

BRICS Summit: Joining Hands to Create Great Future for China and Africa

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From all indications, China has emerged as the greatest beneficiary at the 15th BRICS summit – a platform hosted by South Africa last August with participation of African leaders. The summit turned out to be successful with most of the significant questions put under serious discussions and finally ended with a joint declaration which outlines the necessary strategic pathways into the future. In practical context, BRICS is increasingly becoming the beacon of hope for the new multipolar world.

At the most obvious level, there were some genuine adverse criticisms, but one main advantage was and still exists now is the emphasis on preparing for a new multipolar world order. It is a distinctive impetus to the divergence between the world represented by the West and the world represented by the BRICS. This is the fundamental driving interest, the reason twisting potential members mostly developing nations in the south towards joining BRICS.

Results emerging from Johannesburg indicate that BRICS will expand to have a total of three African states – South African Egypt and Ethiopia. For China, who has swiftly moved into the continent in 90s after Russia abandoned and exited after the collapse of the Soviet era, has designed a comprehensive plan to strengthen its economic foothold. China keep its distance, far away from empty geopolitical rhetoric. China, the key driver of BRICS, interprets active participation by African leaders at the summit which further gives the continent an opportunity to take a more active position in world politics and economics.

President of the People's Republic of China, **Xi Jinping**, during the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue held on August 24, rained praises that Africa has made big strides on the path of independence, seeking strength through unity and integration. With steady progress under Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU), the official launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and growing coordination among the sub-regional groups, Africa is becoming an important pole with global influence.

Xi Jinping also said that

“China will continue to support Africa in speaking with one voice on international affairs and continuously elevating its international standing. China will work actively at the G20 summit to support the AU’s full membership in the group. China supports making special arrangements on the U.N. Security Council reform to meet Africa’s aspiration as a priority.”

Over the past 20 years, China has stayed committed to this basic principle of together with Africa and drawing strength from the spirit of China-Africa friendship and cooperation. Aiming to China-Africa relations to new heights and build a shared common future, China shows absolute readiness to work with Africa to implement new vision of common connectivity with new strategic action plan to be implemented right away, starting September 2023.

To chart the course for practical cooperation in the next stage and partner with Africa to bring its integration and modernization into a fast track, on the sideline meeting with African leaders, Xi Jinping made three concrete proposals which are as follows:

(i) China will launch the Initiative on Supporting Africa’s Industrialization. China will better harness its resources for cooperation with Africa and the initiative of businesses to support Africa in growing its manufacturing sector and realizing industrialization and economic diversification. In implementing the nine programs under the FOCAC framework, China will channel more resources of assistance, investment and financing toward programs for industrialization.

(ii) China will launch the Plan for China Supporting Africa’s Agricultural Modernization. China will partner with Africa to expand grain plantation, encourage Chinese companies to increase agricultural investment in Africa, and enhance cooperation with Africa on seed and other areas of agro-technology, to support Africa in transforming and upgrading its agricultural sector. China will host the second Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Agriculture in Hainan this November.

It also plans to partner with Africa in tackling the current food crisis, China will provide additional emergency food assistance to African countries in need. More importantly, China has confidence that Africa will attain food self-sufficiency through its own efforts.

(iii) China will launch the Plan for China-Africa Cooperation on Talent Development. China plans to train 500 principals and high-caliber teachers of vocational colleges every year, and 10,000 technical personnel with both Chinese language and vocational skills for Africa. China will invite 20,000 government officials and technicians of African countries to participate in workshops and seminars. To support Africa in strengthening education and innovation, it will launch the China-Africa Universities 100 Cooperation Plan and 10 pilot exchange programs of China-Africa partner institutes.

China sees the world undergoing rapid transformation and unpredictable turmoil, and the changes unseen in a century are unfolding at a faster pace. At this point of history, it becomes to address the deficit in development, overcome security challenges and enhance mutual learning between civilizations.

In view of this, Chinese leader Xi Jinping has put forward the Global Development Initiative,

the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, called for peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit, and advocated building a community with a shared future for mankind. These proposals have received the extensive support of African countries. China and Africa, through the creative explorations for modernization, are giving answers to the questions of the times, and making joint efforts to advance the great endeavors of win-win cooperation, harmonious coexistence and shared prosperity of civilizations.



The BRICS leaders and Sergei Lavrov (representing Vladimir Putin). (Licensed under Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0)

At the BRICS-Africa Outreach and BRICS Plus Dialogue, Xi Jinping reported a number of notable achievements the previous years as following:

The Global Development Initiative (GDI), precisely for the purpose of calling on the world to stay focused on development and lending impetus to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Last year, China held the first High-Level Dialogue on Global Development where a host of measures for development cooperation were unveiled. Encouraging progress has been made since then.

China has put development first and allocated more resources. 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.

China has taken results-oriented actions and deepened practical cooperation. From Asia to Africa, from Pacific island countries to the Caribbean, over 200 cooperation projects have come to fruition, and cooperation mechanisms are growing in areas such as poverty reduction, education and health.

China has unleashed the power of innovation and built up momentum for development. Under the GDI, it has prioritized green development, new-type

industrialization, the digital economy and some other key areas, and pursued a Partnership on New Industrial Revolution to boost high-quality development.

China has tided over difficulties together and made development more resilient.

Food and energy security bear on the economy of a country and the well-being of its people. It has launched a China-FAO South-South Cooperation Trust Fund, implemented the Food Production Enhancement Action, and provided food assistance to and shared agricultural technology with many countries. It has also initiated a Global Clean Energy Cooperation Partnership with a view to achieving energy security.

China is a friend that Africa can count on. Over the past decade, China has provided a large amount of development assistance to Africa and partnered in building more than 6,000 kilometers of railway, over 6,000 kilometers of highway, and 80-plus large power facilities on the continent. Going forward, China will carry out more cooperation with African countries to support Africa in enhancing its own capacity for development. Specific measures will be taken, such as providing satellite mapping data products, implementing a Smart Customs cooperation partnership, and launching with UNESCO a “GDI for Africa’s Future” action plan, to support sustainable development in Africa.

It’s often-stated that like-minded friends inseparable move and work together. China and Africa demonstrate and/or testify to this popular rhetoric. As Africa faces formidable challenges during this time of complex geopolitical processes, China upholds true friendship and solidarity, displays optimum readiness to ensure high-quality comprehensive strategic partnership. The vigorous nature of the China-Africa cooperation meets the development needs of Africa and has been implemented efficiently, which has supported the economic and social development of African countries.

We can, at this juncture, say that the 15th BRICS meeting is a turn-key that brings along its fold substantial, if not additional changes for economic landscape across Africa. We have already witnessed, to an appreciable level, how China has partnered with Africa in building a large amount of connectivity infrastructure, carried out extensive cooperation with the AU and sub-regional organizations, and assisted the construction of several signature Pan-African projects, including the new AU Conference Center and the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Judging from above, we can conveniently conclude that advancing the African agenda is a strategic priority for China as it used the opportunity to portray its assertiveness during the BRICS summit. Understandably Africans hold high perceptions over China’s consistent engagement, dynamism in its collaborative partnership and strong attachment to achieve their development goals per the United Nations SGDs.

According the official documents, China will next year (2024) host the FOCAC meeting, where it will again draw up new plans for development in Africa. It is quite clear that China and Africa have eternal hope to carry forward the traditional friendship, enhance solidarity and coordination, and bolster cooperation across the board, both further desire to deliver a better future for the Chinese and African people, and set a fine example in the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

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