

# CONTEMPORARY WORLD *NIGERIA*

当代世界

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*A Shared Future*



## China&Africa

- The Idea of Harmony or “He” in Chinese Philosophical and Social Outlook and the Dynamics of Performing Nigeria China Symphony
- Global Development Initiative and Building a China-Africa Community of Development with a Shared Future
- African Free Trade Area Construction and China-Africa Industrial Cooperation

# Inaugural Message

**W**e, the *Contemporary World Nigeria*, now meet our readers with the first issue in joint efforts of the Nigerian Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution and China's *Contemporary World* magazine.

The world today is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century. The international balance of power accelerates its adjustments, and the world situation is fraught with uncertainties. In response to the global challenges, it is the only right way for the world to uphold peace, development and win-win cooperation. China is the largest developing country in the world whereas Africa is a continent with the most developing countries, and between them there are similar historical experience and common mission that bind China and Africa closely together. Looking to the future, it is all the more necessary for Nigeria and China, and in a larger sense Africa and China to deepen comprehensive and all-domain cooperation, and progress steady forward in jointly building a community with a shared future for mankind.

“Sincere friendship and equality, win-win for mutual benefit and common development, fairness and justice, and progress with the times and openness and inclusiveness”, the above truly captures the relations between Africa and China working together in good and hard times over the past decades, standing for the core content of the everlasting spirit of Africa-China friendship and cooperation. It is in this great spirit that we cooperate in producing *Contemporary World Nigeria* in the hope to enrich the connotation of mutual learning between civilizations and enlarge the extension of Africa-China traditional friendship through strengthening academic research and cultural exchanges, and do our bit for sustained development of Africa-China relations.

Setting store by academic standard, thought-provoking insight and innovative development, *Contemporary World Nigeria* aims to publish indepth articles on Africa-China relations, African affairs, and international studies, and provide multiple perspectives and deep reflections on understanding and resolving international issues of all kinds. We believe that *Contemporary World Nigeria* will help promote Nigeria-China cooperation, enhance Nigeria-China friendship and Africa-China friendship at large, and make unique contributions to the building of an Africa-China community with a shared future and that of a community with a shared future for mankind.

The Editorial Board

September, 2022

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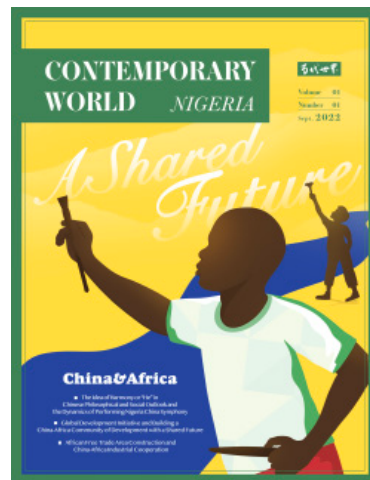
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# MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NIGERIA, H.E. GEOFFREY ONYEAMA

The collaboration between the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) and the *Contemporary World Magazine* of the Peoples Republic of China towards the publication of the *Contemporary World Nigeria* did not come to me as a surprise, considering the fact that the Nigeria-China relations continue to provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and building a better society.

I have watched with keen interest and great admiration at how IPCR has innovatively engaged and optimally harnessed the inherent benefits in the bilateral relations, with a view to facilitate and deepen conversations around its core mandate in the promotion of peace and security. This is in tandem with the core objective of the United Nations as well as the overarching commitment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to international peace and security.

As our world faces numerous challenges associated with the negative effect of climate change and globalisation such as irregular migration, terrorism and other transnational organised crimes, it has become imperative to use this kind of platforms to highlight the distinctive impacts of these menaces across the world. Since the international community, especially the global south, has witnessed the manifestation of these threats differently, it is important to avoid the impatience of generalising the causes, consequences and solutions.

Thus, credible platforms, such as the *Contemporary World Nigeria* would naturally serve as constructive avenues for the elaboration of not only the peculiarities of the causalities, but also the complex dynamics of factors sustaining them and people-centered options for the mitigation. Granting that there are certain global challenges that a one-size-fit-all solution would address them, but the significant percentage of the problems confronting communities in the global south are unique to each community and requires the input of experts within those communities.

In commending this partnership by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, which is a credible Agency under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is my hope that the editorial team would be audacious in raising voices for ordinary people in the global south. This will best be possible when the journal is accessed at the global policy levels and considered a veritable source of information to influence decisions and resolutions.

We are fully in support of this initiative and wish this partnership will facilitate constructive conversation around international cooperation, solidarity and mutual respect, for the benefit of our common humanity and shared future.

Congratulations!

# MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE CPC CENTRAL COMMITTEE, CHINA, H.E. LIU JIANCHAO

**O**n the occasion of the launching of the *Contemporary World Nigeria*, I wish to express my warmest congratulations!

In our long-standing relations, China and Africa have always understood and supported each other. An unbreakable fraternity was forged in our struggle for national liberation. We have embarked on a distinct path of cooperation in our journey toward development and revitalization. Together, we have written a splendid chapter of mutual assistance amidst complex changes, and set a shining example for building a new type of international relations.

China is the largest developing country in the world, while Nigeria is the largest economy and most populous country in Africa. Over the past half a century and more since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the traditional friendship between China and Nigeria has gone from strength to strength and produced bountiful results in practical cooperation. The two countries have also closely coordinated and cooperated with each other in international and regional affairs. In recent years in particular, under the guidance of President Xi Jinping and President Buhari, the China-Nigeria strategic partnership has demonstrated a sound momentum of development. Bilateral cooperation has become a fine example of international cooperation.

Culture is an important bond for enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between peoples of various countries. People-to-people and cultural exchanges serve as a crucial pillar for building a new type of partnership between China and Nigeria and between China and Africa. The sustained development of bilateral relations cannot be realized without the “hard” support of economic and trade cooperation or the “soft” facilitation of cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Over the past decades, people-to-people exchanges have injected a cultural dynamic and provided a strong driving force for the development of bilateral relations. In recent years, cultural interactions between China and Nigeria have taken on more diversified forms with ever more fruitful outcomes. The *Contemporary World Nigeria* is one of the latest outcomes of our ever deepening academic and cultural exchanges.

Work hand in hand, and we can expect a promising future. We hope that the *Contemporary World Nigeria* will become a key platform for cultural exchanges between our two countries and between China and Africa which will enhance our mutual understanding, facilitate academic and cultural interactions and give impetus to the development of state-to-state relations. We hope that the magazine will serve as an important channel for cultural mutual learning which will facilitate extensive dialogues, diversified communication, the interplay of ideas and innovative development. We hope it will act as a crucial bridge for people-to-people exchanges and interactions which will further consolidate our mutual trust, build consensus, expand cooperation and deepen our friendship.

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# THE IDEA OF HARMONY OR “HE” IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL OUTLOOK AND THE DYNAMICS OF PERFORMING NIGERIA CHINA SYMPHONY

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**Charles Onunaiju and Li Xuda**

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Cultural Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in Nigeria and also Director of  
the China Cultural Center in Nigeria.*

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**H**armony or “He” is a fundamental and central normative theme that has been clearly discernable in the trajectories of China’s long history, evolving and being refined through the ancient times to the present and featuring prominently in contemporary efforts at Chinese national rejuvenation.

From the point of Chinese history which spanned over 5000 years, the word “harmony” once carved on tortoise shells is not a freshly minted political jargon but a philosophical tradition. Philosopher Confucius (551BC-479 BC) expounded the philosophical concept of harmony without uniformity, which translates that though the world might be full of differences and contradictions, it is of supreme importance to strive for balance and achieve harmony.

An Italian missionary Matteo Ricci, who visited China more than 400 years ago, observed in his writings that the Chinese cherished harmony and peace.

The evolution of harmony in Chinese philosophical tradition contributes and enriches the philosophical outlook of historical dialectical materialism, which clarifies and provides the material foundation in the complex trajectories and gives social contents to harmony. Harmony is not an unattainable Hegelian ideal form of social mullion of perfection but a solid form to be achieved at various stages of human and societal development marked by peaceful coexistence and combinations of various elements working in complementarity and support of each other. Harmony

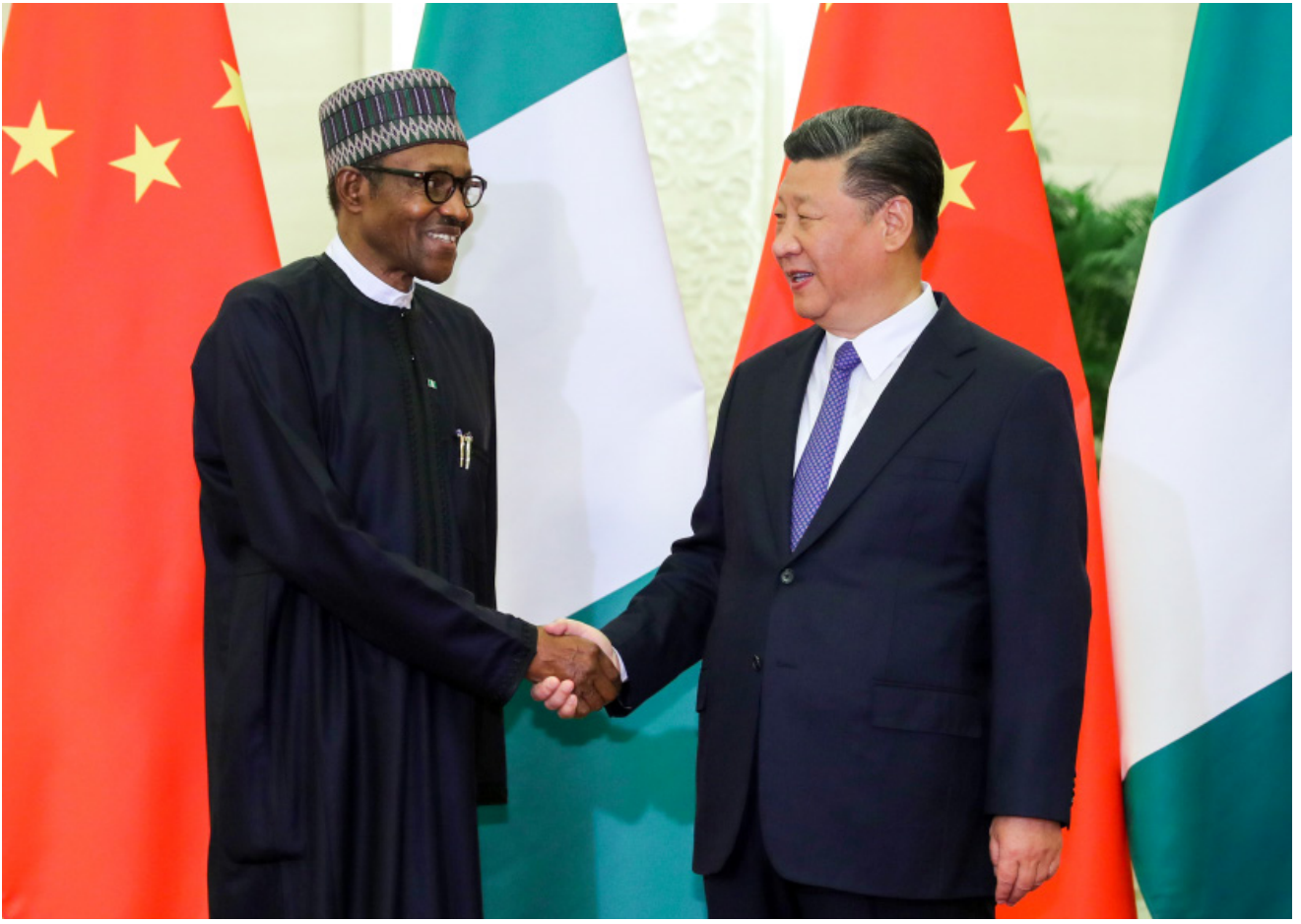
is achieved through unity in diversification and largely means coordination, combination, integration and peace among different elements in Chinese diplomacy; it is a reflection of Chinese people’s ethical principles.

The affable late premier Zhou Enlai played a vital role in formulating the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” in 1954, which are now the fundamental guidelines of China’s International relations. And in the early 1980s China’s foremost reform leader, the late Deng Xiaoping proposed the “independent foreign policy of peace”. Since the turn of the century, the Chinese leadership has pledged to take “a path of peaceful development”.

Former President Hu Jintao expounded copiously on the theme of harmony domestically and advocated the concept at the United Nation’s 60th anniversary summit, and proposed that multilateralism, mutually beneficial co-operation and the spirit of inclusiveness should be upheld to realize common prosperity and to build a world where all civilizations coexist harmoniously and accommodate each other.

At the end of 2005, the Chinese government for the first time issued a white paper on peaceful development. “Harmony” was described as the building of a peaceful and prosperous world considered the ultimate goal of China’s development.

Even up to this day, the world is by no means trouble free. Regional flash points, local conflicts and terrorist at-



*Chinese President Xi Jinping meets Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari in 2018, Beijing. (Photo/Xinhua)*

tacks continue to flare. Recently, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which killed millions of people and disrupted the global economy and social exchanges through unprecedented disruptions of international travels, is a reminder that all human beings are aboard the same ship and can only paddle to safety together. Despite this brutal reminder, some circles in some parts of the world still think in terms of zero sum game or winner takes all. Global economic recovery lacks speed and momentum. There is cloud of pessimism about the future of humanity. However, it is common sense that with increasing connectivity, no one, no matter how powerful or wealthy, can remain immune from negative factors when facing such a grim situation. President Xi Jinping's thought on diplomacy for a new era which is grounded on "He" or Harmony and cooperation illuminates a path of infinite optimism and should, as such, generate conversations and reflections and contribute to its global practice.

Former deputy director of China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) Mr. Ruan Zongze noted that the continuity in the strategies of different generations of Chinese leaders show that China, facing a complex and changing world, has always regarded peace and harmony as priority.

Within the context of the emerging framework of Nigeria – China cooperation in the building of a community with a shared future for all mankind, the concept of harmony has assumed more importance. The Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, H.E Cui Jianchun has already proposed an initiative with the outline of "sharing Chinese harmony and performing China-Nigeria symphony" in his introductions of the initiative. He explained that in traditional Chinese culture, people uphold the concept of harmony because it is generally accepted that harmony is the most important traditional value facilitating personal growth, social progress and a country's development. And concerning performing Nigeria-China symphony

he declared that symphony is the metaphorical reference to win-win cooperation between China and Nigeria. Explaining further the operational variables in the concept, Ambassador Cui Jianchun posited that at the level of citizens and nature, we advocate kindness and harmony with the aim to achieve the goal of “harmony in coexistence”, adding that both China and Nigeria have abundant human resources and vast natural resources. He therefore urged that guiding, encouraging, educating and supporting everyone to be kind and respectful, adapting to and protecting nature are the prerequisites for performing China- Nigeria symphony. The performing of China- Nigeria symphony at several levels with distinct features can lead to specific goals. At the level of family and society, he counseled for happiness and friendliness with the hope to achieve the goal of “harmony in interpretation”, pointing out that happiness and friendliness are the foundation of social stability. He considered these important human categories which would help establish stable and harmonious society as the basic guarantee for performing China- Nigeria symphony. Building on the prerequisites of happiness and friendliness as the foundation for social stability, he extrapolated to the level of nation and culture and advocated unity and concordance with the hope to achieve the goal of “harmony in diversity” referencing to the broad diversities of China and Nigeria which are estimated to have 250 and 56 ethnicities respectively. The top Chinese diplomat to Nigeria added that these groups yearn for harmony and cultural integration and concluded that promoting unity and concordance between nation and culture is the real value of performing China- Nigeria symphony. Further articulating the trajectory of performing China- Nigeria symphony, H.E. Cui Jianchun posited that the peace and consonance would thrive at the level of country and governance and inevitably lead to the goal of achieving “harmony in development”. As the evolving trend of human aspirations moves to peace and collective security, China- Nigeria symphony would contribute to the global orchestra in promoting world peace and improving the quality of governance.

The powerful metaphor of Nigeria-China symphony evokes the image of the considerable mileage that Nigeria-China cooperation has attained in recent times in bilateral relations and the wider framework of China – Africa cooperation under the guidance of its effective and time honored mechanism of the Forum on China – Africa cooperation (FOCAC). Since its founding at the turn of this

century in 2000, the FOCAC process has phenomenally changed multilateral cooperation between China and African countries, generating tangible inputs to Africa’s important need for economic development, social stability and inclusive and sustainable growth.

The concept of harmony and even performing symphonies would be meaningless without creating the material conditions to sustain it. China’s long philosophical tradition of seeking harmony and peace took a turn of practical enrichment with the founding of New China on the broad united front of the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC). In constructing modern China, the leadership of the CPC has created material conditions to turn the philosophical tradition of harmony into a material force contributing to the current drive to Chinese national rejuvenation, transforming the long traditional concept of harmony into a practical roadmap for generating common prosperity. China has taken the tangible steps to share its concept of harmony in Africa, not as mere philosophical reflections and musings but supporting the material basis to advance it.

Harmony is a shared aspiration of persons, peoples or communities to coexist together but these aspirations are best served when the basis of sustenance is continuously reproduced to meet the ever growing needs of the society in which people and communities hope to coexist. The objective imperative to coexist and to achieve harmony is not obtained by mere wishing it but through continuous and sustained efforts to achieve it.

Performing Nigeria-China symphony to generate win-win outcomes has been continuously strengthened on several diverse pillars and the conditions of harmonious lyrics, arising from it, are the result of complimentary and vigorous efforts of both sides to advance it. Despite the phenomenal mileage it has reached, it is still a work in progress but has, as its guarantee, the strong political will and mutual respect of the leadership of the two sides. The ever expanding symphony between Nigeria and China has expanded to various sectors.

China, as the second largest economy in the world, has continued to play significant roles in the socio-economic and infrastructural development of Africa, in Nigeria in particular, over the years. It is without doubt that no other country has had such impact on the African continent as that of China. A.U.S.-based management consulting firm, in its report in 2017 based on field research, corroborated the fact that in several key sectors, spanning from infra-

structure to trade and investment, China is clearly in the lead of other countries in its engagement with Africa. Her presence is everywhere and the impact is enormous which an ordinary person on the street can feel.

Nigeria and China established diplomatic relations in 1971, a relationship that has spanned over fifty years and has been of mutual benefit to both countries. China has, within a short period and through focused leadership and domestically generated policy choices, transformed itself from a poor developing country into an increasingly prosperous major country. China has become the factory of the world, producing most of the manufactured goods of the world and now in cooperation with Africa in the field of industrial and production capacity creating local industrial capacities in Nigeria.

Since 1971, Nigeria and China have continued to achieve and witness fast growing pragmatic bilateral relations through strategic partnership. This by extension has great elements of strategic partnership which include sharing common values and interests; mutual understanding and respect; specific areas of interests; and commitment to promoting the interests of each other on a win-win basis.

