

Africa-China Review

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24 YEARS OF FOCAC THE IMPACT ON CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION



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Editor's Note

It is now 24 years since the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was officially launched in the year 2000. Since then, FOCAC has been a platform for high-level political coordination, where African countries and China meet to exchange ideas, develop strategies and make agreements to strengthen economic cooperation and enhance Africa's sustainable development.

The 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) took place in Beijing from September 4 to 6, 2024, under the theme: "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future". Heads of 53 African states, governments, delegations and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission attended the summit where they discussed issues ranging from emerging challenges to policies and cooperation agreements.

In a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the FOCAC 2024 Summit, on September 5, Chinese president Xi Jinping said that, "China and Africa account for one-third of the world population. Without our modernization, there will be no global modernization."

Xi also announced the 10 partnership actions, to be implemented in the next three years, covering areas of: mutual learning among civilizations, trade prosperity, industrial chain cooperation, connectivity, development cooperation, health, agriculture and livelihoods, cultural and people to people exchanges, green development and common security.

China pledged RMB 360

billion Yuan (about 51 billion U.S. dollars) of financial support to implement the 10 partnership goals for China-Africa modernization.

It is worth noting that for the past fifteen years, China has remained Africa's largest trading partner and in 2023, the trade volume reached a record \$282.1bn and projected to reach or even surpass \$300bn by 2035.

It is against this background that the Africa China Review in partnership with the Chinese Embassy in Rwanda organized a one day virtual seminar with academia, experts, researchers, government representatives, and media professionals in China, Africa and Pakistan, to discuss the Impact of FOCAC in strengthening China-Africa

Cooperation.

Discussants shed light on important questions such as:

1. *How can China and Africa jointly work together towards modernization?*
2. *What implications do the three global initiatives bring to China Africa Cooperation?*
3. *Has FOCAC in the 24 years lit a new face of Africa?*

The event took place on November, 14, 2024 at 10.00am Kigali Time, 16.00hrs, Beijing Time.

This 4th Edition of the Africa-China Review Magazine exclusively covers what was discussed during the virtual seminar and other articles that reflect the importance of FOCAC for the benefit of China and Africa. ■



TOPIC

24 Years of FOCAC

The impact on China-Africa Cooperation.



H.E. Mahdi Gulaid
GUEST OF HONOR

Former Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia, currently an MP of the Federal Parliament of Somalia



H.E. Wang Xuekun
HOST

The Chinese Ambassador to Rwanda



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MODERATOR
Researcher and publisher Africa-China Review.



November 14th, 2024

16:00hrs (Beijing Time)
11:00am (EAT), 10:00am (CAT)



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Opening statement by the Chinese Ambassador to Rwanda at the FOCAC Webinar



H.E. Amb. Wang Xuekun

Your Excellency Mahdi Mohammed Gulaid, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia, and current member of the House of the People, Hon. Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Senator of Pakistan, Mr. Virgile Rwanyagatare, DG Asia & Pacific of Foreign Affairs of Rwanda,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning and good afternoon.

Welcome to today's webinar. I am delighted to see many old friends and new faces. I would like to first thank you all for taking your precious time to join us.

The Embassy has been working with our friend Mr. Mbanda and his Africa China Review to host online seminars in past years. We have discussed Belt and Road cooperation, poverty alleviation cooperation, among other topics.

And today, our topic is the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, or FOCAC. Following this year's FOCAC Beijing Summit, it is a good time to reflect on the achievements of FOCAC and

embrace the opportunities it creates for the world.

Allow me to also thank Mr. Mbanda for organizing this wonderful meeting of minds.

Dear Friends,

After 24 years of development, FOCAC has injected tremendous momentum to China-Africa cooperation. From "Ten Cooperation Plans", "Eight Major Initiatives", "Nine Programs", to this year's "Ten Partnership Actions", FOCAC has made outstanding contribution to China-Africa relations and common development, and brought tangible benefits to hundreds of millions of

people. It has become an example and a leading force in international cooperation with Africa.

This year, I had the honor to personally participate in the summit and receive H.E. President Paul Kagame in Beijing, attending important activities and bilateral talks between China and Rwanda leaders.

During this Summit, China made the commitment of providing financial support totaling 360 billion Chinese yuan to implement the “Ten Partnership Actions”, giving 33 African countries, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines, carrying out 30 infrastructure connectivity projects and 1000 small and beautiful livelihood projects in Africa, and so on. With those concrete measures, China is helping Africa to move towards the vision of AU 2063 Agenda.

As President Xi quoted an African proverb in his speech, a friend is someone you share the path with. Coming through the joint

struggle against imperialism and colonialism, China and Africa have shared our destiny and solidarity. Going towards common prosperity and peoples' happy living, we are on the shared path to build an All-Weather China-Africa Community with a Shared Future for the New Era.

China is willing to work with Rwanda and other African brothers and sisters to actively implement the outcomes of the FOCAC Beijing Summit and advance China-Africa modernization, with a powerful force of more than 2.8 billion people, accounting for one-third of the world's population.

I look forward to your insights and perspectives, for the development of FOCAC, for more outcomes of China-Africa cooperation, and for a stronger voice for South-South cooperation.

Thank you ■

FOCAC, a unique platform for building a modern, inclusive, and prosperous future



H.E. Mahdi Gulaid

Former Prime Minister of Somalia, H.E Mahdi Gulaid and current member of Parliament of the Federal Parliament of Somalia, was the guest of honour in a one day virtual seminar organized by Africa-China Review in partnership with the Chinese embassy in Rwanda. Below is his full speech.

*Honorable Guests,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a pleasure to speak today on China-Africa cooperation, especially as we celebrate the achievements of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) after 24 years. FOCAC represents a unique platform for

building a modern, inclusive, and prosperous future. Today, I will address how China and Africa can jointly work toward modernization, the impact of key global initiatives on this partnership, and the transformative effect of 24 years of FOCAC on Africa.

1. China and Africa: A Partnership for Modernization

The modernization journey of China and Africa is a significant driver of global

progress. China and Africa together account for over one-third of the world's population.

This partnership enables joint strategies that benefit both regions. At the recent 2024 FOCAC Summit, China committed \$51 billion to support ten key action plans focused on trade, industrial cooperation, and connectivity—crucial areas for Africa's industrial and economic advancement.

For example, enhanced tariff-free market access allows African agricultural products like coffee, tea, and nuts to find new markets in China, benefiting African farmers and expanding local economies.

2. Implications of the Three Global Initiatives

The Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilization Initiative proposed by China align closely with Africa's development needs. The Global Development Initiative supports Africa's industrialization goals through skills development and infrastructure, such as the Confucius Institutes and Luban Workshops that provide technical and language training for African youth. The Global Security Initiative reinforces peace and stability, addressing the importance of security for sustainable development. Finally, the Global Civilization Initiative encourages cultural exchange and mutual understanding, creating a stronger people-to-people bond between China and Africa.

3. FOCAC's Impact on Africa: A New Chapter in Development

In 24 years, FOCAC has transformed China-Africa relations, taking Africa's development to new heights. China has remained Africa's largest trading partner for over a decade, with trade volumes reaching \$282.1 billion in 2023. The partnership is not just economic but deeply rooted in mutual respect and the pursuit of common goals. African leaders, media, and the broader public describe China-Africa cooperation as "win-win," with FOCAC bringing infrastructure development, healthcare, and digital progress across the continent. This collaboration has been instrumental in realizing Africa's Agenda 2063, bringing Africa closer to its goal of a sustainable and self-reliant future.

Through the FOCAC framework, China has committed to supporting African nations in infrastructure, industrialization, and capacity building. During the pre-civil war period of Somalia's history, Somalia has been a beneficiary of these efforts. For example:

Infrastructure Development: China has played a pivotal role in rebuilding Somalia's National Stadium and National Theatre, both enhancing their role as a symbol of cultural unity and sporting pride.

Transportation: China's involvement in constructing Somalia's north-south highway spanning the length of the country has improved regional connectivity, a key element for economic growth

Healthcare: The rehabilitation of Banadir Hospital is another testimony to China's impact, ensuring access to quality healthcare for thousands of Somalis.

Conclusion

China-Africa cooperation under FOCAC has achieved much, yet it also holds great promise for the future. With aligned goals, mutual respect, and a shared vision, China and Africa stand as a powerful example of what global partnerships can accomplish. Let us continue to build this high-level community with a shared future and advance modernization for our peoples.

Thank you ■

Mahdi Gulaid is Former Prime Minister of Somalia, currently an MP of the Federal Parliament of Somalia.

Remarks by the Director General Ministry of Foreign Affairs- Rwanda



Mr. Virgile Rwanyagatare

The Director General in Charge of Asia and the Pacific at Rwanda's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation Mr. Virgile Rwanyagatare represented the ministry and delivered remarks and expressed his pleasure for the robust bilateral relations that exist between Rwanda and the People's Republic of China. Read below the full text.

Your Excellency Mahdi Mohammed Gulaid, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia and current member of the House of the People,

Honorable Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Senator of Pakistan,

Excellency Wang Xuekun, Ambassador of China to Rwanda,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning to you all.

It is both an honor and a pleasure to extend a warm welcome to each of you today. I want to express my gratitude for your valuable time and presence at this significant virtual seminar. I would also like to convey my sincere appreciation to the Embassy

of the People's Republic of China in Kigali, as well as all the stakeholders who have worked tirelessly to organize this event. Your efforts have been crucial in bringing together various participants to evaluate the profound impact of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) on our collaborative initiatives.

As we gather here today, let us acknowledge that FOCAC represents a pivotal strategic platform designed to enhance collaboration between China and African nations across critical sectors, including diplomacy, economy, and culture. This high-level policy platform not only facilitates regular summits but also produces

actionable three-year plans that outline priority areas for cooperation with each participating African country. The value of FOCAC cannot be overstated, as it fosters mutual understanding and shared goals that bridge our cultures and economies.

