

CONTEMPORARY WORLD *NIGERIA*

当代世界

Volume 02

Number 04

Oct-Dec. 2023



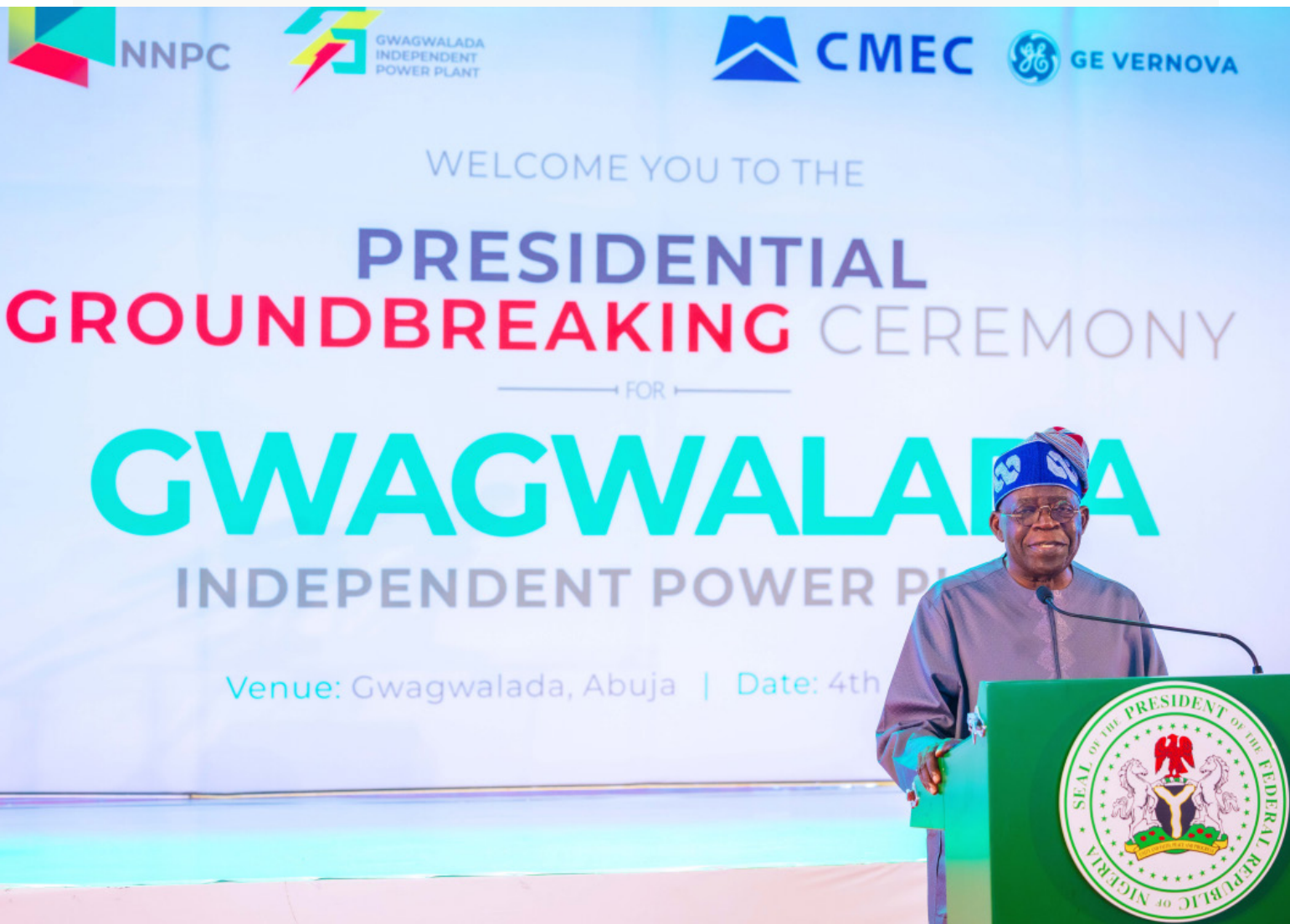
GLOBAL SOUTH AND CHINA-AFRICA HIGH-QUALITY COOPERATION

Shaping Africa-China Cooperation in the Evolving World Security Order

Multilateral Cooperation and China's Role in African Integration and Security Cooperation

China Initiatives Boost Common Development of Global South

Global South: An Important Driving Force for the Evolution of the International Order



Nigerian President Bola Tinubu speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the phase-one Nigerian gas-fired power plant project undertaken by a Chinese company in Abuja, Nigeria, Aug. 4, 2023.

(Photo/Xinhua)

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Shaping Africa-China Cooperation in the Evolving World Security Order 02
Mikatekiso Kubayi

Multilateral Cooperation and China’s Role in African Integration and Security Cooperation 07
Y.A. ZOAKA

China Initiatives Boost Common Development of Global South 13
Zhang Chun

Global South: An Important Driving Force for the Evolution of the International Order 19
Niu Haibin

The Strength of the Global South in Addressing Climate Change 23
Chen Ying

CHINA & AFRICA

Locating the Belt and Road Initiative in Nigeria’s Renewed Hope Agenda: Implications for Global Human Security 28
Muftau Olaiya Olarinde

Profound Changes Unseen in a Century and Building China-Africa Community with a Shared Future 34
He Wenping

The Belt and Road Initiative and Construction of the Free Trade Area in Africa 40
He Yizhou

AFRICAN AFFAIRS

The Governing Philosophy, Institutional Building and Policy Choice of the Rwanda Patriotic Front 44
Wang Xuejun



Volume 02 Number 04 Oct.-Dec. 2023

Publishers:
 A co-publication of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) and China’s Contemporary World Magazine

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China’s Contemporary World Magazine
 No.4 Fuxing Road, Haidian District,
 Beijing, China
 ddsjcn.com

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ISSN: 2955-1749

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SHAPING AFRICA-CHINA COOPERATION IN THE EVOLVING WORLD SECURITY ORDER

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Africa and China have a long relationship spanning over 1200 years, covering various epochs. This relationship has evolved with time, from infrequent contact during earlier, less technologically advanced times to frequent and strategic in today's globalized and much-complicated world. But these relations do not occur in a vacuum. Africa and China are both actors in the current geopolitical and economic landscapes. While China has reached the point of nearly realizing its goal of creating a moderately prosperous society, Africa, too, though less grand in scale, has seen its own rise in the geopolitical landscape and a steady growth of its economy.

AFRICA, MULTILATERALISM, AND GREAT POWER COMPETITION

There are many entry points in a conversation about Africa-China relations. For this conversation, the geopolitical landscape and its influence on the evolving nature of multilateralism and its governance architecture on security and finance offer a good frame. This is because the current and future Africa-China relations are closely related to the rise of both China and the Global South and their role and influence on a reform of multilateralism. The much debated and often agreed upon need for reforms is to achieve greater equity in global governance, greater representativity and legitimacy, and greater agency of the Global South over security and financial architecture that affect them.

The UN Charter explicitly discusses the role of the

United Nations (UN) in promoting and maintaining peace, conflict resolution, conflict prevention, and promoting good relations between states to avoid wars. Africa has had a less than satisfactory record of "conflict-lessness". With the numerous conflicts currently being resolved, many agreements and pacts have been concluded between various parties, many of which have yet to be sustained. Despite the decades of UN presence in peacekeeping matters in Africa, its growing population expected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, its growing economy, and the challenge of violent extremism preying on underdevelopment and poverty, Africa still does not have a single state among the P5 of the UN Security Council (UNSC).

Africa needs to attain its equitable space at the decision-making tables of global governance. It has continued to be a recipient of decisions, often calamitous to regional stability and development, such as the case of Libya. In another challenging failure of the global governance system, its financial architecture continues to fail to heed Africa's long repeated call for unified action to arrest illicit financial flows. The most recent vote on a global position on tax matters, resolution A/C.2/78/L.18/Rev.1 on the promotion of inclusive and effective international tax cooperation at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), displayed the dichotomy between developed and developing economies in full view of the concerned populations of the Global South.

This has been the nature of multilateralism before the rise of the Global South. It is a multilateralism designed in the mid-40s by states wielding the most power, military, and finance without developing economies'

voices or contributions in the design. It is a design that has presided over the numerous conflicts of the past decades without success. It is a design that has yet to succeed in shedding the globe of the harmful legacy of colonialism, which today continues to see illicit financial flows, flowing out of the continent the much-needed resources for its development. It is a multilateralism that today has allowed the construct of great power competition with Africa as a theatre.

The United States (US) has passed some legislation to contain China's rise as a technological and military power. It has also passed legislation to curtail the "influence of Russia" on Africa in what it may determine to be malign, as if to assert that Africa lacks the agency and maturity to determine its own relations for its development. Africa continues to see the extraction of crucial minerals for current and future technologies.

Development finance is important for collective human security. The UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development acknowledges the importance of development in preventing violent extremism and conflict. The African Development Bank (ADB) estimates a need for more than \$200 Billion in infrastructure investment in Africa for its development, both to catch up and propel it into the future. If the estimated 2.5 billion population holds true access to high-quality education and health, access to consumables, access to jobs and attaining a higher Human Development Index (HDI) must be financed. Africa's self-reliance, productive capacity, technological capability, and industrialization, among other instruments to generate dignity for its population, will need to be financed. Africa's security and stability will need to be financed.

AFRICA-CHINA RELATIONS IN A MULTILATERALISM OF THE FUTURE

Development and security are important features of multilateralism and certainly a multilateralism of the future. According to its proponents, This system of global relations will be based not on power and force but on collaboration and the freedom of each people(s) to pursue a development path of their own choosing independently. Among the features of the multilateralism of the future are equity in global governance, improved access to knowledge for developing economies, and a reformed financial and security architecture. These are not merely

the age-old goals of many in the Global South but proposed shifts in a 2023 UN High-Level Advisory Panel report. Africa-China relations have much opportunity and space to evolve in the context of the Global South's rise in future multilateralism and the pursuit of African continental interests.

The role of China in the ascendance of Africa is played out in multiple perspectives. For this conversation, two, political and economic, provide a brief context. In the pursuit of development and to realize the aspiration of and the renaissance of an "Africa we Want" in the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, 15 flagship projects have been proposed. One of them is the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This initiative needs other efforts to bear fruit for its success. Such initiatives would include the up-scaling of productive capacity and technological capabilities for the localization of production, the generation of regional value chains, and greater investment in Research and Development (R&D).

According to the UN's Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 2023 World Investment Report, China is Africa's fifth largest source of FDI behind the United Kingdom (UK), France, Netherlands, and the US. South Africa is the sixth largest source of FDI in what constitutes a collective 3.5 % of global FDI. This is important because attaining the objective of improving the African population's economic well-being is important for reducing violent extremism and conflict. It is also important in lieu of the calls for increased domestic resource mobilization to fund AU programs such as peacekeeping operations and general self-reliance.

Given the development needs, finance, and security, among other dimensions, development partnerships are important. However, the continent must exercise its agency to best defined and negotiate such partnerships at strategic or other levels to attain the best possible outcomes. China has, at least publicly, often argued for each country and region to pursue a development path suitable for its specific material conditions and reality, that each country and region design systems and policies and extract partnerships it needs for these systems and policies, according to its independently set priorities. China is also often argued in discourse to prefer quite strong non-interference in others' sovereign spaces or internal affairs.

But China is also at the receiving end of the debt-trap narratives. Despite having recently announced a

waiver for the debt of 17 African states, the narratives have lingered. According to Dr Akinwumi Adeshina, the President of the African Development Bank at the Paris Club in June 2023, African debt to China had been on a speedy rise to 14% of Africa's \$1.1 Trillion external debt. 86% of the remaining debt is split between multilateral and bilateral arrangements, such as IMF, World Bank, and country-to-country arrangements. According to some scholars, the Chinese military is minuscule, and its security presence tends to follow the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. However, some commentators argue that despite having just 1 military base in Djibouti, private Chinese security contractors represent a state security presence considering the Chinese governance system.

By comparison, the US has 34 known military outposts on the continent. The AU Peace and Security Council has already expressed concern over the number of foreign military bases and the establishment of new ones. There has been a rise in resistance to French presence in the west of the continent and the Sahel. There has also been discourse on the presence of Russia on the continent with a direct legislative response from the US, the Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act of 2022. But, of course, this has been just one of the many acts in great power competition for Africa. This competition goes beyond Africa as a strategic theatre.

The Indo-Pacific has also been of particular strategic importance in recent times. The disagreements between the US and China on the Taiwan question, the formation of the QUAD group, and tensions over the South China Sea have received priority attention. Other areas of competition that have enjoyed similar attention include regional multilateral trade pacts, the erstwhile proposed Build Back Better World (BBBW), the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and now the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have taken center stage of geopolitical and security discourse.

Other issues with both potential economic and security dimensions include the expansion of the BRICS bloc of countries to include the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Islamic Republic of Iran, Egypt, and Ethiopia. This has been a major global development of 2023 that sees the group expand into the Middle East and gain in population size, economic size, potential, and strategic value such as energy production. With the many conflicts within and without the continent, the production and proliferation of arms, especially small arms, would continue to be a concern.



Despite all these challenges, the mood and momentum for reform of the multilateral system and the emergence of a new world order seem to continue unhindered. Many repeated calls and motivation for the reform of the UN system at virtually all aspects, including the UNSC, have been received by the Secretary General of the UN, Antonio Guterres. This momentum coincides with the increasing potency of the growing voice of the Global South, effectively its rise, as some have argued. This rise is not without merit. It is a rise that is argued to have been a long time coming, given the nature of global governance and financial and security architecture that has ignored the important voices of many and the potential valuation contributions of developing economies since 1945. However, this is a current but evolving multilateralism within which Africa-China relations will continue to evolve with strategic intent.

AFRICAN AGENCY IN ITS ENGAGEMENT WITH CHINA AND OTHERS

Africa was given a significant reminder of the state of multilateralism, “the rules-based order”, and the current



Photo: Xinhua

Exhibitors attending the third China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo present their products to visitors at the Changsha International Convention and Exhibition Center, June 29, 2023.

state of global solidarity on humanity's pressing issues by the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic is one of the collective human security threats that can be argued to constitute a polypandemic. Some scholars have argued that the polypandemic has not only arrived but possibly poses an epic challenge for global solidarity for urgent solutions in the interests of humanity.

At its worst, the pandemic needed international cooperation in developing an urgent vaccine, in which Africa participated. Africa could not procure the eventual vaccine because some developed economies had bought up to five times their needs, hogging in what has now become known by many as vaccine nationalism. In the early periods of vaccine production, China and Russia were leading providers of vaccines such as Sputnik V and Sinovac, mostly in the form of donations. The 2020 Munich Security Conference report describes a polypandemic as a collective of pandemics, including COVID-19, that threaten humanity in similar measures, such as poverty & inequalities, climate change, and even nationalism.

Another report on threats to human security indicates the waning ability of states to address challenges faced by their populations. A report by the National Intelligence

Council of the US, titled "Global Trends 2040", suggests that within a 40-year period, one possible scenario includes the eventual inability of states to attend or remedy challenges faced by their citizens leading to widespread frustration, a rise in social movements and accompanying protests as has already begun across the globe and other challenges such as states seeking different sources and avenues of power.

On its end, China has adopted, refined, and perfected the art of long-term planning to resolve challenges. The 20th National Conference of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has not only begun implementing its strategic plan for 2020 to 2035 but has already laid its strategic plan through the middle of this century. The 14th National People's Congress of China has worked to legislate to support attaining the set goals as per the respective long-term plans. However, the significance of the confidence the Chinese system displays is the constant emphasis on developing policies and adopting actions to suit its own material conditions. It is an apt example of the exercise of agency. The five-year plans aim not only to foster development planning for China based on its domestic conditions but also to influence how it projects foreign policy as a reflection of its domestic policy.

What is, of course, important for Africa to note and define for itself is the adoption by China of a "dual circulation" policy comprising the development of the domestic market while fully maintaining its vigor in the global market as such that the two complement each other. Development, poverty eradication, a green economy, territorial integrity, security, and technological advancement have attracted many to partner and trade with China. As China continues its path to what it describes as modernization, Africa, in its exercise of agency, has an opportunity to determine what synergies and collaborations can be leveraged for its own advantage and what can work best for its own material conditions, realities, and priorities.

UNEVEN POST-COVID ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT ASPIRATIONS

Africa, as do other regions of this globalised world, needs genuine development partnerships, sensitive to the unique needs and priorities of Africa for the attainment of The Africa We Want by 2063. Many states on the continent, as is a general tendency in the Global South, have chosen to be non-aligned. Not passive, but non-aligned,

and preferring to work with all potential partners on the basis of mutual respect and equality. This has been a positive response in a period of great power competition and a new scramble for Africa. So the task of seeking, developing and shaping a genuine development partnership is a noble assignment of the agents of Africa's people. These development partnerships, with China and others alike, require the best in agency.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on how societies interact has seen massive and unequal injections of finance into weak economies funded by a mix of sources, including debt. It is necessary to reflect on the driving ideas and agenda behind foreign policy and security strategies of the globe's leading powers and prepare accordingly. The COVID-19 pandemic has already tested partnerships and collaborations when they are most urgent during the global crisis. The global economy came close to a complete halt, with the movement of goods and people brought to the bare minimum. This has had a devastating impact on the world economy and developing economies the most.