Nigeria's membership of FOCAC and joining the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has further given impetus and increased opportunities for cooperation including connectivity, infrastructure, finance, trade and investment. In September, at the 2018 FOCAC meeting in Beijing, President Muhammadu Buhari acknowledged that Nigeria benefited from over five billion dollars' worth of projects from China. Through FOCAC and BRI, our partnership has resulted in the construction of the first urban rail system in West Africa with \$500 million. There is the 180 kilometers rail line connecting Abuja and Kaduna, which is a showcase of Chinese technology.

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has become an opportunity to further strengthen Nigeria-China strategic partnership and raise it to a new level. Chinese medical science and expertise were deployed to help Nigeria manage and curtail the crises as it did for other countries. Chinese support has been critical to Nigeria's fight against the pandemic. The Chinese government puts human lives first, and the Chinese responded to the pandemic in Nigeria with the same commitment as they did in China.

The Chinese government donated medical equipment to various government offices to help fight COVID-19 in Nigeria and other countries in Africa and the rest of the world. We are aware that year 2020 was an extraordinary

year in which China really showed that she is indeed a friend to Nigeria. In the common fight against COVID-19, China and Nigeria supported each other from the very beginning. President Muhammadu Buhari commended China's efforts in fighting against COVID-19 in his statement of solidarity. When the pandemic broke out in Nigeria, China was among the first to offer help, and has sent medical supplies and shared experience on treating COVID-19. The mutual support between China and Nigeria vividly proves that solidarity and cooperation is the most powerful weapon to defeat COVID-19.

China has shown that she is a worthy friend and a reliable partner of Nigeria in standing up to the challenges. It sent a high level official to Africa despite the pandemic. Over the past 30 years, China has always put Africa top on the agenda for the first foreign visits of Chinese leaders and high-level officials every year. The visit to Nigeria in January 2021 by His Excellency Wang Yi, the State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China, was historic and significant as this added color to the 50 years of friendship despite the scourge of the pandemic.

In the last fifty one years of diplomatic relations, Nigeria and China have witnessed thriving cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Thousands of Nigerians travel to China at various intervals for capacity building. Those trained Nigerians return back and begin to contribute to the well-being of the nation. There is enormous potential in the area of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Nigeria.

The number of Nigerian students studying in China rose greatly in recent times, which stands first in all African countries. Many of them are covered by a wide variety of scholarships, studying master and doctorate degrees in engineering, medicine, agriculture and other majors.

In the year 2000 at the first FOCAC conference, China declared the exemption of RMB10 billion worth of debts for relevant African countries. The 2018 Beijing Summit of FOCAC was another landmark as China again rolled out debt forgiveness and interest-free loans as a way of building trust and goodwill and lessening the financial burdens of poor African countries. China has built more than 6,000 kilometers of railways and roads in Africa, nearly 20 ports, more than 80 large power plants among others in terms of infrastructural development.

Nigeria as a country is a major beneficiary of this relationship under the FOCAC platform. The Chinese have carried out several infrastructural projects. Many Chi-

nese-funded projects have been successfully completed. Some of the projects include the 187 km Abuja-Kaduna standard gauge railway line which was commissioned in 2016. The 315 km Lagos-Ibadan railway line and the Itakpe-Warri railway line have also been commissioned.

In the history of the existence of the ECOWAS sub region, there has been no experience of light train, but the friendship has given birth to the Abuja urban light rail project which was commissioned in 2018. The light train is the first of its kind in West Africa as a whole. There are bountiful results in bilateral cooperation, such as the four airport projects in Abuja, Port Harcourt, Kano, and Enugu, with Abuja now enjoying brand new airport terminals, the Zungeru Hydropower Plant, Abuja Keffi-Lafia Makurdi Road, Lekki Deep sea port, Ogun Guangdong Free Trade Zone, Lekki free trade zone, to mention just a few. His Excellency Cui Jianchun said that the symphony produces great melody when harmonized. It is also logical that Nigeria, just like China, can attain giant development with great harmony across all sectors. China and Nigeria have rich cultures and enduring traditions, cultural diversity and mutual learning which are embedded in the lifeblood of both nations. The China-Nigeria relationship has spanned over 51 years and as such both countries have a lot to learn from each other.

Recently, the Chinese government also showed care for the well-being of Nigeria as a nation especially as we move gradually towards the general elections. Advice that brings about improvement and advancement only comes from friends who are sincere and loving. We see this demonstrated by China through her Ambassador to Nigeria.

His Excellency Cui Jianchun, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Nigeria, has called for harmony and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria, saying these are keys to development and integration in every society.

Bringing together the Nigeria-China symphony he believes would further enhance the people-to-people ties between both countries. In his words, "Today is a very important day for China and Nigeria and last year we have talked about building the China-Nigeria Five GIST GDP Strategy. So, relating to the people's connectivity, today we are sharing Chinese harmony and performing the Nigeria-China symphony. The logic is that in China, we value, cherish harmony and I think harmony is international, and in China we have a long history of practicing the idea. So, I try to get across the Chinese idea about harmony and its four elements; harmony in coexistence, harmony in integration, harmony in diversity and harmony in development".

There could be no advancement in any society without both capital and human development. The Chinese government has over the years developed capacities of Nigerians in various quarters which are now yielding fruits in driving our economy in the right direction. I will limit myself to just five aspects.

**1. Capacity building:** In 2019, the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) sent 60 of its engineers to China for four months training on manufacturing of transformers in Nigeria. A statement issued by NASENI said the training was targeted at establishing a fully indigenous transformer plant to be operated and managed by Nigerians with local content as priority. Those engineers would return to Nigeria to deploy different specializations acquired in China along the manufacturing line of transformer plant and High-Voltage Testing Lab. The establishment of Nigeria's indigenous transformers manufacturing plant would remove anomalies. In 2013, NASENI, through the Federal Government, signed an agreement with the Chinese Great Wall Industry Corporation (CGWIC).

**2. Technical training in the railways:** Through the established train services in Nigeria, lots of young Nigerians have been given well-paid employment. The large train station at Idu, Abuja Nigeria has been a harbor for employment for many Nigerians. The Abuja-Kaduna rail line and Abuja light rail were constructed by the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) under the Belt and Road Initiative. The Chinese also trained many young Nigerians to operate as drivers for the train. Fatimoh Abiola is the first woman in Nigeria that is licensed to drive a train. President Muhammadu Buhari officially declared the full operation of the Abuja light rail on the 12th of July, 2018. He said transport is a lifeline for cities; as such he was full of appreciation to the Chinese government. He acknowledged the high-quality project, and expresses his gratefulness to the Chinese government and people for their support for Nigeria's development. With the construction of the light rail, the local community has benefited tremendously as nearly 5,000 jobs have been created.

**3. Media exchanges:** The media plays pivotal roles in nation building. It serves as mirror of the society. The impact of the men and women of the media profession is critical as messages sent to the public can either make or mar the society; as such they need training and capacity building. In June 2018, over 400 delegates and senior government officials from 42 African countries were in Beijing for

the fourth Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation. The delegation from Nigeria is among the highest-level media participants. The Forum aims to enhance media cooperation and exchanges between China and Africa and boost the development of China-Africa ties in general. According to the former Deputy Minister of the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Director of National Radio and Television Administration, Mr. Nie Chenxi, China, under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, will continue to work for a win-win friendship with Africa, where all parties are satisfied with the developments and exchanges to ensure the long standing relationship is sustained. At the Forum, stakeholders from Nigeria and other African countries exchanged views with their Chinese counterparts on cooperation and the development of the media sector, with most calling for more support in the areas of digital broadcasting and content improvement. According to the International Federation of Journalists, China has sponsored journalists from 70% of low- and middle-income countries for media visits. The offer has found wide acceptance in Africa, and has helped in building capacities of media men and women. As a media practitioner, I have the privilege to go on media training in China on several occasions. I remember the training I attended sometime ago that accorded me the opportunity to study at the prestigious Tsinghua University. In 2018, I was among the five journalists from Nigeria who participated in the media training for top African Media Administrators organized by the Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China in conjunction with the China International Publishing Group (CIPG).

**4. Education access:** China is one of the major countries where Nigerian students have found support in term of higher education. The cost of studying in China is relatively low when compared with countries such as the USA, Canada, UK, and other European countries. With the knowledge of this among the Nigerian society, students who decide to study in China are less burdened. There are also many universities and government sponsored scholarships that cover the entire cost or part of the tuition fees. Some students end up spending nothing on their education. In 2019, the Chinese government stated that 512 out of the 6,845 Nigerian students then studying in China were on Chinese government scholarship. This was disclosed to journalists in Abuja through a press statement by the Press Officer in the Embassy of China in Nigeria, Mr. Sun Saixiong. He said the scholarships cover

students undergoing their master's and doctorate degrees in engineering, medicine and agriculture among others.

The Chinese government has also made provision for learning of the Chinese language here in Nigeria. There are many Chinese language teaching institutes in Nigeria, including, for example, the China Culture Centre in Abuja, the Confucius Institutes in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria, the University of Lagos and some secondary schools within the capital city, Abuja.

**5. Cooperation in military affairs:** In 2019, the Chinese government pledged N2 billion (50 million Yuan) in military equipment and training in support of Nigeria's counter insurgency operations in the North East. The then Ambassador of China to Nigeria, Dr. Zhou Pingjuan made the statement during the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), between Nigeria's Minister of Defense, Mansur Muhammad Dan Ali and Dr. Zhou Pingjuan on behalf of the People's Republic of China at the ministry of Defense. On the 3rd of December, 2020, the Ministry of Defense in Nigeria through the Special Assistant to the Minister of Defense on Media and Publicity, Mohammad Abdulkadri informed media men that the Nigeria-China diplomatic relations dates back to 1971 and has since been cordially enhanced by both countries with signing of various MoUs. They include provision of gratis military aid in 2013, 2016 and acquisition of defense equipment in 2019 among others.

The visit of Minister Wang Yi to Nigeria in January 2021 for the 50th year of our bilateral relations revealed a lot about our win-win cooperation. During a joint press conference, the two Ministers told newsmen China and Nigeria will continue to strengthen cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and firmly support each other until the pandemic is completely overcome. Minister Wang Yi also stated that the two countries will continue to expand cooperation into areas including digital economy and green economy so as to achieve diversified development; the two sides will deepen military and security cooperation in efforts to enhance Nigeria's capacity in safeguarding national security.

The fundamentals of Nigeria-China cooperation are grounded in several complementarities between the two countries, and not least is the sharing of the same National Day on the 1st of every October and the synergy of the two countries in the performance of symphony and sharing in the Chinese idea of harmony to build a community with a shared future for the entire humanity. 🇳🇮

# GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE AND BUILDING A CHINA-AFRICA COMMUNITY OF DEVELOPMENT WITH A SHARED FUTURE

Zhang Chun

*Professor of Center for African Studies, Yunnan University.*

Against the backdrop of the combined impacts of profound changes and a global pandemic both unseen in a century, President Xi Jinping put forward the Global Development Initiative (GDI) at the General Debate of the 76th Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, calling on the international community to re-focus on the development issue, to re-commit to sustainable development goals, to revitalize global partnerships, and to reset international development cooperation. The GDI is not only another important public good provided by China to the international community, but also stands for China's flagship project that plays a leading role in global development domain, having important bearing on practicing the concept of leaving no one behind and building a China-Africa Community of Development with a Shared Future.

## AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT PREDICAMENTS IN THE WORLD'S NEW TURBULENT TRANSFORMATION PERIOD

Since the global commodity crash in 2014, Africa has entered into a new development low-tide period, which may last for a considerably long time: on the one hand, the "Africa rising" lasting for nearly two decades has gradually faded and terminated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and on the other, support for African development by the international community has drastically waned.

In regard to the internal driving force, Africa's sustainable development has encountered major setbacks after twenty years of sustained rapid development between 1994 and 2014. On the one hand, its medium and long-term sustained economic development momentum is less than encouraging. A review of the process of African economic development after the Cold War ended shows that though the African economy witnessed marked development between 1995 and 1996, "Africa rising" to a large degree concentrated between 2000 and 2014. Since 2014, the African economy has been impacted by the commodities crash, the China-U.S. trade friction, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Worse, impacted by the pandemic, the African economy saw the first negative growth in half a century, by minus 2.1 percent in 2020. In 2021, the African economy recovered with a 4 percent growth. The international Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts African growth to be only 3.7 percent in 2022. The African Development Bank believes that it is unlikely for Africa's annual growth rate to recover to more than 4 percent. Judging by the sustainable development goals, the pandemic has in fact made African development regress rather than progress. For instance, based on the value of 2015 U.S. dollar, the pandemic has made Africa's per capita GDP of 2020 go back by a decade, at 1564 U.S. dollars, only on a par with that for 2010 (1531 U.S. dollars). In regard to poverty reduction, the pandemic has nullified Africa's efforts for the past two decades, with more than 40 million people falling into

extreme poverty.

On the other hand, the macro-economic environment for African development has deteriorated dramatically, with shortfall of fund continuing to gape. At the beginning of the 21st century, the optimistic atmosphere of “Africa rising” encouraged most of the African countries to adopt proactive fiscal policies and national development strategies. However, since 2014, as increasing risks of balance of payments and fast mounting debt risks piled on, it has become impossible for Africa’s macro-economic environment to improve in the short run. For instance, the African Development Bank estimated before the pandemic outbreak that Africa’s overall annual requirement for infrastructure investment was between 130 billion U.S. dollars and 170 billion U.S. dollars, with an annual financing shortfall sitting between 68 billion U.S. dollars and 108 billion U.S. dollars, among which that for public health infrastructure financing stood at roughly 26 billion U.S. dollars a year. The pandemic has markedly enlarged funding shortfalls: it is estimated that between 2022 and 2024 Africa may need 484 billion U.S. dollars for coping with the pandemic and achieving economic recovery. The decrease in fiscal revenue caused debt risks of African countries to rise rapidly. In 2014, there were debt risks in 30 of the African countries, among which 11 were low risk countries, 14 were medium risk countries, and only 5 were high risk countries; whereas by 2020, 38 countries faced debt risks, and among them one was low risk country, 16 were medium risk countries, and 15 were high risk countries, on top of which 6 countries had already fallen into debt crisis.

In regard to external support, there has been a remarkable downward slide in developed countries’ support for African development since 2014. After the global financial crisis of 2008, African development assistance from member countries of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) had kept growing, but it had been on decline since 2014, and not recovered to the level of 2013 until 2019 (regardless of inflation). With the pandemic outbreak, the OECD DAC’s assistance to Africa saw little increase in 2020, with its percentage actually on a downward slide (See Figure 1).

Though officially the OECD DAC claimed that its member countries’ global foreign assistance in 2020 totaled 161.2 billion U.S. dollars, with an actual growth of 5.4 billion U.S. dollars on top of that of 2019 or 3.5 per-

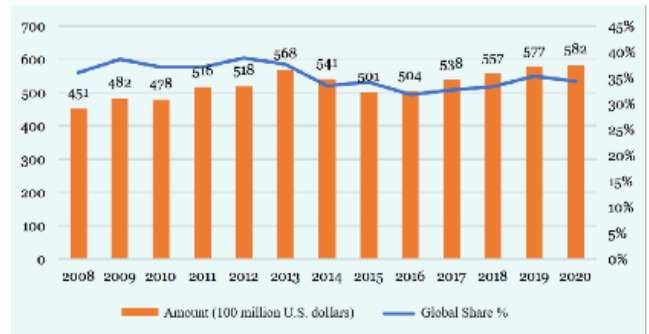


Figure 1. Development Assistance to African Countries from Member Countries of the OECD DAC (2008-2020)  
 Source: compiled by the Author according to data of the OECD DAC, See: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/idsonline.htm>

cent up year on year, that growth mainly reflected anti-COVID assistance totaling about 12 billion U.S. dollars, which means that the OECD DAC member countries’ foreign development assistance in reality decreased by 6.6 billion U.S. dollars. In absence of subdivision data for assistance to Africa, inferred in combination of Figure 1, the situation is less than encouraging.

There is hypocrisy in developed countries’ assistance to Africa. On the one hand, comparing the global financial crisis of 2008 with the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, one can see that developed countries have largely reduced their contributions to international development cooperation. The most important differentiation between the two crises lies in the fact that the global financial crisis of 2008 was induced by the West, and the subject of salvage was the West, be it internal rescue or foreign assistance; whereas the COVID-19 pandemic belonged to force majeure, and foreign assistance was not internal rescue. Therefore, in 2008 the OECD DAC countries provided a very large amount of foreign assistance, whereas except for a very small number of countries, in face of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an evident downward slide in foreign assistance from most of the OECD DAC countries (See Figure 2).

On the other hand, developed countries locked down vaccines through agreement, exacerbating the already serious challenge of immunization gap for Africa. According to statistics of the World Health Organization (WHO), by the end of March 2022, though Africa’s confirmed COVID-19 cases were the fewest among all regions of the world, its vaccination rate was shockingly low: only 25.4 doses per 100 people, in comparison, that

for the Western Pacific region was as high as 208.1 doses. Going by full vaccination of two doses, that is on the average one person receiving two doses, then among 100 people in Africa, only 12.35 persons are fully vaccinated, whereas the figure for the Western Pacific region is 81.39 persons. Although there are people holding the view that owing to memories of colonial history, Africans have misgivings about jabs, resulting in low vaccination rate, a more important key fact is that it is difficult for Africa to acquire sufficient vaccines. One important reason among others behind this is that developed countries in the West tend to sign confidential agreement with vaccine producers so as to lock down vaccine production, which not only reduces the doses of vaccines for open circulation, but also bids up prices of vaccines, as the price for relevant countries' agreement to lock down vaccines is not transparent. According to the figure of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), by

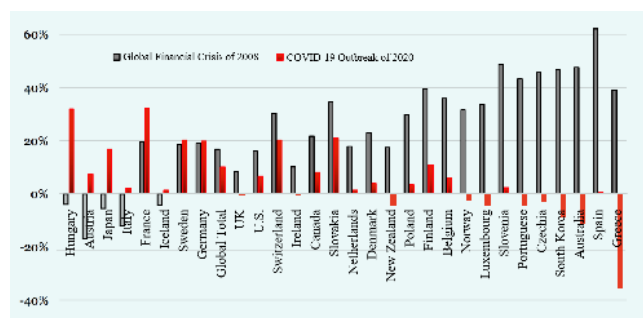


Figure 2. Foreign Assistance Provided by OECD DAC Countries, Comparison between 2008 and 2020  
 Source: Compiled by the author according to OECD DAC data, See <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/idsonline.htm> accessed on March 31, 2022

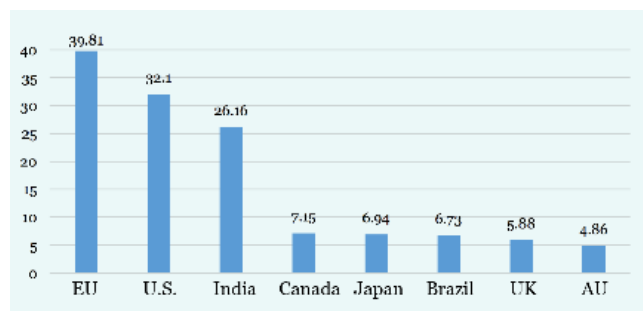


Figure 3. Major countries and regions locking down vaccines (by 100 million doses)  
 Source: UNICEF COVID-19 Vaccine Market Dashboard, <https://www.unicef.org/supply/covid-19-vaccine-market-dashboard#.data> collected on March 31, 2022

March 2022, the AU had only locked down 486 million doses of vaccines for the whole of Africa, much less than countries like Japan or the UK (See Figure 3)

### GDI HAS IMPORTANT BEARINGS ON AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

The GDI was put forward against the background of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development suffering not only delay in implementation but also the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and has particularly important bearings on the African region in face of serious development difficulties. Intended to effectively dovetail the FOCAC Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024), the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035, the AU Agenda 2063, and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the GDI can provide stronger dynamics for economic recovery to Africa, promote achievement of sustainable development goals in Africa, and advance the building of a China-Africa community of development with a shared future.

