



2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

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President Xi Jinping (center) and foreign leaders stand for a group photo on Thursday during the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. RAO AIMIN / XINHUA

Xi: Jointly advance modernization with Africa

President unveils 10 partnership actions at opening ceremony of FOCAC summit

By XU WEI
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President Xi Jinping unveiled on Thursday 10 partnership actions for modernization to deepen China-Africa cooperation in the next three years, pledging to back the continent with unilateral opening of the nation's market and the creation of at least 1 million jobs.

Inside Xi put forward an overarching vision for China and Africa to forge ahead together on their paths toward modernization, while addressing the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing.

He announced a decision to give all least-developed countries that have diplomatic relations with China, including 33 countries in Africa, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines, a move that makes China the first major developing country and the first major economy to take such a step.

He said China will expand market



President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. YAO DAWEI / XINHUA

access for African agricultural products, deepen cooperation with Africa in e-commerce and other areas, and launch a "China-Africa quality enhancement program?"

The Chinese government will provide 360 billion yuan (\$50.7 billion) of financial support to implement these actions, with the support disbursed as 210 billion yuan of credit lines, 80 billion yuan of assistance in various forms and at least 70 billion yuan of investment in Africa by Chi-

nese companies, he added.

The summit also adopted the Beijing Declaration on Jointly Building an All-Weather China-Africa Community with a Shared Future for the New Era and the FOCAC-Beijing Action Plan (2025-27).

"The China-Africa relationship is now at its best in history," Xi told dignitaries from African nations and a number of international organizations.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and heads of

From Xi's speech

"The friendship between China and Africa transcends time and space, surmounts mountains and oceans, and passes down through generations."

"We always empathize with and support each other, setting a stellar example of a new type of international relations."

"Without our modernization, there will be no global modernization."

"On the path to modernization, no one, and no country, should be left behind."

be elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.

Xi made the case to the leaders for the joint pursuit of modernization by China and Africa, saying that such a move will "set off a wave of modernization in the Global South, and open a new chapter in our drive for a community with a shared future for mankind".

He called for joint efforts in advancing modernization that is just, equitable, open, win-win, people-centered, inclusive, eco-friendly and underpinned by peace and security. "China is ready to increase exchanges of governance experience with Africa, support all countries in exploring modernization paths befitting their national conditions, and help ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for all countries," he said.

To promote mutual learning among civilizations, Xi said that China is ready to work with Africa to build a platform for sharing governance experience, a China-Africa knowledge network for development, and 25 centers on China and Africa studies.

As for connectivity, the nation stands ready to carry out 30 infrastructure connectivity projects in Africa, promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and put in place a China-Africa network featuring land-sea links and coordinated development.

Regarding the partnership action for health, Xi expressed readiness to establish with Africa a hospitals alliance and joint medical centers, send 2,000 medical personnel to Africa, and launch 20 health facility and malaria treatment programs.

The nation will encourage Chinese companies to invest in Africa's pharmaceutical production, he added. The key steps to promote people-to-people exchanges include jointly establishing an engineering technology academy, building 10 Luban Workshops and providing 60,000 training opportunities to Africa, mainly for women and young people.

To support partnership actions for green development, the nation is willing to launch 30 clean energy projects in Africa, put in place meteorological early warning systems, and carry out cooperation in disaster prevention, mitigation and relief, as well as biodiversity conservation, Xi added.

China will give Africa 1 billion yuan of grants in military assistance, provide training for 6,000 military personnel and 1,000 police and law enforcement officers from Africa, and invite 500 young African military officers to visit China, in order to bolster the partnership for common security.

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Mauritanian leader eyes closer cooperation

By XU WEI and ZHAO JIA

As African leaders gather in Beijing for the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani said the widely watched event will boost solidarity and cooperation and facilitate the building of a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future.

In an exclusive interview with China Daily, Ghazouani, who is also the rotating chairman of the African Union, expressed strong appreciation for China's principles of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith in its Africa policy.

"I highly appreciate China making solidarity and cooperation for mutual interests with African countries the cornerstone of its Africa policy, which focuses on cooperation and driving African development for the better," he said.

He also said the series of proposals put forward by China on strengthening China-Africa cooperation are constructive and helped deepen the partnership and promote common development.

Ghazouani, who is making his second visit to China since taking

office in 2019, arrived in Beijing on Tuesday to attend the three-day 2024 FOCAC Summit. He met with President Xi Jinping on the same day, and the two leaders jointly announced the elevation of bilateral ties to a strategic partnership.

"Africa is determined to continue on the path of modernization and innovation, enhancing its capabilities by optimally utilizing its resources. China is a friendly country that we greatly rely on to accomplish our development plans," Ghazouani said.

He said three proposals supporting Africa's industrialization, agricultural modernization and talent development made last year by President Xi at the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue, aiming to deepen the China-Africa partnership and achieve economic development, will "open new horizons for bilateral cooperation that effectively enhance joint development".

Cooperation between China and Africa has yielded fruitful results, with trade increasing from \$10.5 billion in 2000 to \$282.1 billion in 2023.