While developing economies are already grappling with the many challenges of underdevelopment and dwindling covers of financing for already challenging and competing needs, the pandemic made the reality more daunting. This section of the world economy did not have adequate resources to deploy countermeasures, such as stimulus packages, for a swift and robust recovery. On the other hand, developed economies have had a huge stimulus package deployed to counter the impact of the pandemic and ensure a robust recovery. The world's



The Laboratory Building of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters project.

largest economies received above 70% of the IMF's \$650 Billion SDR disbursement as a countermeasure. A genuine development partnership would consider this: the remarks of the UN Secretary-General on reforms, the history of partnership, and, of course, the needs of the 15 flagship projects of the AU (continental interests).

At the heart of these issues is the need for urgent preparedness of states to meet challenges and address them to the satisfaction of their people and humanity. The case of Africa specifically and those of states in the Global South generally are particularly of concern. This concern covers current inequalities between individuals, societies, civilizations, and states. African states and those in the Global South must catch up and access technologies that continue to drive modernization and finance to drive development, including state capacities.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

A useful emergent concept in response to the polypandemic is anticipatory governance. While it is early to speak of global anticipatory governance given the weaknesses exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it could be a worthwhile concept to explore at state and regional levels, particularly SADC in South Africa's case and ECOWAS in the case of Nigeria. Although collective planning and integration are at its core in a regional context, such a concept must be accompanied by response capabilities and a strong ethic for collective action. The agenda for UN reform can also be drawn from this argument, especially from the US Global Trends 2040 report, among others, for a reform based on equity to fully realize a better multilateralism at that level.

Emphasis on industrialization on the continent, the development of productive capacities, increased R&D, including joint or collaborative work, localization of production, the development of regional value chains, and increased access to global value chains should be at the core of bilateral and multilateral arrangements. China is fast becoming the global leader in technological innovation. It has managed to remove hundreds of millions of people from poverty, and its governance is based on a strong meritocracy that has earned a strong reputation for its success and its emphasis on appropriate policies and actions for local realities and conditions as well as noninterference in sovereign affairs all provide an opportunity to negotiate strong partnerships for development. 🇨🇳

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION AND CHINA'S ROLE IN AFRICAN INTEGRATION AND SECURITY COOPERATION

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The world has grown so tremendously that no country or continent can survive on its own without establishing a strong presence in other parts of the world. The quest for resources from other parts of the world has driven Europeans to Africa and later made colonial rule an inevitable part of that quest for cheap raw materials. The contemporary world, driven by the technological revolution, has broken the barriers to businesses and it has opened the world to competition through free enterprise. Therefore, with the collapse of the unipolar and bipolar world systems multilateralism tends to be the order of the new era. This is because countries in the global system tend to be confronted with similar, cross-cutting, or common challenges such as energy crises, climate change issues, terrorism, migration issues, human rights, and governance issues which invariably threaten regional or global peace.

Multilateralism refers to the practice of multiple countries or parties coming together to address and solve global problems. Multilateralism also allows countries to pursue common goals through collective decision-making and cooperation. It emphasizes the importance of international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), and international agreements and treaties in promoting peace, stability, and mutual benefits among nations. Multilateralism aims at fostering collaboration, dialogue, and diverse compromises among diverse na-

tions, recognizing that no single country can effectively address complex global challenges on its own.

Multilateral cooperation and Chinese engagement in Africa have been the subject of significant debate in recent years. Africa has become a key battleground for global powers seeking to expand their influence and secure access to the continent's vast natural resources. In this paper, we will examine the role of multilateral cooperation and Chinese engagement in African integration and security cooperation, with a particular focus on the impact of these factors on the region's development and stability.

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION IN AFRICA

Multilateral cooperation in Africa has a long and complex history, shaped by the continent's political, economic, and social dynamics. The origins of multilateral cooperation in Africa can be traced back to the early 20th century, with the establishment of the League of Nations in the aftermath of World War I. The League of Nations sought to promote international cooperation and peace, and its activities in Africa focused on addressing colonial issues and promoting development.

The establishment of the UN in 1945 further expanded multilateral cooperation in Africa, with a specific focus on decolonization and development. The UN played a

key role in supporting African countries in their struggle for independence from colonial rule, and in promoting economic and social development through various agencies and programs.

In the decades following independence, African countries sought to address common challenges through regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU). These organizations focused on promoting political stability, economic integration, and conflict resolution across the continent.

In recent years, multilateral cooperation in Africa has expanded to address a wide range of issues, including health, climate change, and security. The AU and its member states have worked closely with international partners such as the UN, the European Union, and the World Bank to address these challenges and promote sustainable development.

Overall, the history of multilateral cooperation in Africa reflects the continent's ongoing efforts to address common challenges and promote inclusive and sustainable development. While progress has been made, there are still many obstacles to overcome, and the need for effective multilateral cooperation remains as important as ever.

Multilateral cooperation in Africa has long been seen as a key tool for promoting economic development and regional integration, from the OAU Lagos Plan of Action of 1982 where a blueprint was designed for enhancing the integration, infrastructural development, and security cooperation of the continent, to the current AU, playing a leading role in coordinating efforts to address the continent's most pressing challenges, including poverty, conflict, and underdevelopment. Through initiatives such as Agenda 2063, the AU has sought to promote greater economic integration and political cooperation among African countries, to create a more united and prosperous continent.

In recent years, multilateral cooperation in Africa has also been driven by the growing influence of non-Western countries, particularly China. As the world's second-largest economy, China has become an increasingly important player in Africa, both as a major investor and a diplomatic partner. Chinese investment in Africa has grown rapidly in recent years, with Beijing providing billions of dollars in loans and aid to African countries in exchange for access to their natural resources. This has significantly impacted the region's economic devel-

opment and has raised questions about the implications of China's growing influence on African integration and security cooperation.

China's growing involvement in Africa has significantly impacted the region's integration and security cooperation. On the one hand, Chinese investment has contributed to the economic growth of many African countries, particularly in the form of large-scale infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, and ports. These projects have the potential to promote greater economic integration and connectivity within the region, which could in turn foster greater political and security cooperation among African countries.

On the other hand, there are some concerns that China's engagement in Africa could have negative implications for the region's long-term development and stability.

THE ROLE OF MULTILATERAL COOPERATION IN MANAGING CHINESE INFLUENCE

The growing influence of China in Africa has raised important questions about the role of multilateral cooperation in managing Chinese engagement and promoting the region's development and stability. Given the complex and multifaceted nature of the challenges facing Africa, it is clear that no single country or institution can effectively address these issues alone. Instead, a coordinated and collaborative approach is needed, with multilateral cooperation playing a central role in promoting greater transparency and accountability in Chinese investment, as well as in fostering greater economic integration and security cooperation among African countries.

One potential avenue for multilateral cooperation in managing Chinese engagement is through the AU. The AU has the potential to serve as a forum for African countries to coordinate their responses to Chinese investment, and to develop common strategies for promoting greater transparency and accountability in their dealings with Beijing. Given the AU's mandate to promote greater economic and political integration within the region, the organization is well-placed to play a leading role in fostering greater regional cooperation and cohesion in the face of China's growing influence.

Chinese investment in Africa spans a wide range of projects, including infrastructure development such as roads, railways, ports, and energy projects. Additionally,

Chinese companies have been involved in mining, agriculture, telecommunications, and manufacturing in various African countries. These investments are aimed at securing access to natural resources, expanding market opportunities, and fostering economic growth in the region.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF CHINESE INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN AFRICA

1. Infrastructure development: In Kenya, the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) project, which connects the port city of Mombasa to the capital city of Nairobi, was constructed with the support of Chinese funding and expertise. This project has significantly improved transportation and trade in the region. Also, there are countrywide developments of infrastructure in Nigeria including but not limited to railway lines, Kaduna-Abuja, Lagos-Ibadan; new airport terminals, the Lekki deep sea port, etc.

2. Energy projects: China has been involved in various energy projects in Africa, including financing and constructing hydroelectric power plants. For instance, the Karuma Hydroelectric Power Station in Uganda and the Geregu, Zungeru power plant in Nigeria were built with Chinese funding and support.

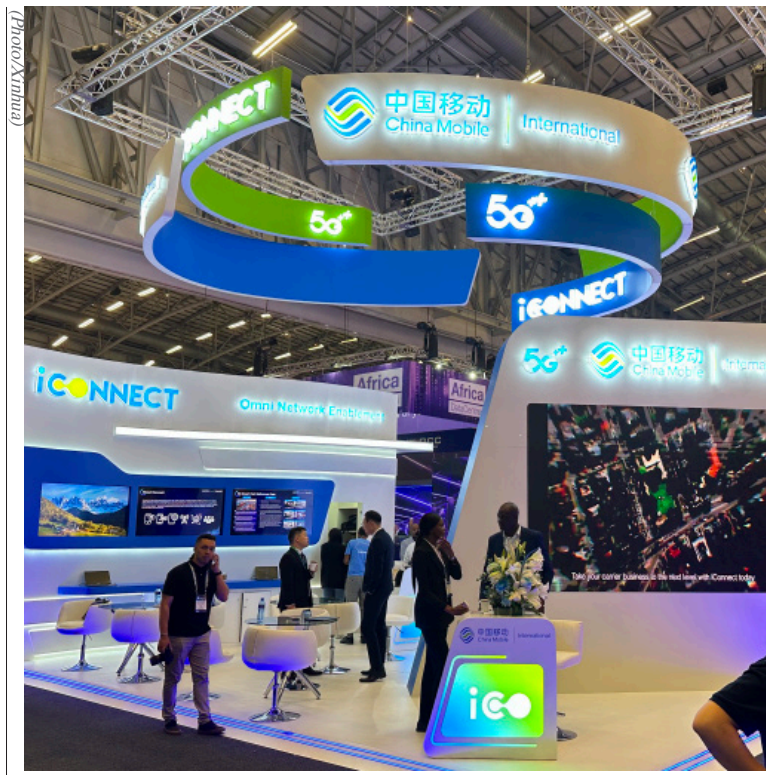
3. Mining: Chinese companies have been actively involved in the mining sector across Africa. For example, in Zambia, Chinese firms have invested in copper and cobalt mining projects, which are vital to the country's economy.

4. Agriculture: China has invested in large-scale agricultural projects in countries such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia. These investments often involve technology transfer and infrastructure development to improve agricultural productivity.

5. Telecommunications: Chinese telecom companies have expanded their operations in Africa, providing mobile and internet services. For instance, companies like Huawei and ZTE have been involved in building telecommunications infrastructure in various African countries.

6. Manufacturing: Chinese companies have established manufacturing facilities in Africa to take advantage of lower labor costs and access to regional markets. For example, Chinese firms have set up textile and industrial facilities in countries like Ethiopia and Tanzania.

These are just a few examples of the diverse range of Chinese investment projects in Africa, highlighting the



People visit the booth of China Mobile at the Africa ICT Expo on the sidelines of the Africa Tech Festival in Cape Town, South Africa, Nov. 14, 2023.

significant presence and impact of Chinese investment in the region.

THE FORUM ON CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has been instrumental in promoting Chinese investment in Africa. FOCAC is a platform for collective dialogue and cooperation between China and African countries, and it has played a key role in facilitating Chinese investment projects across the continent.

Through FOCAC, China has committed significant financial resources to support various development projects in Africa. This includes infrastructure development, such as the construction of roads, railways, ports, and airports, as well as energy projects, including the development of power plants and transmission lines.

FOCAC has also been instrumental in promoting industrial cooperation and investment in sectors such as

manufacturing, agriculture, and telecommunications. This has led to the establishment of special economic zones and industrial parks in countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria, where Chinese companies have invested in manufacturing facilities.

Furthermore, FOCAC has supported initiatives aimed at promoting agricultural modernization and technology transfer, with a focus on improving food security and agricultural productivity in African countries.

Overall, FOCAC has been a driving force behind Chinese investment in Africa, fostering cooperation and partnership between China and African countries to promote sustainable development and economic growth on the continent.

One key feature of the FOCAC is its significant emphasis on people-to-people exchanges and cooperation between China and African countries. This involves programs and initiatives designed to promote cultural, educational, and interpersonal exchanges between the peoples of China and Africa.

KEY ASPECTS OF PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGES UNDER FOCAC

1. Education and training: FOCAC has supported various educational initiatives, including scholarships, exchange programs, and vocational training opportunities for students and professionals from African countries to study in China. This has facilitated knowledge transfer and capacity building in areas such as science, technology, agriculture, and public administration.

2. Cultural cooperation: FOCAC promotes cultural exchanges between China and African countries, including the organization of cultural festivals, artistic performances, and exhibitions. These activities help promote mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's cultural heritage.

3. Health and medical cooperation: FOCAC has supported initiatives to improve healthcare and medical cooperation between China and African countries. This includes medical assistance programs, training for healthcare professionals, and the establishment of medical facilities and research institutions.

4. People-to-people dialogue: FOCAC facilitates regular dialogues and interactions between scholars, journalists, youth representatives, and civil society organizations from China and Africa to discuss issues of common inter-

est and strengthen mutual understanding.

Overall, people-to-people exchanges are an important component of FOCAC's efforts to foster stronger ties between China and Africa, promoting friendship, mutual respect, and cooperation at the individual and societal levels.

Apart from the FOCAC Arrangement, there is also another global initiative of the Chinese government launched in 2013 namely the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

The BRI is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by the Chinese government, focusing on connectivity and cooperation between Eurasian countries. In Africa, the BRI has led to significant investments in infrastructure, such as ports, highways, railways, and energy facilities. The multilateral reach of the BRI in Africa has several security implications and areas of cooperation:

I. Security Implications:

1. Economic security: The BRI investments in African infrastructure can enhance economic security by creating employment opportunities, boosting trade, and facilitating economic growth. However, this economic development may lead to competition and potential tensions between China and other countries with economic interests in the region.

2. Maritime security: The construction of ports and maritime infrastructure under the BRI in Africa has security implications, including the potential militarization of ports, navigation rights, and regional maritime disputes. Cooperation to ensure the security of sea routes and maritime infrastructure could be an area of mutual interest the African countries will need to pay closer attention to guard against any future maritime security threat.

3. Cybersecurity: With increasing digital connectivity as part of BRI infrastructure projects, there is a need for cooperation in cybersecurity to prevent cyber-attacks and safeguard critical infrastructure.

II. Areas of Mutual Cooperation:

1. Counter-terrorism: China and African countries can cooperate on counter-terrorism efforts, including intelligence sharing, capacity building, and joint military exercises to address security threats emanating from terrorist groups.

2. Maritime security: There is potential for cooperation in ensuring maritime security, including anti-piracy

efforts, search and rescue operations, and maritime law enforcement.

3. **Peacekeeping and conflict resolution:** China has been contributing to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. There is potential for cooperation in peacekeeping training, capacity building, and conflict resolution efforts.

4. **Infrastructure security:** Cooperation in securing BRI infrastructure projects, such as ports, railways, and energy facilities, can ensure the safety and stability of these critical assets.

5. **Cybersecurity:** Collaborative efforts in enhancing cybersecurity measures and information sharing to protect BRI-related digital infrastructure.

The multilateral reach of the BRI in Africa provides opportunities for China and African countries to collaborate in addressing security challenges while promoting shared economic development. Effective cooperation should prioritize mutual interests, sovereignty, and the long-term security and stability of the region.

CHINA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN THE AREA OF SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

China's engagement with African countries in the area of security architecture involves various forms of cooperation. Some of the key areas of cooperation in African security architecture with China include:

1. **Military training and assistance:** China provides military training programs and capacity-building assistance to African countries. This includes training for military personnel, logistical and technical support, and the provision of military equipment and hardware.

2. **Peacekeeping and conflict resolution:** China has been actively involved in supporting peacekeeping efforts in Africa, including providing troops and logistical support to the UN and AU peacekeeping missions. China's contribution to peacekeeping efforts in Africa has been significant, and the country has been involved in various peacekeeping missions across the continent.

3. **Counter-terrorism cooperation:** China has engaged in counter-terrorism cooperation with African countries. This includes intelligence sharing, capacity-building in counter-terrorism operations, and collaboration in addressing the regional and global threats posed by terrorist groups operating in Africa.

4. **Maritime security:** China has been involved in cooperative efforts with African countries to enhance maritime

security in the region. This includes joint patrols, information sharing, and support for capacity-building initiatives aimed at combating piracy, illegal fishing, and other maritime security challenges.

5. **Security infrastructure development:** China has been involved in the construction and development of security infrastructure in African countries, including the provision of surveillance equipment, border control facilities, and other security-related infrastructure.

6. **Arms sales and military cooperation:** China has engaged in arms sales and military cooperation with various African countries, providing military equipment, hardware, and technology to support their security and defense capabilities.

China's engagement in these areas reflects its growing interest in Africa and its desire to strengthen ties and cooperation with African countries in the realm of security. The nature of China's involvement in African security architecture has been subject to increasing scrutiny and debate, with discussions on the implications of Chinese engagement for African security dynamics and long-term relations.

CHALLENGES IN CHINA-AFRICA MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

1. **Diverse interests and priorities:** African countries have diverse interests and priorities, and aligning these with China's goals and objectives can be challenging. China's approach to engagement in Africa has to navigate complex political, economic, and social landscapes within each country, as well as the broader regional dynamics.