First, the GDI can help Africa accelerate actions in achieving UN sustainable development goals. Although the international community was enthusiastic about the UN sustainable development goals, since their implementation started in 2006, under the impact of anti-globalization and populism, the steps taken by various countries to implement the goals had been too slow. Therefore, the UN put forward in 2019 a plan for decade of action to achieve Agenda 2030 goals for sustainable development, calling on the international community to amplify actions to attain the sustainable development goals by 2030. The pandemic outbreak has left conditions for completing the decade of action plan no longer sufficient. According to simulation by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), even under the scenario where the pandemic situation is not serious, the prospect of achieving the sustainable development goals still offers little room for optimism. The current pandemic is clearly more than serious, which might lead to a prolonged duration and persistent virus mutations. As such, only by accelerating actions with targeted intervention for inclusive green development, including pursuance of integrated policies in national governance, social security, green economy and digitalization, can it be possible to effectively ameliorate the impact of the pandemic and help bring countries back to the fast track

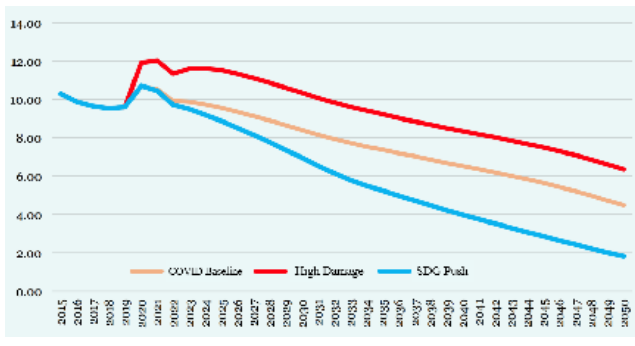


Figure 4. Simulation of COVID-19 Impact on the SDG-1  
 Source: UNDP, "Assessing COVID-19 Impact on the Sustainable Development Goals," <https://data.undp.org/content/assessing-covid-impacts-on-the-sdgs/>

in achieving sustainable development goals. Taking Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG-1) that is ending poverty everywhere for instance, the pandemic has brought global incidence of poverty back to about 12 percent. Only by accelerating actions can the goal of reducing global incidence of poverty to 6 percent be achieved by 2030, otherwise it will not be achieved until 2050 (See Figure 4). Since Africa is the region with the highest incidence of poverty across the globe, the GDI is no less than a "timely rain" for Africa to accelerate actions.

Second, the GDI can effectively deliver China's commitments to international development, and improve efficiency of China-Africa development cooperation. The proposal of the GDI can strike a more effective balance between China's development cooperation and its market cooperation. In global efforts to implement the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG), China's contribution in poverty elimination accounts for 76 percent of the global total; at present, China has achieved the ending poverty goal of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development ten years ahead of schedule. At the same time as it promotes its own development, China has been committed to promoting international development, and entered into several long-term cooperation vision plans with its partners, such as the China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership Vision 2030 signed in November 2018 and the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 signed in November 2021. Before the GDI was put forward, compared with the Belt and Road Initiative focusing on market cooperation, China's commitment to international development cooperation was not as systemic. The GDI provides the framework for China to integrate its international development cooperation, and will promote a balanced

development between the two pillars of development cooperation and market cooperation.

From an African perspective, the role of such a balanced development will be more evident. On the one hand, the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 provides a medium and long-term strategic guidance for China-Africa comprehensive cooperation, making the 3-year action plans of FOCAC more attainable. On the other, the GDI has complemented China-Africa cooperation with a strategic framework of development cooperation. Traditionally, China-Africa cooperation included five pillars of political cooperation, economic cooperation, security cooperation, cultural cooperation and international cooperation. In all initiatives such as the Eight Policy Measures for China-Africa Cooperation of 2006, the Ten Major Programs to Boost China-Africa Cooperation of 2015, the Eight Major Initiatives of 2018, and the Nine Programs of 2021, development cooperation features prominently. Therefore, it will greatly promote in-depth China-Africa cooperation to lead China-Africa development cooperation with the GDI and make it a sixth pillar of China-Africa cooperation.

Third, the GDI can effectively give play to additionality and the catalytic function of Chinese capital, and ameliorate Africa's predicaments in development financing. The GDI was proposed against the backdrop of huge financing difficulties facing the international community and particularly Africa. It can make important contributions to ameliorating development financing predicaments of the international community and Africa in particular by coordinating China's international development cooperation funds and improving their additionality and catalytic function. Both additionality and catalytic function are important principles of international investment. Additionality in investment refers to investing in countries, sectors, regions, capital industries and business models into which other investors have not entered or do not wish to enter. Catalytic investment refers to investment flowing into areas where businesses particularly local investors converge so as to improve efficacy of the use of capital, or investment performing a certain leverage function of bringing in other investors.

The GDI stresses on upholding universality and inclusiveness, and emphasizing advancing cooperation in poverty reduction, food security, pandemic response, development financing, climate change and green development, industrialization, digital economy, and con-

nectivity, focusing on fragile countries many of which are in Africa. In other words, in both aspects of universal inclusiveness and action orientation, the additionality role played by the GDI is highlighted in countries, regions and sectors which traditional assistance providers set little store by.

The GDI stresses on upholding the principles of prioritizing development, following a people-centered approach, innovation-driven development, and harmonious coexistence between man and nature, all of which underlines the catalytic function of Chinese funding and thereby accelerates the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development through urging the ongoing international development efforts and promoting coordinated additional financing in the global development process. At the same time, the GDI funding can be combined with market cooperation with the BRI as the core. A new approach can be developed to development promotion featuring parallel tracks of development plus cooperation that mutually reinforce one another, and bring into full play the powerful mobilizing capacity or leverage role of assistance fund and market investment. Besides, by injecting upfront start-up capital into projects where private capital is reluctant or has difficulty to enter, the GDI can significantly bring private capital in so as to increase its catalytic effect in ameliorating Africa's financing predicaments.

### **PATH TO BUILDING A CHINA-AFRICA COMMUNITY OF DEVELOPMENT WITH A SHARED FUTURE**

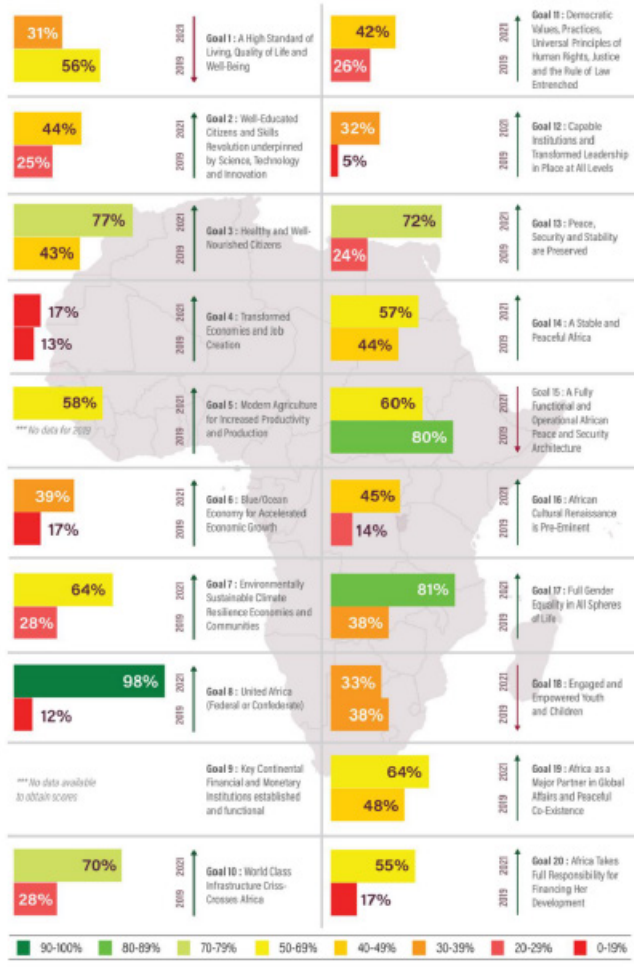
To go hand in hand with building a community with a shared future for mankind, the building of a global community of development with a shared future should also start from a basic modular. Based on sound China-Africa development cooperation, the GDI will markedly accelerate the building of a China-Africa community of development with a shared future. Of course, it will remain a long process in which it is necessary to closely synthesize development visions of China and Africa and that of the international community at large, and make the China-Africa community of development with a shared future a demonstration project for building a global community of development with a shared future through phased implementation of short-term action plans, medium-term strategies and long-term visions.

First, it is necessary to take the 3-year action plans

of the triennial FOCAC ministerial conference as short-term action strategy of China-Africa development cooperation, which will lay a solid foundation for the China-Africa community of development with a shared future. Though there are differences between the action plans of different ministerial conferences, their core elements and structures are similar. A review of action plans of ministerial conferences since 2000 shows that the core elements are trade promotion, investment promotion, poverty reduction and agricultural development, health, scientific and technological innovation, green development, cultural and people-to-people exchanges, and peace and security, among which poverty reduction cooperation, public health, technological transfer, green development, and human resources are traditional domains of China-Africa development cooperation. Though as international environments vary at different periods, so do priorities of China-Africa development cooperation. For FOCAC action plans, adjustments are made in order for priorities to be more appropriate against different background. With the formulation of the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 and the proposal of the GDI, there is reason to believe that the future FOCAC action plans will be made with a more rational logic, the linkage between them smoother, and benefits of China-Africa development cooperation more remarkable.

Second, it is necessary to roll out a scrolling medium-term strategic plan once every ten or fifteen years, especially aiming to dovetail at a high-level the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 and the ten-year implementation plans for the AU Agenda 2063. Owing to launching time differences of different plans, the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 was launched at a time when the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan for AU Agenda 2063 was about to end and the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan was yet to be formulated. Therefore, in the short run, when pushing for the implementation of the FOCAC Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024), it is necessary to closely follow the linkage between the first ten-year implementation plan and the second ten-year implementation plan for AU Agenda 2063, and timely adjust concrete implementation plans of the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 according to the performance of the first ten-year implementation plan.

According to the assessment report on the implementation of the Agenda 2063 released by the AU in



*Table 1. Continental Performance by Agenda 2063 Goals*  
 Source: AUDA-NEPAD, *Second Continental Report: On the Implementation of Agenda 2063*, Johannesburg: AUDA-NEPAD, February 2022, p. 4

early 2022, by the end of 2021, among 20 goals set by the AU Agenda 2063, only 2 goals had been achieved by more than 80 percent, 3 others by over 70 percent, and yet 4 others by 50-60 percent. In other words, only 9 of the goals had been achieved more than 50 percent, less than half of the total (See Table 1). Now it seems that the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan for AU Agenda 2063 as a whole will not be completed on time, and therefore the mission of the second ten-year implementation plan is to a large degree clear, and it is necessary to prioritize the medium-term strategy of China-Africa cooperation leading to 2035 in two aspects, focusing first on goals that are on relatively good grounding and play an important role in promoting African development,

including Goal 3, Goal 10 and Goal 13, and second on goals that are on relatively poor grounding but are of great significance to people’s livelihood in Africa, including Goal 1, Goal 2, Goal 4, Goal 9 and Goal 16.

Third, it is necessary to look high and afar at the smooth linkage between China’s second centenary goal, Africa’s first centenary goal (the AU Agenda 2063), and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to reflect on Africa’s long-term development vision and make flexible readjustments. As both China’s second centenary goal and Africa’s first centenary goal are already established, one should focus on the UN’s follow-up agenda for sustainable development beyond 2030. First of all, it is necessary to consider the evolution of focused groups in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since the onset of the 21st century, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has focused on the poverty issue or on the needs of the poor as one group on the one hand, and on the gender issue on the other, mainly on the needs of women as a group. Hence, it is very important to define the focused groups of a follow-up UN agenda for sustainable development beyond 2030. At present, there are mainly two candidate focused groups, one being the young, and the other the ill. The former has been in the limelight since the Arab Spring, and the latter, highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, it is necessary to consider the construction of an international development financing system. China has made and will continue to make important contributions to international development fund, the GDI being the latest example. China’s contributions to the whole international development financing system are in the process of enlargement, and it is necessary to construct an upgraded edition of the common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) principle, by which developed countries should truly honor their commitment to contribute 0.7 percent of their Gross National Production (GNP) to foreign assistance, whereas emerging development partners should make nationally determined contributions in dealing with climate change, and developing countries or recipients of assistance should set up targets for their internal mobilization of resources. Should an upgraded edition of the CBDR principle be effectively manifested, the international visibility of China’s contributions and particularly its GDI will greatly increase. ■



# CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION AND GLOBAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

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## INTRODUCTION

The thriving relationship between China and Africa today is a product of the interaction that started several centuries ago. One version has it that China's relationship with Africa dates back to the fifteenth century when Chinese traders visited East Africa. Another version has it that the cooperation of the parties can be traced to the sixteenth century following series of trans-continental voyages involving Chinese navigators and some African scholars. The relationship subsequently blossomed into socio-political cooperation and later cultural exchanges. However, it was not until the mid-twentieth century after the Chinese revolution that the framework of cooperation deepened to include the promotion of mutual economic growth and development.

Today, China is Africa's largest trading partner, cred-

itor and source of much needed infrastructure investment. The cooperation is also deepening along political, military and security lines. A position that is regularly, and almost emphatically, taken by scores of contemporary scholars is that self-interest is the driving motivation of China in Africa. However, it may be uncharitable to attribute all of China's influence to mere self-interest. What is equally relevant and true is that politics of power and economic growth have always been the driver of relations amongst states, all with a view to safeguarding interests and assets. What makes the difference is whether the stronger or more influential party is procuring the willingness of the other party by the force of an international system; or inducing the same by mutual favourable offers in return; or simply exploiting a party who is in a vulnerable position. The first scenario is what happens when dominant global powers use tra-

ditional global economic institutions to achieve unjust bargaining positions. Though such a position is legal, it certainly will be far from equity, fairness and justice, for the simple fact that the non-dominant party is helpless in the scheme of things. The other two scenarios will occur when the leadership of a non-dominant party failed to do what they ought to do to achieve a win-win negotiation in contract. In that circumstance, this will be the fault of the non-dominant party. A balanced rhetoric of the China-Africa cooperation capturing what is underlying China-Africa relations is that in 1971 when China was to return to the United Nations, it was her friendship with newly independent countries in Asia and Africa and the massive support which delegates from Africa gave that made it possible for China to be allowed back into the United Nations. China at the time reflected the popular hope of the majority of the developing countries; a hope she has continued to deepen through diplomatic ties with these countries.

China's relationship with Africa (both "north" and "sub-Saharan Africa") is without doubt on the rise. China is globally entrepreneurial and fiercely independent in international politics. China has accomplished the arduous task of eliminating extreme poverty. As of April, 2022, it was estimated that the number of people living in extreme poverty in China had fallen by close to 800 million. China's experience offers valuable insights from which African leaders believe they can benefit. Relating with China is seen by a number of African countries as an act of self-assertion from being pushed around by other traditional allies who simply dictate terms and exhibit undue interference in their domestic issues under the guise of friendship. Further, Africa is going through rapid urbanization which urgently requires the maintenance and development of relevant infrastructure. No other partner has shown a readiness to support Africa in funding these critical infrastructure as China has done.

On the premise established above, this article seeks to explore the possible impact of the China-Africa relationship on global climate governance. In doing this, it will present a brief overview of climate change and its impact on Africa, and examine the complex dynamics of the interface of trade and climate change. In addition, it will analyse the contributions of China-Africa cooperation to the global climate governance discourse. In its conclusion, the paper will interrogate the effec-

tiveness of these contributions to the global climate change governance.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND AFRICA

As the world converge in November, 2022 for the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27) in Egypt, the need to consider Africa and the reality of the climate threat facing her will again come to the front burner. Compared with other regions of the world, the impact of climate change on Africa is much direr. Despite the fact that Africa contributes the least to global warming, the continent suffers the most from climate change impacts. For instance, in spite of Africa having the lowest per capital carbon emissions globally, majority of her people make their livelihood from land which had been degraded or affected by other climate-related vulnerabilities. Many of her inhabitants are displaced by flooding with further consequence of spread of disease, destruction of infrastructure and disruption of ecosystems. Diminishing agricultural yields and near famine are creating problems of food security. Water shortage has become a major issue for many communities in Africa. The competition for resources is deepening instability, violent conflicts between agricultural communities and pastoralist ethnic groups and some of these are being hijacked by terrorist cells and Islamist extremists. Women are repositories of knowledge about crops and climate, the environment and natural resources, yet, the gender gap has become more pronounced. Indeed, the list of the negative impacts of climate change on Africa is endless.

A 2019 report on the State of the Climate in Africa published by the World Meteorological Organization identified Africa as vulnerability "hot spot" for climate variability and climate change impacts. In the same vein, in 2021, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization noted that the number of undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa has increased by 45% since 2012. Climate change without doubt has continued to add to the burdens of those who are already poor and vulnerable. Recent disruptions to the global economy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic have further exacerbated the challenge of climate change for Africa.

It is, however, rather interesting that from time to time, and at regular COP meetings, all the nice statements are made as to why Africa's needs should be

elevated on the global climate agenda. Statements are made about a just transition from fossil fuel and coal, just as pledges are made to protect the forests and peatlands in recognition of their importance as global carbon sink. COP26 was no different. Yet, many of these pledges and promises are never fulfilled. They remained no more than mere platitude. Since the early 1990s, international negotiations have produced several important agreements and accords such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol (2005) and now the Paris Agreement (2015).