Regarding bilateral ties, the Mauritanian leader said his country remains committed to mutually beneficial cooperation with China, and

also cherishes the profound friendship between the two peoples.

China continued to be Mauritania's largest trading partner in 2023, with bilateral trade reaching \$2.25 billion, up 7.4 percent year-on-year. China's exports to Mauritania include tea, light textiles, construction materials, agricultural machinery and household appliances, while the primary imports from Mauritania are iron ore and seafood products.

The Mauritanian leader said cooperation with China within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative in infrastructure, digitalization, agriculture, fishing and other fields has "significantly contributed to the government's efforts in fighting poverty and vulnerability, ensuring food security, providing the necessary conditions for real economic takeoff".

"In the context of the BRI, this partnership has become strategic, given the opportunities this initiative offers Mauritania to become, thanks to its geostrategic location and immense resources, an economic bridge and a corridor for the African-Chinese development train," Ghazouani said.

"China has blazed a moderniza-

tion path with its characteristics, and its experience in this regard could truly inspire African countries to achieve the goals of the AU's Agenda 2063," he added.

In recent years, China has proposed a series of global initiatives in an effort to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Ghazouani expressed appreciation for those initiatives, saying that they contribute to strengthening international cooperation and the power of peace, and forging a balanced and inclusive development model.

"President Xi Jinping is a statesman with exceptional leadership qualities and a visionary outlook for China's future. He has indeed succeeded in leading China to significant levels of progress and prosperity while maintaining friendly relations with countries around the world."

"The characteristics of Chinese foreign policy indicate that His Excellency is a peace-loving leader, consistently supporting just causes and developing nations, striving to end senseless wars, and committed to international cooperation, security and harmony," he said.

Pan Jie contributed to this story.

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Summit theme aligned with Agenda 2063 goals

Leaders of Africa and China are meeting in Beijing to map out the future of China-Africa cooperation. The continent has begun implementing the second 10-year plan of Agenda 2063 that envisages middle-income status for every African Union member state, which makes the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation more timely than any previous meeting.

The theme of the summit, "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future", is well aligned with the second phase of the AU Agenda 2063. Political and organizational leaders would find the summit extremely relevant for properly setting the stage for Africa's transformation in the next decade.



Africa and China need one another more than ever before. Trade and investment is central to the relationship. Africa needs to boost intra-Africa trade and it also needs to trade with the international community, which requires a massive amount of finance and expertise. In the absence of an efficient manufacturing sector and transportation networks, Africa's ambition to transit into middle income territory over the next 10 years appears far-fetched.

The theme of this year's FOCAC, therefore, is very important.

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2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

CHINA-AFRICA ACTION PLAN LAUDED

Editor's note: President Xi Jinping held bilateral meetings on Thursday with foreign leaders who are in Beijing to attend the ongoing 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

Botswana embraces strategic partnership



Mokgweetsi Masisi

The robust China-Africa cooperation not only benefits the Chinese and African peoples, but also drives international cooperation with Africa, creating favorable conditions for the continent's development and vitalization, President Xi Jinping said on Thursday.

He made the remark when meeting with Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi in Beijing. The two leaders announced the establishment of a strategic partnership between China and Botswana.

Xi said the 2024 FOCAC Summit has brought China and its African brothers together, aligning the development of China, Africa and the world more closely and unleashing the positive energy of the Global South to promote global peace, security, prosperity and progress.

Noting that next year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Xi called on both sides to work as partners who trust each other, develop together and foster strong people-to-people bonds.

He underlined the need for the two countries to steadfastly support each other and enhance cooperation in sectors such as industry, agriculture, mining, clean energy, education and healthcare.

Masisi lauded Xi's inspiring keynote speech delivered at the opening ceremony of the summit, in which Xi announced new initiatives to support the partnership between China and Africa to promote modernization, along with China's opening-up policies dedicated to the continent.

Botswana fully supports these initiatives and policies with a strong belief that the vision outlined at the summit will come to fruition, he said.

He expressed gratitude to China for its long-standing support for Botswana, and said his country is willing to take the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations as an opportunity to further advance bilateral relations.

CAO DESHENG

Namibia to enjoy more cooperation highlights



Nangolo Mbumba

President Xi Jinping underscored on Thursday China's willingness to work with African countries to fully implement the outcomes of the 2024 FOCAC Summit to promote common development and prosperity and build a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future.

The summit demonstrates the firm determination of China and African countries to advance modernization together, Xi said.

He made the remarks when meeting with Namibian President Nangolo Mbumba in Beijing.

Noting that both the Communist Party of China and Namibia's South West Africa People's Organization are long-term ruling parties, Xi called for enhancing friendly cooperation between the two countries and the two parties, strengthening exchanges in governance experience, sharing development opportunities, and jointly promoting modernization.

He emphasized the need for both countries to strengthen alignment of development strategies to create new highlights in their cooperation.