2. **Competition with other global powers:** China's cooperation in Africa is often seen in competition with other global actors such as the United States and European countries. This competitive environment can make it challenging for China to establish and maintain a leading position in its multilateral cooperation efforts.

3. **Political instability and governance challenges:** Many African countries face political instability, governance challenges, and corruption, which can complicate China's efforts to engage in multilateral cooperation. Instability and governance issues can create risks for Chinese investments and partnerships in Africa.

4. **Infrastructure and connectivity limitations:** Poor infrastructure and connectivity in many African countries can pose challenges for China's efforts to enhance multi-

lateral cooperation. Investment in infrastructure development, including transportation networks, communication systems, and energy facilities, is essential for promoting effective multilateral cooperation.

5. Cultural and linguistic barriers: China's engagement in Africa may face challenges related to cultural and linguistic differences, requiring efforts to bridge communication gaps and build mutual understanding.

6. Environmental and social concerns: China's multilateral cooperation in Africa is facing increasing scrutiny regarding its environmental and social impacts, particularly related to infrastructure and resource development projects. Balancing economic development with environmental and social sustainability is an ongoing challenge for China's engagement in Africa.

7. Maligning of China: Another critical barrier in the way of China multilateralism is the maligning of China by the West which keeps putting up bad propaganda against China, criticizing it for strategizing to take over the raw materials and infrastructural assets in African countries as a recolonization effort.

Addressing these challenges requires China to adopt a nuanced approach to its multilateral cooperation in Africa, acknowledging the complex and evolving nature of Africa's political, economic, and social landscape. Building trust, fostering mutual understanding, and promoting transparency and accountability are critical elements for addressing these challenges and advancing multilateral cooperation with African countries.

Addressing the challenges of China's multilateral cooperation in Africa security cooperation in the interest of world peace and harmony requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach. Some key steps that can be taken to address these challenges include:

1. Promoting dialogue and mutual understanding: China and African countries need to engage in open and transparent dialogue to understand each other's security concerns, interests, and priorities. Building mutual trust and understanding is essential for effective multilateral cooperation in security matters.

2. Addressing governance and corruption issues: Addressing governance and corruption challenges in African countries is crucial for promoting stability and security. China can support efforts to improve governance, enhance transparency, and combat corruption, as these factors can contribute to peace and harmony in the region.

3. Investing in sustainable development: China can

promote sustainable development initiatives in Africa, including investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and poverty reduction. By addressing underlying economic and social challenges, China can contribute to the long-term stability and security of African countries.

4. Balancing economic interests with social and environmental responsibility: China can take measures to ensure that its economic activities in Africa align with social and environmental responsibility. This includes promoting sustainable development, respecting local communities, and mitigating environmental impacts.

5. Strengthening multilateral institutions and frameworks: China can support the strengthening of multilateral institutions and frameworks in Africa aimed at promoting peace, security, and cooperation. This includes supporting regional and continental organizations such as the AU and the regional economic communities.

6. Engaging with other global actors: China can collaborate with other global actors, including the UN, Western powers, and other emerging economies, to address security challenges in Africa. By working together, these actors can share best practices, resources, and expertise to enhance security cooperation in the continent.

By taking these steps, China can contribute to resolving the challenges of multilateral cooperation in African security and promote world peace and harmony. A collaborative and inclusive approach that considers the interests and perspectives of all stakeholders is essential for achieving sustainable and effective security cooperation in Africa.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the growing influence of China in Africa has significant implications for the region's integration and security cooperation. Chinese investment has the potential to promote economic development and greater regional connectivity. Multilateral cooperation is essential in managing Chinese engagement and promoting the region's long-term development and stability. The AU, in particular, has a key role to play in fostering greater regional cooperation and cohesion in the face of China's growing influence. By working together, African countries can leverage the potential benefits of Chinese investment while also safeguarding their long-term interests and promoting greater regional integration and security cooperation. ■

CHINA INITIATIVES BOOST COMMON DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL SOUTH

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As the profound changes unseen in a century accelerate, human development undergoes a new inflection point. Continuously intensifying deficits of peace, development, security and governance make it imperative for mankind to have systematic, yet feasible international public goods, to integrate forces in the international community in jointly promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. At the same time, as development levels of all countries in the world are uneven, the priority area of building such a community lies in common development of the Global South. It is against this background that China has put forward major initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), covering key areas in building a community with a shared future for mankind. Together they provide systematic Chinese concepts and Chinese approaches for human development at the crossroads to further improve global governance mechanisms, tackle common challenges facing human society, and especially promote unity and cooperation of the Global South with Chinese wisdom.

CONNOTATION AND FEATURES OF CHINA INITIATIVES

Since 2013, China has produced a series of initiatives dedicated to promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind in different domains,

particularly providing an important impetus for common development of the Global South. Compared with the previously existing initiatives in the international community, China Initiatives have unique connotation and features.

First and fundamentally, China Initiatives have built domain modules to the promotion of building a community with a shared future for mankind. In fact, the practical path of building a community with a shared future for mankind is simultaneously developed in two directions: geographical region and topic domain, namely geographical modules and domain modules. At the beginning, the domain module initiatives China proposed were relatively focused, such as the Cooperation Initiative on Global Food Security, the Initiative of International Cooperation on Resilient and Stable Industrial and Supply Chains, and the Global Data Security Initiative. As China deepened its understanding of the profound changes rarely seen in a century and of their accelerating evolution, it came up with the BRI and the G3 initiatives (GDI, GSI and GCI) successively, proposing solutions to issues in core domains of economic growth, social development, peace and security, and progress of civilization, and providing an integrative framework for all kind of previous initiatives. Thereby, China Initiatives have moved on from the ones that promote a community with a shared future for mankind with domain modules towards an increasingly systematic and all embracing whole, laying a solid foundation for building a community with a



Chinese President Xi Jinping poses for a group photo with distinguished guests attending the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, October 18, 2023. (Photo / Xinhua)

shared future for mankind to enter the stage of “filling in the details”.

Second, China Initiatives enable the organic integration of geographical modules and domain modules for building a community with a shared future for mankind. The geographical modules of building such a community cover country, sub-regional and regional levels, and then cover the whole world. At the country level, China has reached a strategic consensus on building a community with a shared future mainly for neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. At the sub-regional level, it has mainly included a community with a shared future for the Lancang-Mekong countries, that for China-ASEAN, that for China-Central Asia, that for China-Arab, and that for Shanghai Cooperation Organization. At the regional level, China has reached strategic consensus with African, Latin American and the Caribbean,

and Pacific island countries on building a community with a shared future. It means that China has reached a strategic consensus with relevant countries in the overwhelming majority of the geographical modules in the world on jointly building a community with a shared future for mankind, and has thus put in place creative practices.

When domain modules and geographical modules are organically combined, building a community with a shared future for humankind becomes concrete and operable. This combination of domain modules and geographical modules works two-way. On the one hand, domain connotation is added to the geographical modules, making the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind geographically specific. On the other hand, the domain modules can be implemented in different geographical regions. To realize the organic combination and mutual embedding of

geographical modules and domain modules is the basis for “filling in the details” in building a community with a shared future for mankind, and also the fundamental requirement of China Initiatives.

Third, China Initiatives are important public products China has contributed to the international community in the new era. This attribute is most evident in the important contributions to easing the global governance deficit. After the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008, the international community failed to find an effective recovery plan over a long period of time. In 2012, the G20 Summit in Los Cabos, Mexico proposed that the top priority of the international community remained to seek strong, sustainable and balanced economic growth. It was against this backdrop that President Xi Jinping put forward the BRI in 2013, aiming to provide strong dynamics for world economic recovery and the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. From 2016 on, there were frequent black swan and gray rhino incidents represented by the Brexit, the rise of populism in the United States (US), and the outbreak of COVID-19, while deficits of peace, development, security and governance continued to increase. The making of the GDI, the GSI and the GCI in fact became the “timely rain” to alleviate the above deficits.

Fourth, China Initiatives provide an important impetus for enhancing international unity and cooperation. The fundamental cause for current global governance deficit to aggravate is the fact that the Western countries are building “small yard, high fence” to keep their hegemony. On the one hand, the Western countries attempt to replace the universal international unity with a club-style multilateral unity, which is clearly opposed by the international community represented by the United Nations (UN). On the other hand, the Western countries view the supply of international public goods in perspective of geopolitical purposes, not only markedly reducing their willingness to provide international public goods, but also comprehensively obstructing emerging markets from participating in supplying international public goods. Therefore, the systematic China initiatives will not only help alleviate the global governance deficit, but also promote unity and cooperation of the international community to jointly provide international public goods, which coincides with the UN calling for the spirit of international unity.

CHINA INITIATIVES STRENGTHEN DRIVE FOR COOPERATION IN GLOBAL SOUTH

Fundamentally, the systematic proposal of China Initiatives is a giveback product of the country for the international community after achieving initial results of its national rejuvenation. As international public goods, China Initiatives are also unique, in the sense of injecting new impetus for cooperation into the Global South, promoting common development of the Global South, and building a community with a shared future for the Global South.

First, China Initiatives actively echo the UN spirit of international unity, serving as a glue for unity and cooperation of the Global South. In recent years, the strategic competition agenda pursued by the US, Europe and other Western countries has produced a negative impact on the internal unity of the Global South, whereas China vigorously practices the spirit of international unity advocated by the UN and plays a positive role in promoting unity and cooperation of the Global South. On the one hand, China has joined hands with other Global South countries in resisting attempts by the US and Europe to split the Global South. Although not invited to attend the Voice of Global Southern Summit held online in January 2023, China continued to attach great importance to unity, cooperation and common development of all developing countries. During preparations for and actual meeting of the 18th G20 Summit in September 2023, China played a constructive role and as always supported the summit in setting great store by the concerns

On March 18, 2021, the 2021 “Silk Road E-commerce” International Cooperation Forum was held in Fuzhou, Fujian, China.



Photo: CNSphoto

of developing countries and achieving quite a few outcomes in support of common global development.

On the other hand, China has always adhered to the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits in promoting unity and cooperation of the Global South. The principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits stands for an important guideline for the Belt and Road cooperation, being fully absorbed in the GDI, the GSI and the GCI. For example, In January 2022, China launched in the UN headquarters the Group of Friends of the GDI, and established in November 2022 the Global Development Promotion Center, both being important platforms for cooperation featuring extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, an important step towards building cooperation mechanism called for by China Initiatives. They provide important drivers to deepen pragmatic cooperation, speed up the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promote mechanisms building, and strengthen integrative cooperation docking with UN development system.

Second, China Initiatives comprehensively promote quality and efficiency of international public goods, being an enabling platform for unity and cooperation of the Global South. The collective rise of emerging markets results in increasing participation of the Global South in the global governance and also its capacity to supply international public goods. In this context, advancement of China Initiatives is conducive to the construction of a division of labor and cooperation system for supplying international public goods, thus enhancing the Global South's capacity to participate in global governance. As China's national strength grows, China initiatives first appear in the domain of economic development, and then gradually expand to multiple key domains, which means that China's ability to supply international public goods continues to improve while it reflects China's innovative practice in making arrangements for the supply system of international public goods, i.e. reshaping a division of labor and cooperation system of supplying international public goods on the basis of comparative advantage of countries involved. A division of labor and cooperation in supply based on comparative advantage not only means that it may be more convenient for emerging markets or those countries with comparative advantage in specific areas to supply international public goods, more important because

of multi-party cooperation being hopeful to improve the quality and stability of supplying international public goods, but also can give more choice to consumption side of public products, averting the dilemma of picking side, thereby truly promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Third, China Initiatives offer free ride opportunities, standing for an underpinning support for unity and cooperation of the Global South. When providing international public goods, the Western countries tend to emphasize that it is precisely because of free ride that it is increasingly difficult to control cost of supplying international public goods, eventually leading to supply deficit. This proposition is rather hypercritical. The fundamental issue is that the supply of international public goods must precede the consumption, so the logic of the supply side cannot be inferred by the logic of the consumption side. The US-led Western countries are not only the largest consumption side, they enjoy the privilege of leading the making of relevant international norms and rules. Therefore, the real logic of the West emphasizing the free ride issue is to require the consumption side to share the cost of supply.

Different from the Western countries, China takes a responsible attitude towards the supply cost of international public goods, and insists that although China Initiatives are initiated by China but are to be shared by the world. For example, to implement the GDI, China has set up cooperative funding platforms such as the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, making important contributions to easing the financing deficit in international development. In August 2023, President Xi remarked at the the BRICS-Africa Outreach and BRICS Plus Dialogue that China has set up a Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund with a total funding of US\$4 billion, and Chinese financial institutions will soon set up a special fund of US\$10 billion dedicated to the implementation of the GDI. For another example, at the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2023, President Xi announced that the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China will each set up a 350 billion yuan (US\$48.75 billion) financing window, and that an additional 80 billion yuan will be injected into the Silk Road Fund, to support the joint Belt and Road projects in a market-oriented and commercial way. By taking up the main cost of China Initiatives as an international public

good, China not only provides an underpinning support for unity and cooperation of the Global South, it has also played a catalyst role in promoting the development of the Global South.

CHINA INITIATIVES PROMOTE COMMON DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL SOUTH COUNTRIES

China Initiatives are meant for the entire international community while focusing on the Global South countries. The key meaning of promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for the Global South through China Initiatives is to achieve common development of China and other Global South countries for a community of shared interests, to take common responsibility for a community with shared responsibilities, and to share dignity for a community with a shared future.

I. China Initiatives Promote Building a Community with Shared Interests for the Global South

Promoting the construction of a community with shared interests of the Global South is of fundamental significance to building a community with a shared future for the Global South. In recent years, China Initiatives have made important progress in building a community of shared interests for the Global South. Taking

A Kenyan journalist poses for a photo with train drivers at the Mombasa West Station of the Mombasa Railway, which was built by a Chinese company, on May 31, 2017 in Mombasa, Kenya.



(Photo/Xinhua)

the BRI as an example, over the past decade, China has signed Belt and Road cooperation documents with more than 150 countries and more than 30 international organizations, hosted three Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, and established more than 20 multilateral cooperation platforms in professional fields. From 2013 to 2022, the cumulative volume of imports and exports between China and BRI partner countries totaled US\$19.1 trillion, with an average annual growth of 6.4%; the total two-way investment between both sides exceeded US\$380 billion, of which China's outward direct investment surpassed US\$240 billion; China's total value of overseas contractual projects in BRI partner countries over the same period of time and the turnover reached US\$2 trillion and US\$1.3 trillion respectively.

As China Initiatives become more systematic, a virtuous circle of coordinated progress among various initiatives has taken shape, mainly reflected in two aspects. From the perspective of coordinated domain functional synergy, the BRI focuses on infrastructure construction to promote economic growth, being big and excellent market project; the GDI focuses on developing people's livelihood, being a small but beautiful heart-winning project; the GSI is devoted to the dual protection of national security of individual countries and common security, being a stable and safe safeguard project; and the

On June 15, 2023, the SCO Industry Chain Supply Chain Forum and SCO International Investment and Trade Expo opened in Qingdao. The photo shows performers from Belarus posing with volunteers after the show.



(Photo/Xinhua)

GCI advocates mutual learning between civilizations, helping enhance mutual understanding and reduce misunderstanding and misjudgment, being a harmony in difference communication project. From the perspective of fiscal synergy, the BRI belongs to market cooperation and can achieve financial sustainability through for-profit cooperation. The GDI, the GSI and the GCI are more of public welfare and universality, which calls for coordinated improvement of efficiency through fiscal and financial policies, so as to promote building a community of shared interests for the Global South.

II. China Initiatives Promote Building a Community with Shared Responsibilities for the Global South

At present, the international community's willingness to unite and cooperate faces many challenges, and the US-led West have been on a second period of responsibility shirking after the end of the Cold War. The first period of responsibility shirking was the aid fatigue in the West after the Cold War ended, aiming to reduce foreign assistance and require the recipients to solve their own problems independently. The second period of responsibility shirking emphasizes the shared responsibilities rather than common but differentiated responsibilities, its core being to require the emerging markets to bear more of the supply cost of international public goods. To promote building a community with shared responsibilities for the Global South with China Initiatives helps alleviate the strategic competition between major countries promoted by the US-led West, and in turn promotes building a global community with shared responsibilities.

On the one hand, world peace and common development are to be promoted through partnership building. As early as 2015, President Xi pointed out the important role of partnership building at the 7th BRICS Summit. At present, China's partnership networking diplomacy is on the increase, having established partnerships with more than 90 countries, and regional and international organizations. It is a network that covers nearly all major countries and important regions in the world, and provides an important support for enhancing the international status of developing countries and ensuring a balance between justice and benefit for China and other developing countries.

Furthermore, strategic assurances for the Global South can be provided by regional overall diplomacy

mechanisms. The overall diplomacy mechanisms between China and the Global South roughly started from the ASEAN + China mechanism in 1991, and since then the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, and the China-Latin America Forum have gradually advanced systematization and institutionalization of China's overall cooperation mechanisms with the Global South. The institutionalized development of China's cooperation with the Global South further makes clear the country's strategic determination and strong sense of mission to always remain a reliable friend and sincere partner of the developing countries.