At Copenhagen (COP15, 2009), rich nations made a promise to channel US\$100 billion a year to less-wealthy nations by 2020 to assist them adapt to climate change and mitigate further rises in temperature. More than a decade after, the promise remains unfulfilled. In the absence of a precise approach on how to measure countries' pledges, some analysts have alleged that even the public funds that are said to be mobilised by some members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are inflated. Same issues of inadequate attention to the plight of Africa exist with global private capital initiatives such as the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, and the green bonds. Commenting on the 2022 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) tagged Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change, the UN Secretary General described the report of the IPCC as a litany of broken climate promises. "It is a file of shame cataloguing the empty pledges that put us firmly on track towards an unliveable world".

A clear parallel to making empty promises could be established in how climate finance is expended. Despite the recognition that what Africa needs most is adaptation and the prescription of the Paris Agreement for equal proportioning of funds for mitigation and adaptation, significant proportion of climate finance is expended on mitigation projects. In 2019, less than half of the funds that was spent on mitigation project went to adaptation project. Even in that situation, many African countries could not benefit from the fund due to the complex technicalities guiding allocation and disbursement.

Clearly, the power equation at the global level of decision-making for climate governance is unlikely to see the needs of Africa fulfilled beyond the economic,

security or social interests of the selected few who have the monopoly of decision-making. There is a considerable mismatch between the magnitude of the climate challenge that Africa is facing and the regular rhetoric of support that offers no more than dashed expectations. This accounts for why developed nations are not able to convince African countries and other vulnerable nations that they are serious about climate change.

Propositions that seek to stop financing of fossil and coal investments without accommodating holistic discussions of alternatives and how countries (including public and private actors) affected are to treat extant financial obligations will not achieve just transition. A true and just transition will only result from sincere cooperation and engagement where all parties listen to understand and not merely to respond with flowery language. For as long as the needs of all are not balanced, unrelenting push for renewables will be unrealistic and not achieve much. That is the reality. The dictum *pacta sunt servanda* meaning agreements must be kept and must be balanced with *clausula rebus sic stantibus* which allows for unenforceability of contract due to fundamentally changed circumstances. If this is not done, climate change governance will continue to revel in lip-service and "greenwashing". It will also gravitate those who feel systematically side-lined to explore or nurture relationships which they feel can deliver meaningful partnerships and also enable them preserve their own margin of power.

## INTERFACE OF TRADE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Trade is recognised as one of the critical tools that can be deployed to meet the challenge of climate change and achieve shared climate goals. In the same way, trade can engender environmentally disastrous situations in a country.

Where a country lacks effective environmental policies and appropriate institutional frameworks, the impact of trade liberalization will result in pollution. With specific reference to climate change, international trade, just like other economic activities, generates greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). From the generation of the energy used during production to the final production, assembly, packaging, shipping and transportation of traded goods and services to the final consumer, carbon emissions will occur. Trade also increases emissions by

stimulating economic activities through increased income. The extractive industry in particular contributes to air, water and land pollution and toxic wastes. They are also responsible for half of the world's carbon emissions and more than 80 percent of biodiversity loss.

As alluded to earlier, trade can help in diffusing green technology by offering consumers lower-emission goods and services and facilitating the deployment of climate-friendly technologies. Well-structured economic incentives and environmental policies will encourage promotion of trade diversification in the transition to a low-carbon regime, and so would international cooperation.

In the context of the cooperation between China and Africa and as part of foreign direct investment, there are a number of Chinese business entities operating in sectors of the economy that are vulnerable to environmental concerns and climate impacts in Africa. The China-Africa Overseas Leather Products S.C is operating in Ethiopia; Jeronimo Group of Industries & Trade PIC is in Somaliland; China is involved in the development of oil fields, pipelines and refinery infrastructure in Sudan, Angola, Gabon and Nigeria; Chinese companies are also involved in mining projects in Guinea, Zambia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, and Gabon; Chinese fishing companies are involved in activities in Mauritania and Senegal; Chinese logging and timber companies are trading or operating concessions in Gabon, Mozambique, Equatorial Guinea, Congo, and Cameroon. China is also a significant source of financing for telecommunications, roads, railways and builder

*Wind power project equipment operated by Chinese company in South Africa.*



Photo/Xinhua

of hydropower dams in Sudan, Ghana, Mozambique and Ethiopia. The country also has joint ventures for solar and power holding companies in Sierra Leone, Benin, Mozambique, Ghana and South Africa; and is also involved in intensive mechanized agriculture and in the health sector.

China's policy towards Africa undoubtedly has been expanding and strategic, and despite being classified as a developing country, not many developed countries can match the clout that China is currently enjoying in Africa. China's foreign policy expressed in five principles: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual non-aggression; non-interference in other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence, resonates so well with many African leaders. These leaders are convinced that the capitalistic approach of the current international system which is reflected in the way interests are reconciled from time to time is intensely dismissive of their position or indifferent to their situation. With such a background belief, conversations are commenced in a stereotyped environment of mistrust and suspicion. On the contrary, many African leaders have come to view China as a partner who can set the tone for knowledge creation, and with whom they can share, receive and interpret information convivially in the implementation of common interest. Already, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat and the Ministry of Commerce of China have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on establishing an Export Group on Economic Cooperation. The goal is to use this platform to collaborate in such areas as experience-sharing on intellectual property rights, customs procedures, digital trade, competition policy, as well as on institutional capacity and implementation of the AfCFTA.

Against the background of the above, the key question that arises is what does the synergy between China and Africa portend for climate governance? What strategic goals should the parties aim for? What priorities need to be set for the future of the cooperation?

### **CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE GOVERNANCE**

Climate governance has been defined as the institutions and processes that have been put in place for the effective management of the global climate system.



*African diplomatic envoys to China watching videos about cooperation with Africa in China's Sunward Intelligent Equipment Co.*



*A modern farm built by Chinese company in Namibia.*

Climate governance promotes opportunities and prompts action to avoid or, as may be necessary, redress climate change impacts. The governance process which operates at different levels may be formal or informal. Its level of operation may also be local, national, regional or international. Governance processes invariably reflect the moral and ethical principles of the social order it seeks to regulate. Applying this to China-Africa cooperation, we can decipher the synergy of the relationship for climate governance from the moral and ethical principles of the parties.

Not many will deny that contribution to corruption, over exploitation of natural resources, abuse of workers, and illegal multinational strategies among others have always been fingered as the negatives of globalization. Thus, they are not new grounds of social corporate irresponsibility peculiar to Chinese entities and from

in 2009 underlined African countries' urgent need for stronger capacity to adapt to climate change and support their legitimate rights in combating climate change. The 5th Ministerial Conference which held in Beijing agreed that China help African countries enhance capacity building in meteorological infrastructure and forest protection and management, and scale up assistance and training to Africa in disaster prevention and reduction, treatment of desertification, ecological protection, and environment management.

At the 6th Ministerial Conference which held in 2015 in South Africa, leaders from China and Africa agreed to setup the China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Centre. The Centre was unveiled at the UNEP Secretariat in Nairobi in 2018. It is anticipated that the Centre which already has a US\$1 million commitment from the China Trust Fund will serve as:

(i) a forum for environmental policy interaction and dialogue;

(ii) a clearing house for information exchange and technical co-operation on sustainable development;

(iii) a platform for capacity development in support of environmental policy and best practice to achieve Sustainable Development Goals;

(iv) a catalyst for joint environmental programmes and project development and implementation;

(v) a platform for mobilisation of funds for environmental projects and programs that will contribute towards Africa's development priorities.

The 8th Ministerial Conference of the Forum which held in Dakar adopted four documents, namely: The Dakar Action Plan (2022 – 2024); the 2035 Vision for China-Africa Cooperation; the Sino-African Declaration on Climate Change; and the Declaration of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of FO-CAC. Two of the documents (the 2035 Vision and the Sino-African Declaration) were quite

which entities from Europe, United States and other developed nations are immune. The only difference in the country's policies is that, unlike other traditional allies of Africa, China does not influence domestic policies of others or dictate policies to them. With respect to the right of parties in international contracts on the other hand, the question to ask is why are African leaders not determining Africa's priorities? African leaders are the ones who bear a primary responsibility to support entities from Africa achieve win-win in international negotiations. This will involve putting in place right policies, effective enforcement of laws, deepening of confidence in national institutions relevant to international trade and transactions, and a strong determination by these leaders to make a difference in the diversification of the economy of their respective countries.

With particular reference to climate governance, China has been very proactive in its cooperation with Africa. Reference can be made to a flurry of initiatives aimed at promoting the implementation of climate governance principles and mobilising corporate entities to address climate change in their businesses. Under the auspices of the China-Africa multilateral cooperation platform, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) announced in 2000 that parties will fulfil many environmental conventions, and that in implementing cooperation projects, parties will be bound to specific plans for environmental protection in general, but, forestry exploitation in particular. This was followed by the 2003 Addis-Ababa Plan (2004 – 2006) of the 2nd Ministerial Conference of FOCAC which agreed on a number of concrete measures with potentials to support climate mitigation and adaptation.

In 2005, FOCAC, jointly with the UN Environment Program (UNEP), held the China-Africa Environment Cooperation Conference, the goal of which was to promote environmental cooperation with African countries and also provide training. The 4th Ministerial Conference which held in Egypt

significant steps in pushing the ambition of African countries to develop a green economy and tackle climate change. They also expressed clear support for the implementation of African countries' initiatives such as the Great Green Wall Initiative, Initiative for the Adaptation of African Agriculture, and the Initiative for the Adaptation of Africa. The 2023 Vision for China-Africa Cooperation is aligned with China's own 2035 vision for development and is in sync with the long-term aspiration of Africa as outlined in the 50-year development blueprint, Agenda 2063, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations. The ideas, strategies and commitment underpinning all the documents sum up to the fact that in Africa's resources, if utilized and managed effectively, reside the key to its green development.

## CONCLUSION

The challenge of climate change and its governance is intricately linked to every aspect of human endeavour; be it food, water, security, energy, transportation, trade, housing, investment, development, or land-use, among others. This is why its governance consistently calls on the involvement of all stakeholders: in politics, public administration, private sector, civil society and the citizens. Looking at the China-Africa Cooperation, one can tick the boxes that affirm the existence of all the appropriate framework that is required to give effectiveness to climate change governance. Connecting the initiatives and bringing them to reality in order for them to deliver sustainable development to Africa is the task ahead. The clear potential of what the relationship can deliver is the motivation for traditional allies such as the United States in seeking a renewed partnership with Africa.

There, however, is a big question begging for an honest answer: "Are African leaders ready?" Regrettably, many African countries are in an uneasy state reflecting a dismal state of affairs courtesy of bad governance arising from deficit of leadership. African leaders must define Africa's relationship with China in ways that will be mutually beneficial. First steps have been taken to put laudable initiatives on the ground. The next step is for African leaders to be able to measure their worth and achievement by what "good" they are able to bring collectively for the continent and their respective countries. This is the time to take full advantage of the market opportunity that the relationship has to offer; work with China to share knowledge, skills and technology; and proactively get Africa's academic institutions to become more vibrant in research and development that will result in innovations. China-Africa cooperation presents a great opportunity for Africa to become a respected collaborator in the global climate governance discourse. ■

# WAYS TO PROMOTE CHINA-AFRICA GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE EXCHANGES IN THE NEW ERA

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The exchange of governance experience is a critical thrust of current China-Africa cooperation and an important approach to concretely advancing the building of a China-Africa community with a shared future. Following the principle of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith and pursuing greater good and shared interests, China has joined hands with African countries to enhance mutual learning. They aim to promote common development through experience sharing and enhance political mutual trust and value consensus through people-to-people communication and knowledge sharing. In the face of the combined impacts of once-in-a-century changes and pandemic, identifying the right objectives and principles and innovating the approaches and means of governance experience exchanges in the new era are of great relevance to jointly promoting development and governance of China and Africa.

## **IDENTIFYING THE OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE EXCHANGES BETWEEN CHINA AND AFRICA IN THE NEW ERA**

China and Africa should identify clear objectives and principles of governance experience exchanges in the new era. Guided by the Global Development Initiative, the experience sharing should aim at building a closer community with a shared future for China and Africa, pursue sincerity, real results, amity, and good faith, as well as the greater good and shared interests, and up-

hold the fundamental principles of seeking common ground while shelving differences, mutual respect and mutual learning.

First, the implementation of the Global Development Initiative serves as the guidance for experience sharing. In an effort to revitalize the world economy and that of developing countries in particular after the pandemic, Chinese President Xi Jinping solemnly proposed the Global Development Initiative and called on countries around the world to build a global development community and accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Africa is the continent with the most developing countries, especially the least developed countries, and thus is also the region facing the most urgent and arduous tasks in achieving peace and development. Therefore, China regards Africa as an important region where it fulfills the responsibilities as a major country and regards the development of Africa as the key to tackling challenges in global development and governance. The two sides exchange governance experience in an effort to support Africa in independently exploring a path for development suitable to local conditions through mutual learning and assistance, enhance the governance capacity of African countries through human resources development and boost Africa's cultural confidence through people-to-people exchanges and cultural cooperation, which has become a real highlight in the leap-frog growth of China-Africa relations in the new era. In the jointly-formulated China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 and the nine projects

of China-Africa cooperation announced at the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the FOCAC, governance experience sharing and governance capacity building are identified as crucial aspects of cooperation.

Second, building a closer community with a shared future for China and Africa is the objective. China-Africa solidarity and cooperation is a solid cornerstone of China's foreign policy and a fine example of a new type of international relations. To build a closer community with a shared future for China and Africa, the two sides need to develop political mutual trust, offer economic assistance to each other, share responsibilities as well as carry out exchanges in culture, experience and concepts. Such exchanges in experience, covering the aspects of economic development, state governance and institutional building among others, is a kind of in-depth communication of concepts and systems that facilitates mutual understanding and recognition and satisfies the need for joint pursuit of development and rejuvenation. Such governance experience sharing is important in that by uplifting China-Africa cooperation from general trade and diplomatic support to communication of ideas and mutual knowledge, it contributes to expanding the essence and enriching the content of South-South cooperation in the new era. Such sharing is relevant in that both sides push forward development and rejuvenation through mutual learning of governance experiences, develop strategic mutual trust and recognition as well as tighten the bond of generations of friendship. Globally, such sharing boosts their confidence in culture and development path, contributes to more balanced development of a diversity of human civilizations and promotes the reform and improvement of the international system.

Third, sincerity, real results, amity, and good faith as well as the pursuit of the greater good and shared interests, which were proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, are the moral orientation. As expounded by President Xi, China-Africa cooperation should follow a principled approach that values credibility, friendship, justice and high moral standards. The greatest good of China-Africa cooperation is to synergize China's development with Africa's independent and sustainable development and connect the Chinese Dream with the African Dream. Through development assistance and cultural exchanges, China and African countries can share experiences in poverty reduction and development, strengthen scientific and technological cooperation and knowledge

sharing, and create inner driving force of economic development in Africa. While some western countries are still obsessed with the zero sum mentality believing in one side's winning at the cost of others and "winner takes all" and continue to consolidate the obsolete center vs. periphery international development landscape, China and Africa are joining hands towards win-win cooperation and common development. By doing so, they inject new impetus into world development, contribute new ethical norms to international relations and exhibit to the world China's upholding of international justice.

Fourth, seeking common ground while shelving differences, mutual respect and mutual learning are the fundamental principles. At the 2018 Beijing Summit of the FOCAC, President Xi Jinping clearly expounded the five-no approach that China pursues in its cooperation with Africa, including no interference in African countries' pursuit of development paths that fit their national conditions; no interference in African countries' internal affairs; no imposition of will on African countries; no attachment of political strings to assistance to Africa; and no seeking of selfish political gains in investment and financing cooperation with Africa. As China has pledged, when sharing governance experience with African countries, China remains committed to prospering respectively and together. China not only acts on its belief that one does not do to others what he doesn't want others to do to him, but also pursues higher moral standard of "while establishing itself and pursuing success, also working to establish others and enable them to succeed as well". Showing deep respect for African countries' independent choice of development path and their experience, China has established partnerships with African countries to carry out exchanges in culture, ideas, concepts and systems. Such experience sharing is a mutual learning process to draw on each other's merits and make up for deficiencies as equals. The time-honored history, splendid culture and rich local knowledge of African countries also offer reference and inspirations for China. Such experience sharing requires both sides to fully understand their similarities and differences in culture, systems and concepts and respect each other's uniqueness and differences in state governance theories and practices. On this basis, the two sides should explore the greatest common denominator and identify their common concerns and converging interests. Specifically, in terms of modernization, they can share the experience of economic and social develop-

ment; in terms of state building, they can discuss about the choice of systems and capacity building; and in terms of building a China-Africa community with a shared future, they can work to build a shared cultural foundation, conceptual consensus and bond of values.

### **COMPREHENSIVELY ENRICH AND EXPAND GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE SHARING BETWEEN CHINA AND AFRICA**

China-Africa exchanges of governance experience initially focused on professional skills and development experience, including China's invaluable experience in leading the Chinese people in revolution, construction and reform, which largely exhibit itself in the form of systematic review and international communication of the Chinese experience. China and Africa, as their cooperation is fully elevated, constantly enrich and expand their exchanges of governance experience.

The first is to jointly build a new pattern of all-round and multi-level exchanges of governance experience, evolving from exchanges of professional skills and development experience to systems, concepts and ideas. During the First Ministerial Meeting of FOCAC in 2000, an African Human Resources Development Fund was set up to support China-Africa cooperation in skills training, science, technology and education and facilitate exchange of experiences in economic and social development. China released its first Africa Policy Paper in 2006, proposing to boost governance experience sharing. Ever since, the two sides have attached importance to state system and political party building at the macro level, which have become an essential aspect of experience sharing between China and Africa. Today, the exchanges of governance experience are not limited to general skills training and knowledge sharing, but have expanded to extensive mutual learning in culture, systems, concepts and ideologies. In essence, such exchanges are a kind of international development cooperation, in which the two sides share experiences in poverty reduction and development and help each other strengthen development capability through skills training, experience sharing, technology transfer and capacity building. Such exchanges are also a kind of cultural communication, in which the two sides draw on each other's systems and ideas to jointly explore development models and paths that fit their conditions. Through the in-depth exchanges

of culture and ideas, the two sides cement political mutual trust and foster a stronger bond.

The second is to build a new model of governance experience sharing, featuring the two-way interaction of Chinese experience and African local knowledge. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially since the reform and opening up, China has created the two miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability. African countries have been looking to the east, expecting to explore and learn from the secret recipe of China's rapid development. China's poverty reduction, development experience, exploration of development path, and the governance of the CPC and the Chinese government have become topics that African political elites and public are interested in. Therefore, the exchange of governance experience between China and Africa largely exhibits itself in the form of systematic review and international communication of China's experience. But the exchange also remains a two-way interaction. Especially as regional and country studies attract extensive interests in recent years, the Chinese academic community pays close attention to the African continent, African countries, local people and societies and conduct more systematical and profound studies on African languages, culture, history, politics, economy and social development. Africans' reflections on their own countries and societies, interpersonal relations and bond between man and nature offer insight and inspiration to the Chinese. The detours African countries have taken also offer a lesson for the Chinese to study thoroughly and inspire them to ponder on and address the challenges that lie ahead.