China supports Namibia's role as a coordinating country for the United Nations' Summit of the Future, which will be held on Sept 22 and 23, and is willing to enhance multilateral strategic coordination with Namibia to build up the force of the Global South, Xi said.

Mbumba said the two outcome documents adopted by the FOCAC summit on Thursday morning will help consolidate the brotherly friendship between Africa and China, and the initiatives proposed by Xi to promote modernization will usher in a bright future of common development and prosperity for Africa and China.

He expressed his country's commitment to implementing the outcomes of the summit and to strengthening cooperation with China in the fields of agriculture, minerals, infrastructure, clean energy, aerospace and aviation.

CAO DESHENG

Friendship with Ghana further solidified



Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo

President Xi Jinping called on Thursday for China and Ghana to enhance political mutual trust and promote exchanges and cooperation in various fields, and to act as good friends who trust each other, good partners who develop together and good brothers who coordinate closely.

He made the remarks when meeting with Ghanaian President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo in Beijing.

Xi said that in the 64 years since the two countries established diplomatic ties, their friendship has solidified despite changes in the international landscape.

Xi expressed China's support for Ghana as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council from 2024 to 2026, and said that China is willing to strengthen strategic coordination with the African country.

Xi said the 2024 FOCAC Summit has identified the direction and path for China and Africa to jointly advance modernization and is pointing the way for the progress of the Global South. China is ready to work with Ghana to effectively implement the outcomes of the summit, he added.

Akufo-Addo said that Ghana highly values its friendly relations with China, which he described as the most trustworthy friend and partner of his country.

Ghana firmly adheres to the one-China principle and supports China's positions on human rights, he said.

Expressing appreciation for China's long-standing support to Ghana, Akufo-Addo acknowledged that Chinese investment and cooperation have significantly promoted his country's economic and social development.

Xi's proposal of 10 partnership actions for modernization to deepen China-Africa cooperation is forward-looking, and Ghana will actively implement these proposals with China and solidify the two nations' friendship and partnership, he said.

CAO DESHENG

Relations with Rwanda elevated



Paul Kagame

China supports Rwanda in taking its own independent development path and is willing to deepen exchanges of experience with the African nation regarding party and state governance, President Xi Jinping said on Thursday in Beijing when meeting with Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

During the talks, the two heads of state announced the decision to upgrade bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

He added that the FOCAC summit has brought a historic opportunity for elevating bilateral friendly relations, and China is willing to implement the outcomes of the summit with Rwanda and strengthen cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture and satellite applications.

Beijing is also willing to work together for the success of the Confucius Institute at the University of Rwanda and the Luban Workshop, and to drive the two countries' high-quality cooperation in jointly building the Belt and Road to achieve more outcomes, Xi added.

China appreciates the positive role played by Rwanda in maintaining peace and security in Africa, and is willing to deepen cooperation with Rwanda in areas such as peacekeeping.

Kagame said he has vivid memories of Xi's historic visit to Rwanda in 2018, adding that the two nations share similar ideas and philosophies, and both advocate multilateralism and respect sovereignty and independence.

Rwanda firmly adheres to the one-China policy and supports China's national reunification, a position built on bilateral friendship and mutual understanding, he said.

Kagame said that Rwanda regards China as a friend and partner worthy of long-term trust, and his country is willing to strengthen exchanges of governance experience, advance pragmatic cooperation in various fields, and work together to implement the three global initiatives put forward by Xi.

ZHANG YUNBI

Progress seen in ties with Guinea-Bissau



Umaro Sissoco Embalo

China is willing to carry forward its traditional friendship with Guinea-Bissau, advance strategic cooperation and jointly safeguard the sovereignty, security and development interests of both countries, President Xi Jinping said on Thursday.

He made the remarks during a meeting with Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embalo in Beijing.

Xi recalled Embalo's state visit to China in July, saying that his attendance at the 2024 FOCAC Summit demonstrates his country's friendly relations with China and high regard for China-Africa solidarity and cooperation.

He noted that bilateral cooperation in various fields has been pragmatic and efficient, with progress seen in Guinea-Bissau's exports of cashew nuts to China and the sending of a new group of Chinese agricultural technology experts to the African country.

Xi expressed the hope that both sides would actively implement the outcomes of the FOCAC summit to give new impetus to the development of bilateral relations and China-Africa cooperation, and work together to promote modernization.

Embalo said that for Africa, China represents the future and serves as a brother.

He praised the important initiatives proposed by Xi, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, and said that these demonstrate extraordinary strategic vision and historical significance and show strong theoretical and practical innovation.

Guinea-Bissau greatly appreciates and actively supports these initiatives, he added.

Guinea-Bissau is willing to be a reliable friend and partner of China, and it wants to use the FOCAC summit as an opportunity to deepen friendly exchanges and practical cooperation between the two countries, Embalo added.

CAO DESHENG

Sao Tome and Principe gains fruitful results



Patrice Trovoada

President Xi Jinping and Sao Tome and Principe's Prime Minister Patrice Trovoada jointly announced on Thursday the decision to elevate bilateral relations to a strategic partnership.

