

China-Africa Summit Enhances Relations to the Level of “Strategic Partnership”

53 states on the continent were represented at the FOCAC gathering in Beijing

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This year’s Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit was held in Beijing where decisions were made to strengthen already existing ties into a strategic partnership between the two geopolitical entities.

The People’s Republic of China has maintained close relations with African states since the 1950s as the struggle for national independence rose to world prominence.

FOCAC was convened under the theme of “Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future.” Holding the Summit under this theme distinguishes FOCAC from other imperialist-dominated gatherings where calls for the expansion of NATO and its aggressive policies across the globe are common themes.

Today in the third decade of the 21st century, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) views Africa as a source for economic cooperation and joint development. Over the last five decades, China has been instrumental in providing assistance for infrastructural projects including the continental headquarters of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the construction of railway lines in several areas of East Africa; solidarity efforts within the United Nations and other international agencies; along with myriads of important initiatives amid fostering multipolarity and greater unity within the Global South.

China-Africa Cooperation Mutually Beneficial to All

Between September 4-6, African heads-of-state, foreign ministers, journalists and members of civil society engaged with their Chinese counterparts in following through on existing programs while creating new ones. A host of bilateral meetings involving Chinese President Xi Jinping and African leaders resulted in pledges of more than \$US50 billion in investments.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, pose for a photo with foreign dignitaries before a welcome banquet for the guests attending the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, on September 4, 2024, in Beijing. Photo: Xinhua

FOCAC was formed in 2000 and since this time period economic and development cooperation between the AU member-states and China has resulted in concrete advancements for hundreds of millions within each geo-political region. Africa is in desperate need of alternative trading and infrastructural partners who view the continent from a shared perspective of reconstructing a post-colonial society.

Whereas China is seeking partners in its forward-looking strategic planning centered on the building of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), many African states are also seeking to expand their reach related to trade and investment on more favorable terms. At present the reemergence of an African debt crisis impacting Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, Egypt and other states, has fueled the search for development partners from China, Russia and particularly among others within the Global South.

It is quite obvious that the strategic orientation within Africa should be centered around the lifting of living standards coupled with an increasingly independent foreign policy. These goals of greater cooperation and enhanced development have challenged the hegemony of imperialism.

The gap in wealth and living standards which emerged from the historical advent of enslavement and colonization can only be corrected by waging a struggle against imperialism to ensure the empowerment of the majority of people within a society. The massive dislocation of geo-political regions within Africa, Asia and Latin America represents the abysmal failure of capitalism on a global scale.

[On the official FOCAC website one report](#) clearly defines the objectives of the Summit:

“Having successfully lifted 800 million people out of poverty, China has acquired firsthand knowledge of the transformative impact of poverty alleviation on a country’s development and long-term stability. This experience has also strengthened China’s belief that eradicating poverty is not only a domestic priority but also a global imperative.... China’s victory in poverty reduction resonates particularly in Africa, where many nations view China’s efforts as a source of inspiration in their own quests to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development.

One example of China’s commitment to helping African countries tackle poverty is the transfer of Juncao technology, often referred to as the Chinese hybrid grass technology. Originally developed in China, this innovative technology uses a type of hybrid grass to cultivate edible and medicinal mushrooms, while also serving as animal feed and a natural method for controlling soil erosion.”

Despite its vast deposits of natural resources, the profits generated by the multinational corporations are not adequately shared with the workers, farmers and youth of the AU member-states. Consequently, this paradigm has seriously hampered economic development on the African continent.

Anti-imperialism and Socialism Provides Alternatives to Western Hegemony

China through its socialist system has maintained control of the commanding heights of the national economy. Its policy of redirecting surpluses into planned projects outlined by the Communist Party and its leadership, has placed China in a position of potentially exceeding the size and capacity of the U.S. economy. Over the last few decades, the U.S. as forerunner of the world capitalist system has become dependent upon goods manufactured in China. In sectors such as environmental technology and electric vehicles, China has surpassed the manufacturing output of the U.S.

Therefore, in this national election year in the U.S., the question of the economic, political and military status of the PRC is often raised by both of the ruling class dominated parties. Democrats and Republicans fear China due to the fact that it provides a different social system which has proven its ability to grow exponentially.

The imperialist militarism of the U.S. drains trillions of dollars from the national treasury. Adventures in recent decades such as the occupations of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria along with the bombing of Yemen and the destruction of Libya precipitated a sharp rise in terrorist activity in Africa and West Asia. The escalation in warfare and the subsequent dislocation domestically and internationally is a direct by-product of imperialism.

Since the launching of a NATO proxy war against the Russian Federation, even more of the tax dollars of working people are being stolen by the defense industry. Instead of rebuilding the industrial base of the U.S. and reconstructing the educational, housing and service sectors of the economy, Washington and Wall Street are enriching the ruling class as the overall social conditions of the masses are worsening.

Not being burdened with an imperialist foreign policy, China is able to invest its time and resources into building institutions which contribute to the lessening of poverty. Such a program of action against impoverishment will liberate billions more from the clutches of imperialist domination and exploitation.

[As emphasized by the FOCAC website:](#)

“Since the FOCAC was set up, Chinese companies have helped African countries build or upgrade more than 10,000 km of railways, nearly 100,000 km of highways, roughly 1,000 bridges, almost 100 ports and 66,000 km of power transmission and distribution lines, all of which have created arteries of connectivity across the continent.... According to a report released by Chinese authorities last week, China has remained Africa’s largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, and the proportion of China-Africa trade in Africa’s total foreign trade has steadily increased. Infrastructure projects spearheaded by China-Africa cooperation are spread across the continent, which have helped improve connectivity and socio-economic conditions on the continent, and propelled African industrialization, modernization and integration.”

The sense of collaboration and shared respect among peoples have guided the success of the implementation of these plans advanced by FOCAC. On a much broader scale, Beijing has been a proponent of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Plus Summit which at its previous gathering in the Republic of South Africa expanded its membership to include Egypt, Ethiopia and other states in West Asia.

Reports indicate that the upcoming BRICS Summit will enjoy the participation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. These developments point to the rising tide of a reconfigured world system where unipolarity is on the decline.

[In his keynote address](#) to the FOCAC Summit on September 5, President Xi Jinping hailed the progress made by the China-Africa alliance emphasizing that the next phase in relations would achieve even greater heights:

“Thanks to nearly 70 years of tireless efforts from both sides, the China-Africa relationship is now at its best in history. With its future growth in mind, I propose that bilateral relations between China and all African countries having diplomatic ties with China be elevated to the level of strategic relations, and that the overall characterization of China-Africa relations be elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.... The Communist Party of China held in July the successful Third Plenary Session of its 20th Central Committee, laying out systematic plans for further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization. This will profoundly further transform China. It will also provide new opportunities and new driving forces for African countries and for our joint pursuit of modernization.”

These comments by Xi envision a profound transformation of the world economy aimed at improving access to science and technology. FOCAC can serve as a model for the forming of alliances among developing states which actively improve the stability and qualitative growth of these geopolitical regions.

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