In light of this framework, the Republic of Rwanda wishes to commend the robust bilateral relations that exist between our nation and the People's Republic of China. This relationship is exemplified in various completed and ongoing projects across sectors such as infrastructure, healthcare, and education, made possible through generous grants and concessional loans provided by China. Indeed, China has emerged as a leading contributor to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Rwanda, playing a pivotal role in our overall development trajectory.

Reflecting on our partnership, I wish to highlight the historic state visit by His Excellency Xi Jinping, the President of the People's Republic of China, to Rwanda in 2018. During this landmark visit, President Xi was warmly hosted by His Excellency Paul Kagame, who, at the time, served as

the Chairperson of the African Union. This meeting was not only marked by fruitful discussions but also culminated in the signing of several key agreements that have strengthened our bilateral cooperation, particularly within the Belt and Road Initiative and other vital sectors.

As I draw my remarks to a close, I want to reinforce the optimism that Rwanda holds regarding the future of Africa-China relations. We firmly believe that the ongoing collaboration under the FOCAC framework, enhanced by comprehensive strategic plans, will further solidify the partnership between Africa and the People's Republic of China. Rwanda is particularly committed to implementing the outcomes of the FOCAC for the socio-economic advancement of our people. In this regard, I urge the government of China to expedite the selection and funding processes for the recommended projects as outlined during the just concluded FOCAC.

Thank you all for your kind attention, and I look forward to engaging discussions that will arise from this important seminar.■

China-Africa cooperation has enormous prospects in the future



Dr. Wang Wen

The convening of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation Summit in 2024, is a significant milestone for bilateral relations. The Forum on China Africa Cooperation summit, which has persisted for 24 years, not only plays a significant role in promoting bilateral development between China and Africa, but also has significant practical significance in the entire world history.

Firstly, historically, no rising power has played a pragmatic, rational, and win-win role in Africa's development like China.

In the past 500 years of modern globalization, at least 10 major powers have emerged, namely Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium, Japan, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The vast majority of these major powers launched colonization, wars, and black slave trade in Africa. Although this cruel and bloody history is far away from us, it needs us to remember it.

China also remembers the history of being bullied and oppressed by Western powers back then. Remembering history is not for revenge, but to prevent its repetition. China's rise does not want any disasters, colonialism, or wars to repeat themselves in Africa like Western powers did. From this perspective, it is unfair for some Western and African media to still use terms such as "neo colonialism" and "imperial aggression" to describe China.

Secondly, in reality, the 24 years of China

Africa cooperation have truly tapped into the spillover effects of China's development model. Chinese enterprises have participated in the construction and renovation of over 10,000 kilometers of railways, nearly 100,000 kilometers of highways, and nearly a thousand bridges, nearly a hundred ports, 66,000 kilometers of power transmission and transformation lines, and 150,000 kilometers of backbone communication networks in various African countries. They have also established multiple agricultural technology demonstration centers in Africa, promoted more than 300 advanced agricultural technologies, and achieved continuous positive growth in the amount of agricultural products imported from Africa for seven consecutive years.

At present, China is still helping Africa to improve the Internet era, and even the new energy and smart era. From this perspective, China's rise is a blessing for Africa. Of course, Africa is also helping China with production capacity cooperation and market supply. The cooperation between China and Africa is win-win, rational, voluntary, and forward-looking. Under the framework of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation, we continuously promote economic cooperation and resist ideological interference. From this perspective, some Western media repeatedly smear the cooperation between China and Africa. We should actively resist and not let those voices influence the progress of cooperation between China and Africa.

Thirdly, China Africa cooperation has enormous prospects in the future. As

President Xi Jinping said, without the modernization of China and Africa, there would be no modernization of the world. With a huge market of 3 billion people, China and Africa have inexhaustible potential in infrastructure construction, agricultural manufacturing, Internet, transportation, tourism and other aspects.

Currently, to my knowledge, there are 2 million Chinese workers, entrepreneurs, and students in Africa. Africans in China also constitute the fastest-growing foreign population. Many Africans have become "internet celebrities" in China, with millions of followers, and some have even found lifelong partners in China. From this perspective, the exchanges and cooperation between China and Africa in terms of personnel, economy, and social interactions are equal and mutually beneficial, providing significant support for the formation of a new type of human civilization.

In summary, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is a great platform that promotes historical progress, maintains current cooperation, and enhances future expectations. We must persist in this endeavor.

For the future, we will still face many challenges, such as provocations and interference from the West. However, we must have confidence, persist, and believe that the future of China-Africa relations will undoubtedly be better ■

The author is the Executive Dean of Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China.

Africa, China and Resurgence of Global South



Senator Mushahid Hussain

It's my pleasure and privilege to be participating in this important webinar on 24 years of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), and I am grateful to my good friend in Kigali Rwanda, Gerald Mbanda who is the Chief Editor of the Africa China review for organizing this important conference at time of turbulence and transformation, when the world is being turned to Topsy-turvy, when the world is seeing a historical transition of economic and political power away from the west to the global south of which China, Africa and Pakistan are an important component.

This conference which was convened in and as

President Xi Jinping rightly said at the conference on 5th of September that China and Africa comprise one third of the world's population and he added that without our modernization, without the modernization of China there can be no global modernization, so when we look at China-Africa relations, we are looking at Africa's biggest trading partner, China, over \$280 billion worth of trade registered in 2023 and we are talking of this cooperation which spans so many areas at the FOCAC in

Beijing on 5th of September where over 50 African leaders were present.

President Xi Jinping pledged over \$50 billion to 10 partnership goals in different areas of health, of agriculture, of common security, of green development, of poverty alleviation in the next three years, so China-Africa cooperation is going to be one of the pillars in the resurgence of the global south, and this did not start today, we can trace it back soon after the Chinese revolution in 1949, which led to the formation of the People's Republic of China, China was one of the first countries to lend a helping hand to their third world brothers in Pakistan in Asia,

in Africa they started building the TAZARA railway, Tanzania and Zambia.

In the 60s, Chinese experts were there, supporting liberation movements in Zimbabwe, in South Africa and Namibia, in different parts of Africa, part of the national liberation movements, so China was in the forefront of the freedom struggle, struggle against racism, racial discrimination, western hegemony, and for those want to know about western hegemony in Africa, the worst crimes were committed by the colonialists and we have already seen that, there is a book I saw called King Leopold's ghost, it's about Belgian colonialism in Congo, and the crimes that were committed, because Congo was not a colony even, it was a private property of King Leopold, the king of Belgium, and how they left Congo in shambles when it achieved independence, and how the first leader of a free Congo, Patrice Lumumba was brutally murdered by western intelligence and then we have also seen other examples.

We saw the movie "blood diamonds" which shows how these western mercenaries and mining companies have exploited and plundered the natural and mineral resources of Africa and it is no accident that the great African leader Nelson Mandela who when he visited Pakistan in 1999 as President of South Africa I was then minister for information, culture and tourism, I had the honor to be his minister in waiting for four days, and I took him around and he gave me his book also, "long walk to freedom", duly signed for me, for which I am eternally grateful. He said these western leaders and I quote are dinosaurs, meaning they are they

have mindset based on the past.

It is China which is talking about the future, a brighter future, better future so when we talk of China modernization, how is China's role different than the west. First, China's relationship is neither transactional, not tactical, not temporary, nor based on conditionalities, nor seeking to extract things, it's based on peaceful development, win-win cooperation, inclusivity through the Belt and Road Initiative, which is the most important global initiative on diplomacy and development in the 21st century, where China has invested over one trillion dollars and three thousand projects in the last 10 years, then we are talking of the global development initiative of President Xi Jinping, the global security initiative and the global civilization initiative.

All of these are inextricably intertwined, because whether it's development, whether it's security, whether it's civilization, there is talk of harmony, connectivity, cooperation, working hand in hand of shared prosperity. So it's not an exclusive approach, it's not a zero sum game approach, it's not an approach of seeing things in a scenario where one side wins and one side loses, or it's not a talk of control and coercion, it's about connectivity and cooperation, and that is what the way forward is, and then when we talk of these initiatives in the new situation, on the one side, the Americans, the west are still talking of seeing Africa in a cold war context.

America established in 2007, United States Africa Command, which is based in Germany by the way, and where they either do have interventions ostensibly on

counter terrorism, but they are promoting their own interests along with other western powers. China does not do that, Chinese modernization is an example of peaceful development of socialist modernization, of harmony between nature and humanity, as opposed to the militarization promoted by the west, where they talk of control, coercion, use of force, extraction.

So in this context, we have two contrasting visions in the world, and when Africa is moving forward to build global south as the vehicle of progress of which we are integral component, we should be on the right side of history, we should be with those countries who support our independence, who talk of preserving, protecting and promoting our national liberation not just from the yoke of western colonialism and neocolonialism, but also from hypocrisy, double standards and racism that is evident.

We stand with principles, we stand with progress, we stand with prosperity and we stand with China in building better tomorrow for the global south, for Africa, for us even in Asia and Pakistan, better tomorrow, with no overlords, no underdogs, a peaceful and a prosperous tomorrow, and we feel that China, Africa relations are the biggest guarantee for this prosperous future which is now reshaping the world, throwing new light into Africa's development from the age of darkness under colonialism to the age of light and prosperity, under new alternative emerging global order based on equality, inclusivity and peaceful development and modernization of shared prosperity ■

Hon. Mushahid Hussain is the chairman of Pakistan-China Institute and President of Institute of Pakistan-Africa for Development and Research (PAIDAR)

FOCAC: A platform for shared Development and Modernization



Gerald Mbanda

During the FOCAC 2024 Summit in Beijing, China announced that the overall characterization of China-Africa relations has been elevated to “an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era” and a blueprint for future cooperation was jointly established. For the next three years, China announced 10 partnership actions in areas such as; mutual learning among civilizations, trade prosperity, industrial chain cooperation, and connectivity. China pledged 360 billion yuan (about 51 billion U.S. dollars) of financial support to

implement the 10 partnership goals for China-Africa modernization.