Trovoada, who is on an official visit to China, is attending the ongoing 2024 FOCAC Summit in Beijing.

Xi said that in recent years, bilateral relations have maintained a good momentum of development and pragmatic cooperation in various fields has yielded fruitful results. Sao Tome and Principe's return to the China-Africa family of friendly cooperation fully aligns with the shared interests of both peoples, he added.

China will, as always, support Sao Tome and Principe's efforts to advance its national construction and economic development, and is willing to work together to actively implement the outcomes of the summit and drive the strategic partnership for the betterment of the two peoples, Xi said.

He emphasized that the two sides should stay committed to the general direction of friendship and "firmly support each other on issues involving one another's core interests and major concerns".

The two countries should explore cooperation in areas such as tourism, agriculture, fisheries and infrastructure to allow Sao Tome and Principe to benefit more from the outcomes of the summit, Xi added.

Trovoada thanked China for its valuable support in his country's development.

The new action plan put forward by Xi in his speech at the summit's opening ceremony will strongly boost the development of his country and Africa, Trovoada said.

Sao Tome and Principe firmly adheres to the one-China principle, and hopes to further consolidate political mutual trust and strengthen its partnership with China, in order to provide a strong guarantee for realizing its long-term economic development, he added.

ZHANG YUNBI

Central role of UN in intl affairs supported



Antonio Guterres

President Xi Jinping said on Thursday that practicing genuine multilateralism and supporting the United Nations' central role in international affairs have been the unchanged principles of China's diplomacy.

When meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in Beijing, Xi said that China will continue to actively participate in the UN's work in various areas, and it supports the UN in hosting the Summit of the Future later this month.

He also pledged to promote the reform of the international financial architecture and strengthen artificial intelligence governance to contribute to global peace and development.

Xi said he appreciates the UN's consistent emphasis on Africa, and is willing to strengthen cooperation with the international body to jointly support Africa in achieving peace, stability, development and vitalization.

The president mentioned his 2013 visit to Tanzania, when he put forward the principle of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith for China's Africa policy. China has no selfish interests in pursuing cooperation with Africa, he said.

Xi said his proposal to build a community with a shared future for mankind is aimed at helping people across the world, including those in Africa, live a happy life.

Chinese modernization will bring more opportunities for other countries and inject new momentum into global peace and common development, he added.

Guterres said that China's cooperation with Africa has helped reduce the historical injustices suffered by the continent and has promoted its peace and development.

The UN would like to strengthen coordination with China to resist acts that create division and undermine common progress, and jointly push for global governance that is more just and equitable, he said.

ZHOU JIN

Ascent of Sino-African relationship continues, Wang says

By ZHOU JIN

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The relationship between China and Africa has been elevated to a higher level and bilateral cooperation has been boosted, demonstrating the unity and potential of Global South cooperation, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Thursday.

China established or elevated its strategic partnerships with 30 African countries during the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing, and such solid bilateral relations are the foundation for China-Africa friendship, Wang said at a news conference about the outcomes of the summit.

Yassine Fall, foreign minister of Senegal, and Jean-Claude Gakosso, foreign minister of the Republic of Congo, also attended the joint news conference. The Republic of Congo will take over from Senegal as the rotating co-chair of FOCAC.

The overall characterization of China-Africa relations has been elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era.

After first ascending from a new type of international relations to a comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership, and now rising to the new level, the China-Africa relationship continues to reach new heights with clearer

characterization and greater substance, Wang said.

This demonstrates the firm resolve of the over 2.8 billion people from both sides as they march forward hand in hand amid unprecedented changes, he added.

"This summit has sent out a powerful message of China and Africa working together toward common development, and demonstrated the unshakable confidence, unity and cooperation among the Global South," Wang said.

So far, China has helped Africa build or upgrade nearly 100,000 kilometers of roads, over 10,000 kilometers of railways, around 1,000 bridges and 100 ports, he noted.

China has sent medical teams to almost all African countries, providing around 230 million treatments, Wang said.

Furthermore, over the past three years, Chinese companies have helped create more than 1.1 million job opportunities on the continent, he said. "We must match our words with actions, and deliver tangible benefits for African people through concrete cooperation," he added.

Fall, the foreign minister of Senegal, said that she is satisfied with the progress of cooperation between the two sides under FOCAC, and expressed gratitude for China's commitment and efforts to make the China-Africa partnership a

unique model of South-South cooperation.

Gakosso, the Republic of Congo's foreign minister, said that by extending a brotherly hand to Africa for over 20 years, China has helped to accelerate the modernization of the continent.

"To the memory of Africans, never before has there been so much prosperous, exemplary and promising economic and commercial cooperation between a foreign country and our continent," he said.

The summit carries forward the mutually beneficial cooperation and proactive solidarity that constitute the cornerstone of the China-Africa relationship, Gakosso said.