III. China Initiatives Promote Building a Community with a Shared Future for the Global South

Generally speaking, China's diplomatic experience with the Global South has undergone three stages of standing up together, growing rich together and then of becoming strong together. Be it in Africa, the Asia-Pacific, or the Middle East, China emphasizes the concept of community with a shared future, and its willingness to continue to pursue a win-win strategy of opening up, share its own development opportunities with other countries, and welcome all countries to take the free ride of China's development. Therefore, China Initiatives are to promote social and economic development of developing countries, so that countries and their people can share the development dividends. The focus of China Initiatives tilts toward the Global South, providing major help for the latter to alleviate peace, development, security and governance deficits, which is the key to promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for the Global South. China Initiatives demonstrate to the Global South and the international community at large China's historic innovation in its national rejuvenation: to take a new path of peaceful development rather than follow the beaten track of big powers in seeking hegemony, and to make other countries, especially the Global South countries beneficiaries of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation rather than victims of the rise of big powers in history. In this sense, China Initiatives are not only a concrete manifestation of China's adherence to the path of innovative development, but also the country's concrete practice in promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for the Global South. ■

GLOBAL SOUTH: AN IMPORTANT DRIVING FORCE FOR THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

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Since the beginning of the 21st century, the international order has witnessed a notable shift marked by an increasingly active involvement of the Global South in global affairs. This engagement has effectively curtailed hegemonism, Cold War mentalities, and camp politics. The Global South is committed to fostering a more just, reasonable, equal, and representative international order, aspiring to earn a more peaceful, stable, and conducive external environment for sustainable development. In pursuit of these goals, Global South countries have forged a robust community of solidarity and mutual assistance. This united front holds the power to influence global politics and economies, actively contributing to the establishment of an equitable, prosperous, and sustainable world.

EMERGING FORCES IN GLOBAL POLITICS

The Global South emerged within the era of global politics as a new identity and worldview that champions global thinking and coordinated action. It believes challenges can be effectively addressed only through collaborative global efforts. The rise of the Global South has significantly contributed to the overall globalization and a more inclusive and equitable international order.

Viewed through the lens of international politics and economics, the Global South, a product of non-alignment and the Third World, maintains a legacy grounded in anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and anti-hegemony. In

1991, the UN General Assembly passed the Challenge to the South: Report of the South Commission urging Global South countries to take concerted actions worldwide. The concept of the Global South gains traction as people recognize the global presence of Emerging Market and Developing Countries (EMDCs) whose agenda is an important part of modern global politics. In the meantime, Global South countries, emerging as a collective force, go beyond borders to address development issues, voice global concerns, and undertake tangible actions.

In recent years, the Global South has witnessed a rapid increase in influence, emerging as a new political actor. This growth can be attributed to internal factors (enhanced capabilities, and political awakening) and external factors (a new phase of globalization, and escalating international competition).

Internally, EMDCs have increasingly become pivotal drivers of global economy and essential contributors, and even leaders, in global governance. In 2023, the African Union gained entry into the G20, while the BRICS Summit 2023 agreed to admit Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The African Peace Mission actively promoted the peaceful resolution of the Ukrainian crisis. The Global South advocated for attention to the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. These latest developments showcase growth of global influence of the Global South. Additionally, emerging multilateral development financing institutions such as the Asian

Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank are giving more priority to the developmental needs of Global South countries.

Externally, as the international power structure becomes increasingly diversified, the West and the United States are seeking to secure support from the Global South to reinforce its dominant or advantageous position in the international order. To secure their dominance, they strategically positioned EMDCs, including China, at the lower rungs of the global industrial and value chains. This was achieved through the dismantling of neo-liberal globalization and adjustments to the globalization model amid a trend of tribalization. The United States and the West are enhancing their influence in the Global South by establishing ideological connections, promoting “near-shoring” and “friendly shoring” and launching global infrastructure initiatives. Although the Global South countries welcome resources from the United States and the West, they still choose an open world economic system, the international order and multilateral cooperation represented by the United Nations over economic protectionism and pan-security represented by the West.

GLOBAL SOUTH VIEW ON INTERNATIONAL ORDER

The Global South possesses not only the economic foundation for sustainable development but also the political inclination to advance towards a just and equitable international order. This grants a unique advantage and role to the Global South in resolving international conflicts, promoting global development, addressing climate change, and advocating dialogue among civilizations.

I. Pursuing Peaceful Transformation

The end of the Cold War did not usher in lasting global peace. Neo-interventionism and NATO’s eastward expansion have heightened geopolitical tension and turmoil, causing a sharp decline in political mutual trust and security cooperation intentions among major powers. Despite the persistent threat of terrorism, the United States, aiming to preserve its hegemonic position, listed major power competition as the foremost threat in its national security strategy in the post-Cold War era. The U.S. seeks to maintain a long-term competitive advantage over China and contain Russia.

The Global South treasures international security based on the UN Charter, underscoring the importance of the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Multilateral

mechanisms dedicated to global and regional security governance, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, are making beneficial endeavors in this respect. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, focusing on regional security threats, has included countries with territorial disputes, such as India and Pakistan, as members. Saudi Arabia and Iran were invited to join BRICS following their reconciliation.

In the face of new international security crises, such as the Ukrainian crisis and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, most countries in the Global South have taken determined positions based on their understanding of the crises, humanitarian concerns, and their own national interests. They actively engaged in promoting peace and dialogue. The majority of Global South reject deploying arms or imposing unilateral sanctions on belligerents. Moreover, they oppose the pan-security approach that labels specific countries or enterprises as security threats groundlessly. Most of them refuse to take sides in major power conflicts, accommodating their legitimate interests rationally. Some economically robust countries in the Global South autonomously manage their relations with relevant countries based on their interests. Given the current security landscape, the Global South is advocating for a reform of the post-war international security order. It is also calling for a more representative UN Security Council and restrictions on the power of permanent members.

II. Pursuing Development Rights

Over a long time, many Global South countries with limited resources and development capabilities, have relied heavily on financing from donor countries and internation-

On October 30, 2023, at the Security Council’s open meeting on the political and humanitarian aspects of Syria, China clearly expressed its opposition to external forces undermining the security and stability of Syria.



Photo/Xinhua

al organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Formulating independent development policies aligned with their own national conditions has proven challenging for them but they need to secure more equitable, independent, and mutually beneficial development and cooperation opportunities urgently. Countries like Cuba, Venezuela, and Iran, situated in the Global South and subjected to longstanding financial and trade sanctions from the United States and the West, find themselves largely disconnected from development resources within the global financial and trade system. The U.S. strategies of “decoupling and breaking the chain” and “small yard and high wall” in science and technology also impose significant restrictions on the access of emerging technologies by the Global South.

The Havana Declaration, adopted during the G77 and China Summit in September 2023, expressed profound concerns regarding the current unfair international economic order, highlighting its most severe impact on developing countries. The declaration urged a comprehensive reform of the international financial architecture, aiming for more inclusive and coordinated governance. It emphasized the importance of enhancing cooperation among countries, promoting representation of developing countries in global decision-making processes. Furthermore, it firmly opposed the implementation of laws and regulations with extraterritorial effects and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries. The declaration reiterated the urgent need to eliminate these measures immediately.

Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, global economic and security challenges, and limited technological innovation capability, the Global South faces significant obstacles in attaining sustainable development goals. There is an urgent need for an international order that empowers them to harness the development opportunities presented by the fourth industrial revolution. Their collective goal of the Global South is to advance and modernize through new industrialization and deeply engage in it through science, technology, and innovation. Furthermore, the Global South closely follows AI developments and relevant regulations, aiming to enhance their own AI technology and applications and actively participate in the development of global regulations.

III. Pursuing Environmental Justice

The rise of the Global South happened during an era

emphasizing environmental justice. Capital and technology-constrained countries in the Global South anticipate a transformed international order that can address the specific needs of developing countries regarding climate change. Despite the international community reaching a consensus on common but differentiated responsibilities, developed countries have fallen short in meeting their financing commitments and altering the business models of multilateral development banks and international financial institutions. In 2022, the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) made a breakthrough agreement to provide loss and damage funding for underdeveloped countries hit hard by climate disasters.

A new generation of politicians in the Global South generally regards green development as their philosophy of governance. Kenyan President Ruto, Colombian President Petro, and Brazilian President Lula all place special emphasis on global green development cooperation. The Global South is also progressively enhancing its capacity, including scientific and technological capabilities to address climate change through South-South cooperation. A case in point is the China-Brazil Joint Laboratory for Space Weather built to conduct scientific studies, such as the near-Earth space environment of the two countries and develop weather early warning models.

IV. Pursuing Openness and Inclusiveness

As an informal designation of a community, the Global South is characterized by its high tolerance for differences. It comprises many countries with varying ideologies, social systems, religious customs, and levels of development. Its perspective on the international order reflects its commitment to respecting and supporting the diversity of the world. The US subprime mortgage crisis in 2008 and the riots at the US Capitol in 2021 reaffirmed the political determination of the Global South to pursue a development path aligned with their national conditions. Additionally, these events deepened its understanding of the diversity within the international order featuring various development models.

The Global South countries have gradually moved away from the neoliberal development model represented by the Washington Consensus to focus on mutual learning from development experience and expertise through international exchanges. For instance, right before her visit to China, Honduran President Xiomara

Castro wrote “the refounding of Honduras demands new political, scientific, technical, commercial and cultural horizons”, demonstrating her political will to draw inspiration from China’s development. Uruguay, Brazil, and China have gained international acclaim for their respective achievements in renewable power generation and inclusive social initiatives, thereby bolstering the global influence of the Global South in sustainable development. The Global South countries view the development models and achievements of others as valuable examples.

The Global South is a constantly evolving global identity. Although the Global South countries have explored distinctive development paths, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, import substitution, and neo-liberal reforms, they consistently make development explorations within the context of the international order and the global system. The Global South has always reiterated the importance of South-South cooperation and North-South Dialogue, demonstrating its commitment to an open and inclusive international order.

CHINA’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GLOBAL SOUTH: PROSPECTS

China has unequivocally asserted that it is an integral member of the Global South. In his closing speech at the 2023 BRICS Business Forum, President Xi Jinping affirmed that “as a developing country and a member of the Global South, China shares a common destiny with other developing countries and actively pursues a shared future with them. China has steadfastly championed the common interests of developing countries and endeavored to enhance the representation and voice of EMDCs in global affairs.”

China has actively collaborated with other Global South countries to promote a more just and rational international order. The Bandung Spirit, championed by China in the 1950s, laid the foundation for South-South cooperation. In 1991, China and the G77 jointly presented a position paper as the G77+China group for the first time at the Preparatory Meeting of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Since then, the G77+China has evolved into a crucial mechanism for the Global South. International mechanisms initiated by China such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the BRICS, and the Belt and Road Initiative, have provided additional channels for the Global South to actively shape

the international order. The BRICS expansion and the African Union’s accession to the G20 signify the shared commitment of the Global South to uphold multilateralism and promote reform within the global governance system. China played a leading role in these processes.

In July 2023, China put forward four proposals on strengthening cooperation among the Global South countries: eliminate conflicts and jointly build peace; reinvigorate vitality and promote development; be open and inclusive for common progress; be united and discuss cooperation. China underscored its readiness to collaborate with a vast number of EMDCs to advance the implementation of Global Development Initiatives, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilization Initiative. The goal is to jointly build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind. These proposals strongly align with the Global South’s perspective on the international order, indicating a promising prospect for China to collaborate with the Global South. To effectively promote the cooperation and development of the Global South countries, attention should be directed towards the following aspects:

Firstly, it is imperative to acknowledge the significance of the Global South. The Global South plays a constructive role in supporting economic globalization, safeguarding international peace, and advancing the agenda of sustainable development amid significant global changes. Despite being underdeveloped, the Global South has achieved notable development milestones and possesses substantial potential. It is contributing significantly to the Community of Shared Future for Mankind.

Secondly, it is crucial to effectively enhance the unity of the Global South. With certain countries and actors attempting to sow divisions within the Global South, China should stand more closely together with developing countries and strengthen the unity and resilience of the Global South through the ongoing improvement and implementation of BRICS and the G77+China.


Thirdly, there is a need to raise public recognition of the Global South. With the implementation of Belt and Road initiative and dissemination of research results on the Global South regions, the public can develop a heightened awareness of the Global South. This increased awareness will help individuals recognize that the rise of the Global South contributes to the development of a more just and equitable international order. By then, garnering more public support for new international relations and South-South cooperation will become achievable. 



Photo: Xinhua

Delegates attend the opening ceremony of the first Africa Climate Summit on September 4, 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.

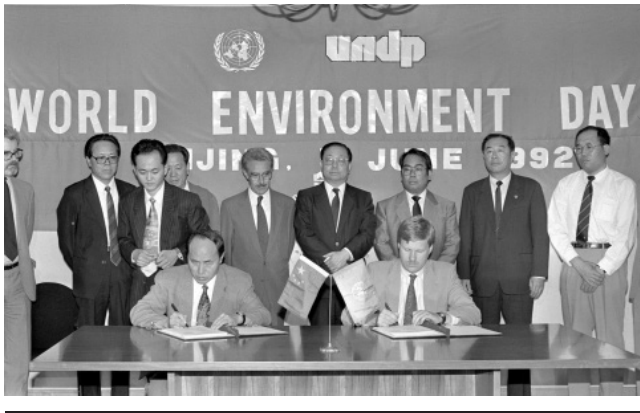
THE STRENGTH OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

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According to State of the Global Climate 2022 and Provisional State of the Global Climate 2023 published by the World Meteorological Organization, the global mean temperature in 2022 was 1.15°C above the 1850–1900 average, the years 2015 to 2022 were the eight warmest on record, and the year 2023 was the warmest year on record. It is imperative to address the global climate crisis since it is posing in-

creasing challenges to the ecosystem and sustainable socio-economic development of human society. The global climate governance has weathered ups and downs over the past 30 years. In this process, boundaries between the North and the South camps have been blurred with the rise of internal division. The Global South has and will continue to play an important role in improving the global climate governance.



Supporting the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and in commemoration of the World Environment Day, the United Nations Development Programme and China's then Ministry of Economic and Trade signed the Coal Plan and the Gas Layer Project Plan, in Beijing, June 5, 1992,

ROLES PLAYED BY THE GLOBAL SOUTH IN GLOBAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

The concept of the Global South was first proposed by Carl Oglesby, an American left-wing political activist, during the Cold War. It initially referred to the vast number of developing countries that are distinct from the Western countries. However, this concept has been greatly enriched in global climate governance.

First, it refers to all developing countries. Countries are mainly categorized into two groups in climate negotiations, thus leading to North-South divide in global climate governance. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted in 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) entered into force in 1994. With a total of 198 parties, the Convention is one of the international environmental laws with the widest coverage. The UNFCCC divides countries into Annex I Parties (developed countries and countries with economies in transition) and non-Annex I Parties (developing countries) and sets out different obligations for different groups. It is emphasized that Annex I Parties should take the lead in reducing emissions and provide non-Annex I Parties with financial and technical assistance. To realize the objectives of the UNFCCC, COP3 held in 1997 adopted the Kyoto Protocol, for the first time setting out quantitative emission reduction obligations for developed countries and countries with economies in transition (CEIT). Although

developing countries were not subject to any quantitative emission reduction obligations, they pledged to control the greenhouse gas emissions through implementing sustainable development policies.

Second, it refers to the Group of 77 (G77) and China. Established in 1964, the G77 currently has 133 members. It has long been committed to strengthening solidarity and cooperation among developing countries, promoting the building of a new international economic order, and advancing socio-economic development of developing countries. At the preparatory meeting for the UNCED in 1991, the G77 and China published their first joint position paper. Since then, the cooperation mode of “the G77 and China” has gradually emerged in other areas including socio-economic development, UN finance and budget, and climate change. As representatives of the Global South, the G77 and China have participated in various climate negotiations and played a significant role in improving global climate governance.

Third, it refers to various mechanisms established by developing countries for addressing climate change. As the landscape of global climate governance evolves, the North and the South camps have been further divided by their positions, and various organizations and mechanisms have thus been formed such as the BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China), the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Countries of these organizations have gradually formed a common stance through regular exchanges, and actively safeguarded their own interests in global climate negotiations. There is also overlap between different groups. For example, 10 countries in the AOSIS are also LDCs.

Fourth, it refers to regional or functional organizations established by developing countries, including the African Union (AU), the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America (ALBA) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). They represent the interests of their respective regions or groups and express a coordinated and consistent position in global climate governance.

HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH TO GLOBAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

There are three landmark events in intergovernmental climate negotiations since 1990, and the Global South

has played an important role in improving global climate governance.

First, the Global South has promoted the adoption and entry into force of the UNFCCC, establishing basic principles and laying an important legal foundation for global response to climate change. During the negotiation of the Convention, there was a binary distinction between developing and developed countries. For developed countries, on the one hand, they attempted to play down or even evade their historical responsibilities and delay the fulfillment of their obligations to offer technological and financial support. On the other hand, they asked developing countries to reduce emissions. For developing countries, they strived to defend their own development rights and interests, emphasizing that eradicating poverty and improving people's livelihoods were their top priority. Meanwhile, they stressed that developed countries should take the lead in cutting emissions and fulfill their obligations to offer financial assistance and technology transfer to developing countries. After rounds of negotiations, the UNFCCC was adopted. The Convention formalizes five principles including to act on the basis of equity and in accordance with common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and to promote sustainable development. The Convention divides countries into Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, and sets out common but differentiated responsibilities, striking a balance between different parties' pursuit.