For the past fifteen years, China has remained Africa's largest trading partner and last year (2023) the trade volume reached a record 282.1 billion US dollars, growing from US\$261 billion in 2022. In 2023, China's direct investment in Africa exceeded 40 billion dollars, and expected to grow in 2024 demonstrating the strong resilience of China-Africa economic and trade

cooperation. China is the second largest economy in the world and the top manufacturing country, with 31.6% of the total global manufacturing output. On the other hand, with low industrial base, Africa's contribution to global manufacturing stands at a mere 1.9% while manufactured goods imports account for 62% of total imports.

Western countries through their media have created a narrative that China has given big loans to African countries which they cannot pay back and this has resulted into a “debt trap.” This is absolutely not true. First of all it is not the lender

who should be blamed for giving out loans; rather the question is how the borrower uses loan. "The 'Debt Trap' narrative is aimed at spoiling the good relationship of African countries with China simply to maintain western influence and dominance. The western story lines suggest that African countries have been "recolonized by China" due to the debt burden, and therefore, African countries should re-think their relationship with China because China is bad. The 'debt trap narrative has failed as many African countries have realized the practical cooperation with China that produces tangible results.

To the contrary, research from China-Africa Research Initiative (CARI), at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced international studies indicate that Africa is more indebted to western countries than China. China's lending to Africa compared to other lenders constitutes only 13% of the total Africa's debt, while multilateral lenders make up 32% of Africa's debt. Bondholders contribute 27%, other bilateral lenders 15%, while another 13% comes from non-official lenders. The multilateral lenders plus other bilateral are dominated by western countries and institutions like the IMF and World Bank.

China has helped many African countries by writing off their debts. Since 2000-2019, China wrote off more than \$3.4 billion of debt, almost all interest-free loans to African countries. While in 2022, China forgiven 23 interest-free loans in 23 countries to allow them to manage their post-COVID economic recovery. Contrary to China 'Debt trap' narrative, China's approach to debt relief has been more flexible.

Chinese companies have invested in development projects playing an increasing role in bolstering Africa's industrialization. One example is the Sapphire Float Glass Factory in Tanzania's coastal region, which serves both the local market and exports to six other African countries. With a production capacity of approximately 700 tons per day, the factory has created 1,012 direct jobs for locals and 3,857 indirect jobs since its inauguration in September 2023. At full capacity operation, the factory is expected to provide 1,650 direct and 6,000 indirect jobs.

If we say that for the last fifteen years Africa has traded more with China than western countries, this gives sleepless nights to western manufacturers vying the vast Africa market of almost 1.4 billion people. If China wins most contracts for infrastructure development in Africa, definitely western companies will not be happy and they will do everything to create a crack in the China-Africa relationship.

When I travel to Kenya and see the Nairobi High way, it strikes my eyes not only for the contribution to the city's modernization, but also to improved traffic congestion and reduced time of travel and money wasted burning fuel in traffic jams. The good thing happening under FOCAC, is that China wants the development and modernity attained in infrastructure, industrialization, agriculture, innovation etc, is shared with African countries under the principle of 'leaving no one behind' through South-South Cooperation.

FOCAC 2024 therefore, is a continuation of the already existing framework of deepening practical cooperation between China and

Africa. The African Development Bank estimates that the continent's infrastructure financing needs will be as much as 170 billion US dollars a year by 2025 with an estimated gap of around 100 billion US dollars a year. China's loan commitments under FOCAC provide significant advantages for Africa, to address the critical infrastructure development deficit and fostering economic development. China loans support much needed industrialization and plays an important role in job creation and skills development.

On December 6, 2023, China announced that 98 percent of taxable products from Angola, the Gambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Mali and Mauritania would be exempt from import tariffs. China started the zero-tariff treatment for 6 least-developed African countries. Under FOCAC 2024, more cooperation will be enhanced in areas such as: trade, infrastructure development, health, education, agriculture, science and

technology, innovation, climate change, people to people exchange as well as the realization of UN SDGs and Africa's Agenda 2063.

The future of China-Africa relations will continue to grow stronger and stronger under FOCAC and the Belt and Road Initiative frameworks. The future of China-Africa relationship does not depend on the wish of outsiders. It is the resolve of the two sides to work together with mutual respect, equality and shared interests. To say that China competes with the west for resources and influence again this is another misconception spread by western countries. China deals with African countries as equal partners on a win- win principle and on a sincere relationship with no conditionality or strings attached. China is not seeking influence but a new order in international relations that are more equitable and just.

Gerald Mbanda is a researcher and publisher on China- Africa Cooperation.

The Impact of FOCAC on Africa in particular and Rwanda development in general



Dr. Ismael Buchanan

Dr. Ismael Buchanan, a senior lecturer at the department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Rwanda, during the seminar on the Impact of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), focused on the historical journey of the relationship between China and Africa, as well as China's promotion of the education sector and knowledge exchange.

Read full text:

It is my pleasure to be given this opportunity to speak in this Africa-China review with a Theme 24 years of FOCAC: The impact on China-Africa Cooperation.

Comrades, allow to me first of all thank our embassy of China in Kigali (Rwanda) as host for taking this initiative to invite me to this Africa-China review. Indeed, if you allow me your Excellency Ambassador Wang, I want to thank Mr. Gerald Mbanda who is the chair of Africa-China Review and who proposed me to share some of my insights on the given topic.

Indeed comrades, my today's talk is basically on China-Africa cooperation

on issue of Knowledge exchange especially in the education sector. Of course, my interest on today's topic does not come from nowhere; this is just based on my current position as an academicien from the University of Rwanda. Then you will understand the reason behind taking into consideration what I want to talk about today.

Let remind ourselves that the cooperation between China and Africa or the exchanges between Africa and China dates back from the ancient time and the establishment of contemporary relations between Africa and China in the 1950s, when six African

countries, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Guinea, Sudan and Somalia signed with China for the first time an official bilateral trade agreement and also the beginning of the 21st Century, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation known as FOCAC was set up in 2000 as one of the most important platforms for Africa and China Cooperation. Since its creation, this program gathers every three years both African and Chinese Top Leaders either in China or in one African Country.

China-Africa friendship has not been an overnight achievement, nor has it been gifted from on high. Rather, it has been fostered throughout the years when China and Africa supported and stood alongside each other in trying times. China has aided to the limit of its capabilities the development of Africa, and has been grateful for the strong support and selfless help African countries and their peoples have extended to China for a long period of time. Till today, China and African countries have continued to provide mutual support, writing a new chapter in China-Africa solidarity and friendship at times of crisis.

From these perspectives, the cooperation seems to abide by the preached principle of equality between the two parties. Apart from political, economic, cultural issues and programs which are discussed during these fora, education is also one of the main points of focus of FOCAC. As I mentioned on the above, today, I want to focus on the willingness and the possibilities of establishing knowledge sharing partnership between Africans and Chinese in the sector of education. With these discussions in mind, I am going to limit myself on some aspects of China-Africa in knowledge exchange focusing on educational exchanges. Knowledge sharing should be confused

neither with data sharing nor with information sharing; the knowledge sharing includes data and information sharing, skills and expertise communication, ideas exchange.

China vigorously supports education in Africa. Based on the needs of African countries for economic and social development, China helps train much-needed professionals for African countries and encourages outstanding African youth to study in China through



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several scholarships. Starting from 2012 for example, the two sides have implemented the 20+20 Cooperation Plan for Chinese and African Institutions of Higher Education as an exchange and cooperation platform among universities.

China set up an educational trust fund under UNESCO to provide teacher training for more than 10,000 teachers in African countries. Since 2018, China has established Luban Workshops together with colleges and universities in different countries in Africa with the aim of sharing quality vocational education



resources with Africa and training high-caliber technical personnel to meet the urgent needs of economic and social development on the continent. Chinese government has helped many African universities set up Chinese language departments or Chinese language majors and so far, some countries in Africa have started to incorporate the Chinese language into their national education systems. Again, to tackle Africa's skills gap, Beijing has not only provided sustained support for TVET but also encourages Chinese companies, notably HUAWEI (famous in global ICT solution provision) to establish collaboration with universities and other higher-educational institutions in the region to also ensure regular updates of educational curriculum to meet industry demand and concurrently strengthens the link between academia and industry, which unlocks Africa's development potential.

On the side of encouraging academic exchanges and cooperation among think tanks, support is given to sharing research and achievements, especially on topics such as state governance, development paths, industrial capacity cooperation, and culture. Both sides have also been working on enhancing research strengths. Many think tanks and academic research institutions have participated in the China-Africa Joint Research and Exchange Plan. China is also actively developing research cooperation with African countries and universities, especially in the field of agriculture and foods security.

This year, we recently organized an international forum on agricultural high-quality development organized by Rwanda Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) in conjunction with the Chinese Embassy in Rwanda, thanks to the Chinese Embassy support towards the

success of the event, whereby 200 participants attended from Rwanda and outside the country. Also, in March this year, during the 13th Meeting of the China-Africa Think Tanks Forum held in Tanzania's port city of Dar es Salaam, scholars from 50 African countries jointly issued the Dar es Salaam Consensus, which proposed solutions to major global issues and challenges, drawing widespread attention and positive responses from the international community. After that forum of think tanks which held in Dar Es Salam, scholars decided to write a letter to H.E the Chinese President Xi Jinping, and as one of the African scholars who attended the 13th meeting of the China Africa Think Tanks Forum in Dar Salaam, under the patronage of the Chinese Embassy in Rwanda, I had a chance to be part of those African scholars who wrote a letter to H.E Mr. Xi Jinping. He automatically made his remarks in reply to our joint letter from the 63 scholars from 50 African countries by encouraging African scholars to continue to provide intellectual support for building a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future and safeguarding the common interests of the Global South.

Stepping up scientific and technological collaboration, and knowledge sharing

China actively strengthens communication and coordination with Africa in terms of technological innovation strategies. China shares experience and achievements, and promotes the exchange and training of professionals and technology transfer, as well as innovation and entrepreneurship on both sides. In recent years, China has assisted Africa in cultivating a large number of scientific and technological talents through projects such as the Alliance of International Science

Organizations in the Belt and Road Region Scholarship, Chinese government scholarships, the Talented Young Scientist Program, and the Innovative Talent Exchange Project. China also assisted Sudan and Algeria to launch their first ever communication satellites.