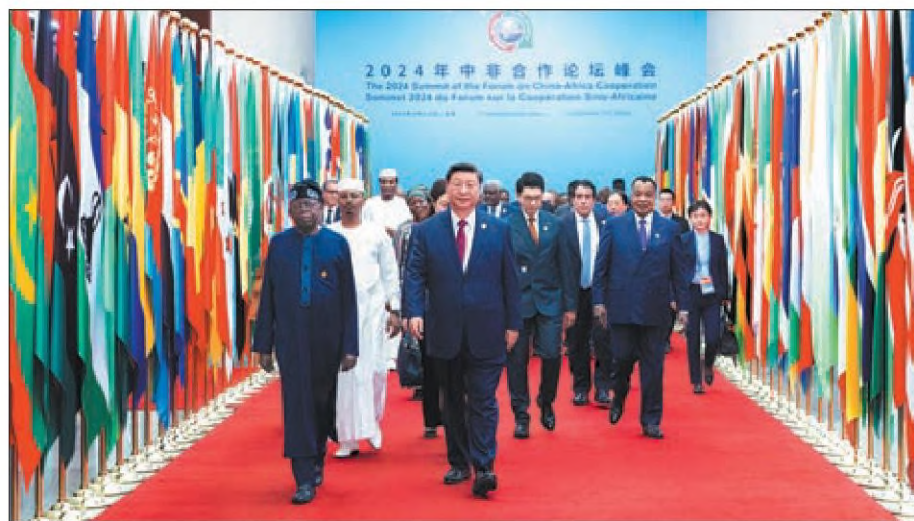
Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Senegal's Foreign Minister Yassine Fall (left) and the Republic of Congo's Foreign Minister Jean-Claude Gakosso (right) meet with the media at a joint news conference on Thursday to discuss the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

2024 FOCAC SUMMIT



President Xi Jinping and African leaders attend the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Thursday. Xi delivered a keynote address titled "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a Community with a Shared Future" at the ceremony. ZHAI JIANLAN / XINHUA

FRIENDS JOINING HANDS



Clockwise from top left: Children warmly greet international dignitaries as they walk toward the welcome banquet venue at the Great Hall of the People on Wednesday evening. ZHANG LING / XINHUA
President Xi Jinping and foreign leaders enter the venue of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation at the Great Hall of the People on Thursday. HUANG JINGWEN / XINHUA
United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (second from right) talks to international dignitaries ahead of the banquet at the Great Hall of the People on Wednesday evening. YAN YAN / XINHUA
The wife of the prime minister of Cape Verde (second from right) explores traditional Chinese intangible cultural heritage skills. SHEN HONG / XINHUA
President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, greet international dignitaries at the banquet at the Great Hall of the People on Wednesday evening. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY



2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a Community with a Shared Future

Keynote Address by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Summit of The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
Beijing, September 5, 2024

Your Excellency President Bassirou Diomaye Faye,

Your Excellency President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, Chairperson of the African Union (AU),

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government and Heads of Delegation,

Your Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Your Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission,

Friends and Distinguished Guests,

Blossoms in spring turn into fruits in autumn, and a bumper harvest is the reward of hard work. In this season of harvest, I am delighted to gather together with so many old and new friends in Beijing to discuss grand plans for China-Africa friendship and cooperation in the new era. On behalf of the Chinese government and people, I extend a warm welcome to you all!

The friendship between China and Africa transcends time and space, surmounts mountains and oceans, and passes down through generations. The founding of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 was a milestone in the history of China-Africa relations. Over the past 24 years, especially in the new era, China has advanced forward hand in hand with our African brothers and sisters in the spirit of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith. We stand shoulder to shoulder with each other to firmly defend our legitimate rights and interests as once-in-a-century changes sweep across the world. We get stronger and more resilient together by riding the tide of economic globalization, delivering tangible benefits to billions of ordinary Chinese and Africans. We share weal and woe in fighting natural disasters and epidemics together, creating touching stories of China-Africa friendship. We always empathize with and support each other, setting a stellar example of a new type of international relations.

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.

Friends and Distinguished

Guests,

Modernization is an inalienable right of all countries. But the Western approach to it has inflicted immense sufferings on developing countries. Since the end of World War II, Third World nations, represented by China and African countries, have achieved independence and development one after another, and have been endeavoring to redress the historical injustices of



President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Summit of The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing on Thursday. LI XUEREN / XINHUA

the modernization process. As we are about to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, we are going all out to build a great modern socialist country in all respects and pursue national rejuvenation through a Chinese path to modernization. Africa is also awakening again, and the continent is marching in solid strides toward the modernization goals set forth in the AU's Agenda 2063. China and Africa's joint pursuit of modernization will set off a wave of modernization in the Global South, and open a new chapter in our drive for a community with a shared future for mankind.

— We should jointly advance modernization that is just and equitable. In promoting modernization, we should not only follow the general rules, but also act in light of our national realities. China is ready to increase exchanges of governance experience with Africa, support all countries in exploring modernization paths befitting their national conditions, and help ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for all countries.

— We should jointly advance modernization that is open and win-win. Mutually beneficial cooperation is the sunny road to the betterment of long-term and fundamental interests of all countries. China is ready to deepen cooperation with Africa in industry, agriculture, infrastructure, trade and investment, promote exemplary, high-quality Belt and Road cooperation projects, and build together a model for the delivery of the Global Development Initiative.