Second, after the Kyoto Protocol was adopted, the Global South has not only actively controlled greenhouse gas emissions through implementing sustainable development policies, but also helped developed countries and CEITs to meet their emission reduction targets at low cost through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The Kyoto Protocol, for the first time, sets binding emission reduction targets for Annex B Parties (developed countries and CEITs), requiring them to reduce emissions of six greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide included, to 5.2% below the 1990s base year level by 2008–2012 in aggregate. The Protocol also introduced the CDM and other two project-based flexibility mechanisms, allowing Annex B countries to purchase emission reduction entitlements from a foreign country at a low cost to help them accomplish their emission reduction targets. According to the UNFCCC website, since its operation in 2006, the CDM has registered more than 1650 projects and produced certified emission reductions amounting to

more than 2.9 billion tons of CO₂ equivalent in the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

Third, the Global South has facilitated adoption and entry into force of the Paris Agreement, forging a global political consensus on promoting green and low-carbon development. On the eve of the Paris Climate Conference, the BASIC countries, as representatives of major developing countries, reached a consensus on facilitating the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Although the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement imposed a negative impact on global climate governance, the Global South didn't flinch but firmly defended the hard-won results. As of July 2023, 193 parties to the Agreement have proposed their Nationally Determined Contribution targets, and more than 150 countries have made commitment to carbon emission neutrality. All this demonstrates the irreversible and accelerating trend of global green and low-carbon development and transformation.

NEW CHALLENGES FACED BY THE GLOBAL SOUTH IN GLOBAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

The COP26 held in Glasgow in 2021 completed the Paris Agreement Rulebook, after which the Agreement became operational and implementable. In the current situation, the Global South is also facing many new challenges.

First, with the rise of the Global South, its contribution to global economy, trade and emissions is also increasing, giving them greater pressure to cut emissions. Glo-



(Photo/Xinhua)

Participants (right) discuss about wind power projects in the Clean Energy Exhibition Area at the sixth China-Arab States Expo, Sept. 22, 2023.

balization brought important development opportunities to the Global South. Emerging market countries, with significant economic development, become a larger driving force for the world economy compared with the US and other developed Western countries. The share of the Global South in the world economy doubled from about 20% in 2000 to 42.2% in 2021. The share of developing economies in global trade in goods rose from 14.8% in 2000 to 42.9% in 2022, and their total trade volumes tended to overtake that of the developed countries. Meanwhile, economic development and urbanization leads to rapid growth of carbon emissions of the Global South, especially those in Asia, whose global share of carbon emissions grew from 26% in 2000 to 44% in 2021. The rise of the South and the decline of the North in trade and emissions has not only profoundly changed the global climate governance, but also brought increasing pressure to the Global South to cut emissions.

Second, the US and its Western allies have taken various measures to curb the rise of the Global South and weaken the influence of the Global South. In recent years, the US and its Western allies have been wary of the rise of the Global South. When the EU found its competitive advantage disappeared with the rapid growth of China's electric vehicle exports, it immediately launched an anti-dumping investigation on China. In June 2022, the G7 summit proposed to establish an open, inclusive and cooperative international Climate Club. But in reality, the Club serves to implement their trade protection measures such as imposing carbon tariffs. On the one hand, they invite some developing countries to join their small circle by, for example, establishing the Just Energy Transition Partnership with South Africa. On the other hand, they attempt to impose unilateral punitive measures on countries outside the circle. All this creates a more complex and volatile international environment for the Global South.

Third, it's difficult for the Global South to take a united stance since member countries are at various development stages and have different interests and demands. Among members of the Global South, only a handful of emerging countries are developing rapidly, while many others are experiencing slow development or stagnation for various reasons, or are even in economic recession because of regional conflicts. The development gap within the Global South has been widening, sometimes even surpassing that between the North and the South. The Paris Agreement Rulebook weakens the principle of

common but differentiated responsibilities, and blurs the line between the North and the South. On issues such as the phase-out of fossil fuels, fund-raising, and compensation for losses and damages, there is a clear divergence of interests among countries in the South camp, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to coordinate their needs and interests.

POOLING THE STRENGTH OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH TO ADVANCE GLOBAL CLIMATE COOPERATION

Strengthening international cooperation is essential for addressing climate change. Countries of the Global South should enhance solidarity to have a stronger voice and safeguard their overall interests. Going forward, the Global South should and can play a bigger role in global climate governance.

First, China is committed to its natural membership of the Global South and its leading role in maintaining the solidarity of the Global South. China being a natural member of the Global South is a fact that cannot be changed by a decision or a statement by the US and its Western allies. The G77 and China always speak on behalf of developing countries. China, as an important member of the BASIC,



the BRICS and developing countries with similar positions, will continue to gain strength from and safeguard the solidarity of the Global South, and will actively take the lead in global climate governance. BRICS expansion in 2023 made the organization become more significant in terms of the population, economic volume and geopolitical influence. BRICS has also transitioned from an organization of emerging economies to a platform for developing countries. Such transition not only enhances its overall influence, but also meets the expectations of the international community and demonstrates the importance and value of multilateralism. Through implementing the Joint Statement issued at the BRICS High-level Meeting on Climate Change, BRICS countries will become a political force to be reckoned with in the global climate governance. In the face of unilateral punitive measures taken by some Western countries such as building small circles and imposing carbon tariffs, countries of the Global South should manage the differences and strengthen solidarity to balance the influence of the Global North.

Second, the roles of such platforms as the South-South cooperation on climate change and the green Belt and Road Initiative should fully leverage to enhance cooper-

Researchers set up an automatic weather station at the summit of Cho Oyu Peak.



(Photo/Xinhua)

ation among countries of the Global South on climate change and green development. Developing countries urgently need external financing, technology transfer and capacity-building to address climate change and boost green development. As willingness of developed countries to provide financial assistance keeps declining, South-South climate cooperation has received increasing attention. China has established the South-South Climate Cooperation Fund, and incorporated more climate-related projects into the Belt and Road cooperation. Having stopped building new coal-fired power projects abroad, China is also vigorously developing renewable energy. Going forward, China should further enhance the efficiency of the South-South Climate Cooperation Fund, work with other countries to launch more climate-friendly infrastructure projects, such as renewable power plants, clean and efficient transportation systems and climate-resilient buildings, and further pool the strength of the Global South on climate change and green development to lead win-win cooperation among countries of the Global South.

Third, it is necessary to unleash the potential of the Global South in addressing climate change and promoting green development within the framework of the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative. The Global South has a large number of countries with various resource endowments, culture, traditions and interests, at different development stages. However, they have common pursuit of a better future and sustainable development, and there is a huge potential for cooperation. From 2021 to 2023, China put forward three major global initiatives which advocate accelerating the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, steering global development toward a new stage of balanced, coordinated and inclusive growth, staying committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and respecting the diversity of world civilizations. All these three initiatives have gained more and more support from the Global South. To combat climate change is one of the UN sustainable development goals and a key area for cooperation of the Global Development Initiative. When implementing the three initiatives, we should promote sustainable development of the host countries, and respect rights of all countries to independently choose their own green development paths, so as to pool the strength of the Global South for win-win cooperation. 🇨🇳

LOCATING THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE IN NIGERIA'S RENEWED HOPE AGENDA: IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL HUMAN SECURITY

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In the dynamic landscape of global geopolitics and economic development, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has emerged as a transformative force, redefining international relations, trade and fostering connectivity among nations. Disappointedly, the world has a large infrastructural gap constraining trade, openness and future prosperity. Multilateral development banks (MDBs) are working hard to help close this gap. Most recently China has taken a giant step towards strengthening international relations, trade and fostering connectivity, a plan known as the BRI. China and economies that have signed co-operation agreements with China on the BRI (henceforth BRI-participating economies) have been rising as a share of the world economy.

At 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Nigeria officially joined the BRI and since then, the country has strategically positioned the BRI within its Renewed Hope Agenda, recognizing the multifaceted implications it holds for the nation's socio-economic growth and, consequently, its role in contributing to global human security. The agenda is a comprehensive framework designed to address historical challenges, stimulate economic growth, and enhance the overall well-being of its citizens. At the heart of Nigeria's embrace of the BRI lies recognition of the initiative's potential to address critical gaps in the country's infrastructure.

As Africa's most populous nation and the largest economy, Nigeria faces the challenge of bridging infrastructural deficits that impede sustainable development. The BRI, with its emphasis on building roads, ports, and energy infrastructure, aligns with Nigeria's development needs, offering a pathway to modernization and enhanced economic productivity. Moreover, the BRI presents Nigeria with an opportunity to diversify its trade partnerships and reduce dependency on traditional economic alliances. By participating in the BRI, Nigeria aims to integrate itself into a global economic network, fostering trade and investment ties with a diverse array of nations. As Nigeria strategically locates the BRI within its Renewed Hope Agenda, the implications for global human security become increasingly salient. The interconnectedness fostered by the BRI extends beyond mere economic benefits, impacting various facets of human security such as political stability, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF NIGERIA INFRASTRUCTURAL GAP

Over the years, inadequate infrastructure is one of the major constraints to Nigeria sustained economic growth and development. This conclusion was based on the reports of various development plans such as *National Vision 20:2020* and *the Economic Recovery* and

Growth Plan (ERGP), 2017-2020. The reports among others, consistently point to high infrastructure gap as one of the factors that seriously undermined the country's economic performance over the years. For instance, the country's infrastructural gap as a percentage of GDP stood at 1.2% while the quality of infrastructure remains 39.7 in a score of 100 in 2016. These data indicate the existence of weak infrastructure necessary to spark the path to sustainable growth and development. Over the years significant efforts have been made to address these challenges. One of those efforts is the increasing budgetary allocation for infrastructural development as contained in ERGP. These efforts aim at expanding the power sector infrastructure to achieve at least 10 GW of operational capacity, and investing massively in transportation infrastructure. An attempt towards the implementation of this policy resulted to increased allocation of at least 30% to capital projects in the Federal Annual Budgets since 2016. This effort notwithstanding, the budgetary allocation is far below the actual expenditure needed to meet the country's infrastructural needs as indicated in Figure 1.

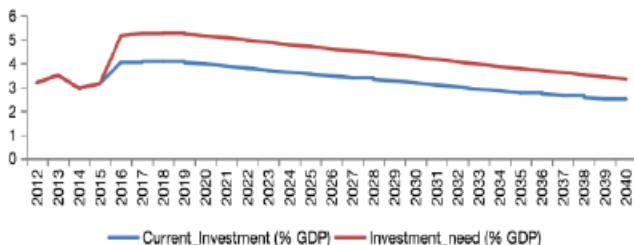


Figure 1: Forecast of Nigeria Infrastructural Spending, 2012-2040 (% of GDP)
 Source: Global Infrastructural Outlook, 2023. <https://outlook.gihub.org/countries/Nigeria>

The forecast clearly indicates the current trend of investment is far below the country's investment needs over the forecast periods. Specifically, in 2016 the current trends indicated that current investment stood at 4.05% against the 5.17% required for closing the infrastructural gap. Between 2016 and 2040, the forecast of investment need stood at 4.41% of GDP against the current investment that is equivalent to an average of 3.32% per year.

This implies that the current investment will continue to fall short of the country's infrastructural needs. This explains the poor ranking of the country in global competitiveness.

In 2019 Global Competitiveness Index Report on quality of infrastructure, Nigeria ranked the 130th position out of 141 countries in the list with a score of 48.33 points out of 100 coming behind Egypt (52nd), South Africa (69th), and Algeria (82nd). In another recent report, the 2020 Africa Infrastructure Development Index (AIDI) developed by African Development Bank to evaluate the status and progress of infrastructure development across the continent, also indicated that Nigeria recorded an index of 23.27 falling behind 23 other African countries.

A forecast of sector by sector analysis of the level of investment for each of the major components of infrastructure further established a clear gap between the current level of investment and the country's investment needs.

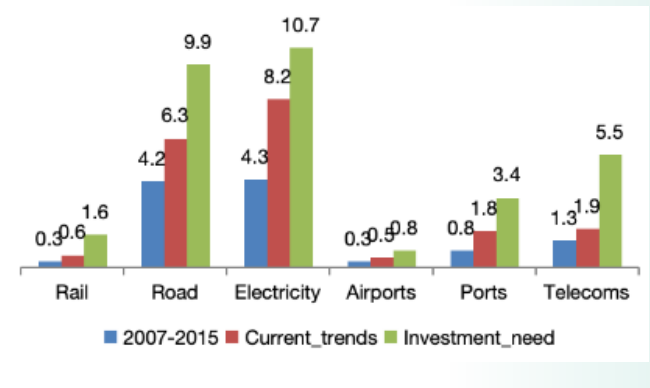


Figure 2: Average Annual Investment (Billion US\$, 2015 prices and exchange rates).
 Source: Global Infrastructural Outlook, 2023. <https://outlook.gihub.org/countries/Nigeria>

On the average, investments on all the sectors increased from the 2007-2015 average annual expenditure as shown in Figure 2. However, investments on airport and rail attract least amount of investment with \$0.5 billion and \$0.6 billion respectively, as current investments against \$0.8 and \$1.6 billion investment need respectively. Spending needs are greatest for electricity and roads, which together account for \$20.6 billion for the forecast period under the investment need scenario and

\$14.5 billion under the current trends scenario. The gap between the two scenarios is proportionately greatest in the roads and telecom sectors, where investment needs for each of the two sectors are \$3.6 billion greater than the estimated spending under current trends.

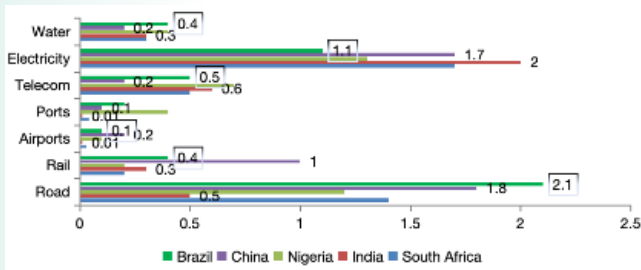


Figure 3: Infrastructure Investment Need, 2016-2040 (% of GDP)
 Source: Global Infrastructural Outlook, 2023. <https://outlook.gihub.org/countries/Nigeria>

A comparative analysis of the emerging economies infrastructure needs vary by region. Figure 3 indicates that the investment need for Nigeria is about 0.4%, 0.6% and 0.4% of its GDP for water, telecom and ports sectors respectively, far above the investment need for China, India, South Africa and Brazil, while in term of ports, rail and road Nigeria lag behind China, Brazil and South Africa with investment need of 0.1%, 0.2% and 1.2% of its GDP respectively. This suggests that Nigeria is most likely to lag behind their peers in terms of the fund dedi-

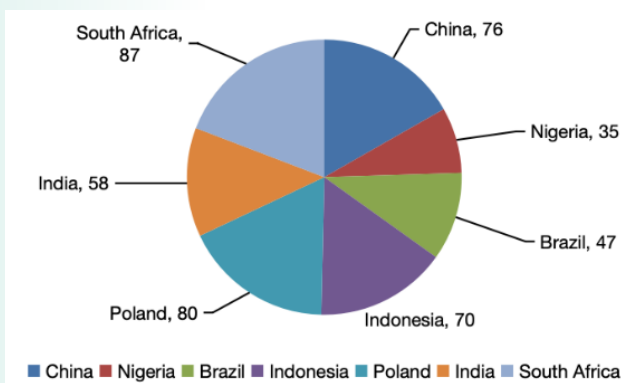


Figure 4: Infrastructural Stock in Selected Countries (% of GDP, 2016)
 Source: Global Infrastructural Outlook, 2023. <https://outlook.gihub.org/countries/Nigeria>

cated to infrastructural investment on rail and road. This scenario underscores the low level of infrastructural stock (measured by infrastructural stock as % of GDP) and the country ranked at the bottom of the table.

As shown in Figure 4, the total stock of infrastructure in Nigeria is equivalent to 35% as a percentage of its GDP, lower than other comparator countries such as India that has 58%, China with 76% and South Africa with 87% of their GDP in 2016. Based on international benchmarks, every developed country typically is expected to have “core infrastructure” stock (roads, rail, ports, airports, power, water and ICT) equal in value to about 70% of GDP, with power and transportation infrastructure usually accounting for at least half of the total value. Disappointedly, Nigeria stock of infrastructure is far below the world bench mark as shown in Figure 4. Surprisingly not, the percentage of total income committed to infrastructural development equally underscores the poor scores recorded by the country in term of logistic performance. Using Logistics Performance Index between the periods of 2007-2022 as a measuring yardstick, Nigeria recorded the least score among all the countries in the list (see Figure 5). A critical look at Figure 5 further revealed that the effectiveness of Nigeria infrastructural investment is not only lower than that of China, Brazil, Indonesia but the performance has equally be on a steady decline commencing from 2014 up to 2022.