Rwanda and China relations in the education sector

Recently, China and Rwanda celebrated a 53-year-long fruitful bilateral cooperation and trade which dates back to 1971. From its inception, this relationship yielded various



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initiatives bilaterally between China and Rwanda. These include developments and aid in education, health, culture and economic sectors among others. For example, the number of Rwandan students with Chinese scholarships have increased and almost double that of previous years (of course that awarding scholarships is one component among the many other commitments

that China has made to support Rwanda's education) represents the will of the Chinese government to continue strengthening education support to our Rwandan students to pursue their bachelor's degree, master's degree or PhD, from various disciplines ranging from Civil engineering, Finance, ICT, Agriculture, Medicine, Marketing among others and most of our Rwandan students were sent to China to further their education to acquire skills the country needs most to develop further. Up to date, the government of China has kept on providing more scholarships to the Rwandan students to study in China annually which is very important in promoting friendship and understanding between our two countries. To add more, currently, the Chinese language teaching in Rwanda is developing with high momentum.

China and Africa relations from academic achievements to cooperation consensus.

Academic exchanges have not only deepened mutual understanding but have also significantly contributed to the development of various sectors in Africa. This has not only empowered these individuals but has also created a new generation of African professionals who are equipped to drive progress in their home countries. Moreover, these academic exchanges have facilitated cultural understanding and fostered long-term relationships between African and Chinese scholars, which are essential for sustainable cooperation.

China-Africa academic exchanges have yielded fruitful results, many African scholars like me could access various platforms to do field research and exchange academic ideas with other African and Chinese counterparts, enabling the two sides to deepen our mutual



understanding and foster better policies to boost the bilateral cooperation.

China-Africa's ties have been characterized by a friendly bilateral, multilateral and holistic relationship, covering a range of cooperation in economic development, trade, culture, education, health, politics, governance, security, diplomacy and people-to-people interactions.

As you look at our relationship with China, it is always based on values, sincerity, common good, respecting each other, win-win cooperation. China is a friend that respects your views, even when we look at the recent FOCAC meetings, China always asks Africans what they want without necessarily to impose the Africans, for me their relationship is sort of brotherhood and comradeship. It is based on equality, respecting each other's independence and characteristics, not imposing things that might not work for us.

What can be improved?

In an international environment marked by complexity and change, developing and emerging markets are becoming key drivers in the world economy; China and Africa are poised to adapt these shifting trends by deepening their strategic partnership and expanding cooperation in investment and trade. While China and Africa cooperation has made ground-breaking achievements, there are number of outstanding obstacles and challenges, including:

- An unstable political and security situation in some Africa regions,
- Threats to the efficiency, sustainability and reputation of China-Africa cooperation

stemming from a lack of sophisticated, efficient and refined cooperation practices, and inconsistent standards of product quality, management, labor rights etc.

- There is also room for improvement in China-Africa cooperation on people to people and culture exchanges, education, and technical training etc. True sustainability in the China- Africa partnership will be driven by the spirit of respect, sincerity and equality in both economy and cultural interactions.

- Aggressive progress should be balanced by rational decision-making and a commitment to win-win opportunities for common development and substantive measures should be taken to address outstanding issues in China- Africa business activities and to promote a health model of partnership based on new synergies and drivers of growth.

- African leaders need to ask themselves what makes China develop and make sure Africa gets the same.

- African leaders should not be shy, aware of what China is doing in cooperation with Africa countries.

- Africa leaders and governments need to harmonize their strategic visions between China and Africa to see where both can invest or assist one another.

With this in mind, it is therefore, imperative for policymakers and relevant stakeholders, including international organizations in the region, to establish and increase cooperation with Beijing and Chinese enterprises in a problem-solving process to scale up efforts to address the challenges of education in Africa. ■

Chinese built power plants help to solve power crisis in Africa



Mubarak Mugabo

In Sub-Saharan countries, only one person in five has access to electricity and if nothing is changed, less than 40 percent of African countries will reach universal access to electricity by 2050. Per capita consumption of electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) averages only 124 kilowatt-hours a year and is falling.

If only allocated to household lighting, it would hardly be enough to light one bulb per person for six hours a day. Again about 30 African countries are said to experience power shortages and regular interruptions in service.

In September 2024, Ugandan president Yoweri

Museveni commissioned a 600 megawatt Karuma hydropower station in Kiryandongo- mid western Uganda. The Karuma hydropower plant which is the largest in the country was built on a Chinese loan of \$1.4billion secured from the Export-Import Bank of China.

Two other electricity substations in West Nile region, were also commissioned, thanks to the Chinese-funded hydropower projects. West Nile, home to about three

million people, is one of Uganda's underdeveloped regions. It was isolated from the national electricity grid for decades and used diesel generators for electricity.

Other regions used kerosene to light their homes and for their businesses, which in due course polluted the environment. A report issued by Uganda's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development in 2018 revealed that firewood and timber accounted for 85 percent of the primary source of energy in the West Nile.

China is committed to programs which will not only meet Africa's needs, but also address the challenges



Karuma hydropower station, the largest in Uganda, built on a Chinese loan of \$1.4 billion secured from Export-Import Bank of China.

hindering the continent's development. In 2015, Uganda secured a \$482.5 million loan from the Export-Import Bank of China to fund the construction of the 183 MW Isimba Hydropower Project, which would support electricity generation far beyond Uganda's domestic consumption.

Uganda had a generation capacity of 150 megawatts before the 1990s, not enough for the entire country. Even after the construction of the 250 MW Bujagali Hydropower Plant in eastern Uganda with funding from Western banks, Uganda's electricity consumption demand reached 500 MW by 2013. The domestic installed capacity was just sufficient to meet this demand, leaving little margin for growth or unforeseen increases in consumption.

This story is not much different from the story of neighboring Kenya and many other sub-Saharan African countries. Currently, 600 million Africans remain without access

to electricity, posing significant challenges to healthcare, education, productivity, digital inclusion and, ultimately, job creation. Uganda, for example, experienced loadshedding for decades until the early 2000s, which became the new normal.

However, instead of practical support, Africa has been getting lectures on the Western concepts of rights and democracy from Western institutions. China, on the other hand, has been a friend indeed for African countries and Africa has seen mutually respectful exchanges with China for decades. With China's rapid development, especially after the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit (FOCAC) came into existence in 2000, no-strings-attached win-win cooperation and engagement between Africa and China have been catapulted.

Today, Uganda has an installed power generation capacity of approximately 2,000 MW. The Karuma Hydropower Plant is

expected to save about 1.31 million tonnes of raw coal and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 3.48 million tonnes annually, which is equivalent to planting 1.5 million trees.

It has also connected the West Nile region to the national grid. With this achievement, the region will soon see industrial parks being established. Karuma's completion has also led to Uganda to start constructing a transmission line to neighboring South Sudan. The newest African country is facing energy deficits as well.

From 2010 to 2020, China built and financed 96 projects aimed at enhancing Africa's power generation capacity. These energy initiatives, among which many are green ones, are increasing electricity supply, bolstering energy security, reducing reliance on petroleum imports and mitigating the impact of climate change both in Africa and globally.

A green transition is everyone's goal, but unfortunately, some want to play politics. The Western media has been peddling lies that China's increased funding of projects in Africa is aimed at addressing China's overcapacity. They claim that as China struggles with its "overcapacity" in green products such as solar panels, Africa is its "dumping ground."

Such claims are utterly absurd. China does not face an "overcapacity" issue. Overcapacity must be evaluated in the context of long-term demand. For example, according to a report by the International Renewable Energy Agency, global installed solar photovoltaic capacity would increase to 5,457 GW by 2030. However, based on

the current annual global increase, it is estimated that the total capacity will reach only about 2,000 GW by 2030, which means the current capacity is falling short of meeting this expected target.

Apart from that, the Western media's narrow definition of "overcapacity" as "production exceeding domestic needs" ignores economic fundamentals. When domestic demand is met, the surplus products naturally flow to export markets. If countries produced only for their own needs,



As long as China's products boost African industries, create local jobs and increase household incomes, why would it be a problem?

cross-border trade wouldn't exist. Thus, the idea of China "dumping" excess capacity in Africa is unfounded.

This is not the first time the West has used "overcapacity" as a pretext to smear China. When China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, its large exports of high-quality, affordable goods were labeled as "overcapacity." Later, the Belt and Road Initiative was similarly criticized, though it actually supported the industrialization needs of African nations and fostered mutual benefits. Now, as China exports new energy products that align perfectly



with the environmental values the West has long promoted to the world, the West is once again spinning the narrative of "overcapacity."

China's hydro products are transforming Uganda and the rest of Africa in many ways. Industrial parks have been established in areas where these hydro and solar power projects have been built. Uganda expects more, given the increase in clean energy generation products. As long as China's products boost African industries, create local jobs and increase household incomes, why would it be a problem?

This labeling also exposes the double standards of some Western countries, especially the United States. The U.S. has been pressuring and trying to coordinate its allies to suppress China, in order to repatriate industries, especially high-tech capacity into the U.S. Take the semiconductor sector as an example.

The U.S. is leading the world in terms of designing, producing and exporting high-

end chips – in other words, it has a large and strong capacity, even an "overcapacity" in this area, by the U.S. standard. Yet, it not only falls short of reducing its "overcapacity," but, instead, is forcing back more capacity.

But, when China takes the lead in certain areas, for instance green energy, or when Chinese industrial capacity shifts to meet the developmental needs of African nations, it is derided as "dumping" and Beijing is accused of "undermining African industrialization." The "China overcapacity" theory is merely a pretext for its protectionism, and, more and more African countries are not buying that argument anymore.

Bilateral cooperation through the past decades highlighted China's unwavering commitment to bilateral development and partnership in Africa. Africa wishes that this cooperative spirit continues ■

Mubarak Mugabo, is a Vision group journalist and China-Africa Centre Fellow based in Kampala-Uganda.