The third is to build a new system of Chinese discourse that integrates China's experience of century-old struggles and new concepts and theories of state governance in the new era. To introduce China's governance experience, it is imperative to tell the stories of China and the CPC well, so that the African public understand the capability of the CPC, the adaptability of Marxism and the strengths of socialism with Chinese Characteristics. To tell the stories of the CPC to the African audience, China should elaborate the achievements and experience of the CPC over the past century in a way that they can understand; but also focus on the present to highlight China's new achievements and experience of development and governance. An emphasis should be placed on the major breakthroughs in the theories and practices of

the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, China's reflections on the world order and its contribution to the world.

The fourth is to keep pace with the times and address the new problems and challenges facing China and African countries. Under the combined impacts of changes unseen in a century and the COVID-19 pandemic, African countries are generally faced with a series of challenges in pandemic response, economic recovery and people's wellbeing, adding a growing number of uncertainties and instabilities to economic and social development. China and Africa need to focus on the following three fields when they share governance experience. The first is medical and health cooperation. China is well positioned to share its experience in pandemic control and scientific and technological outcomes of vaccine research, development and production to improve African countries' pandemic response capacity. The second is to boost economic recovery and guarantee people's livelihood. A multi-pronged approach should be adopted to deliver development assistance, trade promotion and investment. BRI cooperation should further adapt to Africa's sustainable development and help African countries meet poverty reduction and development goals. The third is cooperation in the digital economy. Being physically isolated by the global pandemic, China and Africa stand ready to carry out cooperation in the digital economy. They will jointly speed up the construction of digital projects in Africa, realize digital evolution in Africa as well as explore new sectors and forge new formats of economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa.

### **INNOVATE THE APPROACHES AND MEANS OF GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE SHARING BETWEEN CHINA AND AFRICA**

To elevate China-Africa exchanges of governance experience in the new era, the two sides should leverage on the existing cooperation mechanisms and further adopt new approaches and means to score more notable achievements.

First, party-to-party exchanges offer political guidance. Most African countries have established modern political party systems. Political parties represent critical political forces that organize state power or participate in political life, whose political platforms and views have an important bearing on state governance. Political parties, with

natural bond with the people, also represent people's interests and thus play a vital role in shaping and influencing public opinions. While state-to-state communication and cooperation remains the mainstay of China-Africa governance experience sharing, political party exchanges have a role to play in offering political guidance. The CPC has established party-to-party relations with over 110 political parties and organizations in more than 50 African countries. They have set up various dialogue mechanisms within such framework as FOCAC and the CPC in Dialogue with Political Parties High-Level Meeting, expanding exchanges of visits of high-level political party leaders, theoretical discussions and skills trainings. The two sides engage in dialogues on state governance, institutional development and party building. Sharing experiences in economic and social development is conducive to improving state and party governance theories and the capacity to govern and participate in politics, thus better equipping all parties to explore the paths and models that fit their own development. By conducting candid exchanges on major regional and international issues of interest to each other and exchanging views on global governance, the CPC and African political parties can enhance mutual trust and consensus, and thus jointly increase their influence and voice in global affairs.


Second, public diplomacy and non-governmental diplomacy play a fundamental role. China's grand diplomacy is now showing a new feature of overall diplomacy, with public diplomacy and non-governmental diplomacy as important aspects, representing an intrinsic requirement of major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and a fundamental project for China's building of soft power. If official exchange is the main channel, public diplomacy and non-governmental diplomacy are new platforms. In recent years, taking up the opportunities created by China-Africa BRI cooperation, China has actively coordinated political parties, the central government, the National People's Congress, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, sub-national governments and civil societies and has involved media, enterprises, trade unions, think tanks, scholars, NGOs and other resources in this effort. By going out and inviting in, China has reached out to the African people to tell the stories of China and the CPC, and through people-to-people exchanges Chinese and African people have established strong emotional bonds and shared mutual knowledge. Public diplomacy and non-governmental

diplomacy toward Africa have become a highlight and feature as China-Africa exchanges of governance experience go deeper and become more concrete.

Third, the FOCAC mechanism plays a stronger leading role. The FOCAC is a mechanism jointly established by China and Africa for collective consultation and multilateral dialogue. It has played an essential leading role in identifying the characterization of China-Africa relations, steering the direction of China-Africa cooperation, formulating the road map for China-Africa cooperation and proposing new policies and measures. Ever since the First Ministerial Meeting of FOCAC, China and Africa have successively established or launched such initiatives as the African Human Resources Development Fund (2000), the African Talents Program (2012), the China-Africa People-to-People Cooperation Program (2015), the African Capacity Building Action (2018), and the African Capacity Building Project (2021). These initiatives aim to boost the capacity building of African countries through skills training, project cooperation, visits to China and seminar discussions. Within the framework of FOCAC, China and Africa have further set up sub-fora, such as China-Africa People's Forum, China-Africa Think Tanks Forum, China-Africa Young Leaders Forum, China-Africa Media Cooperation Forum and China-Africa Poverty Reduction and Development Conference. The two sides have also launched and implemented the China-Africa Joint Research and Exchange Plan, the China-Africa University 20+20 Cooperation Plan and the China-Africa Think Tank 10+10 Partnership Plan to build a multi-level and multi-field community of knowledge among Chinese and African intellectual and academic circles. Therefore, people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Africa grow at all fronts and the exchanges of governance experience keep deepening and expanding.

Fourth, attempts and explorations should be made to promote multilateral exchanges of governance experience. China-Africa governance experience sharing is conducted through bilateral cooperation between China and individual African countries as well as collective dialogues among China, African Union (AU) and African regional organizations. Capacity building has been included in the China-AU strategic dialogue mechanism. China firmly supports the AU in playing a bigger role in peace and development in Africa. On the basis of the Africa-proposed, Africa-agreed and Africa-led principles and with an open attitude, China is also ready to work with

Africa's non-regional partners to boost Africa's capacity building through tripartite and multilateral cooperation. For example, the China-EU strategic dialogue regularly discusses African issues. With multi-level channels for regular communication on African issues, China and the EU have reached a preliminary consensus on promoting tripartite cooperation among China, the EU and Africa. Such tripartite and multilateral cooperation aims to reduce differences, enhance coordination and beef up all parties' strenuous and effective efforts to boost African capacity building. All parties can take a step-by-step approach, starting from cooperation in such low politics areas as poverty reduction, agriculture, public health, natural disasters, climate change and anti-piracy and gradually expanding to such high-politics areas as peace and security as they build stronger trust and consensus.

Fifth, new concepts, paradigms and discourses that can be easily understood by both Chinese and people from other parts of the world should be created. When engaging in governance experience sharing with African countries, it is imperative to show the characteristics of the Chinese path and system as well as to build maximum consensus in development. From the perspective of development, China's experience is essentially a successful exploration of developing countries to pursue modernization and an important practice of human society to address problems in development and governance. Fully taking into account of the features of Chinese history and culture and national conditions, the CPC has kept up with the times to adapt Marxism to the Chinese context, independently explored the development path that fits its conditions and realized economic and social development and the rejuvenation of Chinese civilization. It is fair to say that China's development experience has offered other developing countries more options of the paths towards modernization and that socialism with Chinese characteristics has created a new format of human civilization. In the meantime, it is imperative to create Chinese discourses and narratives that adopt international expressions, so that the international community can understand the essence and global significance of the Chinese experience. Creating new concepts, paradigms and expressions that cater to both Chinese and people from other parts of the world is an inevitable requirement for sharing the CPC's governance experience and an important task for communicating with African countries. 



Ghana's Tema Harbor, representing China-Africa Cooperation.

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# AFRICAN FREE TRADE AREA CONSTRUCTION AND CHINA-AFRICA INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION

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## INTRODUCTION

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (Agenda 2063), the African Union's long-term development strategy, fashioned after Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2030 SDG) for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse. The AfCFTA is expected to create the world's largest free trade area bringing together 55 African countries consisting of 1.3 billion people with a combined GDP of approximately US\$ 3.4 trillion as well as to expand the size of Africa's economy to US\$29 trillion by 2050. All these will enable Africans

to take full advantage of the trade potential on the continent to create jobs, increase the income and improve the standard of living of every African while positioning the continent as a force in global trade. Regrettably, industries that will produce the needed goods and services for the volume of trade that will sustain the AfCFTA are really not available. Many factors are responsible for this ugly situation, but the most crucial is poor and, in some cases, complete absence of infrastructure. Meanwhile, African countries on their own do not have enough financial capability to provide the needed infrastructure. Certainly, the success of the AfCFTA construction depends predominantly upon the accomplishments of the China-Africa industrial cooperation. This

article adumbrates on the legal framework establishing the AfCFTA and the objectives and principles of the AfCFTA. Thereafter, it ascertains the extent to which industrial cooperation under the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has provided infrastructure and promoted industries that will enhance the success of the AfCFTA. Its penultimate part discusses how to make the best of FOCAC and address some of the problems of African countries hindering the success of the AfCFTA. The concluding part highlights the importance of China-Africa industrial cooperation to the AfCFTA and makes recommendations on how best to give full play to the role of FOCAC and address the problems of African states so as to enhance the success of the AfCFTA.

### **THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF AFCFTA: ESTABLISHMENT, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES**

The Agreement Establishing AfCFTA was signed in 2018 by 44 of the 55 African Union (AU) Member States at Kigali, Rwanda. On April 29, 2019, the AfCFTA Agreement entered into force after the 22nd deposit of the instrument of ratification by the Saharawi Republic. The operational phase of the AfCFTA was launched in July 2019 and trading under the AfCFTA Agreement began on January 1, 2021. The AfCFTA Agreement is a framework instrument that covers trade in goods, trade in services, investment, intellectual property rights, competition policy and dispute settlement. Successful conclusion of the first phase of negotiations led to signing of the Protocol on Trade in Goods (Trade in Goods Protocol), Protocol on Trade in Services (Trade in Services Protocol), and Protocol on Rules and Procedures on the Settlement of Disputes (Dispute Settlement Protocol). The three protocols are integral parts and form part of the single undertaking with the AfCFTA Agreement after it entered into force. Phase II negotiations on investment, intellectual property rights, and competition policy after the adoption of the AfCFTA Agreement by the Assembly of the AU are ongoing.

The cardinal general objective of the AfCFTA is to create a single liberalized market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of capital and natural persons in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent. It is also among the general objectives of the AfCFTA to promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development,

agricultural development and food security. In order to fulfil and realize these general objectives, the state parties are mandated, among others, to eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods, and progressively liberalize trade in services. The principles governing the AfCFTA are: driven by Member States of the AU; Regional Economic Community's (REC) Free Trade Areas (FTAs) as building blocs for the AfCFTA; variable geometry; flexibility and special and differential treatment; transparency and disclosure of information; preservation of the acquis; Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) treatment; National Treatment; reciprocity; substantial liberalization; and consensus in decision-making.

### **THE FORUM ON CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION**

The diplomatic relations between China and African countries started 66 years ago. However, it was only in 2000 that the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was established based on sincere friendship and equality, win-win for mutual benefit and common development, fairness and justice, progress, openness and inclusiveness. During the 2000 FOCAC, the Ministers from the two sides adopted the Program for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development (the Program), which detailed the 18 areas of their strategic cooperation. Notwithstanding the FOCAC creating a form of uni-multilateralism in which all countries are equal partners, the comparative weight of China's state capacity effectively indicates 53 pairs of bilateral relationships under a single architecture. Between 2000 and 2022, FOCAC has witnessed three phases.

### **FOCAC: EARLY EFFORTS ON TRADE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT**

During the 2000-2006 phase, China and Africa focused on deeper trade engagement, which led trade between the two sides to expand by 5.2 times. No doubt, generally, China's strategy was to attract more imports from Africa, and more specifically it offered tariff free imports for over 440 items from Africa's Least Developed Countries. In para 2.3 of the Program, the Chinese government agreed to continue to cooperate with and provide development assistance to African countries, focusing among others on the promotion of local industries. During this phase, China also strengthened

its cooperation with Africa in human resources development and trained up to 10,000 African personnel in different fields. At this time, the AfCFTA was not established and no specific reference was made to it by the two sides. During the 2006-2015 phase, China expanded its area of cooperation with Africa from trade only to include foreign aid, direct investment, development finance, including US\$5 billion preferential loans and credits, and infrastructure building under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. Indeed, by the end of the 1st quarter of 2009, China had smoothly cancelled 150 mature debts of 32 African countries. The milestone gains for Africa was the establishment of the China-Africa Development Bank which increased China's foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa; and enhanced China's funding of physical investment in priority areas including agricultural development, infrastructure construction, human resources training and health care, power grids, special trade zones, ports, and transportation. In the Beijing Action Plan (2013-2015) adopted during the 5th Ministerial Conference of FOCAC, China promised to continue to support the development of overseas business cooperation zones established in Africa so that they can contribute towards rapid industrialization and economic restructuring in Africa. Again, the Beijing Action Plan (2013-2015) did not make any reference to the AfCFTA because the negotiations for establishing the AfCFTA were launched in June 2015.

### **FOCAC: SHIFT OF FOCUS TO INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

The third phase (2015-2021) commenced with the second summit of the FOCAC which was held at Johannesburg, South Africa. During the Summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping promised China's cooperation with Africa in major areas including industrialization, agricultural modernization, building infrastructure, financial services, green development, trade and investment facilitation, etc. To ensure smooth implementation of the initiatives, President Xi announced that China will provide Africa with US\$60 billion of funding support, including US\$5 billion of free aid and interest-free loans, US\$35 billion of preferential loans and export credit on more favorable terms, US\$5 billion of additional capital for the China-Africa Development Fund

and the Special Loan for the Development of African Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) each, and a China-Africa production capacity cooperation fund with the initial capital of US\$10 billion. President Xi stressed that the programs will focus on helping African countries among others achieve accelerated industrialization and realize sustainable development. President Xi made other specific commitments in the areas of human resources development, among others. During the closing ceremony of the 2015 FOCAC Summit, the Chinese Foreign Minister reported that China helped Kenya in building new industrial parks that contain several firms operating in various economic sectors, including manufacturing for export. In Ethiopia, China constructed industrial parks which produce footwear for both domestic and export markets. All these efforts will accelerate the development of the AfCFTA.

During the Beijing Summit of FOCAC in 2018, the Declaration - China and Africa: Toward an Even Stronger Community with a Shared Future through Win-Win Cooperation adopted by consensus stressed in para 4.2 the agreement between China and Africa to form a strong synergy between the BRI and the UN 2030 SDGs and AU Agenda 2063 and, among others, strengthened industrial capacity cooperation under the BRI. The two sides also agreed that greater cooperation in the planning of African infrastructure and industrial development will lend new impetus to the win-win cooperation and common development between China and Africa. In para 13.2 of the Declaration, China declared its support for early progress in developing AfCFTA and the Single African Air Transport Market. Furthermore, China promised to strengthen cooperation with Africa in trade and investment facilitation, as well as support African countries in the areas of infrastructure development and industrialization. As a matter of fact, the BRI has enabled African countries to rebuild some of their infrastructure which will facilitate and aid in the implementation of the AfCFTA. Examples of such infrastructure are the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway in Kenya, the TAZARA railway in Tanzania, the rail projects in Ethiopia, the Lagos-Ibadan rail projects, Abuja-Kaduna, Lagos-Calabar and Abuja light rail projects and the Lekki Free Trade Zone in Nigeria. Indeed, there are many other BRI or FOCAC projects strategically located in many African countries that will enhance movement of people, goods and service, a sine quo non

for the success of the AfCFTA.

The Action Plan adopted at the Beijing Summit in 2018 captured the major initiatives and other outcomes of the summit. Within the context of AfCFTA discourse, the Action Plan reiterated China's support for building of the AfCFTA and boosting trade between the two sides by helping Africa to increase its export while China increases its import, particularly non-resource products from Africa, with a focus on value added agricultural products and industrial products. Para 3.2 of the Beijing Action Plan is specifically on industry partnering and industrial capacity cooperation by China and Africa. Of importance is China's promise to step up support in the development of industries in Africa, including processing and manufacturing industries, and the development of industrial parks and transfer technology to African countries in order to help them build more diversified economies and stronger capabilities for self-driven development. China also encouraged developmental financial institutions such as the China-Africa Development Fund, the China-Africa Fund for Industrial Cooperation and the Special Loan for the Development of African SMEs to increase support for China-Africa industrial capacity cooperation to boost the industrialization of Africa. To achieve this, China will extend US\$20 billion of credit lines and support the setting up of a US\$10 billion special fund for development financing. What is more, the two sides agreed that infrastructure development particularly railway, sea port, maritime shipping, Single African Air Transport Market, and information and communication technology (ICT) that sustain digital economy, etc. will enhance industrial development and trade as envisioned in the AfCFTA Agreement.

### AFCTA AND INDUSTRIALIZATION IN AFRICA AFTER THE FOCAC DAKAR 8TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

The FOCAC 8th Ministerial Conference held in Dakar, Senegal in November 2021 marked a watershed in the China-Africa partnership. Four documents were adopted but the China and Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 (China-Africa Vision 2035) stands out as a 15-year mid-to long-term cooperation plan jointly developed by China and Africa. Under the China-Africa Vision 2035, eight areas of cooperation are envisaged: 1) partnerships for common development; 2) trade/investment/financ-

ing; 3) industrial cooperation; 4) green cooperation; 5) health; 6) people-to-people exchanges; 7) peace and security; and 8) cooperation on global governance.

Regarding the AfCFTA, the wordings of the China-Africa Vision 2035 indicate that China actively participates in the development of the AfCFTA. More so, China-Africa infrastructure cooperation is upgraded as China supports the development of African railway, highway, shipping, port, airline, and communications networks. Fortunately, promoting transformation and growth to advance industries in one of the very few areas stressed by China-Africa Vision 2035 mixes China's promise and reorientation. For instance, China supports Africa in:

(i) Developing modern agriculture and agro-industries so as to enhance food security capabilities of African countries and improve safety and value added of African agricultural produce.

(ii) Setting up parks for blue economy to foster industrial clusters and regional growth poles.

(iii) Building new types of infrastructure and developing the digital economy to bridge the digital divide.

Concerning China's promises, China will help Africa develop 'Made in Africa' brands and integrate them into global industrial and supply chains by assisting Africa to develop its manufacturing sector as well as sharing its experience with Africa to help Africa upgrade and enhance the competitiveness of its manufacturing sector, invigorate the private sector and create more jobs in the private sector. Also, China will cooperate with Africa to conduct extensive scientific research, develop Africa's

*People celebrating the completion of Ghana's Tamale Interchange built by Chinese company.*



*(Photo/Xinhua)*

technological innovation capability and transfer technology and its application to Africa in order to improve sustainable economic and social development in Africa. Indeed, the only economic and financial commitment of China to Africa under the China-Africa Vision 2035 is China's promise to invest US\$60 billion in Africa by 2035 directly in agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure, environmental protection, digital economy and blue economy.