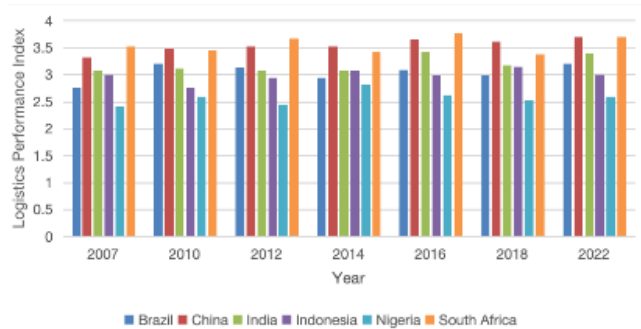


Figure 5: Logistics Performance Index: Overall (1=low to 5=high), WDI, 2023.

For instance, in 2014 the country recorded and overall score of 2.81 (in a score of 1=5), and by 2022 the performance declined to 2.56 (see Figure 6) while China has continued to maintain a sustainable improvement in

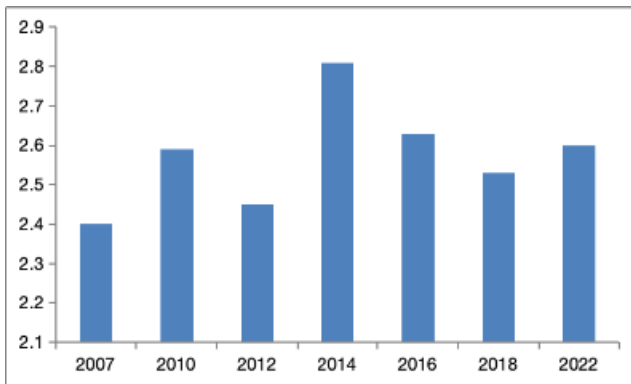


Figure 6: Nigeria Logistics Performance Index: Overall (1=low to 5=high), WDI,

Source: World Development Indicator, 2023

its logistic performance index. This implies apart from insufficient funds dedicated to infrastructural development in Nigeria, the performance of the available infrastructural facilities is grossly inefficient (see Figure 5).

It needs to be noted that in the next 10 years, Nigeria's population is expected to expand significantly from its current estimate of about 190 million to almost 264 million. This is likely to exert profound future demand for infrastructure expansion to reduce congestion and strain on existing networks. Without drastic improvements in Nigeria's core infrastructure, the prospects for economic growth and development will be severely compromised. Therefore, Nigeria needs to invest heavily in infrastructure in order to put in place basic utility and transport networks. However, the country might likely face the greatest challenges in terms of institutional factors and access to finance.

THE BRI AND THE GLOBAL HUMAN SECURITY

Over the years, Nigeria has been tagged as the sleeping giant due to its inability to harness the full spectrum of economic opportunities because of infrastructural constraints and poor logistic performance as evidenced in Figure 4 and 5 respectively. To unlock Nigeria's untapped potential and fostering economic diversification, the country needs to take advantage of vast infrastructural projects proposed under the BRI. This collaborative infrastructure projects will not only ensure a dynamic exchange of ideas, technology, expertise and economic development, but also facilitates mu-

tual understanding and contributes to the socio-cultural enrichment of both nations. Amidst the promises of economic growth and cultural exchange, the implications for global human security cannot be overlooked.

Human security entails peace, development and human rights and their interrelationship, without downplaying the critical essence of economic, political, civil, social and cultural rights. The interlinkages between development and peace in human security are direct, but can provide a "back door" towards human and ethnic rights within states. Achievement of human security requires policies that are people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented that strengthens the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities. This has been treated cautiously by China at the conceiving stage of the BRI. Human security has remained a herculean task for Nigeria and by extension Africa continent. With a high population growth rate estimated between 2.4% and 2.7%, Nigeria's current growth performance is insufficient to make an impact on unemployment and poverty rates. Available data from NBS showed that unemployment rate remains high, increasing from 23.1% (20.9 million) in Q3 2018 to 33.3% (23.187 million) in Q4 2020. Under-employment rate, however, equally increased slightly from 21.2% to 22.8% equivalent to 15.915 million people during the same year. In terms of poverty, report by NBS indicates that 82.9 million Nigerians are poor equivalent to 40.1% of the total population (excluding those in Borno State) while in 2022, 63% of the total population are multi-dimensionally poor. This high rate of unemployment and poverty could be attributed to poor performance of manufacturing sector and human capital development. Available data from World Bank Development Indicators showed that the quality of human capital remain low, with a score 0.018 (in a score of 0-1) in 2020 compares to China and Indonesia that recorded scores of 0.65 and 0.54 respectively. In terms of manufacturing sector performance, the performance of manufacturing sector measured by value added as a percentage of GDP declined from 21.2% in 2017 to 20.1% in 2020.

This poor macroeconomic outcomes could be attributed to weak infrastructures, while the crises of COVID-19 pandemic further exposes the weaknesses of Nigeria infrastructural facilities. The pandemic equally presents great opportunities to build a strong and resilient economy through infrastructural development.

However, the Global Infrastructure Hub estimated that Nigeria's total infrastructural investment needs between 2016 and 2040 will require about US\$ 878 billion, translating to about US\$35 billion per year. Clearly, the required infrastructural fund is far beyond financial inflow of Federal government alone considering the fact that the economy is heavily dependent on the oil and gas sector which are vulnerable to shocks in the international energy markets.

The BRI is aimed at opening up of the regions and roads for infrastructural development, investment opportunities, economic cooperation and empowering weaker nations to have infrastructure and compete effectively in global market. Hence, connectivity enhanced by infrastructure is a critical pathway for human security. This is the rationale behind the BRI which will fight poverty among global population, enrich nations, and integrate humanity for shared future. Therefore, the BRI presents an opportunity for Nigeria to fix its infrastructural decay and unlock its growth potentials and that of Africa as a whole. Through BRI, Nigeria has been able to enter into various bilateral agreements with China targeting infrastructural development.

The Abuja-Kaduna Railway section is the first section of the Nigerian Railway Modernization Project, using China railway technical standards and connecting the capital city of Abuja, Niger and Kaduna states, with a total length of 186.5 km and a maximum speed of 150km/h. Abuja Rail Mass Transit Project (Phase 1) as the first light rail in West Africa is another project signed between CCECC and the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA). During construction of the rail an estimate of 20,000 local staff were employed while about 1000 direct jobs and over 200,000 indirect jobs were provided through the project mostly in areas of material production, subcontracting works, and equipment manufacturing and related services. Another major project of the BRI in Nigeria is the Lagos-Calabar coastal railway project. The project as initially negotiated was \$11.917 billion. The contract was later renegotiated and came up with a cost of \$ 11.117 billion and to be funded through China Exim Bank among other financial institutions that finance the Belt and Road project.

The agreement between Nigeria and other African countries with China was based on willingly signed developmental agreements. Hence, the cooperation is not aimed at exploitation but carried out in a manner

of mutual benefit and win-win in line with the theory of International Development Cooperation. This is because China and Nigeria, Africa or the entire world, have one major goal, which is mutual or collective benefit of the cooperation/collaboration that binds them together. Collaboration with China under the BRI offers the opportunity for technology transfer and knowledge sharing. This can play a crucial role in upgrading Nigeria's technological capabilities and fostering innovation and human capital development. Access to advanced technologies can improve efficiency across various sectors, from service sector to manufacturing, resulting in increased productivity and competitiveness on the global stage. Nigeria, as a major player in the West African region, could leverage the BRI to enhance regional integration. Strengthening economic ties with neighbouring countries can lead to a more stable regional environment, promoting peace and security. The BRI's focus on connectivity aligns with Nigeria's potential role as an economic hub in West Africa, further contributing to the country's macroeconomic stability.

Investment in physical infrastructure such as power and transportation through Nigeria-China economic relations are critical to development of industries, mechanized Agriculture for meaningful development. The potentials in the agricultural sector to bring about the much desired structural transformation of Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Hence, among other critical areas of investment, a promising sector that Nigeria can leverage upon to reduce the menace of unemployment given its natural comparative advantage is the agricultural sector. Investment in Agricultural sector will bring about the much desired structural transformation of Nigeria economy. However, the quantum of China's investment in such a critical sector in Nigeria remains insignificant. An index to measure such investment is the hectares of Land acquired for agricultural projects. According to China-Africa Research Initiative, available data indicate the existence of about 50 model farms in Nigeria. This further reveals very little commitment in this sector from China when compared to investments in oil exploration and construction. As at 2022, the Chinese agricultural sector (primary production) contributes about 7.8% to GDP and employs about 240 million workers while share of service sector to GDP was 52.3%. A greater commitment to this sector by both trading partners would not only address the problems of structural rigidity in Nigeria but also reduce the



Photo: Xinhua

- ▲ A ceremony is held marking the completion of the first phase of the Lagos Rail Mass Transit Blue Line project undertaken by China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation in Nigeria's southwestern state of Lagos, Dec. 21, 2022. This is a picture of a light rail train captured on the same day in Lagos, Nigeria.
- ▶ Guests are invited to take a trial ride on the Mass Transit light rail train in Lagos, Nigeria, Dec. 21, 2022.



Photo: Xinhua

rate of unemployment.

While the potential benefits are evident, it is essential for Nigeria to manage the associated risks, particularly in terms of debt burden. BRI projects are often funded through loans, and careful negotiation of terms is crucial to ensure that the debt burden remains manageable. However, the pattern of providing infrastructure in Nigeria through China's financial resources creates an issue of debt accumulation. Transparent financial practices and effective risk management are vital to avoid potential problems and ensure the sustainability of the collaboration.

Conclusively, Nigeria's decision to join the BRI is rooted in the recognition of the urgent need to address its significant infrastructure gaps. The country's infrastructure deficit, as highlighted in various reports and analyses, poses a considerable challenge to sustained economic growth and development. The existing trends in infrastructure spending, as depicted in figures and forecasts, reveal a persistent shortfall in meeting Ni-

geria's infrastructure needs, leading to a lower global competitiveness ranking and logistical performance. The BRI, spearheaded by China, presents a promising avenue for Nigeria to bridge its infrastructure gap and unlock its economic potential. The BRI aligns with Nigeria's development needs, particularly in the areas of roads, ports, and energy infrastructure. The strategic integration of the BRI into Nigeria's Renewed Hope Agenda underscores its multifaceted implications, extending beyond economic benefits to encompass aspects of global human security, political stability, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. Critical to the success of BRI is effective institutional framework, particularly a public service dedicated to excellence and efficiency and supportive of reforms. 🇳🇬

PROFOUND CHANGES UNSEEN IN A CENTURY AND BUILDING CHINA-AFRICA COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE

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In the twentieth century, humankind has experienced two world wars. As time goes on, not only has the number of sovereign states in the world increased, but many developing countries that were formerly colonized and oppressed have begun to run forward on the path of development, and have formed emerging countries and even the power of Global South. And international affairs are no longer dominated only by the “Seven Powers” of the Western countries. Driving the changes in the world is also the dramatic century-rare change in China. From battling against poverty and weakness to becoming the world’s second-largest economy, China has achieved magnificent turnaround and continued with stepping into the center of the world stage. The process has transformed China and promoted changes in global governance. China and Africa, as the strongest forces of solidarity among developing countries in the Global South, need to strengthen their communication, coordination and solidarity, and to build a closer China-Africa community with a shared future in order to grasp the overall positioning and strength of the developing countries in the profound changes unseen in a century.

THREE PERSPECTIVES OF PROFOUND CHANGES UNSEEN IN A CENTURY

At present, the profound changes unseen in a centu-

ry are accelerating, and the three dimensions of changes in the international balance of power, changes in China’s power and status, and the emergence of many uncertainties in the century-long changes are important perspectives for observing the directions of the future.

Firstly, the loss of Western dominance and the overall rise of emerging powers. The most significant change in the international balance of power over the course of a hundred years is the “rise of the East and fall of the West” and “rise of the emerging powers and fall of the traditional powers”. With the rising power of developing countries, the Group of Twenty (G20), which was established in 1999 and includes developing countries such as China, has replaced the Group of Seven (G7), which was formed by Western developed countries, to dominate global economic governance.

In addition to the G20’s increased global weight and status, the BRICS mechanism, comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, has evolved from a business concept featuring emerging markets to a multilateral consultation and cooperation mechanism among emerging market countries. The BRICS mechanism has also expanded from its initial focus on the economic sphere to the broader political, security and social spheres. During the 15th BRICS Leaders’ Meeting in August 2023, the BRICS mechanism underwent a historic expansion with Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates becoming new members,

making the BRICS a more representative organization of the Global South.

In terms of global scope and development trend, emerging economies and developing countries has been closing the gaps with traditional developed countries. The “latecomer’s advantage” and “catching-up advantage” of emerging economies and other developing countries have continued to flourish. In 2018, emerging markets and developing countries accounted for about 40% of the world’s total economy, contributing about 80% to world economic growth. According to the United Nations, by 2050, the global population will reach about 10 billion, of which 8.5 billion will belong to the current emerging markets and developing countries. The gradual loss of dominance by the Western powers and the rise of emerging powers as a whole are arguably the most revolutionary, historic and even irreversible changes in the international balance of power since modern times. This change is also described by President Xi Jinping in three “unprecedented” terms: the rapid rise of emerging market countries and developing countries is unprecedented; the metabolism and fierce competition brought about by the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial change are unprecedented; and the mismatch and asymmetry between the global governance system and the changes in the international situation are unprecedented.

Secondly, China has been growing in comprehensive national strength and stepping closer to the center of the world stage. After more than 40 years of reform and opening up, China has not only succeeded in lifting more than 700 million people out of poverty, but has also become the world’s second largest economy. According to the statistics released by China’s National Bureau of Statistics in 2022, China’s GDP in 2021 was 17.7 trillion U.S. dollars, firmly ranking second in the world; GDP per capita exceeded the \$12,000. China’s GDP in 2021 is expected to account for 18.5 percent of the world’s GDP, and China’s economic growth has contributed 30 percent to the world’s economic growth. China continues to be the main power source driving the world’s economic growth.

African countries, on the one hand, hope to understand and learn from China’s experience in economic development and political governance, and seize the historical opportunities for Africa brought about by Chi-

na’s development as well as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) put forward in 2013. On the other hand, they wish to break away from their previous dependence on former colonial masters by closely cooperating with China and other emerging economies. As the Cameroonian scholar Elvis Ngor puts it, with China’s emergence as a global economic power and its increased cooperation with African countries, Africa has a once-in-a-lifetime geopolitical opportunity to become a strategic partner of China and to defend its geopolitical values in international relations.

Thirdly, the international system is facing major shocks and adjustments. The United States in the aftermath of its victory of the Cold War, not only vigorously promoted the neo-liberal economic paradigm and the democratic and free political development model of multi-party competition, but also demonstrated to the world the superpower status of the United States in terms of military strength by launching the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The international pattern has also changed from the “Bipolar System” during the Cold War to the “only super power and multi-great powers” pattern of the post-Cold War era. Moreover, the United States, as the “only super power”, is far exceeding the “multi-great powers” of Europe, Russia and China, etc. With the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008 and the United States global strategy spreading too far, the United States’ willingness, determination and ability to control the regional and international situation alone have obviously declined. And the international status of the changes between the “multi-great powers” in the trend of equalization has become more prominent. Especially during the Trump administration, under the banner of “America first”, the US engaged in unilateralism, authoritarianism and hegemony, and politicized and weaponized the issue of tariffs which caused chaos and disorder in the international order, and the process of globalization encountered a counter-current. While at the same time, the threat of terrorism and the regional conflicts were hardly stopped, and the competition among the major powers have sailed into uncharted waters. The COVID-19 pandemic that has swept across the globe has added another footnote to the profound changes unseen in a century. The pandemic is a great challenge not only to the global public health system, but also to the process of globalization and global governance.

BUILDING A CHINA-AFRICA COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE WITH JOINT HANDS

In the course of building a community with a shared future between China and Africa, the two sides have not only sound historical foundation, moral basis and common values, but also more solid and broader development conditions and room for advancement in the context of the new era, empowered by the development of the BRI.

First, we will build a China-Africa community with a shared future side by side through thick and thin. The concept of “China-Africa community with a shared future” was put forward in March 2013 by President Xi Jinping. During his visit to Africa, President Xi pointed out that China and Africa share common historical encounters, common development tasks and common strategic interests, and that we are in the same boat through thick and thin in a “community with a shared future”. Indeed, China and African countries are both developing countries, belong to the Third World and have had similar historical encounters and common destinies, having suffered from colonialism and aggression by foreign powers. Therefore, the solidarity and mutual support between

China and Africa have withstood the test of storms and have become more and more solid on the basis of common political and development aspirations, constituting the most solid foundation for building a community with a shared future between China and Africa.