China's contribution to Liberia's human resource development



Nicholas D. Nimley

Liberia has embarked on a path of reconstruction and revitalization in recent years. Essential to these efforts is the development of a solid, skilled human resource base capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century. One of the key international partners in this endeavor is the People's Republic of China, whose contributions to scholarships, and technical training programs have helped improve Liberia's human capital and infrastructure development through several China aid projects. China's contribution to Liberia's human resource development therefore, is not just aid, but also an investment in Liberia's future resilience and

prosperity.

China's engagement in Liberia's education sector is a testament to its commitment to fostering a true partnership based on mutual respect and development.

China has not only improved the capabilities of individuals but also equipped the country with the skills necessary for economic growth and social progress through access to education. This investment in human resource development demonstrates China's understanding that

education is the foundation of development and a catalyst for innovation, economic diversification, and sustainable growth.

While our main focus is the progress made in strengthening Liberia's human capital, it is important to also shed light on the infrastructure developmental projects initiated by China in Liberia.

Over the last 20 years, China's footprints are visible in Liberia. From the Jackson F. Doe regional referral hospital in the central region of Nimba County, the Capitol building annex which housed our national legislature (seat of parliament), the renovation of our largest sports stadium (SKD), the ministerial complex that

housed government ministries and agencies, the annex of the national vocational training center, the construction of the Roberts International Airport Terminal, and recent cooperation agreement for the construction of two overhead bridges among others are tangible that can be felt and touch by Liberians.

Educational Cooperation: A Catalyst for Development

One of the most important aspects of China's support for Liberia is the provision of scholarships to Liberian students, enabling them to pursue higher education in a variety of fields. These scholarships cover several fields, including medicine, engineering, agriculture, and information technology, which are key sectors for Liberia's development. By receiving training in these fields, Liberian students not only gain valuable knowledge and skills but are also exposed to new perspectives and technologies that they can bring back to their home country.

As one of the beneficiaries of the China-Liberia partnership through FOCAC, I earned my postgraduate degree from Renmin University of China; I hope to pursue a PhD by next autumn. I cannot say much about how grateful I am to the People's Republic of China for its cooperation with my country Liberia, because China is teaching us how to fish instead of giving us fish.

Moreover, these educational opportunities offered by China help counter the brain drain phenomenon that developing countries often experience. China empowers Liberians to contribute significantly to their country's development upon their return through

education and skills acquisition. The ripple effects of such education programs are profound as they contribute to developing a more capable workforce capable of meeting the challenges facing Liberia.

Short-term Technical Training: Closing the Skills Gap

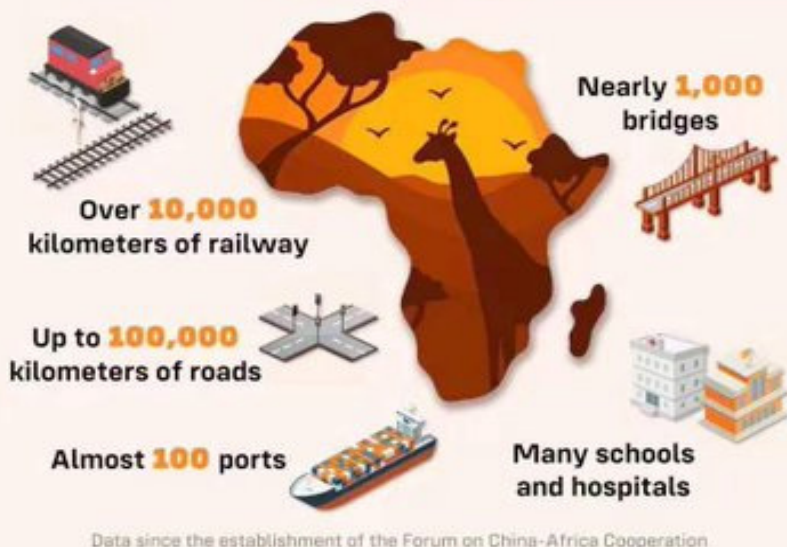
In addition to longer-term academic programs, China has contributed significantly to the development of Liberia's human resources through short-term technical training programs. These programs target specific skills gaps in various industries and are tailored to the immediate needs of the Liberian economy. From the medical fields to engineering, security to journalism, these trainings provide individuals with the tools necessary to increase productivity and innovation in their sectors.

Short-term training programs are especially beneficial in fast-changing sectors such as technology and agriculture, where staying up to date with the latest techniques and tools is important. China's efforts to provide these learning opportunities demonstrate a pragmatic approach to development assistance that prioritizes sustainable skills transfer over short-term solutions.

China's "Dialogue and Action" Approach: A Model for Partnership

China's relationship with Liberia is an example of a "dialogue and action" approach, thus promising assistance and taking concrete action. This type of partnership is characterized by genuine cooperation, capacity building, and respect for each country's unique development path. Focusing on practical and impactful contributions, China has set a precedent for international

What China has built in Africa



partnerships, prioritizing long-term benefits over temporary gains.

China's contribution to Liberia demonstrates its broader efforts to support Africa's rise on the world stage. This effort goes beyond just aid, aiming to empower countries to become self-reliant by strengthening key development sectors. China's investments in education and technical training are aligned with this vision, with a focus on providing individuals with the skills needed for innovation and leadership.

The Way Forward: Sustaining Partnerships for Future Growth

As Liberia looks to the future, it is important to recognize and build on the foundations laid through international collaboration, especially with countries such as China. Effective partnerships serve as catalysts for development, transforming economies, uplifting societies, and ultimately shaping a better future for all its people.

To maintain this momentum, Liberia must

continue its dialogue with China and other international partners and forge strategic alliances aligning with national development goals. The expertise and resources available through these partnerships will enable Liberia to further improve its education infrastructure, develop new industries, and create opportunities for innovation.

However, in conclusion, the People's Republic of China's contribution to Liberia's human resource development is not just aid, but also an investment in Liberia's future resilience and prosperity. Valuing and building on these efforts will help Liberia toward more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future goals.

Let us celebrate this partnership and continue to nurture it to ensure that the legacy of today's investments in education and skills development blossoms into tomorrow's success stories ■

Nicholas Nimley is the Managing Editor of the South Liberia Post in Liberia.

TAZARA: An Example of Sustained Sino-African Economic Cooperation



David Rugero

China has been collaborating with different African countries since the early days of pre-independence. The establishment of diplomatic relations between China and newly independent African nations occurred primarily between 1960s and 1970, a period that can be traced back to the Bandung Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, from April 18 to 24, 1955. This significant conference convened representatives from 29 Asian and African countries, including prominent figures such as Jawaharlal Nehru (India), Gamal Abdel

Nasser (Egypt), Sukarno (Indonesia), and Zhou Enlai (China). The primary objective of this gathering was to foster economic and cultural collaboration while simultaneously opposing colonialism and neocolonialism within their respective regions.

The objectives of the Bandung conference encompassed promoting Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation, opposing colonialism and neocolonialism by any nation, encouraging

independence movements within the colonies in Africa and Asia, and deliberating on peace and the role of the developing world in the context of the Cold War.

The "Ten Principles of Bandung" were approved at the conference. They emphasized the significance of upholding sovereignty and territorial integrity, abstaining from interference in internal matters, advocating for racial equality, and fostering peaceful coexistence. These principles laid the groundwork for establishing the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961.



The formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) signaled a pivotal moment in the collective voice of newly independent nations and those in pursuit of independence. It underscored the significance of collaboration among developing countries, signifying a watershed in the annals of international relations by accentuating the value of unity among developing nations.

Premier Zhou Enlai's visit to Africa in 1963-1964 represented a significant diplomatic endeavor that underscored China's collaboration with the African continent during the Cold War era. T

his diplomatic mission was characterized by China's endorsement of African nations' efforts to combat colonialism and imperialism. Premier Zhou sought to foster solidarity with newly independent countries and those still struggling for independence.

The primary objective of the tour was to initiate and reinforce diplomatic and economic ties between China and African nations.

China has provided economic aid and technical support to several African nations, encompassing infrastructure development, agricultural assistance, and specialized training. This underscores China's dedication to fostering African progress. Premier Zhou Enlai championed the Non-Aligned Movement and the solidarity of Third World countries, advocating for principles such as mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in internal matters, equality, and mutual benefit. This initiative facilitated cultural exchanges and interpersonal connections, nurturing enhanced comprehension and goodwill between China and African states.



Photo Credit: Xinhua

By engaging with African leaders, Zhou Enlai sought to strengthen Sino-African relations and the tour highlighted China's proactive foreign policy approach of mutual cooperation and solidarity among the developing world.

The Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) project is one of the most significant early Chinese aid projects to African countries, exemplifying China's commitment to infrastructure development in Africa during the Cold War era. TAZARA has a rich history of evolution that faced numerous challenges. The idea for the railway was proposed in the 1960s to connect the landlocked Zambia with the Tanzanian port of Dar es Salaam, facilitating access to international markets. After being rejected by Western financiers, Tanzania and Zambia turned to China. In 1967, China

agreed to finance and construct the railway, seeing it as an opportunity to support economic development in the Southern African nations but also playing a significant role in helping anti-colonial movements in Africa.

Construction of TAZARA began in 1970 and was completed in 1975. The railway spans about 1,860 kilometers (1,160 miles) from Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. It officially opened in 1976.

In its early years, TAZARA was crucial in transporting goods, especially Zambian copper, bypassing routes controlled by apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The railway initially benefited from Chinese engineers and managers who ensured smooth operations and maintenance. When the Chinese left, the railway encountered maintenance and

management challenges.

Between the 1990s and 2000s, the railway faced economic challenges. The end of the Cold War and the decline in copper prices affected TAZARA's profitability. The railway suffered from underinvestment, leading to deteriorating infrastructure and unreliable services as well as administrative challenges.

However, China has recently supported the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) to improve its operations. China has committed to investing over \$1 billion to rejuvenate the TAZARA railway. This investment aims to modernize the aging infrastructure and enhance the railway's efficiency, ultimately stimulating regional trade and economic opportunities.

The China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), a subsidiary of the China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC), is conducting a comprehensive review of TAZARA's operational and business models. This review, aims to provide an optimized rehabilitation proposal to improve the railway's capacity and efficiency. Local engineers and other technical staff to run the SGR have been trained both locally and in China to acquire the necessary skills for the smooth operation of the railway.