In his Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference, President Xi decided to reaffirm China's commitment to Africa under the FOCAC mechanism by laying out the specific economic, financial or projects commitments of China to Africa in nine areas. With regards to enhancing the objective of the AfCFTA, President Xi affirmed that China will open 'green lanes' for African agricultural exports to China, accelerate inspection and quarantine procedures and further increase the scope of LDCs products allowed zero-tariff import treatment in China. This will enable China to meet the expected US\$300 billion total import from Africa in 2024. China will provide US\$10 billion of trade finance to support African export; undertake 10 connectivity projects in Africa; collaborate with African countries to expand Silk Road e-commerce cooperation; hold online festivals featuring quality African products; and launch a campaign to market 100 African stores and 1000 African products on e-commerce platforms. All these commitments will give continued support to the development of the AfCFTA. Concerning industrial promotion commitments, China will encourage its private sector to invest US\$10 billion in Africa in three years; establish a platform for China-Africa private investment promotion; undertake 10 industrialization and employment promotion projects for Africa; provide credit facilities of US\$10 billion to African financial institutions, support the development of African SMEs on a priority basis; and undertake 10 digital economic projects aside from setting up centers for China-Africa cooperation on satellite remote-sensing application.

### **HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF FOCAC AND ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

The author believes that the effectiveness of FOCAC would be greatly enhanced if the two sides could come up with a well-defined binding agreement that takes

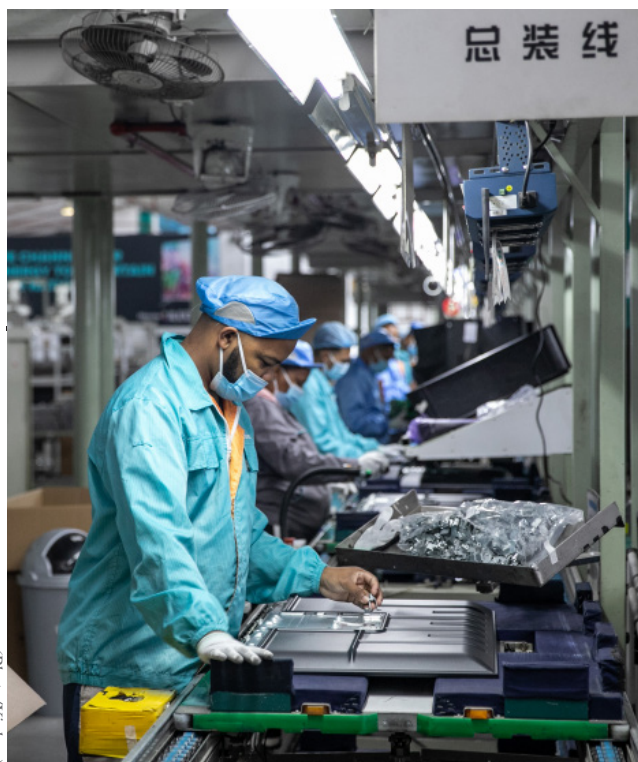
into account the AfCFTA Agreement and the existing bilateral trade and investment agreements between China and some Africa countries. Negotiating and adopting such an agreement is very important because some African countries having bilateral trade or investment agreements with China can circumvent the conditions permitting such agreements to gain African market without a commensurate gain for the African continent. This will certainly jeopardize the collective resolve of member states of AU to use AfCFTA to reduce poverty and boost African economy by liberalization of intra-African trade.

Secondly, African countries must realize the best solution to their low level of industrial development is not China's financial aids and loans. The International Monetary Fund downgraded China's growth to 3.3 per cent in 2022, the lowest level in more than 40 years, and to 4.6 per cent in 2023. The truth is neither China nor any developed country or international organization may be financially capable of providing all the funding for industrialization of Africa. A glimpse of how bad the situation is can be best illustrated using Nigeria. China has promised to invest US\$60 billion in Africa by 2035 under the China-Africa Vision 2035. Nigeria's National Development Plan 2021-2025 requires N348.1 trillion. The government (Federal, States and Local Government Areas) investment is expected to be only N49.7 trillion. The remaining balance of N298.3 trillion is expected from the private sector. Meanwhile, the prevailing investment climate and business environment in the country have already incapacitated majority of private business concerns. In order to achieve the objective of the NDP 2021-2025, the Federal Government will still resort to external funds. While the US\$60 billion investment in Africa under the China-Africa Vision 2035 is budgeted for the period of 2021-2035 (15 years), the Nigeria's NDP will last from 2021 to 2025 (5 years). Unfortunately, at the current official exchange rate of N422.88 to US\$1, Nigeria needs about US\$705.4 billion from external sources for its priority investment from 2021-2025. Meanwhile, industrialization is just one sector out of the numerous sectors of the economy, which are open for investment.

Another problem Nigeria and many other African countries are likely to encounter is poor accountability and transparency on the part of those in government. One aspect of poor governance in most African coun-

tries is lack of sincerity on the part of the government to use foreign aids, grants and loans for the purposes such funds were given. Where the exact projects are executed, padding of costs of the projects or contracts, most times to the knowledge of foreign donor agents or officers, has emerged as a new form corruption in African countries. All these call for transparency, accountability and prudent management of African countries' financial resources by heads of state and government as well as their political appointees. It further calls for sincerity on the part of all levels of government in allocating scarce financial resources to sustainable infrastructure projects. Definitely, industries can only thrive in environment with basic infrastructure. The cases of Dunlop and Michelin Tyres relocating their plants from Nigeria to Ghana because of epileptic power supply, despite the teeming market in Nigeria for their products, should serve as excellent lessons for those in government in Africa. Probably, they need to be informed that in the symbiotic relationship between industries and social infrastructure, it is the latter that first attracts the former. Investors will always prepare to locate industries where there are infrastructure.

*Local workers working in Chinese industrial park in South Africa.*



(Photo/Xinhua)

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The establishment of the AfCFTA represents a major step towards greater economic integration and trade on the continent. To an extent, the slogan “African solutions for African problems” is correct, but when it comes to getting adequate funds to finance industrialization and investment that will facilitate and aid the development of the AfCFTA, Africa definitely need external funding and investors. The FOCAC industrial cooperation has greatly assisted Africa to gradually build up its industrial base and provided financial resources to invest in construction of necessary infrastructure that will enhance the growth of industries. As on November 11, 2021, information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China revealed that China has established industrial capacity cooperation mechanisms with 15 countries in Africa. China and African countries have worked together to build economic and trade cooperation zones, special economic zones, industrial parks and science parks, attracting enterprises from China and other countries to invest in Africa. By the end of 2020, direct investment of Chinese companies in Africa had surpassed US\$43 billion. China has established over 3,500 companies of various types across the continent. From 2000 to 2020, China helped African countries build more than 13,000 km of roads and railways and more than 80 large-scale power facilities. All these and other projects embarked upon by China in Africa will make free movement of people, capital, goods and services in Africa possible and in the long-run contribute immensely to the success of the AfCFTA.

### The recommendations are:

- 1.China and Africa should come up with a well-defined binding agreement that takes into account of the AfCFTA Agreement;
- 2.There should be transparency, accountability and prudent management of African countries’ financial resources by those in government;
- 3.The success of the AfCFTA depends on availability of basic infrastructure such as roads, railways, airports, seaports, digital communication system, etc. and efficient interconnectedness of all these. African countries should focus on developing these infrastructure. 🇨🇳

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# FEATURE AND TREND OF U.S. POLICY ON AFRICA IN A CHANGING WORLD

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The U.S. policy toward Africa has never been a priority in the foreign affairs of all U.S. administrations. While inheriting most of the policies from its predecessor, each administration also makes some mild changes to its Africa policy according to new situations. It is fair to say that the U.S. policies toward Africa are basically consistent and for the most part characterized by ideological infiltration. Since the beginning of the 21st century, as economic and trade cooperation between China and Africa continues to grow, the United States has got more anxious. Under the Trump administration in particular, the U.S.-China relationship was defined as strategic competition, which expedited the pace of strategic rivalry and confrontation between them on a global scale, and Africa was turned into a venue for strategic competition with China by the U.S. The Biden administration basically continued with its predecessor's Africa policy which highlights major country competition and Africa has been incorporated into the U.S. global strategy.

## ADJUSTMENTS IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD AFRICA AFTER THE COLD WAR

As Africa rises, the U.S. has recognized more and more geopolitical and strategic values of Africa. Currently in particular, the U.S. views Africa as not only a venue for strategic competition with China, but also an important region for its economy and global governance.

The post-Cold War era sees the U.S. maintaining its policy toward Africa like during the Cold War and African affairs

have stayed in a lesser position in the U.S. diplomacy. But that doesn't mean the U.S. has ignored Africa. While constructing its global hegemony, the U.S. also worked to prevent any African country from seeking hegemony against it and adopted such prevention as a primary goal in its Africa policy. Nonetheless, each U.S. administration after the Cold War has only made mild changes to the Africa policy, which is characterized by moderate fluctuation and robustness. The specific characteristics are as below:

First, strategic orientation. During the Cold War, the U.S. intensified rivalry against the Soviet Union on a global scale and maintained strategic aid to African countries, which it believed would best serve its security interest. After the Cold War, due to its anti-terrorism strategic needs and demand for Africa's energy resources, and as emerging countries like China increased their economic investment in Africa, the U.S. recognized the need to strengthen aid to Africa to increase its influence there. Particularly since the Obama administration, the U.S. has gradually formed a view that China will pose a challenge to the U.S. in Africa. As a result, it focused on providing humanitarian and development aid to Africa, with an important strategic aim of promoting good governance.

Second, incremental enhancement. Since the Reagan administration, every U.S. administration has released iconic policy initiatives or cooperation priorities for Africa. The Reagan administration launched the "constructive engagement" policy in the hope of ending the apartheid regime in South Africa. The George H. W. Bush administration was committed to ending the civil wars in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Somalia. The Clinton administration launched the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which became the trade and investment cornerstone between the U.S. and Africa. The George W. Bush administration launched the PEPFAR, Millennium Challenge Account and other initiatives on combating malaria and supporting child education. The Obama administration launched the Power Africa and Feed the Future initiatives to alleviate the prolonged power and food shortages in Africa, and the Young African Leaders Initiative to nurture pro-Western leaders.



*U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken making speech on Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy in South Africa in 2022.*

Third, political features. As African affairs were never a priority in its diplomacy, to cope with the competition between major countries in Africa, the U.S. relied more on approaches such as exporting values and promoting Western democracy. To that end, all U.S. administrations have pegged their aids to Africa with conditions on human rights and democracy, in an attempt to bring about economic institutional reforms in African economies, but in vain. Meanwhile, the democracy drive in African countries under the U.S. direction has failed to curb corruption in Africa. All these have indicated that the additional conditions have failed to achieve their desired results.

### **TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S NEW AFRICA STRATEGY**

After taking office in 2017, President Trump declared the political goal of America First, which was also adopted to guide the U.S. foreign policy. As a result, the focus of the U.S. global strategy was shifted from anti-terrorism to major country competition. In December 2018, the Trump administration released the New Africa Strategy, which adopted containing China's and Russia's influence in Africa as its core goal. The Strategy was mainly implemented through the following approaches:

First, launching the Prosper Africa initiative to confront the so-called China model with the U.S. model.

In June 2019, Karen Dunn Kelley, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce declared the launch of Prosper Africa at the 12th U.S.-Africa Business Summit in Mozambique, which called on U.S. and African businesses to strengthen cooperation, encouraged private investment in Africa, and defined the goal of doubling U.S. investment on the African continent. In effect, Prosper Africa encourages African leaders to choose the so-called high-quality, transparent and sustainable U.S. investments as alternatives to China's state-directed initiatives. As of early November 2020, the initiative had enabled the U.S. to conduct over 280 transactions with over 30 countries and regions in Africa with the total trade volume reaching 22 billion U.S. dollars. Most of these projects were on infrastructure, credit and financial services, and sectors including energy, agriculture, transportation, healthcare, technology, and pandemic control were covered. However, the Trump administration still attached numerous political conditions to these policies, such as requiring recipient countries to carry out democratic reforms in the political system, conduct market-oriented reforms in the economy and promote good governance by civil societies in social governance. The Trump administration's economic and trade policy toward Africa was still America first, with politics taking precedence over the economy and the United States' interests served more than Africa's.

Second, hedging against China's economic influence in Africa. In February 2020, during his visit to Africa, the then U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo repeatedly abetted African countries to be wary of and take actions against China's economic activities in Africa by making insinuations about China-Africa relations. Backed up by its power of discourse, the Trump administration kept playing up China's influence in Africa in its implementation of the New Africa Strategy. Although such propaganda does not cost much, it is highly provocative and could extensively influence the African society, generating pressure on African governments from the bottom up. In addition, in 2018, the Trump administration enacted the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act (BUILD), and the United States International Development Finance Corporation (IDFC) was established as a new foreign aid agency thereunder. The Trump administration's New Africa Strategy encourages private businesses to invest in Africa, and attempts to out-compete

the Belt and Road Initiative by integrating the tools of investment, aid and trade, thus hedging against China's influence growth in Africa.

Third, increasing strategic competition with China and Russia in the field of African security to maintain its strategic advantage in Africa. By the beginning of 2020, the U.S. had already deployed over 20 military bases in Africa. Moreover, President Trump granted AFRICOM more autonomy, allowing it to take preemptive military actions without his approval. The then U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper has also admitted that the U.S. dispatches security aid staff to Africa to better compete with China and Russia in Africa.

The Trump administration's New Africa Strategy aims to maintain the U.S. influence in Africa and strengthen the ability to carry out strategic competition with China in Africa under the guidance of America First. However, this strategy has not received positive response from African countries due to its overemphasis on U.S. interests. In addition, President Trump often failed to show enough respect to African leaders, causing many African leaders to avoid visiting the U.S., for they knew they were unlikely to be met by the President, and even if they were, they might be slighted. President Trump's inclination of white supremacy has also dealt a serious blow to the prestige and soft power of the U.S. in Africa. In fact, the histories of British and French colonization in Africa have both indicated that in the context of relative decline of hegemony, great powers will quickly lose their influence in Africa if they fail to take the matter seriously. The U.S. will be no exception. The fatal weakness of a policy whose true purpose is about major country competition would inevitably be exposed as time goes by.

### **BIDEN'S AFRICA POLICY SINCE TAKING OFFICE AND ITS FUTURE PROJECTION**

The Biden administration has continued with the Trump administration's strategy of major country competition, identifying China as a competitor that poses a serious challenge to America's prosperity, security and democratic values. Its Interim National Security Strategic Guidance depicts China as the only competitor potentially capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international

system. The U.S. security and foreign policy with institutional prevention as its core is pushing the international situation towards a more volatile and uncertain future, which is also reflected in the situation in Africa.

To repair relations with African countries, President Biden switched focus back to trade and human rights issues and even lifted the Trump administration's travel ban on six African countries within hours upon taking office. President Biden also said he would reconsider bilateral trade talks with Kenya, suggesting a possible renewed focus on supporting the African Continental Free Trade Area. In a video address to the African Union summit in February 2021, President Biden reiterated the United States' strong focus on human rights in Africa, recommitted the U.S. to value diplomacy, and in particular, severely criticized the alleged abuses in Ethiopia, Cameroon, Zimbabwe and Egypt. The State Department also made a high-profile claim to promote democracy and human rights in Africa. The U.S. even signed a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council, calling on Egypt to end its repression of freedom of expression and assembly, which was seen as an unusual move against an African ally.

The Biden administration has also reshuffled its Africa policy team. Judd Devermont, director of the Africa Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, who is also a former senior CIA official and national intelligence officer for Africa, was appointed to the National Security Council to disentangle the decision-making process on Africa policy. In a July 2021 speech, Dana Banks, senior director for African affairs on the Biden administration's National Security Council, pledged consistency to the Trump administration's Prosper Africa initiative, saying the initiative would be the centerpiece of the U.S. economic and commercial engagement with Africa. She reiterated that the initiative would bring African and U.S. businesses together, stimulate the U.S. and African private sector, and increase bilateral trade. In August 2022, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, during which he rolled out a new U.S. strategy toward Africa. It can be seen that the Biden administration seeks to deepen consensus and strengthen cooperation with African allies and multilateral organizations, in order to serve the economic recovery of the United States while consolidating relations with African allies, thus securing an advantage in

its strategic competition with China in Africa. Next, the Biden administration is expected to adopt the following policies:

First, strengthening the aid of COVID-19 vaccines to Africa. At present, the novel corona virus variants are raging in Africa, largely due to insufficient vaccines aided to Africa from the international community, particularly from the West. It is estimated that COVID-19 vaccines aid to Africa will not be fully available until 2023, and the U.S. is still acting slowly.

Second, actively bringing in U.S. private businesses to Africa. The Biden administration continues to strengthen the U.S. economic position in East Africa through the International Development Finance Corporation and Prosper Africa initiative. In the eyes of the U.S., the influx of private companies into East Africa will undermine China's investment projects there, and East African leaders will also be cautious about Chinese investment in the region. As economic ties between the U.S. and Africa get closer, they believe, African media and civil societies will increasingly speak out against Chinese investment.

Third, continuing to provide bottom-up development aid to Africa and promoting Western democracy and the rule of law. The Biden administration redirected its annual aid for health projects in West Africa to aid for promoting democracy, human rights, and social governance. Meanwhile, to reduce China's and Russia's influence in Africa, the Biden administration is expected to leverage its discourse advantage to publicize opaque investments and supply chains, and support civil society organizations to investigate and hold accountable opaque investments. This would effectively squeeze China's investment in the region.

Fourth, strengthening the alliance system and maintaining hegemony through multilateral mechanisms. Through strengthening ties with the Economic Community of West African States, the Biden administration seeks to have dominance in the bloc and promote the rule of law, defense of human rights, and independent judiciary. Southern Africa is the region of the greatest concern to the United States on the African continent. The Biden administration will continue to support South Africa's regional leadership role and coordinate with SADC to address issues like debt through multilateral dialogues.

Fifth, pursuing an active public diplomacy by in-

creasing investment in academic, commercial and cultural exchanges to compensate for the insufficiency of official diplomacy. The most important part of this attempt is the training of the young generation. The Biden administration has proposed to prioritize support for U.S. enterprises that launch businesses in Africa, strengthen and expand coverage of exchange programs such as the Young African Leaders Initiative and the Africa Tourism Leadership Forum and Awards, enhance academic exchanges between U.S. and African universities, and expand market for private college education.