The China-Africa community with a shared future is also based on “sincerity, real results, amity, and good faith” and the values in pursuing the greater good and shared interests. President Xi Jinping has used the words “sincerity, real results, amity, and good faith” to point out the basic concepts and principles for China-Africa relations to be stable and sustainable in the future. President Xi pointed out that we should value “sincerity” to our African friends, value “real results” in our cooperation with Africa, value “amity” in our friendship with Africa, and value “good faith” in solving problems in our cooperation. In addition, the Chinese leaders have also repeatedly put forward the need to establish the principle for pursuing the greater good and shared interests in China’s policy towards Africa, especially in economic and trade cooperation. They emphasized to balance “shared interest” and “greater good”. “Greater good” means moral righteousness. When China interacts with African countries, we shall give priority to mo-

This is a picture of the Mozambique National Pavilion at the China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation Innovation Demonstration Park (Hunan Gaoqiao Market), June 29, 2023.



rality and righteousness, value equality, sincerity and amity, honor commitments, and speak out in defense of Africa's legitimate rights and reasonable demands. "Shared interest" stands for mutual benefit. China shall give more consideration to the reasonable needs of the African countries, and strive to make Africa benefit more through cooperation. When needed, China shall put friendship before profit.

Secondly, we will build a China-Africa community with a shared future through common development and win-win cooperation. From the perspective of economic development, China and Africa have strong foundations and resource endowments that complement each other's advantages and make cooperation mutually beneficial. The African continent is rich in natural and human resources and has a broad market. China has accumulated rich development experience, capital and applicable technology through reform and opening-up. On the one hand, African countries hope to find the key to development by learning from China's development experience. On the other hand, China has the ability and strong will to help Africa's development, and is able and willing to move forward together with African countries to promote the building of South-South partnership based on mutual respect and win-win cooperation.

It is with the idea of strengthening South-South cooperation and promoting Africa's development that China continues to invest huge resources in promoting China-Africa cooperation against the backdrop of shrinking international development cooperation with Africa. For example, at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, in December 2015 and the FOCAC Summit in Beijing in September 2018, China put forward the *FOCAC Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018)* and the *FOCAC Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)*, with a total value of 60 billion U.S. dollars. They aim to promote Africa's development in areas such as infrastructure construction, industrialization, health, poverty reduction and agricultural support, trade and investment promotion, digital innovation and human resources training.

For example, since the BRI was put forward in 2013, cooperation in the area of infrastructure construction between China and Africa has been significantly accelerated. According to a report released by the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa in 2017, China invested an average of 12 billion U.S. dollars per year in Africa's



Guests attend the "Red Hall Forum: China and African Countries on the Road to Modernization" Nairobi Dialogue held in Nairobi, Kenya, Nov. 14, 2023.

infrastructure sector from 2011 to 2016, making it the largest source of investment in Africa's infrastructure. In terms of production capacity cooperation and industry promotion, China has established about 25 economic and trade cooperation zones and hundreds of industrial parks in Africa, making positive contributions to Africa's industrialization, job creation and export increase. The "two-wheel-drive" model of "infrastructure construction + industrial development in industrial parks" vigorously promoted by China is boosting Africa's economic development and transforming Africa's resource and energy endowment into the fruits of sustainable development and benefiting people's livelihoods.

PATHS TO BUILD A CLOSER CHINA-AFRICA COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE

In his opening speech at the FOCAC Beijing Summit 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping profoundly elaborated on the profound connotations of the six dimensions of building a China-Africa community with a shared future, pointing out the direction of the future construction of the China-Africa community with a shared future.

First, we shall "build a China-Africa community with a shared future to assume our joint responsibility". China and Africa should not only strengthen political dialogue and policy communication with each other, but

also enhance collaboration and cooperation in regional and international affairs, so as to safeguard the common interests of China and Africa and the vast number of developing countries. China-Africa win-win cooperation and common development will not only lead South-South cooperation and greatly enhance the overall strength and influence of developing countries, but also promote North-South dialogue and the development of the international situation and governance system in a more balanced and rational direction, and make a greater contribution to the construction of a new type of international relations centered on win-win cooperation. In the post-COVID era, China and Africa can also convene special summits on some major international affairs, so as to send out to the international community a common voice of China and Africa's solidarity and unity.

Secondly, we shall “build a China-Africa community with a shared future that pursues win-win cooperation”. The docking of the BRI with Africa also needs to move from concept initiation to real actions, and be carried out with three levels, namely, the docking between the Belt and Road construction and the *United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the docking with the implementation of the *Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU)*, and the docking with the development strategies of African countries. In the post-COVID



Participants of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Agriculture take photos of and learn about drones at the Paddy Field National Park in Sanya, Hainan Province, Nov. 14, 2023.

era, special attention should be paid to strengthening China-Africa economic and trade cooperation and helping Africa revitalize its pandemic-hit economy. In the process of China-Africa industrialization cooperation, attention should be paid to technology transfer, personnel training and job creation in Africa; in the process of China-Africa financial cooperation, attention should be paid to strengthening financing support for small and medium-sized enterprises in Africa, and to solving the problems of financing and debt by using innovative financial tools such as development financing; and in the process of strengthening the construction of infrastructure for interconnection and connectivity, attention should be paid to the sustainable development of the projects.

Thirdly, we shall “build a China-Africa community with a shared future that delivers happiness for all of us”. China-Africa cooperation projects should focus more on improving and raising people's living standards than on grandiose “flagship projects”, and should take the enhancement of people's well-being as the starting and ending point for the development of China-Africa relations. Only when China-Africa cooperation brings visible and tangible results and benefits to the people of China and Africa can the sustainable development of China-Africa cooperation be ensured and the strongest foundation of the China-Africa community with a shared future be consolidated. The friendship of nations lies in the amity of peoples, and the amity of peoples lies in the hearts. FOCAC, which meets every three years, lists many specific projects to benefit the people in its action plan for the next three years. For example, in October and November 2019, China's “Access to Satellite TV for 10,000 African Villages” project was completed in Nigeria and Cameroon respectively. The completion of the project has enabled villagers in 1,000 villages in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, and 300 villages in Cameroon, respectively, to receive satellite TV programs with clear images and rich content, and has also enabled children to obtain better educational resources through remote TV education programs, which is of great significance.

Fourthly, we shall “build a China-Africa community with a shared future that enjoys cultural prosperity”. China and Africa are both birthplaces of human civilizations with brilliant cultural heritages which make China-Africa cultural exchanges rich in resources and



Children wait to board a train at the Nairobi Station of the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway in Nairobi, Kenya, Oct. 6, 2023.

connotation. It is necessary to promote exchanges, mutual understanding and coexistence between Chinese and African civilizations, so as to not only provide lasting assistance to each other's civilization renaissance, cultural progress and literary prosperity, but also make greater contributions to the diversification of the world's civilizations. In recent years, China-Africa cultural and people-to-people exchanges have been full of new ideas. People-to-people exchanges are no longer limited to mutual visits of cultural organizations, tourism cooperation and exhibition tours of museum collections, but have expanded and deepened to the exchange of ideas and joint research. The foundation of China-Africa cultural co-prosperity must be mutual understanding, and it is necessary to strengthen China-Africa media cooperation and civil exchanges, and build a "public opinion field" conducive to China-Africa friendship and cooperation.

Fifthly, we shall "build a China-Africa community with a shared future that enjoys common security". As China-Africa economic and trade cooperation and people-to-people exchanges become more and more frequent, China-Africa peace and security cooperation in recent years has also continued to expand its scope and deepen its content, from participation in United Nations

peacekeeping in Africa, support for counter-terrorism and anti-piracy efforts in Africa, provision of non-reimbursable military assistance to the AU, training of African peacekeepers, to holding discussions and exchanges on strengthening security cooperation. The China-Africa Peace and Security Fund and the China-Africa Peace and Security Forum were launched one after another in the past three years. And the implementation of 50 security assistance projects has been promoted in such areas as construction of the BRI, social security, United Nations peacekeeping, counter-piracy and counter-terrorism.

Lastly, we shall "build a China-Africa community with a shared future that promotes harmony between man and nature". President Xi Jinping has often said that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets. Not only should China's domestic development focus on the concepts of green, environment-friendly and sustainable development, in China-Africa cooperation, we should also uphold the concepts of environmental protection, wildlife protection and the unity of man and nature, and realize the organic combination of economic development and environmental protection. In promoting green industrialization, China has a lot of experience to share with Africa. 🇨🇳

THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE FREE TRADE AREA IN AFRICA

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The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), one of the flagship projects under the Agenda 2063 of African Union (AU), aims to eliminate intra-African trade barriers and boost African trade through trade agreements, achieve regional economic convergence and accelerate Africa's economic integration. The establishment of the AfCFTA marks a new stage in Africa's economic integration and is expected to have a significant impact on the growth and development of member states of the AU and is expected to expand investment opportunities and create jobs.

The year 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of Chinese President Xi Jinping announcing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the principle of "sincerity, real results, amity, and good faith" towards African countries. Over the past decade, China and Africa have not only deepened their cooperation in trade and economy, infrastructure construction, health and cultural exchanges, but also expanded new opportunities for cooperation in areas such as environmental protection, science and technology, digital economy and climate change. Under the impetus of the BRI, China-Africa trade has continued to grow, and investment and cooperation projects have spread across the African continent. The principle of "sincerity, real results, amity, and good faith" has further consolidated China-Africa friendly relations and made the two sides work more

closely in global and regional affairs. With the official launch and in-depth promotion of the AfCFTA, the BRI is increasingly in line with the development strategy of the AfCFTA, which will lay a solid foundation for the construction of a closer China-Africa community with a shared future in the new era.

THE FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS OF THE AFCFTA

On May 30, 2019, the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement came into force. In July of the same year, the "African Union Extraordinary Summit on the African Continental Free Trade Area" declared official establishment of the AfCFTA. Disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the AfCFTA was forced to be postponed and was eventually officially launched on January 1, 2021. Fifty-four AU member states, excluding Eritrea, signed the agreement.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty of the global economic recovery, the AfCFTA has made remarkable progress. To date, the first two phases of its negotiations have been largely completed, and the third phase, covering digital trade and protocols specifically for women and youth, is in full swing.

The AfCFTA will significantly reduce transaction costs in trade, thanks in large part to the launch of the

Pan-African Payment and Settlement System in January 2022 in Ghana's capital, Accra. Through the system, member states will be able to settle transactions directly in their own currencies, saving the continent an estimated \$5 billion a year in payment costs.

In terms of advancing trade flows, the AfCFTA has likewise achieved considerable success. In July, 2022, a total of seven countries participated in a pilot program of trade as a way to test the infrastructure, regulatory, and policy environment for intra-African trade. In addition, member states are actively pursuing their own strategies, such as Nigeria's Enyimba Economic City project, which allows duty-free access to the entire African market for locally processed or assembled products.

The AfCFTA is the largest free trade area since the establishment of the World Trade Organization in 1994, covering a continental economic market of 1.3 billion Africans and a GDP of about \$3.4 trillion. The AfCFTA is a vision of development under the AU's leadership in exploring the concept of independent and autonomous pan-Africanism to expand intra-African trade and create a single continental market by promoting the free movement of commodity goods and services, better coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation regimes across African Economic Community and at the continental level as well.

Now Africa is in the stage of demographic dividend. The construction of the AfCFTA can accelerate the process of African integration, and is an effective way for Africa to get rid of its dependence on the global market, strengthen the competitiveness of its own market, realize internal economic and political integration, and integrate into regional and global value chains. In recent years, the scale of trade in the African market has been expanding. According to the World Bank, the total import and export volume of the African region reached 2.1 trillion U.S. dollars in 2022, a year-on-year increase of 3.6%. Among them, exports amounted to 1.1 trillion U.S. dollars, an increase of 3.8% year-on-year; imports amounted to 1 trillion U.S. dollars, an increase of 3.4% year-on-year. The establishment of the AfCFTA not only stimulates the economic potential of value-added production and trade in all sectors of the African economy and accelerate the process of industrialization in the African continent, but also brings about economies of scale through the unified market, enabling it to improve its competitiveness and create

more employment opportunities in the medium and long term, and gradually achieve the transformation of Africa's economic structure and the sustainable development of society.

Indeed, the future course of the AfCFTA depends on the potential interests of Member States in it. African countries must strive to realize the common vision of the AfCFTA. Challenges such as competition for regional powers, the legacy of colonialism, overlapping memberships, lagging national infrastructures and the lack of complementarities among regional partners in terms of commodities and factors of production, as well as the mistrust that still exists in economic cooperation and protectionism among African countries, are inevitably challenges that need to be overcome in the construction of the AfCFTA.

JOINTLY BUILDING THE BELT AND ROAD TO DEEPEN CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION

The BRI highlights the importance of Africa. Africa is an important pole in the current world political and economic structure, and an important direction and purpose for the Belt and Road construction. In May 2017, the relevant documents of the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation explicitly stated that Africa is a key partner in the joint Belt and Road construction. In 2018, the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation adopted the Beijing Declaration – Toward an Even Stronger China-Africa Community with a Shared Future, which once again reiterated the importance of Africa's participation in the construction of the Belt and Road.

At the end of 2020, China and the AU signed Cooperation Plan between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the African Union on Jointly Promoting the Building of the Belt and Road. This is the first cooperation document signed by China and regional international organizations to jointly build the Belt and Road projects, and its main content is centered on the "five links" of the Belt and Road construction, namely policy coordination, infrastructure unimpeded trade, financial circulation and people-to-people bond. It specified the contents of cooperation and key cooperation projects, and put forward the corresponding timetable and roadmap. The cooperation plan effectively facilitates the top-level interface between the BRI and

the Agenda 2063, and promotes complementarity of strengths of the two sides to jointly address global challenges.

In November 2021, Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China released a white paper named *China and Africa in the New Era: A Partnership of Equals*. This is the first white paper issued by the Chinese government to comprehensively introduce China-Africa cooperation, and the first white paper since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China to introduce the achievements of China's cooperation with a region of the world. In the same year, the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation adopted the Vision 2035 for China-Africa Cooperation, which sets out the direction and goals of cooperation in the medium and long term, emphasizing the promotion of the building of a closer China-Africa community with a shared future.

As of June 2023, 52 African countries as well as the AU Commission signed cooperation documents with China on the construction of the Belt and Road. In August 2023, the BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. At the summit, the BRICS achieved a historic expansion of its membership. Egypt and Ethiopia became new members of the BRICS cooperation mechanism. After the expansion, the total population of BRICS countries is 3.68 billion, accounting for 46% of the world's total population, and the proportion of BRICS countries in the global economy has exceeded that of the G7 countries in terms of purchasing power parity. The BRICS countries reaffirm their support for the Agenda 2063 and for Africa's integration through, among others, the AfCFTA. The BRICS cooperation mechanism echoed the BRI and had become an important driving force in support of the the construction of free trade area in Africa by promoting the growth of trade and infrastructure investment.

THE BRI AND COOPERATION ON CONSTRUCTION OF THE AFCFTA

China has always supported Africa's economic integration process and played an active role in realizing peaceful development in Africa. China's BRI will give strong impetus to the construction of the AfCFTA and the opening up of Africa, thus contributing to Africa's autonomous and sustainable development.

I. Promoting Infrastructure Construction in Africa

Strengthening Africa's infrastructure construction and realizing inter-regional connectivity is a prerequisite for Africa's productivity growth and industrialization, and also the key to the smooth operation of the AfCFTA. First, China shall increase its investment and technical support in Africa's infrastructure construction, especially in key areas such as transportation network, energy supply and information communication. An improved infrastructure network can not only promote Africa's own connectivity and regional integration and provide a material foundation for the implementation of the AfCFTA, but also provide a broader market and more convenient logistics for Chinese enterprises.

Second, China and Africa should deepen production capacity cooperation and explore a China-Africa free trade cooperation mechanism. The establishment of the AfCFTA provides new space and platform for China-Africa capacity and investment cooperation. China can optimize its industrial layout according to the actual needs of African countries' development, build a number of production capacity cooperation demonstration zones in Africa, and strengthen cooperation in agriculture, manufacturing and other fields. At the same time, supporting African countries in upgrading their own industrial chain will not only help African economic growth and employment, but also facilitate the export of Chinese products and services, and realize the balanced development of China-Africa trade.

Third, China and Africa should actively explore innovative financing models. Infrastructure projects usually require huge capital investment. China can explore diversified financing channels with African countries, such as using the public-private partnership model, setting up a special fund, and utilizing loans from multilateral development banks, so as to alleviate the financial burden of individual countries and reduce investment risks. In addition, China and Africa should strengthen bilateral and multilateral dialogue mechanisms and jointly explore investment agreements and bilateral trade agreements, etc., in the form of laws and policies to ensure the stability and sustainability of cooperation between the two sides.

II. Expanding Emerging Areas in China and Africa

First, China-Africa cooperation needs to pay more attention to the joint development of emerging areas,

such as the digital economy, green energy and biotechnology industries. In terms of digital economy, China and Africa can jointly build digital transaction and cross-border e-commerce platforms, promote the development of digital currency payment systems, as well as promote the construction and upgrading of Internet infrastructure to enhance the digitalization of the African region, which will not only help African countries cultivate local digital talents, but also provide a new impetus for trade between China and Africa, and form a mid-to high-end value chain cooperation model.

Second, investing in green energy and environmentally friendly industries will help China-Africa cooperation extend to the high-end value chain. For example, building solar and wind power projects in Africa can not only help Africa solve the problem of energy shortage, but also promote local sustainable development. At the same time, China can help African countries upgrade their industrial level in areas such as environmental protection technology and clean production through technology transfer and joint research and development, and then participate in the higher-end global industrial chain.