An initiative to modernize the railway to a standard gauge has been undertaken. A 300km section of the Tanzania's Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) project connecting Dar es Salaam port city to Morogoro have for the first time electrified line. The initial SGR train services between Dar-es-Salaam and Morogoro commenced on June 14, 2024, while regular operations between Dar-es-Salaam and Dodoma started on July 25,

2024, according to Tanzania government officials. The maiden SGR electric train services from Dar to Morogoro consisted of 14 carriages, including 11 standard class and three business class, carrying a total 1,400 passengers.



The SGR will connect strategic locations such as industrial parks, inland container depots, and major population centres. This connectivity is expected to reduce reliance on the current road trucking system, which is more prone to accidents...

The SGR electric trains are expected to cut the travel time between Dar and Morogoro to about two hours from the current four-hour journey by bus and five hours by train on the old meter gauge railway. This development is particularly welcome given the project's history of persistent delays since 2017. The SGR aims to connect Tanzania with neighboring Burundi, fostering regional trade and integration, movement of good and people as well as boosting industrial development.

The SGR will connect strategic locations such as industrial parks, inland container depots, and major population centres. This connectivity is expected to reduce reliance on the current road trucking system, which

is more prone to accidents and largely to blame for high road maintenance costs. The anticipated reduction in road traffic may also lead to a decrease in transportation-related emissions, contributing to environmental conservation efforts.

In mid-July, the board of directors of TAZARA approved targets of transporting 350,000 tons of cargo and ferrying 3,430,000 passengers in 2024-2025. The board projected 55.19 million U.S. dollars in total income for the 2024/2025 financial year.

The revenue will be reaped from various services including freight, parcels, passenger traffic, open access fees, and other non-operational activities. The board was also briefed on the ongoing efforts to revitalize TAZARA with the involvement of investors from China.

It is estimated that over 48 years of operation, the TAZARA railway has

transported over 30 million tons of cargo and carried more than 40 million passengers, playing a pivotal role in the economic operation and development of Tanzania, Zambia, and neighboring countries.

On the sidelines of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Beijing on September, Presidents Xi Jinping of China, Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania and Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

These efforts to modernize TAZARA are part of China's ongoing initiatives under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), reflecting its commitment to promoting development cooperation, modernization and connectivity in Africa leading to improved economies and the living standards of the people ■

David Rugero is the author of "End of Black Folly", a novel about cultural revival crusade by Black Africans and African Diaspora.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), what is the quid pro quo?



Mweusi Karake

A few months ago, my eight year old grand daughter Tona, learned a new expression: “quid pro quo.” Since then she takes every opportunity to use and misuse it, especially when dealing with me on serious and very light issues. I may ask her to get me a glass of water and her reply would be “what is the quid pro quo”? I haven’t bothered going deeper in explaining that, “quid pro quo” is the act of doing something in exchange for something of equal value.

Instead in an attempt to improve her knowledge I have also told her that there is something called “Pro Bono” the latter does seem to interest her very much. I like her latest attitude of

knowing the saying goes that “there is no free Lunch.”

If eight year olds are beginning to understand that there is nothing for nothing, we should be asking ourselves what is in it for both parties - China and Africa. The theme for this year’s Summit is: “joining hands to advance modernisation and build a high level China-Africa Community with a shared future.”

The “quid pro quo” is clearly stated this year’s forum theme, especially the

last three words “a shared future.” Critics especially are breathing fire asking how a country could summon a whole continent and Africa responds.

First of all thanks to China’s resistance to colonialism, it a huge country geographically; more than 9.6 million square kilometers, bigger than the mighty USA and much more than the UK with a less than one 10th of Algeria with 2,381,741 sq km, yet I have never heard any one complain about US –Africa Summit, nor UK Africa Summit, despite her size.

We could also talk about the population. On top of that, China has a population of more than 1.4 billion

people; on the contrary UK has just a population of 68 Million. That is less than one third of the population of Nigeria. Actually if critics were honest to themselves, they ought to ask “what is China looking for in Africa; or better still “what is the quid pro quo” for Africa too must had a pull factor?

Population and demography

Population does matter. It didn't matter in the past but it matters today and tomorrow. Africa in terms of the population Africa like China has above 1.4 billion people. That population in addition to African population is young, and is shedding off the colonial mentality of adoring western models. Being the youngest continent, it means that it has the biggest population that is able and willing to learn and adapt to new outlook and way of life. Africa middle class is rising fast, whereas the global north in particular North America and Europe the middle class is shrinking due to several factors such as monopoly capitalism that has put wealth in the hands of the few, and aging population that is supported by fewer and fewer young people.

The young growing middle class in Africa has basics that they are looking for. A beautiful affordable car, household appliances, TV, fridge, cooker etc. Middle class of my age waited for Japanese, Europeans to declare cars unworthy their roads or air pollution standards to afford a second hand car.

Today in Kigali the capital of Rwanda, a brand new DONGFENG/AEOLUS 5 seat SUV car costs \$26000, with favorable payment plans. A young graduate can get the entire needed house hold appliance cooker, fridge,

TV, micro wave etc, for as little as \$1000. His counterpart in the US will need almost double since the US will have slapped 40% protective taxes.

In Kigali, it has become literally a self-imposed rule that any new house has to have tiles thanks to affordable Chinese ceramics. African does not put any punitive taxes on Chinese good and neither does China. Why do I refer to the affordability of what is more luxury to our young graduates and growing middle class? It is no secret that a happy middle class is good for national economy and security.

China has remained Africa's largest trading partner and last year (2023) the trade volume reached a record 282.1 billion US



China has remained Africa's largest trading partner and last year (2023) the trade volume reached a record 282.1 billion US dollars, growing from US\$261 billion in 2022.

dollars, growing from US\$261 billion in 2022. Someone is going to scream “your middle class in promoting China's industries!” No, China is also importing from Africa agricultural produce and other resources, and indeed FOCAC serves as a channel to make such commitments. For example during the last FOCAC summit held in Dakar, Senegal in November 2021, China committed

to importing goods worth \$300 billion from Africa between 2022 and 2024. During the FOCAC Summit in September, Chinese president Xi Jinping pledged 360 billion Yuan (about 51 billion US dollars) to support ten partnership goals for China Africa modernization.

Harnessing the gifts of nature

With the exception of a few countries north of the Sahara, and the extreme southern Africa, the rest of Africa, enjoys 365 days of sunshine a year. China leads the world in wind and solar energy, with twice as much capacity under construction as the rest of the world combined. So in this field of renewable energy, China and Africa have an excellent symbiotic relationship. We the sun, they have the most affordable solar panels. No need to drill no need for fuel refineries, so Africa has the energy, China gets the market for the solar panels. I don't think this is too difficult science to explain even to my 8 year old granddaughter Tona, where the quid pro quo lies.

My city Kigali is full of 100% public electrical buses. Imagine a situation where we are able to put up recharging solar power station using our nature given sunshine at the equator. Almost zero cost, save for the infrastructure. Should any sane leader put prohibitive taxes to these facilities? Added to electric buses, estimates suggest that

there are as many as 110,000 motorcycles in Rwanda of which 70,000 are used taxis known in Rwanda as “moto-taxis”. Currently, around 30,000 motorcycles are thought to be operating in Kigali, Rwanda capital city. Of late the most popular are Chinese made electrical bikes. Beside almost zero carbon emissions, think of that number of jobs created, and the multiplier effect. Restaurants that feed these young men and women “motari” as they known in Rwanda, and several dependents.

China does not come to Africa with a paternalistic approach, preaching to Africa about democracies and “our way of life” as part of the pre-condition for cooperation. China and Africa are not just forging a shared future but also a shared present and indeed have a shared historical past. China played a big role in Africa's liberation struggles and in return Africa was instrumental in readmission of China into the UN. Africa does not forget friends, and China does not take friendship for granted. The theme of the FOCAC Summit: “Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future,” is evidence enough that there is a huge “quid pro quo” from China-Africa Cooperation ■

Mweusi Karake, is a regional integration advocate and former head of public relations/cooperate communication at COMESA.

Importance of FOCAC to Africa



George Nsamba

The recent Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit that was held from September 4 to 6, 2024, in Beijing-China, is just one of those meetings scheduled to be held every three years. The attendance at this meeting is evidence of the importance that FOCAC has for Africa.

Apart from delegates from China, the summit was attended by 53 heads of states and government who brought with them various ministers ranging from foreign affairs to economic cooperation. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission was also in attendance which emphasizes how

important this summit is for Africa in general.

Attendances aside, let us look deeper why FOCAC is important for Africa. When FOCAC was started in the year 2000, it was meant to cement the relationship between China and African states which for so long were just being exploited by Western powers who on the whole happened to be former colonisers of most of the African states. The relationship between China and Africa though did not start in the year 2000.

Africa and China have had a long relationship going as far back as the days when these African countries were trying to liberate themselves from their colonial masters.

China was always present as a shoulder to cry on and FOCAC was just to take this relationship further in ways that are meant to develop Africa states.

One just has to look at some West African former French colonies to see the extent of exploitation that has continued long after these countries were said to be given independence yet they get locked into agreements that are only meant to keep exploiting

these countries endlessly. Recent coups and government changes in this part of Africa has come as a means to free these countries out of the grip of the western colonisers.

China on the other hand has never colonised Africa and the relationship between China and Africa is not that of master and slave which most African countries have endured from their former colonisers for far too long but that of mutual respect, equality, and centred on win-win cooperation. President Xi Jinping in his key note address said that “China-



FOCAC has been a great injection of development in Africa hinged on infrastructure development, industrialisation gearing towards sustainable development

Africa cooperation seeks to jointly advance just, equitable, open, win-win and mutually beneficial modernization that puts the people first”. This has been evidenced at all summit meetings that have taken place since the advent of FOCAC.

Despite being rich in natural resources, Africa has been impoverished by former colonisers to the point where infrastructure development in most Africa countries was pushed to the back row due to lack of development finance which if borrowed from the former colonisers would come with

more strings attached in favour of former colonisers.