In a nutshell, most of the Biden administration's Africa policy is a continuation of its predecessor, particularly the Prosper Africa initiative and the concept of major country competition in the New Africa Strategy. It encourages investment in Africa from private U.S. businesses to rival against China's investment, focuses more on health, education and infrastructure in terms of aid, and hopes to help American democracy take root in Africa by fostering civil forces, thereby reducing China's influence in Africa.

However, African attitudes towards the Biden administration's Africa policy are divided. On the one hand, influenced by the American democratic values, many Africans support Western democracy. As Afrobarometersurvey data shows, 70 percent of Africans from the sample countries support the Western democracy. On the other hand, however, U.S. aid to Africa is perceived by these countries as either lip service or with additional political conditions. In the final analysis, the U.S. never really cares about the development of Africa as a whole. Instead, it used Africa as a tool for geopolitical gamesmanship and promoting Western democracy. Moreover, racial injustice at home is seriously undermining the United States' image as a beacon of democracy in Africa. Young people in Africa can easily see the tragic scenes of police brutality, gun violence and mass shootings in the U.S. through social media platforms. In Kenya, protesters knelt outside the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi to protest against not only the killing of George Floyd, but also the abuses by Kenyan police. Derek Chauvin's guilty verdict even made the front pages of many newspapers in Africa. As a result, young Africans are increasingly showing a preference for a more independent Africa. In the long run, the United States' influence in Africa will wane. ■

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# AFRICA AND THE END OF US GLOBAL HEGEMONY

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## INTRODUCTION

The U.S. has dominated world affairs since the end of the Second World War in 1945. This reality has allowed the U.S. to play critical roles in the establishment of important international organisations such as the United Nations and all its affiliate bodies, as well as multilateral groups such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD – World Bank), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and several others. Thus the U.S. has determined the course of international relations and global socio-economic development and peace and security cooperation.

In the area of peace and security, the U.S. also led the formation of Western Military alliances across the world, the most significant being the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Equally importantly, the U.S. established military bases across the world. In response to this the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) also established the Warsaw Pact alliance, bringing together all Communist countries of Eastern Europe. This development led to the Cold War between Western capitalist countries, under the umbrella of NATO, led by the U.S., and the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, led by the Soviet Union, thus the beginning of the East-West competition.

Over the decades, the U.S. also strengthened its global domination through its strong post-Second World War economic boom, a situation that allows it to impose its national currency, the dollar, as a global currency especially after the adoption of the dollar as a preferred currency for the global oil trade, the so-called petro-dollar, further consolidating its global dominance in the financial sector.

It was into this world dominated by the U.S. that African

countries emerged after their independence from colonial bondage. Though the U.S. was not a colonial power in Africa like some European powers, such as the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, and others, the preponderance of U.S. power, its hegemony over world affairs, manifested in the pattern of centre-periphery relationship that developed between African states and the U.S..

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, and as a consequence, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved, it was thought in some quarters that NATO would also be dissolved paving the way for the establishment of a new global collective security arrangement which could have brought all nations together. The U.S., however, had a different objective of consolidating its global dominance.

Against the chaos that ensued in the Russian Federation, the successor state to the Soviet Union, during the transition from the Communist order to a western style democratic arrangement, the U.S. emerged as the unchallenged global super power. American scholars began to talk of the “End of History” and the triumph of the American world view.

## THE U.S. AS A GLOBAL HEGEMON

It is widely recognized that power is a very important attribute that nations pursue in the international system. Power is the basis of foreign policy decision making and planning of security strategy, the management of national resources and the control of market share and access to globally available resources. Accordingly, the more powerful a nation is, the more it should be able to achieve its national economic, political and security objectives on the international scene. To understand the global hegemony of the U.S., therefore, we must understand the power that the U.S. possesses.

But first, we must understand this power against the background of the international system.

Between 1945 and 1991, when the USSR was dissolved, the U.S. and its NATO allies were in competition with the Soviet Union and its War-

saw Pact allies in what became known as the Cold War. African countries emerged on the international stage as independent nations in this Cold War environment. They were immediately confronted with the challenge of global alliances. However, African countries, and many other developing countries in Asia and Latin America, opted for a non-alignment policy, choosing not to be aligned to any of the ideological camps. This policy allowed the young nations of Africa to have access and to cooperate with all nations irrespective of their ideological leanings. This policy was tested again and again as critical issues confronted the global community, such as the national liberation struggle, the anti-Apartheid struggle, the campaign for a new international economic order, and the issue of global peace and security among others.

The U.S. expected the African nations to support its global vision and agenda. However, most of the African countries remained non-aligned. Though nations are largely interdependent on the international stage, some are more dependent than others on the dominant global capitalist countries. Meanwhile, U.S. hegemony and interests continued to pose challenges to the interests of the Global South generally and African countries, which were largely primary commodity producers and exporters and therefore dependent on the goodwill of the developed countries.

The crucial factor on the international stage is power. The extent to which one nation can pursue its international and domestic goals is based on its power broadly defined. Critical elements of power include military capability, in terms of men and material, strong economic capability, including technological and industrial capability, huge territory, huge population, institutional capabilities, the power to develop a strategic vision and the capacity and the will to pursue the vision. All these elements constitute the critical factors which define the power of the U.S. on the international stage.

For a long time, particularly up to the early twentieth century, state power was equated with military capability. This explains the arms race by states to acquire more weapons of mass destruction in relation to other actors throughout the century.

The realist school of international relations has built a deep understanding of the role of power in the affairs of nations, and how power affects the possibilities of states, both within their boundaries and in relation to

other nations on the international scene. This small group of nations has been able to establish their hegemony and, on the basis of their power, determine the fate of other actors. To the realists, appeal to human reason or to the world court will not produce peace and order; only power will. Though the realists are concerned about peace and order in the international system, they believe that these values can only be achieved, not so much by international law or international organizations, but by power. Hence the pursuit of power by the U.S. and its allies to foster a unipolar world, a hegemonic world, dominated by them. The realists also believe that U.S. and Western hegemony is good for the world. However, it is this hegemonic pursuits that have led to U.S.-led wars in Vietnam, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan and even Ukraine with dire consequences for the international community.

## THE U.S. AND AFRICA

The United States has always occupied a prominent position in the relations between Africa and the outside world even though there was no colonial relationship between them. The relationship grew out of the dominant position of the U.S. in the international system, in critical multilateral agencies such as the IBRD, also known as the World Bank and the IMF, its economic, military and political power and influence. The U.S. is also attracted to Africa because of the strategic position of the African continent and the rich natural endowments of the continent and its potential both as a market for American goods and services and also as a destination for American investment.

After the Second World War, African states looked up to the U.S. in their struggle against colonialism, and for national liberation and for support in the campaign against the Apartheid system in South Africa and other racist regimes on the continent. In addition, African countries also looked up to the U.S. for economic assistance, disaster relief, humanitarian aid, and investment. Even though most of the African states were non-aligned during the Cold War period, they continued to seek American support in a variety of ways especially as their economic condition deteriorated in the 1970s.

At the end of the Cold War in 1991, which also coincided with the end of Apartheid, many African countries moved closer to American policy prescriptions for them



Photo: Xinhua

People protest against U.S. sanctions in Zimbabwe, 2022.

by accepting the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the adoption of multiparty democracy and liberal and neo-liberal economic reforms, the central principle of which was market orthodoxy. Accordingly, in the last three decades, as African countries embarked on democratic construction and economic reforms, and as African leaders trooped to the U.S. for validation and support, there was no major obstacle towards a reinvention of U.S.-African relations, which could be classified as growing in leaps and bounds with every successive American president adding new elements to the mix of policy engagement of African countries. Though terrorist attacks on the September 11, 2001 imposed new elements into American foreign policy, particularly the Global War on Terror, U.S.-African relations did not suffer any major setback because of U.S. pursuit of its anti-terrorism policy, which profoundly affected the international system. In fact many African leaders consider U.S.-African relation as being good and friendly, and American support for African aspirations on the international stage very reliable, even dependable.

That was until President Donald Trump came into office in 2017 and openly adopted an antagonistic “America First” attitude towards African states. The period of 2017 to 2021 therefore marked the lowest point in U.S.-African relations since the end of the Cold War. The coming into office of President Joe Biden in 2021 offers

a great opportunity for improving U.S.-African relations and putting up U.S.-African engagement on a pedestal of mutual benefit in this new and dynamic international system.

However, beyond the dramatic changes in global politics, the rise of China and a resurgent Russian Federation and the role of emerging powers like India, key issues in U.S.-Africa relations remain aid and the prospects for socio-economic development on the continent.

Through aid, technical and humanitarian assistance and trade, the U.S. became very close to several African leaders, and became second or third in influence after the departed colonial masters in most of the African countries.

The national liberation struggle and the fight against Apartheid and racist regimes on the continent, however, created some obstacles for the growing U.S. African cooperation as the U.S. continued to support those racist regimes. As a result, the diplomatic relations were not as warm as was expected, even though American investment continued to expand across the continent.

By the 1970s, African economies started to experience several severe negative turns. Their need for economic and humanitarian assistance from the U.S. continued to grow as well as the need for U.S. support in negotiations with the World Bank and the IMF to solve critical balance of payment problems. It was also a period of campaign for a new international economic order.

This was a time when the Cold War was raging and the African countries were promoting their non-alignment policy against the background of U.S. strong support for the Apartheid regime of South Africa and other racist regimes on the continent.

By the 1980s, the U.S. through the World Bank and the IMF was promoting Structural Adjustment Programme for African countries. In the evolution of U.S.-African relations, the 1990s was a critical period. Soviet Union had collapsed, bringing to an end to the Cold War, while a triumphant capitalist order was unchallenged on the global stage, and globalization was declared. Apartheid South African and all other racist regimes have been defeated opening up opportunities for a new level of engagement between the U.S. and African countries. At the same time, African countries were experiencing severe political and economic crises, because of economic decline in most countries, resulting in growing autocratic rule and human rights abuses. In response, the U.S. invoked democratization as a solution to Africa's political and economic problems, investing enormously in the development of non-governmental organisations and activist civil societies committed to fundamental political change on the continent. By the end of the decade, several African countries have embraced democratic rule, with most of them adopting American-style presidential system. In Nigeria, the second longest period of military rule, starting from 1983, came to an end following the sudden death of General Sani Abacha and the decision of the Nigerian military under General Abdusalam Abubakar to return the country to democratic rule, at the shortest possible time, a feat accomplished in less than one year with a democratic election and the arrival of a democratic government in May 1999.

Consequently, Washington's agenda on the continent was now focused on the promotion of democratic rule, market driven economic reform, and to this was deployed American aid to the continent.

U.S.-African relations continued to improve, signposted by increased visits of American leaders to the continent. President Carter had visited Nigeria and Liberia (1978), President George H. W. Bush had visited Somalia and Ghana (1993); President Bill Clinton visited Uganda (1998), Rwanda (1998), South Africa (1998), Botswana (1998), Senegal (1998) and Nigeria (2000). President George W. Bush visited Senegal (2003), South

Africa (2003), Botswana (2003), Uganda (2003), Nigeria (2003), Benin (2008), Tanzania (2008), Rwanda (2008), Ghana (2008), Liberia (2008). President Barak Obama visited Ghana (2009), Senegal (2013), South Africa (2013), Tanzania (2013), Senegal (2013), South Africa (2013), Kenya (2015) and Ethiopia (2015).

In general, we can talk of improved U.S.-African relations in the new millennium. Some African countries are closer to the U.S. than others. Generally however, those countries that embraced democracy and neo-liberal economic reform such as Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco and others enjoy greater cooperation and support from the U.S., further signposted by increased level of high-level official exchanges between the U.S. and Africa, greater collaboration between American and African agencies and institutions in the fight against drug trafficking, piracy, terrorism, money laundering and other transnational crimes. There was also greater security cooperation, with several military cooperation agreements signed (i.e. with Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa and others) for training and other types of cooperation.

Another significant issue is the growing presence of the U.S. military on the continent with a U.S. military sub-regional command at Sao Tome and Principe, and another major U.S. military base in Djibouti, at Camp Lemmonier, the only permanent U.S. military base in Africa. The U.S. has also signed an agreement with Ghana on the establishment of the West African Network Logistics, a kind of military hub to ferry military supplies to U.S. troops across the continent, indicating a growing U.S. strategic presence. The decision of the U.S. to build a huge 500 million dollar consulate in the commercial capital of Nigeria, Lagos also suggests that the Americans have a grand strategic plan for the African continent. President Joe Biden has recently authorized the deployment of 500 U.S. troops in Somalia. Overall, the U.S. now has 30 military facilities in 15 African countries.

## **THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITION OF AFRICAN STATES**

The pressing challenge most African states face is the building of a sustainable and secured society. Thus, the most critical project for Africa is the institutionalization of good governance. The end of the Cold War in 1991 opened a new window to address Africa's developmental problems through the promotion of democratization and

subsequently good governance and economic reforms in the new millennium. Africa continued to face several political and socio-economic crises expressed in lack of food security, high level of unemployment and consequent high level of poverty, terrorism and other types of criminality, environmental problems and challenges to peace and security, all of which were encapsulated and explained as governance crises.

However, while the U.S. and World Bank called for democracy and good governance, they fought running battles with governments that were supposed to be democratizing in Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria and others for one reason or the other. On the other hand, while demanding that African states take back seat in development to allow market forces to operate, they also wanted strong states or authoritarian governments to implement its unpopular neo-liberal programmes. Thus the World Bank concept of good governance had undemocratic connotations. This is why some African scholars have tried to define good governance in social terms as “democratic governance” and not good governance as being popularly promoted. Democratic governance implies over and above technical efficiency and probity, regular interaction between government and civil society and free participation by the latter through its institutions and popular organs. It means the achievement of socio-economic welfare for the people in the broadest sense. In other words, Africa needs a developmental state and not just a technocratic state.

The enduring nature of neo-colonialism in Africa, the imposition of neo-liberalism with policies of privatization, deregulation of the economy under the logic of market forces, only expose the fragility of African states making them more dependent on the global capitalist system.

African countries are still largely at the bottom of the global economic ladder. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to more than 1 billion people, half of whom will be under 25 years old by 2050. According to the World Bank, Africa is a diverse continent offering human and natural resources that have the potential to yield inclusive growth and wipe out poverty in the region, enabling Africans across the continent to live healthier and more prosperous lives. Africa undoubtedly has made immense progress in moving toward effective democratic governance as mirrored in an ever-larger number of elections, the implementation of new constitutions, including term limits and constraints on unlimited

power, and the African Union’s refusal to embrace or cuddle regimes that come to power through military coups. At the same time, key governance challenges exist in Africa: poor resource management or complete lack of management, disconnects between citizens and leaders or utter disregard for social compact, the use of ethnic or religious identities to incite violence and marginalization, impunity and sheer disregard for the rule of law, decrepit infrastructure, spent, weak and almost comatose institutions, corruption, poor service delivery, absence of accountability, the list is endless.

### **AID IN U.S.-AFRICAN RELATIONS**

The U.S. as the richest nation in the world occupies a significant position among donor countries to African states. Though never a colonial power, American economic success as the number one economy in the world has given it a leading position as a leading provider of economic and other aids to African countries.

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has continued to introduce new initiatives in its aid programme. The U.S. provides bilateral aid and also through multilateral agencies. Africa’s needs and American priorities are not the same. In the first place, Congressional guidelines require that U.S. aid promotes American values, such as human rights and democracy, promotion of economic reform, humanitarian needs and security, in line with broad U.S. interests.

In the past, the U.S. did not accord the African economy any serious attention beyond access to its minerals. However, in the new millennium, with the successful engagement of China with African countries, the U.S. has had to rethink its strategy on the continent and has accordingly been introducing one initiative after the other to enhance its engagement with African states.

However, U.S. aid does not go to the most needy, but to countries which are in a position to meet some American interests in terms of energy and/or solid mineral resources or security. In the last couple of years, with the achievement of energy sufficiency in the U.S., countries like Nigeria, Angola and other major oil producing countries no longer have the attraction they once had. Now, American assistance on the continent is deployed more than ever before to pave the way for American corporations to make good investment and enter the African market more effectively.

(Photo/IC Photo)



*U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visits Rwanda in 2022.*

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) receives about a quarter of U.S. foreign aid through the State Department and the USAID. The amount going to SSA has also increased steadily because of the increasing challenges facing the continent in terms of global health problems, HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Maternal and Child health, and nutrition. Another source of concern for the U.S. is the security problems on the continent, growing transnational crime, and the perennial ethno-religious conflict now further compounded by terrorism.

In the last two decades, American Presidents have taken steps to register their support for African development by launching pet programmes and initiatives which were identified with them. In 2000, President Bill Clinton launched an elaborate African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to assist the economies of Sub-Saharan African countries by helping them gain access to the American market thus improving trade relations with the U.S.. The Act provides eligibility criteria which include that the countries concerned must adopt market reform, respect the rule of law, human rights and workers' rights, adopt political pluralism, accept to protect intellectual property, adopt anti-corruption and poverty alleviation measures, improve healthcare and educational opportunities, eliminate child labour and remove barriers to U.S. trade and investment in their countries. On the basis of the Act, African textile and apparel and other goods, including agricultural products gained access to the American market. This was a big opportunity indeed for textile manufacturers on the continent, expanding benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme. In all, 47 out of 48 Sub Saharan African countries have become eligible

for AGOA. It was extended to 2015 on expiration in 2008 and after its initial 15-year validity, and the AGOA legislation was again extended on June 29, 2015 by a further ten year period till 2025.

The U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) was launched in 2005 under President Bush to reduce the burden of malaria on governments of African countries. It was continued by President Obama. The programme also provided support for agricultural development, economic growth and support for peace and security and other efforts to enhance democratic consolidation and good governance.

President Obama introduced the Trade Africa Initiative (TAI) to help enhance intra-regional trade in Africa which started off with an East African Hub. Another initiative of the President was Doing Business in Africa (DBIA) which was meant to create U.S. business exposure in the African market.

Though President Donald Trump tried to reduce the level of assistance by previous administrations, at the same time he launched his own initiative, "Prosper Africa" to encourage economic growth in Africa by promoting U.S. commercial and investment interest in Africa and also encouraging African investors to also invest in the U.S.. The initiative also imposes more stringent conditions on U.S. assistance to African countries.

At the G7 Summit in Cornwall, UK, President Joe Biden launched his own initiative, called the Infrastructure Initiative also known as "Build Back Better World" to help meet the infrastructure needs of developing countries, but with private sector capital. Obviously, this was an attempt to match China's infrastructure development programme, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by President Xi Jinping and already well received across the world.

### **PROSPECTS FOR U.S.-AFRICAN RELATIONS IN AN EMERGING NEW WORLD ORDER**

The Russian Military Operation in Ukraine and the comprehensive sanctions imposed on Russia by the U.S. and its NATO allies have exposed the weakness and indeed the fragility of

the U.S. global hegemony and opened up opportunities for new initiatives in the management of global affairs. In the first place many countries have seen through the sanctions on Russia how vulnerable they are to U.S. imposition and lack of respect for international agreement.