— We should jointly advance modernization that puts the people first. The ultimate goal of modernization is the free and full development of human beings. China will work vigorously with Africa to promote personnel training, poverty reduction

and employment, enhance the sense of gain, happiness and security of the people in the course of modernization, and ensure that all will benefit from the process.

— We should jointly advance modernization featuring diversity and inclusiveness. Well-balanced material and spiritual advancement is a lofty objective of modernization. China will enhance people-to-people and cultural exchanges with Africa, champion mutual respect, inclusiveness and coexistence of different civilizations on our way to modernization, and strive together for more fruitful outcomes under the Global Civilization Initiative.

— We should jointly advance modernization that is eco-friendly. Green development is a hallmark of modernization in the new era. China is ready to help Africa build "green growth engines," narrow the gap in energy accessibility, adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and jointly push for the global transition to green and low-carbon development.

— We should jointly advance modernization underpinned by peace and security. Modernization would not be possible without a peaceful and stable environment for development. China is ready to help Africa improve its capacity in safeguarding peace and stability independently, prioritize Africa in implementing the Global Security Initiative (GSI), promote mutual reinforcement of high-quality development and greater security, and work together with Africa to uphold world peace and stability.

Friends and Distinguished

Guests,

China and Africa account for one-third of the world population. Without our modernization, there will be no global modernization. In the next

three years, China will work with Africa to take the following ten partnership actions for modernization to deepen China-Africa cooperation and spearhead the Global South modernization.

First, the Partnership Action for Mutual Learning among Civilizations. China is ready to work with Africa to build a platform for governance experience sharing, a China-Africa knowledge network for development, and 25 centers on China and Africa studies. We will make better use of Africa's leadership academies to cultivate talents for governance, and invite 1,000 members of African political parties to China to deepen exchanges of experience in party and state governance.

Second, the Partnership Action for Trade Prosperity. China will voluntarily and unilaterally open its market wider. We have decided to give all LDCs having diplomatic relations with China, including 33 countries in Africa, zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent tariff lines. This has made China the first major developing country and the first major economy to take such a step. It will help turn China's big market into Africa's big opportunity. China will expand market access for African agricultural products, deepen cooperation with Africa in e-commerce and other areas, and launch a "China-Africa quality enhancement program." We are prepared to enter into framework agreements on economic partnership for shared development with African countries to provide long-term, stable and predictable institutional guarantee for trade and investment between the two sides.

Third, the Partnership Action for Industrial Chain Cooperation. China will foster industry cooperation growth clusters with Africa, push for

ward the Pilot Zone for In-depth China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation, and launch an "African SMEs empowerment program." We will build with Africa a digital technology cooperation center and initiate 20 digital demonstration projects so as to embrace together the latest round of technological revolution and industrial transformation.

Fourth, the Partnership Action for Connectivity. China is prepared to carry out 30 infrastructure connectivity projects in Africa, promote together high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and put in place a China-Africa network featuring land-sea links and coordinated development. We are ready to assist in the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and deepen logistics and financial cooperation for the benefit of trans-regional development in Africa.

Fifth, the Partnership Action for Development Cooperation. China is ready to release the Joint Statement on Deepening Cooperation within the Framework of the Global Development Initiative with Africa, and implement 1,000 "small and beautiful" livelihood projects. We will replenish the China-World Bank Group Partnership Facility to boost Africa's development. We support Africa in hosting the 2026 Youth Olympic Games and the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations. We will work together with Africa to deliver more fruits of development to the two peoples.

Sixth, the Partnership Action for Health. China is ready to establish with Africa a hospitals alliance and joint medical centers. We will send 2,000 medical personnel to Africa, and launch 20 programs of health facilities and malaria treatment. We will encourage Chinese companies to invest in Africa's pharmaceutical production, and continue to do what we can to help Africa with epidemic response. We support the development of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to strengthen public health capacity in all African countries.

Seventh, the Partnership Action for Agriculture and Livelihoods. China will provide Africa with RMB1 billion yuan in emergency food assistance, build 100,000 *mu* (about 6,670 hectares) of standardized agriculture demonstration areas in Africa, send 500 agricultural experts, and establish a China-Africa agricultural science and technology innovation alliance. We will implement 500 programs in Africa to promote community welfare. We will also encourage two-way investment for new business operations by Chinese and African companies, enable Africa to retain added value, and create at least one million jobs for Africa.

Eighth, the Partnership Action for People-to-People Exchanges. China will implement with Africa more solidly the Future of Africa-Vocational Education Cooperation Plan, establish together an engineering technology academy, and build ten Luban Workshops. We will provide 60,000 training opportunities to Africa, mainly for women and youths. We

will launch with Africa a Cultural Silk Road program as well as an initiative of cooperation on innovation in radio, TV and audio and visual programs. The two sides have agreed to designate 2026 as the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges.