FOCAC has been a great injection of development in Africa hinged on infrastructure development, industrialisation gearing towards sustainable development. The following statistics tell a big story of how China through FOCAC has been an anchor of Africa development:

During FOCAC II which was held in Addis Ababa in 2002, China introduced a zero-tariff measure for Africa. This is significant because African goods are not competitive in Western markets due to high tariffs that are imposed on these goods. This limits the foreign income that African countries would gain from exporting their goods which leaves them in perpetual poverty.

FOCAC III which took place in Beijing in 2006, resulted in China pledging \$5 billion in financing to African countries and between then and now, a number of infrastructure projects have been completed in a number of African countries funded mainly by cooperation between China and Africa. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is one of the results of the cooperation but FOCAC is taking the cooperation a step further.

In the FOCAC summit which was held in Sharm el-Sheikh Egypt in 2009, China again pledged \$10bn funding. In the summit of 2012, held in Beijing China, \$20 billion was pledged to go towards addressing peace and security in Africa and in the 2015 meeting held in Johannesburg-South Africa, is where \$69billion was pledged to go towards the Belt and Road initiative, while \$60bn was pledged in the 2018 meeting held in Beijing, and \$40billion was pledged in 2021



in Dakar Senegal.

In the 2024 FOCAC meeting that was held in Beijing, China pledged to invest around \$50.7 billion in financing for Africa.

The amount of financing that China has invested in Africa in a short space of time far bypasses what former colonisers claim to have invested in Africa if any, in the last half a century. The usual question asked is whether the West or former African colonisers invested in Africa or whether Africa has in fact developed the west in the form of resources that have been plundered by these developed countries.

It is interesting to note the urgency of the western countries to “visit and cement ties” with Africa every time these FOCAC meetings are due to take place, while the real strategy is to contain China by spoiling the good relationship with Africa.

Africa has long wanted to trade on a basis of equal partnership and respect but

were getting conditions pushed down their throats every time they wanted funding either debt finance or grants but this is no more with the existence of FOCAC. The ideas of the global south cooperation is another factor that Africa will benefit from in order to get out of a one directional relationship with the west that has persisted for far too long.

Given the investments that have come and are still coming towards Africa through FOCAC, one can only see that Africa is developing its infrastructure, being involved in peace missions, developing self-worth through mutual cooperation with China. This is a relationship that is developing from strength to strength and African industrialisation will be on the rise which will assist Africa countries in being less reliant to imports from the west ■

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Learning from China's Development: Insights for Africa



Gerald Mbanda

China's remarkable economic transformation over the past few decades stands as a testament to what focused policies, strategic planning, and sustained efforts can achieve. From being a largely agrarian society to becoming the world's second-largest economy, China's development trajectory offers valuable insights for Africa as it seeks to navigate its own path to sustainable growth and development.

One of the key lessons Africa can draw from China's experience is the importance of long-term planning and consistency in policy implementation.

China's leaders set ambitious goals and implemented policies that supported industrialization, infrastructure development, and technological advancement over several decades. This continuity provided businesses with the confidence to invest and plan for the future, contributing to China's rapid economic expansion.

Infrastructure development played a crucial role in China's growth story and remains a priority for many African

nations today. China invested heavily in building roads, bridges, ports, and other critical infrastructure, which not only facilitated economic activities but also connected remote regions to urban centers. This infrastructure development was complemented by investments in education and healthcare, laying the groundwork for sustained human capital development.

Moreover, China's proactive approach to international trade and investment has enabled it to become a global economic powerhouse. By opening up its economy to foreign investment and actively engaging in international trade, China created

opportunities for its businesses to access global markets and technologies. Africa can similarly benefit from fostering a conducive environment for investment, enhancing trade relations, and participating actively in regional and international trade agreements.

China's emphasis on innovation and technology has been another key driver of its economic success. The country has invested heavily in research and development (R&D), leading to breakthroughs in various sectors such as telecommunications, renewable energy, and artificial intelligence. African countries can leverage China's experience by investing in R&D, fostering innovation hubs, and promoting collaboration between academia, industry, and government.

Additionally, China's experience highlights the importance of agriculture in economic development. Initially, agriculture formed the backbone of China's economy, providing food security and employment for millions. Over time, China implemented policies to modernize its agricultural sector, increase productivity, and enhance rural development. African nations, with their vast agricultural potential, can learn from China's agricultural policies and investments to improve food security, increase rural incomes, and stimulate broader economic growth.

Furthermore, China's experience with urbanization offers valuable lessons for Africa as it experiences rapid urban growth.



China managed urbanization by planning and developing cities that could accommodate population influxes, providing housing, infrastructure, and essential services to urban residents. African countries can benefit from adopting sustainable urban planning practices to address the challenges posed by rapid urbanization, such as housing shortages, traffic congestion, and environmental degradation.

However, it is essential to recognize that while China's development model offers valuable insights, Africa must tailor these lessons to its unique circumstances and challenges. The continent is diverse, with varying levels of development, governance structures, and resource endowments. Therefore, African nations should prioritize policies that are inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of their populations.

Moreover, China's development has not been without challenges, including environmental degradation, income inequality, and social disparities. African countries can learn from China's experiences in managing these challenges, ensuring that economic growth is equitable,

environmentally sustainable, and benefits all segments of society.

China's development offers valuable insights for Africa as it seeks to achieve sustainable growth and development. By emphasizing long-term planning, infrastructure development, innovation, and inclusive growth, African nations can overcome their development challenges and unlock their full economic potential. However, adapting these lessons to local contexts and addressing specific challenges will be crucial in realizing Africa's developmental aspirations.

Learning from China's development is not about replicating a model but understanding the underlying principles and adapting them to Africa's unique circumstances. With careful planning, strategic investments, and a commitment to inclusive development, African nations can chart a path towards prosperity and improve the quality of life for their citizens in the decades to come ■

Gerald Mbanda is a researcher and publisher on China- Africa Cooperation.

Closing Remarks by Ambassador Wang Xuekun at the FOCAC webinar



H.E. Amb. Wang Xuekun

Dear friends, thank you for your wonderful remarks from different perspectives. Your ideas are very beneficial for deepening China-Africa cooperation, jointly advancing modernization, and promoting unity in the Global South. Your words also further show that China is a natural companion, sincere friend and all-weather partner to Africa. I would like to summarize three keywords out of the discussion.

First is partnership. China-Africa partnership features win-win cooperation. Since the independence and

liberation struggle, China and Africa have always been standing together; entering the new century, we have been supporting each other in various occasions; now we will continue to work together with sincerity and equality, towards a modernization path that suits our respective national conditions. Today we see a second awakening of the Africa continent. I believe the China-Africa partnership

featuring win-win cooperation will make more contribution to the world.

Second is initiative. We have discussed the importance of the three global initiatives. The development of Africa and China are fundamental to the development of the world. The 24-year journey of FOCAC have been showing the determination of China and Africa in contributing to the world's development and stability and pulling together the joint efforts of developing countries. In this time of global changes and uncertainty, China and Africa

need to together take the initiative and instill more certainty and stability to the world.

Third is action. The “ten partnership actions” proposed by President Xi Jinping in the FOCAC Summit this year, capture and reflect the demand and need of Africa and China. The proposal covers traditional areas of infrastructure, agriculture, trade and investment, but also new areas like renewable energy, green development, smart education, etc. I hope we all could contribute more wisdom and efforts to implement the “ten partnership actions” and translate the proposal into action.

Dear friends,

All of you here have important influence in your country and region. I hope we can work together to do more for the well-being of our peoples and national development of our two continents.

Let's join together, to call for true multilateralism, for a more fair and just international order, for a more peaceful and beautiful world future, and for building a community with a shared future for mankind!

Thank you■

China and Rwanda agree on the Implementation of the Three Global Initiatives

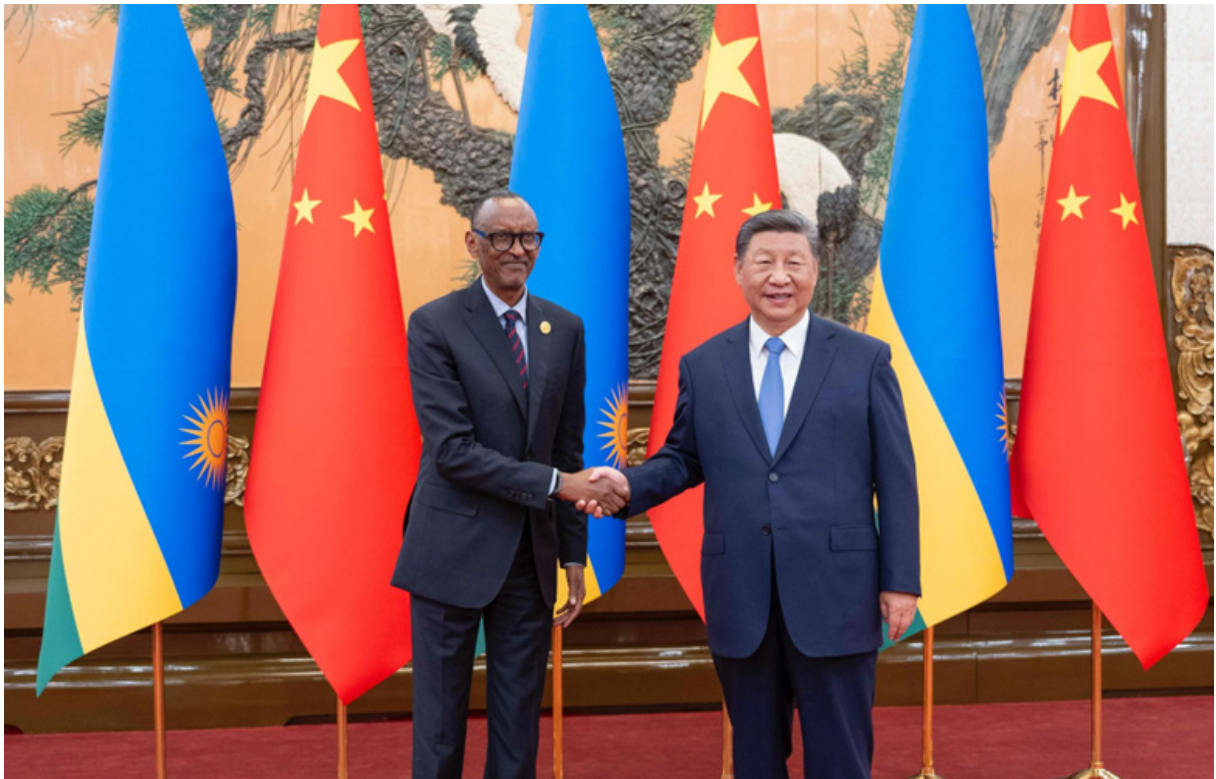


Photo Credit: Xinhua

On the sidelines of the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in September, 2024, the President of the People's Republic of China H.E. Xi Jinping, and the President of the Republic of Rwanda,