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict is a fallout of the U.S. and NATO aggression against Russia, using Ukraine as a proxy through intense interference in Ukrainian affairs, particularly after the February 2014 revolution in Ukraine, the Maidan Revolution, which led to the overthrow of a pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovich. This was followed by anti-Maidan and pro-Russian protests in Eastern Ukraine, and the subsequent integration of Crimea into Russia and civil war in the Donbass region. The provocative U.S. intervention in Ukraine was meant to ensure further breakup and disintegration of Russia, a very huge country and indeed the largest country in the world with enormous natural resources. Towards this end, the U.S. and NATO also embarked on NATO expansion eastwards towards Russia.

Instead of seeking peaceful resolution of the problems between Russia and Ukraine, the U.S. and its allies were instead promoting Ukrainian intransigence, providing arms and ammunition to the Ukrainians, and promising NATO membership to Ukraine, a major issue in the conflict.

Significantly, the U.S. imposed a comprehensive sanction on Russia which included the ejection of Russia from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT), a key factor in global financial transactions and international trade. Travel bans were also imposed on Russian officials and businessmen on top of many other restrictions. A ban was also imposed on Russian export trade in oil and gas among several other restrictions.

These sanctions have disrupted international trade, undermined global food security and clearly demonstrated the misuse and abuse of American global power and hegemony.

Reactions to the sanctions on Russia across the world were swift. Apart from the U.S. and its NATO allies, many countries were reluctant to follow the example of the U.S.. The Global South

generally was not ready to support the U.S. and NATO. While 141 out of 193 members of the United Nations General Assembly voted to condemn Russian aggression in Ukraine, most members did not support the escalation of the war by the U.S. and NATO. 93 members voted to suspend Russia from the UN Human Rights Council, but African countries abstained or voted no. Major countries like China and India abstained. Most developing countries support Russia despite the arm twisting by the U.S., accusing the U.S. of double standard and hypocrisy, citing American aggression across the world in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen and others. Nearly half of AU members abstained during the UNGA's two proposals on the issue, demanding an end to the war. The AU issued a statement asking Russia to respect international laws and territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine.

Despite the impact of the war on Africa including rising commodity prices including fuel and wheat, which threaten food security in Africa, most African countries remain supportive of Russia, remembering the support of the Soviet Union for African liberation struggle and the struggle against Apartheid and racist regimes on the continent.

As a consequence of the sanctions, Russia has retaliated with a regime of sanctions of its own on NATO countries, refusing to accept payment for its oil and gas in dollars, insisting on payment in rubles. China, India and other countries are insisting on other currencies for payment. Meanwhile Russia has set up another payment platform for its international trade, the Mir, which is already being adopted by other countries including India and Türkiye. China is also promoting its Cross-Border Inter-bank Payment System (CIPS). The repercussion of the sanctions on Russia is that the role of the U.S. dollar in global financial transactions will diminish, signaling the end of the role of dollar as a global currency and the decline of the U.S. as a global financial power.

This does not however mean the end of U.S. global power as the U.S. remains the major global military power. However, it appears the U.S. is bent on provoking tension in Asia with the 2nd August, 2022 visit of Speaker of the U.S. House of Representative Nancy Pelosi to China's Taiwan region. This was also quickly followed by the visit of U.S. Senate team of five led by Senator Ed Markey to Taiwan region on 14 August, 2022.

These desperate moves are signs of decline of the U.S. in world affairs. It will be a great opportunity for the Global South particularly African countries to reorganize their global engagements with a view to nurturing more beneficial engagements with other countries, such as China, India and others, towards the establishment of a multipolar world. ■



# GLOBAL SECURITY DILEMMA AND GOVERNANCE AMID THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

**Wang Lincong**

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Since entering the 21st century, humanity has shown solidarity in the face of global security threats and challenges, as manifested by the joint response to SARS epidemic in 2003, the global financial crisis in 2008, Islamic State terrorist organization from 2014 to 2017 and others. However, as the U.S. has turned to major country competition on all fronts, humanity is shifting from cooperation to confrontation in global security governance. This is evident in the deep divisions over COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2022. The Russia-Ukraine conflict shows that geopolitical rivalry has once again taken the center stage of international politics. The deficit of trust, development, governance

and peace on a global scale has become more prominent, and division and confrontation are putting the world in jeopardy. Through the conflict we see the fragility of the global security governance system and the possibility of security issues spiraling out of control. The breakout of high-intensity local wars cannot be ruled out. That begs the question, how the security and development of humanity can be ensured? It will be difficult to ensure stable development of the world without respect for the legitimate security interests of all countries. Therefore, to rebuild trust, resolve dilemma, strengthen cooperation, and advance governance and system building on security issues should top the agenda of global governance.

## **RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT AND GLOBAL SECURITY DILEMMA**

When one party advances its security capability unlimitedly out of its pursuit of absolute security without considering the security interests of the other party, the latter will be thus forced to respond by enhancing its own security capability which in turn will elevate the sense of insecurity for the former who will continue to improve its own security capability. This will end up with higher level of insecurity for both sides. Such a situation is referred to as security dilemma.

The pursuit of absolute security cannot bring security in a real sense. Instead it will create a serious security dilemma. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine stands for such a dilemma. If COVID-19 pandemic is a big black swan event, the conflict can be seen as a gray rhino event. It stands as the continuation and result of the geopolitical rivalry after the Cold War. The regional order adjustments in Eurasia after the upheaval in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union, represented by the Kosovo War, the Georgia War and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, have shown that countries would turn to war for settling regional security order and shaping new regional security architecture. In this process the pursuit of global hegemony by the U.S. and Russia's resistance to it become the two sides of the same coin. How to deal with the so-called security threat posed by Russia has become the core of the security architecture in post-Cold War Europe.

After the disintegration of the bipolar structure the U.S. did not end its hostility to Russia. Instead it has intensified its crackdown on Russia, which eventually led to strong counterattack. The 2008 Georgia war, the 2014 Ukraine crisis and the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict played out against this backdrop. For sure, from the outset Russia did not see NATO's eastward expansion after the Cold War as a serious security threat, but it finally chooses to defend by force its own security interests as it has been encroached on by the U.S. and NATO step by step. This reflects the security dilemma between the U.S. and Russia, which is the deep cause of the outbreak of the conflict.

As the Cold War ended, Russian leaders accepted America's rhetoric about the defensive nature of NATO in the face of its eastward expansion and chose to acquiesce. However, this was not met with equal goodwill

from the U.S.; Instead, the U.S. continued to push for NATO's eastward expansion and ramp up security pressure on Russia. Since 2008, Russia has viewed NATO as a serious security threat instead of a defensive organization, and chosen to respond in a tough way to safeguard its security interests and strategic space. This is reflected in both the 2008 Georgia war and the 2014 Ukraine crisis where Russia took a tough response and was not strongly resisted by the Western countries. Therefore, the mindset that toughness is the only way to security became the urge behind the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict. However, judged from its results, Russia pursues security in a tough way only to find itself in a security dilemma rather than with enhanced security.

The U.S.-led NATO military bloc continues to expand eastward, attempting to increase its own absolute security at the expense of Russia's security interests. Meanwhile Russia's perception of such expansion has changed significantly, that is, it sees NATO as its biggest security threat. The two sides are thus locked in hostilities over perceived security threats, stand in sharp opposition in security objectives and play tit for tat in security means. In particular, NATO recognized Ukraine as enhanced opportunities partner in 2020, which led to a rapid rise of sense of insecurity for Russia. It was only a matter of time for the conflict between Russia and Ukraine to break out. Thus, when Russia once again resorted to military means to eliminate security threats in February 2022, the U.S.-led Western world struck back in kind, plunging the world into a security dilemma and triggering security crisis at an unprecedentedly dangerous level.

## **THE IMPACT OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT ON GLOBAL SECURITY**

The Russia-Ukraine conflict carries both the feature of hybrid war and proxy war. Although it remains a local war within Europe, it has sent shock waves to all countries and exerted overall and long-term impact on the world.

One, it exacerbates global security crisis in both traditional and non-traditional fields. On the one hand, the conflict shows that traditional security issues still pose serious challenges in a real sense. First, it accelerates the pace of global militarization. Since the conflict broke

out, Western countries quickly joined the efforts to arm Ukraine by delivering large quantities of such weapons as stinger missiles, drones, armored vehicles, body armor and other small arms. However, as both a practical and symbolic support for Ukraine, the arms aid would not only prolong the conflict but could make it spiral out of control. Furthermore, the conflict also results in higher military spending in Europe. Germany is planning to increase its military budget and reinvigorate its armaments. Japan, far away in Asia, is also taking the opportunity to beef up its military and plans to raise its military budget to 2% of its GDP. Some developing countries are purchasing advanced weapons and equipment, leading to a surge in arms sales orders and increasing militarization on a global scale. Second, it increases the risk of nuclear war. Russian President Vladimir Putin made it clear on February 27, 2022 that Russia's deterrent includes nuclear weapons, making it the first public nuclear warning since the 1960s. Although it is believed that as long as NATO does not directly deploy troops in Ukraine, it is unlikely for Russia to use nuclear weapons directly. With that said, the Western countries' continuous efforts to bog Russia down into war and bleed it out have caused great antipathy in Russia. The risk of nuclear war has not been completely eliminated. In addition, the conflict has also encouraged some countries to consider possessing nuclear weapons, which further destabilizes the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

On the other hand, the conflict worsens non-traditional security issues including food security, energy security, financial security and war refugees. First, it further disturbs global food security. Russia and Ukraine together accounted for about one-third of global wheat exports in 2021, making them the world's largest and fourth largest wheat exporter respectively. The breakout of the conflict has not only directly pushed up global food prices, but also affected global food supply, putting great pressure on food importers. Take the Middle East as an example, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and other countries that rely heavily on food imports from Russia and Ukraine, have faced greater food security pressure and financial stress due to the conflict. The wheat price in Egypt, for instance, rose 50 percent one month after the conflict broke out. Second, it hurts human security. High energy and food price due to the conflict, compounded by record high inflation in many countries and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, pose a

direct threat to human security and survival, particularly for low-income population. These problems may lead up to secondary risks that, together with existing ones, could trigger popular protests and renewed waves of political and social unrest in some countries. Third, it creates new refugee crisis. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, the conflict has resulted in 6 million refugees and displaced 8 million Ukrainians. Not only will they face immediate physical and emotional stress, but will also be shadowed by the long-lasting impact of the conflict and suffer insecurities in terms of their health, education and social welfare conditions.

Two, it creates a new security dilemma. On the one hand, the hegemony and power politics of the U.S. are resurging once again. Since the outbreak of the 2008 financial crisis, rise of the East and decline of the West is becoming ever more prominent. The U.S. has thus adjusted its foreign strategy, manifested by strategic contraction in the Middle East and major country competition in the Asia-Pacific and Eurasia. Such strategic adjustments, with the fundamental purpose of retaining U.S. hegemony, is the product of its strategic panic about China, Russia and other emerging countries. Since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the U.S. has continuously added oil to the flame of the conflict by supporting Ukraine and containing Russia. Such behavior is driven by two strategic motives: first, the U.S. tries to use the conflict to distract its people from domestic problems and realize its goal of curing internal ailments from the outside by challenging and provoking Russia to the limit; second, the U.S. intends to rally its traditional allies under its leadership and control in Eurasia, so as to achieve the purpose of using Ukraine to control Russia and using Russia to pressurize Europe. As the U.S. had been pushing ahead with such acts as insisting on NATO's eastward expansion, inciting color revolution in Ukraine, and interrupting the economic cooperation and the process of building a peace framework between Russia and Europe, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine eventually broke out. This is the victory of the offshore balancing strategy of the U.S., with its aim to consolidate its hegemony by weakening Russia and trapping Europe, and enrich its military-industrial complex. In short, the U.S. will not let this conflict end easily.

On the other hand, the U.S. is engaged in coercive diplomacy, threatening and enticing other countries to side with it. As far as the Russia-Ukraine conflict is

concerned, many developing countries did not respond positively to the demands of the U.S. and were unwilling to take sides. For example, many Middle East countries take a neutral position out of caution and try to hedge their bets between Russia and the West. Meanwhile they oppose the act of U.S. and European powers to impose extreme pressure and sanctions.

At the same time, the conflict shows that the security structure in Europe tends to collapse, forming the so-called security black hole. The U.S. is not only the initiator but also the driver and beneficiary of the conflict; both Russia and Ukraine bear huge losses and costs; and European countries as NATO members have not only changed their perceptions of security threats, but also witnessed crisis in their security systems. It's fair to say that, after peace and development for most of the century, Europe has once again fallen into a security dilemma.

Three, it severely affects global security governance system. The Russia-Ukraine conflict affects global security governance on all fronts, driving changes in security governance issues, governance modes and governance concepts. First, the rise of military conflicts and security issues are changing to some extent the theme of our times, i.e., peace and development. With the U.S. making a complete turn to major country competition, the world has entered a period of turbulence and transformation. It becomes more insecure with unprecedentedly acute military and security issues. As the Russia-Ukraine conflict is likely to escalate, and countries around the world are taking the old path of rearmament, the 21st century is facing the danger of returning to the jungle days. The U.S.-led Western world is scaling up arms race, launching a new Cold War and using the conflict to weaken Russia. At the same time, it continues to exert maximum pressure and provocation on China on issues related to Xinjiang, Taiwan and the South China Sea. In addition, the U.S. has mobilized tools in the fields of politics, security, economy, finance, science and technology to control the global industrial chain and supply chain, and block globalization through collectivization and regionalization, thus safeguarding its hegemonic interests.

Second, group confrontation has replaced institutional cooperation and changed the security governance mode. After the Cold War, major countries maintained a high level of coordination, especially on security cooperation through the UN Security Council, although there was no shortage of wrangles between them. However, the secu-

urity cooperation on the Russia-Ukraine conflict between major countries through the Security Council has come to an impasse. The U.S. is boosting group confrontation, and NATO is ever more engaged in its global expansion and action preference. It not only encroaches on Russia's strategic space by expanding eastward, but also disturbs Central and West Asia by attacking Libya to overthrow Gaddafi's regime, and intervening in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now it is extending its tentacles to the Asia-Pacific region by attempting to intervene in the South China Sea. It is fair to say that NATO is both an accomplice and a tool of the U.S. in its global hegemonic strategy.

Third, the zero-sum mentality has replaced win-win cooperation, further distorting the core concept of global security governance. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the whole NATO is in a fanatic anti-Russia mood, and the sweeping sanctions against Russia reached its peak. The U.S. and other Western countries wouldn't take Russia's legitimate security concerns in a serious and rational manner. They are still obsessed with repeating the all-win scenario of the collapse of the Soviet Union. This further pushed up the sense of insecurity for Russia. The U.S. and Russia are trapped in the Hobbes culture of mutual hostility, with their mindset transforming to zero or even negative sum game. Their perspective of seeing each other as security threats and hence the hostile behaviors are hard to change in short term.

## WAYS TO ADVANCE GLOBAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE

The Russia-Ukraine conflict highlights global security crisis and the difficulties as well as urgency of security governance. The so-called security governance dilemma refers to the stalemate state caused by the lack of consensus among security governance subjects. However, that does not mean that there is no way out. To crack the dilemma it requires rational response and incremental accumulation of enabling conditions.

What is needed is to start with rebuilding mutual trust on security, to gradually change the perception of security threats, and to establish a security risk prevention mechanism, so as to ease security crisis and get rid of the dilemma. On 21 April 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out in his keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference, "we humanity are living in an indivisible security community". He further proposed for the first time a

Global Security Initiative as follows: we stay committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; stay committed to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries; stay committed to abiding by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter; stay committed to taking the legitimate security concerns of all countries seriously; stay committed to peacefully resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation; and stay committed to maintaining security in both traditional and non-traditional areas. The Initiative has enriched the new security concept. It not only provides new ideas for resolving the Russia-Ukraine conflict, but also a new plan and blueprint for global security governance.

First, we need to foster the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security as well as that of harmonious and co-existing security. The path to global security governance cannot be built without the establishment of a new security concept. The Russia-Ukraine conflict triggers or intensifies global security crisis. The zero-sum or even negative-sum game thinking can lead to crisis everywhere. In fact, Ukraine can only achieve its security by taking a stance between Russia and NATO. The more it keeps drawing close to NATO, the higher its security crisis and risk will be. This shows the necessity of independent security and the importance of mutual security. It is in view of these multiple crises that China has put forward long-term and fundamental approaches to address these issues – building a community with a shared future for mankind and advancing the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative. This is derived from traditional Chinese wisdom and the concept of harmonious and co-existing security. It is a global public good provided by China in the new era. Therefore, it is important to ensure lasting peace, stability, prosperity and development of the world by centering on the new security concept, strengthening the sense of a security community in which mankind co-exists in harmony, and promoting the building of a global security governance system.

Second, we need to establish an inclusive security mechanism and an interest-driven security governance mode. Security mechanism should be inclusive and cooperative in order to be equitable and sustainable. Such mechanism must embrace Russia. At present, the U.S., UK and France are deliberately excluding Russia at the

Security Council, even trying to build a new system without China and Russia. Such a system will not only be ineffective and fragile, but also worsen the current security problems. Only by respecting the legitimate security interests and concerns of all countries and adhering to the principle of indivisibility of security, which means that one country should not enhance its own security at the expense of another, can an inclusive security architecture be reasonable, benign and durable. At the same time, the current crisis-driven security governance mode should be replaced with the interest-driven one, as the former is compellent and the latter is proactive and focuses on the internal mechanism of promoting development and sharing security. It will help to build a universal and inclusive security community.

Third, we need to take a holistic approach to safeguard traditional and non-traditional security. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the focus has been put on the traditional security issue of military confrontation, as the international community is concerned about how to achieve a ceasefire. If NATO continues to support Ukraine in its confrontation with Russia, it will only exacerbate Russia's insecurity. This will not only fail to safeguard Ukraine's security interests, but also make it hard for Russia to end its military operations. At the same time, food security, energy security, financial security, refugee security, environmental security and other issues brought about by the conflict have affected all countries in the world with far-reaching impact. It has now become a complex security problem that needs to be solved urgently and jointly by the international community to prevent the situation from getting out of control.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict is a sign that the world is falling apart. Hegemonic thinking and power politics are the biggest threat to human development and security in the 21st century. In the face of increasingly severe global problems, only by adhering to the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind can we usher in bright prospects. The Global Security Initiative is constructive and should play a guiding role. We should fully respect the legitimate security interests of all countries, work together to shape an inclusive, cooperative and shared security governance mechanism, and build an authoritative and efficient global security governance system. This requires foresight, reason, inclusiveness and action on the part of governments of all countries. ■



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The Blue Line Rail project of Lagos  
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