interactions and exchanges have motivated increasingly stronger enthusiasm of participants from both sides and withstood the test of fluctuating situation. According to an opinion survey conducted worldwide by Pew Research Center in 2015, African interviewees granted a much higher approval rating of up to 70% to incoming

15 "Why Is China Investing in Africa? Evidence from the Firm Level."

Chinese investors compared to respondents from Europe (41%), Asia (57%) and Latin America (57%), which demonstrated local people's acceptance of the positive effects generated by China's participation in Africa's construction and contribution to its economic growth.¹⁶ A report published by the African think tank Afrobarometer on October 24, 2016 also showed that among the 50,000 interviewees from 36 African countries, 63% held a positive view of China, with as high as 92% of Malians viewing Chinese people favorably. There were also 56% of interviewees believing that China's development assistance well matched the need of African countries.¹⁷ At the FOCAC Johannesburg summit in December 2015, President Xi vowed that China, in order to forge ahead with African countries for a comprehensive strategic partnership, would remain committed to political equality and mutual trust despite evolution of the international structure, would stick to win-win cooperation and joint development despite fluctuation of the economic situation, would continue to advance the spirit of mutual understanding and common prosperity despite changes of times and society, and would be firmly determined to share weal and woe with Africa despite the existence of various threats and challenges. At the opening ceremony of the FOCAC Beijing summit in September 2018, he reiterated the resolute determination of China and Africa to engage in friendly cooperation: "For China, we are always Africa's good friend, good partner and good brother. No one could undermine the great unity between the Chinese people and the African people."¹⁸ Compared with the narrow utilitarianism of some countries, China and Africa definitely share a more profound understanding of interests and friendship. It reveals the old Chinese value of putting justice ahead of interests. Instead of material interests, it is advocated in traditional Chinese culture that a state uphold justice as its ultimate well-being.

President Xi hit the nail on the head when he stated at the FOCAC

16 Lindsey Hilsum, "We Love China," in *Granta 92: The View from Africa*, Grove Press, Winter 2005, p.240.

17 "World Development Information Day: China's Growing Presence in Africa Wins Positive Popular Reviews," Afrobarometer, October 24, 2016, <http://afrobarometer.org/press/world-development-information-day-chinas-growing-presence-africa-wins-positive-popular-reviews>.

18 "Work Together for Common Development and a Shared Future - Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation."

Johannesburg summit: “Friendship and justice, which defines China-Africa relations, require us to facilitate Africa’s development endeavor with China’s development and ultimately deliver win-win progress and common development through mutually beneficial cooperation.”¹⁹ He further elaborated at the Beijing summit: “China pursues common interests and puts friendship first in pursuing cooperation. China believes that the sure way to boost China-Africa cooperation is for both sides to leverage its respective strength; it is for China to complement Africa’s development through its own growth, and it is for both China and Africa to pursue win-win cooperation and common development. In doing so, China follows the principle of giving more and taking less, giving before taking and giving without asking for return. With open arms, China welcomes African countries to aboard the express train of China’s development. No one could hold back the Chinese people or the African people as we march toward rejuvenation.”²⁰ The Beijing Declaration - Toward an Even Stronger China-Africa Community with a Shared Future, adopted at the summit, set the direction for the development of a China-Africa community of shared future that assumes joint responsibility, pursues win-win cooperation, delivers happiness for all, enjoys cultural prosperity, ensures common security, and promotes harmony between man and nature. Also, the FOCAC Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021) outlined the roadmap for the community’s development that contains plans for China-Africa practical cooperation in multiple areas and eight major initiatives in the next three and more years. In this sense, the accelerated development of a community with a shared future not only facilitates the win-win cooperation of China and Africa, but also sets an example of South-South cooperation and contributes to the world and all mankind. It demonstrates the glorious human nature that overcomes the law of jungle and achieves common interests, coexistence and common prosperity. 

19 “President Xi Jinping Delivers Speech at FOCAC Summit: Full Text,” December 5, 2015, <http://english.cri.cn/12394/2015/12/05/4083s906994.htm>.

20 “Work Together for Common Development and a Shared Future - Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.”