H.E. Paul Kagame, held talks on bilateral, regional and international issues of common interest. The talks focused particularly on the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Civilization

Initiative (GCI). Both sides decided to elevate the bilateral relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership. Below is a comprehensive Joint Statement signed between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of

Rwanda on the Implementation of the Three Global Initiatives:

One. Both sides agreed that in over 50 years of diplomatic relations, China and Rwanda have deepened their traditional friendship, strengthened political mutual trust, achieved fruitful results from practical cooperation, and closely coordinated on international affairs, benefiting both countries and the two peoples significantly. They spoke highly of the progress in China-Rwanda relations since President Paul Kagame's state visit to China in 2017 and President Xi Jinping's state visit to Rwanda in 2018. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the political mutual support and win-win economic cooperation between the two countries.

Facing global challenges, both sides agreed to collaborate in building a community with a shared future for mankind, advocating for an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world of lasting peace, universal security, and shared prosperity. They support an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. The Rwandan side highly appreciates and actively supports the GDI, the GSI and the GCI proposed by President Xi Jinping, which provide new opportunities for the development of the Global South and draw a new vision for international progress. The Rwandan side expressed readiness to jointly implement these initiatives with China.

Both sides agreed to enhance comprehensive cooperation based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. They emphasized mutual support on issues of core interests and major concern, a

cornerstone of China-Rwanda relations. Both sides reiterated their opposition to external interference in each other's internal affairs and pledged support for each other's independent development paths suited to national realities. The Chinese side reaffirmed its firm support for Rwanda in safeguarding national unity. The Rwandan side reaffirmed its firm adherence to the one-China principle. Rwanda recognizes that there is but one China in the world, Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory and the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China, and Rwanda supports all efforts by the Chinese government to achieve national reunification. The Rwandan side believes that, like all countries, the People's Republic of China has the right to deal with its internal sovereign matters independently.

Two. The Rwandan side welcomes the GDI proposed by President Xi Jinping for its role in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and is willing to join the Group of Friends of the GDI and sign the Memorandum of Understanding on Promoting Implementation of the GDI with the Chinese side. The Rwandan side believes that the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China is a major opportunity for China-Africa relations, and that China's further deepening reform and opening-up will provide cooperation, growth and market opportunities for Africa. The Rwandan side is willing to be China's companion on the path to modernization, supporting each other in exploring a modernization model based on their respective cultural characteristics, development needs, and science, technology

and innovation.

Three. The Rwandan side supports the GSI proposed by President Xi Jinping. Both sides appreciate each other's positive role in the UN peacekeeping affairs, and are willing to strengthen political consultations and enhance political mutual trust between the two countries in view of promoting friendship and cooperation. The Chinese side strongly supports African countries in addressing African issues with African solutions.

China views the Great Lakes region as a community with shared future and security, endorsing trust and peace through the Nairobi Process and Luanda Roadmap. The Rwandan side appreciates China's efforts for African peace and security and is committed to collaborating with China for peace and stability across the continent.

China and Rwanda are ready to jointly implement the GSI, and strengthen cooperation in areas such as climate change, cybersecurity, food security, disaster prevention and mitigation, and personnel security. Both sides agreed to effectively protect the safety and lawful rights and interests of each other's citizens, institutions and projects on their territories. China and Rwanda condemn all forms of terrorism, oppose any terrorist attacks against civilians or double standards exercised in the fight against terrorism, and are committed to jointly fighting the spread of genocide ideology and hate speech in all their forms and to upholding highest human values of embracing diversity.

Four. The Rwandan side highly appreciates the GCI proposed by President Xi Jinping for

respecting the diversity of world civilizations, carrying forward the common values of humanity, advocating the importance of inheritance and innovation of civilizations, and strengthening international cultural and people-to-people exchanges and cooperation. They spoke highly of the two countries' achievements in human rights and fruitful cooperation in areas such as culture, health, tourism, education, youth, and women's development.

The two sides are committed to further implementing this initiative. The two sides are willing to jointly implement the GCI, further expand people-to-people and cultural exchanges, enhance people-to-people friendship and strengthen the bond between their peoples, by stepping up the cooperation in the fields of radio, television, newspaper and online media, deepening exchanges between the media of the two countries over news coverage, programme production and personnel exchanges, encouraging and supporting the development of Confucius Institutes, Confucius Classes and other Chinese language teaching institutions in Rwanda, and enhancing vocational and technical training cooperation between the two countries.

Five. Both sides decided to take the 2024 FOCAC Beijing Summit as an opportunity to establish a China-Rwanda joint working group to accelerate the implementation of the GDI, the GSI and the GCI, fostering deeper China-Rwanda Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and contributing to a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future ■

Source: www.gov.cn

President Kagame commends China as a reliable partner for Rwanda and Africa



Photo Credit: Xinhua

Prior to his departure for the China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit which took place early September 2024 in Beijing, the Rwandan President Paul Kagame commended China as a reliable partner for Rwanda and Africa. President Kagame made

the remarks in an interview with Xinhua News Agency. Below are excerpts of the interview specifically on the relationship of China with Rwanda and Africa:

Rwanda and China share a history of overcoming immense challenges to achieve significant progress. Both countries have shown

resilience, determination, and a commitment to self-reliance. In terms of governance, we both prioritize long-term planning, social stability, and the well-being of our citizens. We have visited several places in China: Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Beijing, among others, and

what impresses me most is the scale of development and modernization, particularly in infrastructure and technology, which serves as an inspiration for Rwanda's own development journey.

We have deepened our cooperation with China across various fields, including trade, agriculture, green development, and digitalization. China has become one of Rwanda's largest trading partners, and our collaboration has led to tangible results, especially in poverty reduction and infrastructure development.

The Belt and Road Initiative has played a crucial role in enhancing Rwanda's infrastructure and promoting sustainable development. Projects like roads in different corners of our country and in the city of Kigali, IPRC North in Musanze, and the Nyabarongo II Hydropower Plant have had a direct impact on improving livelihoods and supporting economic growth. Looking forward, we see potential for further cooperation in areas such as the digital economy, renewable energy, and agricultural modernization.

Rwanda has much to offer in terms of tourism, and we are keen to welcome more Chinese tourists. To enhance mutual understanding and awareness, both governments and media can play a pivotal role. We should promote cultural exchanges, educational partnerships, and tourism initiatives. By highlighting the beauty of Rwanda and the hospitality of its people, we can attract more visitors from China, thereby strengthening our bilateral cultural ties.

The FOCAC has been a key platform for deepening the partnership between China

and Africa. The expanded cooperation framework presented by President Xi in 2018 has indeed met our expectations, particularly in areas like infrastructure development and digital connectivity. Chinese tourists and entrepreneurs can now travel to Rwanda and receive visas upon arrival. As for this year's summit, we look forward to further strengthening our cooperation, especially in new and emerging fields, ensuring that our partnership continues to benefit both China and Africa.



Rwanda has much to offer in terms of tourism, and we are keen to welcome more Chinese tourists. To enhance mutual understanding and awareness, both governments and media can play a pivotal role

The claims of "debt traps" and "new colonialism" are often unfounded and reflect a misunderstanding of the nature of China-Africa cooperation. Rwanda, like many other African countries, values its partnership with China, which is based on mutual respect and shared interests. Rather than being dictated by external narratives, we believe in evaluating partnerships based on their actual outcomes. Our approach to cooperation is one that emphasizes

sovereignty, self-reliance, and the pursuit of win-win outcomes.

China's approach to Africa, characterized by sincerity, real results, amity, and good faith, resonates strongly with Rwanda's values. Rwanda had the honor to host President Xi in 2018 when I was Chair of the African Union Commission. This commitment speaks to the vigor and reliability of our relations. China has proven to be a reliable friend and partner, supporting Africa's development without imposing its will. This model of cooperation is one that we deeply appreciate and seek to continue.

As the voices of the Global South grow stronger on the international stage, it is essential for China and Africa to continue to strengthen their unity and cooperation. China's commitment to being a member of the Global South and aligning its interests with those of developing countries is commendable. Together, we can work to ensure that our collective voice is heard in multilateral forums, advocating for a more just and equitable global order.

The Chinese-style modernization is indeed something we observe with great interest. China's model of development, characterized by long-term planning, strong

state involvement, and an emphasis on infrastructure and technology, offers inspiration for Rwanda. However, the challenge for Rwanda is to adapt these experiences to our unique context. Localization of Chinese experiences requires careful consideration of our cultural, social, and economic realities. Nonetheless, the principles of self-reliance, innovation, and strategic planning that underpin China's success are universally applicable and can guide Rwanda's development trajectory.

In the next ten years, I envision Rwanda becoming a middle-income country, with a diversified economy driven by innovation, technology, and high-value sectors. On the global and African stage, Rwanda aspires to be a leader in peacekeeping, environmental sustainability, and regional integration. Rwanda will continue to play a constructive role in African development, contributing to the continent's progress and standing as a strong advocate for African interests in international forums ■

Source: Source: Xinhua News Agency

<https://english.news.cn/a/20240905/8c11b5b2c6ff4d128549e956179c3198/c.html>



Photo Credit: Xinhua