Third, biotechnology is also a high value-added area where China-Africa cooperation can be further explored. China can join hands with African countries to establish biotechnology parks and jointly carry out pharmaceutical R&D, vaccine production and agricultural biotechnology development. Through such cooperation, African countries can improve their independent research and development capabilities in the field of biotechnology, and gradually upgrade their related industrial chains, and promote the high-quality development of industries such as health care and agriculture.


III. Encouraging china's Private Enterprises to Cooperate with Africa

By the end of 2020, private enterprises had accounted for about 70% of the scale of Chinese enterprises' direct investment in Africa. According to *Market Power and Role of the Private Sector: Report on Chinese Investment in Africa* released by the China-Africa Business Council in 2021, under the promotion of the FOCAC, Chinese private enterprises have gradually become the main force in China-Africa economic, trade and investment cooperation, and their participation mode has been transformed from trade-driven to investment-driven.

Firstly, Chinese private enterprises can be encouraged to participate in the BRI-AfCFTA cooperation through the establishment of special funds or the provision of fiscal and tax incentives. These incentives can help reduce investment risks and operating costs, and facilitate the expansion of Chinese private enterprises into Africa to participate in local infrastructure construction, resource development, agricultural modernization and other areas. At the same time, the establishment of the special fund also helps enterprises promote their brand building in the African market and upgrade the industrial level and overall competitiveness of the African region by providing technical support and management experience.

Secondly, it is necessary to strengthen humanistic exchanges and cooperation in education and training with African countries, especially the multi-channel cultivation of specialized talents. The Chinese private enterprises can provide African students and professionals with opportunities of study and training in China through scholarships, internship programs, workshops and other forms, which can not only enhance mutual understanding and trust between the two sides, but also cultivate international talents familiar with the African market and culture for private enterprises, laying a foundation for the long-term development of enterprises.

Thirdly, private enterprises should pay more attention to local social development and environmental protection when investing in Africa. Through the implementation of green production and the provision of social welfare services, private enterprises can build a good social image and reputation, and accumulate favorable conditions for long-term development. This responsible business philosophy will promote win-win cooperation between enterprises and the local investment sites, which is conducive to promoting the construction of the AfCFTA and realizing the goal of regional integration.

Today, the world is experiencing profound changes unseen in a century, with the international situation undergoing abrupt changes, the strategic gaming of major powers intensifying, and the world economic and security situation being complicated and severe, all of which are deeply transforming the restructuring of the global order. The BRI and the Agenda 2063 will be closely aligned to help the rapid development of the local free trade zone and build a even closer high-level community with a shared future between China and Africa. 

THE GOVERNING PHILOSOPHY, INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING AND POLICY CHOICE OF THE RWANDA PATRIOTIC FRONT

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The sound economic and governance performance in Rwanda has attracted wide attention in the international community. A lot of research into its specific policies has been done to look at the reasons behind the success of Rwanda. From the perspective of party politics, its success can be equated with that of the governance model of a party-centered country. Rwanda's ruling party, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), has led the country in achieving strong economic development by enhancing its power, strong will for development and pragmatic and flexible policy choices. The RPF's success can shed light for latecomer countries in terms of economic development and governance.

PRESSURE, MISSION, AND RPF'S STRONG WILL FOR DEVELOPMENT

The first impetus for the RPF to lead Rwanda in developing its economy comes from its strong will, which is not only caused by its survival pressure, but also influenced by the sense of mission at its birth.

Firstly, the RPF faced severe challenges when it came to power. The Rwanda genocide in 1994, which lasted nearly 100 days, not only took a large number of lives, but also caused a serious economic disaster. Rwanda's GDP plunged by more than 50% that year, with per capita GDP falling from \$249 the previous year to \$112. The country was in desperate need of an infusion of funds for recon-

ciliation and reconstruction, but it had neither mineral resources nor strategic importance and was not on the radar of Western-led international aid. From 1994 to 1996, only \$800 million of the \$2.2 billion promised by the West was delivered. Even with the subsequent increase in foreign aid, as a result of various efforts, it was often halted or reduced by the West on so-called "human rights" grounds, which prompted Rwanda to resolve to become self-reliant. Another pressure comes from within. The RPF is a political organization composed mainly of Tutsi refugees who have been living in neighboring countries such as Uganda and Burundi since independence. Before ending the genocide and taking over power in 1994, the RPF had little contact with the country's majority Hutu population. "The majority of the people accepted the new regime not because they truly recognized its justice and legitimacy, but because they hated the previous rule. In the long term, unless there's rapid economic development and people can live a better life, peace will be most fragile". The third pressure comes from the threat posed by long-standing Hutu rebel militias in eastern DR Congo. To deal with it, the RPF must invest significantly in improving its defence capabilities. In the uncertain prospect of Western aid, it is difficult for the RPF to achieve political autonomy and secure its regime unless it achieves sustainable economic development in Rwanda. Under these three pressures, the RPF has developed a strong will to commit itself to the sustainable development of the national economy.



Rwandan President Paul Kagame (center) inspects the disaster situation on May 12, 2023 in the western Rubavu region.

Secondly, the development will of the RPF came also from its strong sense of mission, which can find its source from three aspects. The first is the sense of national pride and honor existed in the history of the Kingdom of Rwanda. According to its own narrative of history, the kingdom was in expansion in the pre-colonial period when the country was rich and strong, the society was prosperous and peaceful, and the people beamed with a strong sense of pride for their nation. It was all interrupted by the invasion of European colonists and poor domestic governance after independence. The RPF is thus committed to restoring its past glory. The second is nationalism in modern Rwanda. It was born during the colonial rule by Belgium and the decolonization struggle, with the goal of independence and prosperity for Rwanda, breaking the shackle of Western countries and eliminating the influence of neocolonialism. This is the most direct source of the RPF's sense of mission to revitalize and develop the national economy. The third is the personal ambition of RPF leader Paul Kagame. Kagame experienced a raft of disasters such as ethnic antagonism, refugee crisis, civil war and genocide in Rwanda after its independence, and developed a resolute character and the ambition to pursue national independence and peaceful development. Kagame's personal ambition is undoubtedly crucial to the RPF sense of mission as a political party.

With the process of Rwanda's national reconciliation

completed and the new regime established, Kagame launched a national consultation campaign in the late 1990s. And in 2000, after consulting experts from China, Singapore and other countries, the Rwanda Vision 2020 was announced, which was committed to building Rwanda into a middle-income country based on a knowledge-based economy. In December 2020, Kagame unveiled once again Rwanda's Vision 2050, emphasizing that "Vision 2020 was about what we had to do in order to survive and regain our dignity. But Vision 2050 has to be about the future we choose, because we can, and because we deserve it". The new vision aims to transform Rwanda into an upper-middle-income country by 2035 and a high-income country by 2050. The two documents have provided guidance for the country to develop at different stages.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTY BUILDING AND THE RPF'S GROWING STRENGTH

The second impetus stems from the RPF's ever-growing strength as a political party, which not only ensures social stability, but also guarantees the policy making and delivery capacity of the Rwandan government. Its strength mainly comes from the institutionalization efforts in the following three aspects.

I. Establish and Cement the RPF-Led Political Party

System and Political Party Consultation System

First, the RPF took “consensus democracy” as the ideological basis of the new Rwanda after the end of the genocide, and quickly established a unity government led by itself and with the participation of the main opposition parties of the former regime including the Republican Democratic Movement, the Social Democratic Party and the Liberal Party. During the ensuing nine years of transition and subsequent governance, it kept on strengthening its supremacy in the party system and the state power structure. Through the allocation of cabinet posts and parliamentary seats, it gained political dominance in the country. According to the Basic Law framework adopted by the Transitional National Assembly in May 1995, when the government is unable to make a decision, the decision-making power shall be exercised by the President as a sovereign representative, and the minority of one-third plus one has the right to veto. Of the 21 cabinet ministers in the transitional government, the RPF held eight, an effective minority with veto power, thus ensuring that the President “makes decisions in a sovereign manner” on behalf of the RPF. At the same time, it also controlled a majority of the seats in the Transitional National Assembly together with its army and allied parties. The 2003 Constitution, amended after the transition period, inherits the spirit of the Basic Law framework and bulwarked the political position of the RPF. In several post-transition-period elections, the RPF won both the presidential and parliamentary elections by a large margin.

Second, the Rwandan government enacted during the transitional period from 1994 to 2003 a series of party bans, prohibiting extremist and ethnicity, religion and region-based parties, in order to strengthen the leadership of the RPF and national unity. When Rwanda established the transitional unity government, it banned the former ruling party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Democracy and Development, and the Hutu extremist party of the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic, which were directly responsible for the genocide. At the end of the transition period, it banned in 2001 the National Council for Renewal and Democracy which was then in its founding stage and in 2003 the Republican Democratic Movement which was the largest opposition party at that time, both on the grounds that they violated the provisions of the Political Party Law prohibiting the formation of new political parties during the transition period, or endangered national security by inciting political parties

or ethnic division.

Third, the RPF established the Forum of Political Parties to engage political parties in political consultation. During the transitional period, the RPF established the Forum as an initial framework for political consultation in accordance with the Arusha Peace Accords. Rwanda’s 2003 Constitution provided for a multi-party system and made the Forum a permanent and institutionalized establishment. At present, it has 11 members and holds assemblies twice a year for open dialogue and discussion on major issues of national development and governance. At the same time, the Rwandan Constitution also stipulates that the purpose of the Forum is to promote consensus-building, political tolerance and national unity. This in fact further confirms and consolidates the leadership of the RPF.

II. Strengthen Party Building in its Organizational System, Ideology and Party Discipline

Rwanda has a RPF of organization and power system at each of its five administrative levels from province, district, county to village. The party structure of the RPF is parallel to the state administrative structure, with the executive secretary of the party being the core of leadership at all levels and holding decision-making power. The RPF grass root organizations are built all through to, and below, the village level. Party building often takes place in family-style language, encouraging every Rwandan to join the RPF family, which in many areas is the majority of the population. The governance model of the integration of the party, the government and the army is a major feature of the RPF party building, with party and government institutions at all levels, from the province to the village, appointed military and political commissars to supervise the entire political proceedings.

Since taking power in 1994, the RPF, drawing on experience from history and based on actual national conditions, has built a set of ideological system under which the whole party are rallied together, thus strengthening its cohesion as a ruling party. This ideological system mainly includes four aspects. The first is the historical view of the Rwandan national community, which holds that the Rwandans were ethnically united before colonization, with the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, not ethnic labels, but differentiated in wealth and social status. The colonists then came and caused ethnic politicization which continued after independence. And it was not until the RPF came to power that historical glory and national unity were re-

stored. The second is the concept of national unity, which means that the unified identity of Rwandan nationals replaces the differentiated ethnic identity, which is not only a proud historical tradition, but also the practical need for reconstruction. Accordingly, the RPF firmly opposes racism, both politically and legally. The third is the concept of independent nationalism. The RPF believes that genocide has made Rwanda special and that Rwanda must resolutely follow its own path, safeguard its sovereignty, restore its national dignity and reject Western interference and accusations. The fourth is the view of development. The RPF believes that in order to achieve independence and dignity, Rwanda must develop its economy, improve its governance capacity, and achieve national prosperity as soon as possible.

The RPF commits to improving the governance of the party and government through anti-corruption and the traditional performance contract system of Imihigo. First, it exercises zero-tolerance against corruption. On the one hand, it prevents corruption through intra-party education, market reform, institutional improvement, and the participation of the whole people. On the other, it detects and severely punishes corruption by legal and political means. The 2003 Constitution obliges politicians, senior RPF officials and financial management officials to declare their assets. At the same time, the national police and investigation departments have been set up to focus on anti-corruption work. Through careful prevention and severe crackdown against corruption, greater integrity is ensured within the party. The second is to transform the

June 2022, Rwanda, the Humura Shenge project, which aims to help women integrate into the social and economic development process, is underway.



(Photo/IC Photo)

goals of governance and economic development into the responsibility of officials within the RPF system through a multi-level Imihigo system, which helps to make the RPF and its government officials more effective at work.

III. Consolidate the RPF's Social Foundation through Education and Distribution of Responsibility and Power

First, political education is carried out through the “solidarity camp” of Ingando and the “civic education camp” of Itorero. The Ingando camp program, which began in 1998, teaches topics of economic policy, security, solidarity, reconciliation and health in new official language, in order to dispel the “ethnic identity” left by colonialism and promote a “Rwandan national identity” among all the population. The Itorero camp program, launched in 2007, is at the heart of the government's efforts to create model citizens. The RPF has specially designed military-style graduation ceremony for the graduates of these two programs, expecting them to become catalysts and drivers of the country's economic and social transformation.

Second, citizens are included into the party and state system in different ways and assume corresponding responsibilities. For example, Rwanda people are mobilized to join the RPF, and after joining in, they need to donate for national development when called upon; a large number of administrative and security personnel are recruited from among citizens to take on the work of management and supervision of community policing, education or health, among others. Everyone is obliged to participate in collective community work on the last Saturday of each month to maintain a clean living environment.

Third, the basic social, economic and political rights of the people are guaranteed. On the one hand, government delegates its power to ensure broad citizen participation in local decision-making process, i.e. to elect local officials and manage limited resources. On the other hand, basic living benefits are provided to villagers, such as a cup of milk to each child every day for their nutrition. Through these measures, the RPF has embedded itself within the fabric of the society, thereby consolidating its originally weak social foundation.

PERCEPTIONS OF KAGAME AND THE RPF ON DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR POLICY CHOICES FOR RWANDA

The understanding of the ruling RPF on how to recon-

struct the country and sustain its economic results after the disaster constitutes the third political foundation for Rwanda's economic development.

First, its understanding on foreign aid, self-reliance and the relations between the two. Kagame recognizes foreign assistance and support as an important condition for Rwanda's development, yet he knows as well that independence is fundamental. As he pointed out in an interview that, "we appreciate foreign aid and know how to get it by meeting objective criteria, but we refuse to use it for political control". With that said, uncompromising independence can only happen gradually. "It can only be achieved through hard work, determination and a development plan with clear targets...Our daily effort is all about creating and accumulating bit by bit and eventually moving away from dependence on aid." It is out of these perceptions that the RPF government has been working on two directions. On the one hand, it strives for more foreign aid, investment and cooperation, by conducting diplomacy work actively relying on its moral advantages brought by its termination of the genocide and the moral guilt of Western countries, and by improving governance at home and building a favorable international image. On the other hand, it works to reduce dependence on foreign aid, in order to maintain and gradually strengthen national autonomy. In its external relations, the RPF is determined not to give in to strings attached and international pressure that would threaten its ruling status and the political stability of Rwanda.

Second, its understanding on the relationship between free market and state intervention. Kagame believes in the power of free market. In his view, countries with competitive market tend to encourage entrepreneurship and experience long-term economic growth, while countries that suppress market competition tend to have fewer entrepreneurs and therefore slower economic growth. Meanwhile, in the face of the difficult and complex situation after the genocide, Kagame also recognized the limits of the free market and the need for state intervention. Therefore, on the one hand, the RPF government strives to maintain the consistency of macroeconomic policies with liberalism in global economy by working to create a free and efficient business environment and encouraging private economy which is seen as a development engine. On the other hand, it adopts strong state intervention measures. The first is to adopt active interventionism in rural areas and agricul-

ture by introducing the policy of land sharing, gender equality in land inheritance rights, and land registration. Second, the RPF directly controls some basic industries, which enables it to rapidly accumulate a large amount of capital for leading the strategic transformation of the national economy involving people's livelihood. The economic transformation and sustainable development led by the ruling party's conglomerates has become a prominent feature of the "Rwandan miracle".

Third, its understanding on industrial policy and policy choice. Kagame said that Africa must look to its own history and culture, in order to find solutions to African problems. In the case of specific countries, it is necessary to find solutions to various challenges from the past thoughts and practices of their own society, and to form new ideas to push their way forward. In terms of industrial policy selection, it is necessary to identify the industry with comparative advantages that is suited to national conditions. It is under the guidance of this concept, the RPF government, on the basis of extensive consultation with domestic and foreign experts, has chosen to transform to knowledge-based economy, which is not only fit for its small territory, limited resources and dense population, but also keeps with the global trend of digital transformation.

CONCLUSION

Rwanda is a typical example of a developing country in the 21st century achieving good governance and economic growth with political party taking a leading role in that process. The reasons why the RPF is able to lead Rwanda in realizing national reconstruction and economic take-off from the ruins of system malfunction, order collapse and suffering can be attributed to the features of party politics under the leadership of the RPF. Its strong will, sense of mission, strength and the right choice of the development path for the country lays the political foundation of Rwanda's economic development. Its development once again shows that, for the vast number of developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, a political party with a sense of mission and readiness to act can stand up to pressure and challenges and blaze a path of governance and economic development with its own characteristics in the face of adversity, provided that it can base itself on its own realities, maintain independence, seize the trend and keep pace with the times. ■



The second South China Flower and Seedling Trade Fair and the fourth Guangxi Flower and Seedling Trade Fair open in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Oct. 18, 2023. Visitors from Nigeria visit the Flower and Seedling Exhibition.

(Photo/ CNS Photo)



HARBIN ICE AND SNOW WORLD IN HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE, CHINA.

(PHOTO/XINHUA)

ISSN 2955-1749



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ISSN 2955-1749 1,000 Naira