Ninth, the Partnership Action for Green Development. China is ready to launch 30 clean energy projects in Africa, put in place meteorological early warning systems, and carry out cooperation in disaster prevention, mitigation and relief as well as biodiversity conservation. We will create a China-Africa forum on peaceful use of nuclear technology, establish together 30 joint laboratories, and collaborate on satellite remote sensing and lunar and deep-space exploration. All this is designed to help with green development in Africa.

Tenth, the Partnership Action for Common Security. China is ready to build with Africa a partnership for implementing the GSI, and make it a fine example of GSI cooperation. We will give Africa RMB1 billion yuan of grants in military assistance, provide training for 6,000 military personnel and 1,000 police and law enforcement officers from Africa, and invite 500 young African military officers to visit China. The two sides will conduct joint military exercises, training and patrol, carry out an "action for a mine-free Africa," and jointly ensure the safety of personnel and projects.

To implement the ten partnership actions, the Chinese government will provide RMB360 billion yuan of financial support through the next three years. This breaks down into RMB210 billion yuan of credit line, RMB80 billion yuan of assistance in various forms, and at least RMB70 billion yuan of investment in Africa by Chinese companies. In addition, China will encourage and support Africa in issuing panda bonds in China to enhance our results-oriented cooperation in all areas.

Friends and Distinguished

Guests,

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.

As an African proverb goes, a friend is someone you share the path with. On the path to modernization, no one, and no country, should be left behind. Let us rally the more than 2.8 billion Chinese and African people into a powerful force on our shared path toward modernization, promote modernization of the Global South with China-Africa modernization, and write a new magnificent chapter of development in human history. Let us join hands to bring about a bright future of peace, security, prosperity and progress for our world.

Thank you.

XINHUA

What they say

Since its inception in 2000, through a series of projects and measures, FOCAC has become a fine example of partnership underpinned by dialogue, mutual respect and joint construction. In a world fraught with war, violence, extremism and prolonged economic and social crises, the theme of this summit, which calls for modernizing the Africa-China partnership to realize shared goals, is highly relevant.

Though we face complex challenges on the road ahead, we can respond by strengthening political and economic solidarity, which are vital to Africa-China cooperation.

Bassirou Diomaye Faye, president of Senegal

FOCAC has become a high-level platform and effective mechanism for promoting the development of China-Africa partnership. It has also become a model for South-South cooperation. The large

amount of investment from China, especially that within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, has tremendously promoted the development of infrastructure, ports, roads, energy and digitalization of Africa. African countries are in urgent need of these infrastructures.

Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani, president of Mauritania

China has a long history of friendship and solidarity with the people of Africa over many centuries. And we thank China for continuing to expand and develop a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, particularly with our continent, Africa. This summit reflects our shared desire for modernization, development and progress on the African continent. We believe that this shared desire is reflected in the 10 partnership actions on modernization to be taken by China and Africa, as announced by

President Xi Jinping. ... We believe that FOCAC can play an important role as Africa works to build an integrated network of linkages between countries, within regions and across our continent.

Cyril Ramaphosa, president of South Africa

Facing multiple economic crises, unprecedented security threats and pressing climate challenges, the world is in urgent need of multilateralism and a new order, and it requires Africa and China to work together to promote development. Africa and China are urged to push forward the implementation of concrete projects in key sectors such as energy, telecommunications, mining, agriculture, transportation and digitalization, on the basis of technological innovation and modernization.

Denis Sassou Nguesso, president of the Republic of the Congo

Despite the economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, China has remained committed to fulfilling the pledges made during the Eighth Ministerial Conference of FOCAC, particularly the nine programs. This genuine commitment has been instrumental in advancing our common development goals. The impact of this collaboration is present across our economies and China has been a true partner in our fight against poverty and pursuing prosperity.

Bola Tinubu, president of Nigeria

Throughout our journey, there have been defining moments that have shaped this partnership. China has consistently demonstrated its commitment to Africa not only through financial and developmental support, but also through cultural exchanges that bring out people closer and closer together. The establishment of the Chinese cultural centers across Africa exemplifies the depth of our cultural

fusion and shared learning. A landmark of our relationship came in 2000 with the establishment of FOCAC. This platform has been pivotal in strengthening our economic ties and affirming our commitment to mutual progress despite the global challenges we face, whether the economy or geographic.

Samia Suluhu Hassan, president of Tanzania

I underline President Xi's decision to launch the Global Development Initiative in a way that is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals — as well as the focus on green development and promoting integrity-based cooperation, as outlined in President Xi's remarks at last year's Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation that I had the honor to attend. And I'd like to highlight, like many have today, the partnership actions on modernization that were announced today by President Xi. China's remarka-

ble record of development — including on eradicating poverty — provides a wealth of experience and expertise.

Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

Since the inception of FOCAC in 2000, cooperation between the two sides has accomplished tangible results. I am very happy to see that China is willing to vigorously support the modernization of the Global South, including Africa, and promote innovative development. I would like to honor the ten partnership actions proposed by President Xi Jinping. I also pay tribute to China's Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative, all aiming to realize the dream of peace, unity and prosperity for all mankind, and are highly consistent with the African Union's 2063 Agenda.

Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairperson of African Union Commission

CHINA DAILY



2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

Connectivity of industrial chains to be enhanced

By ZHONG NAN
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China is willing to work with African countries to advance modernization and pursue self-reliant development, while enhancing connectivity and deepening cooperation across industrial and supply chains, the country's top political adviser said on Thursday.

Wang Huning, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said China aims to sign a framework agreement for economic partnership with African countries to expand and improve mutually beneficial cooperation.

Wang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during a high-level meeting on industrialization and agricultural modernization at the 2024 FOCAC Summit in Beijing.

Noting that Africa's contribution to global manufacturing remains low, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasized that African countries are keen to leverage platforms such as FOCAC to boost Africa's industrial and agricultural modernization.

With a well-developed industrial system and strength in innovation, China can help Africa play a larger role in the operation of global industrial and supply chains, Ramaphosa said, adding that Africa will better address its deficiencies in infrastructure and other factors by integrating market resources through the growth of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Munetsi Madakufamba, executive director of the Southern African Research and Documentation Center in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, said the economies of China and Africa are highly complementary, with China providing practical technologies, advanced equipment and abundant capital, while African nations offer significant advantages in market size, labor and natural resources.

China has remained Africa's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years. China-Africa trade reached \$282.1 billion last year, up nearly 11 percent compared with 2021, demonstrating the strong resilience of bilateral trade, data from the National Development and Reform Commission showed.

The country's direct investment in Africa exceeded \$40 billion by the end of last year, making it one of Africa's major sources of foreign investment.

China's investment in Africa is also becoming more diverse, moving beyond traditional industries like home appliances, textiles and construction materials to others such as pharmaceuticals, automotive and mobile phone manufacturing, said Shen Xiang, director of the department of Western Asian and African affairs at the Ministry of Commerce.

Chinese companies are also tapping into the African market and resources to boost local production capacity by transferring technology and fostering talent, helping to advance Africa's industrial chain development, he said.

Salim Fakir, executive director of the African Climate Foundation, which is based in Cape Town, South Africa, said that China's advantages in technological innovation and infrastructure development can provide significant assistance to Africa in areas such as climate change mitigation and renewable energy development.



Chinese and African leaders and delegates attend a high-level meeting on peace and security at the 2024 FOCAC Summit in Beijing on Thursday. ZHAO WENYU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Better security sought on continent

By ZHAO JIA
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To further modernization in Africa, China is committed to making a greater contribution to ensuring peace and security on the continent, a senior Chinese official said on Thursday.

While addressing a high-level meeting on peace and security at the 2024 FOCAC Summit in Beijing, Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said China has been an important force for peace in Africa and fully supports the continent's efforts to achieve stability.

He said China will continue to work with African nations to promote peace and security under the framework of FOCAC.

Noting that security is a major issue for the future of humanity, Cai said China is willing to collabo-

rate with the continent to implement the Global Security Initiative, which will lay the security foundation for a community with a shared future for humanity.

Under the initiative, Cai said China will focus on promoting exchanges and mutual learning, enhancing solidarity and mutual assistance, supporting Africa's capacity building and upholding the common security interests of China and the continent.

He said China is ready to work with Africa to implement the 10 partnership actions proposed by President Xi Jinping. Cai also called on international partners to provide more financing and technology support for Africa's development.

President of the Republic of Congo Denis Sassou Nguesso urged China and Africa to develop a cooperation mechanism focused on peace and security, and to stay committed to multilateralism amid mounting

global challenges such as climate change, terrorism and conflicts.

Modernization is not only about making scientific and technological progress, but also achieving political stability and social security, he said. "China has achieved economic and social transformation over the past decades and is a key partner to Africa on its journey of modernization," he said while expressing appreciation for China's various initiatives supporting Africa.

Nguesso spoke highly of the concept of building a community with a shared future for humanity, saying it is "the cornerstone of the actions of China and Africa and also the vision of future cooperation between the two sides."

Mohamed Mirghani, a diplomat from Sudan, said, "I appreciate China for proposing a series of global initiatives, and they have had a good impact on security issues in the world, especially in Africa."

BRI aligns with Africa's development

By YANG RAN
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China-Africa cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative aligns closely with the development needs of African countries, bringing tangible benefits to Chinese and African people, senior officials from China and African nations said.

They made the remarks at a high-level meeting on high-quality Belt and Road cooperation held on the sidelines of the 2024 FOCAC Summit in Beijing on Thursday afternoon.

Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang hailed the significant progress made through China-Africa cooperation within the framework of the BRI.

Ding, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, noted that the BRI has become the largest, most extensive and most

influential international economic cooperation platform.

Ding said that China and Africa should serve as exemplars of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and deliver more tangible benefits to their peoples by jointly building a comprehensive connectivity network, enhancing the quality of economic cooperation, expanding practical collaboration and promoting cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

The BRI has not only enhanced connectivity, but also spurred growth in various industries across Africa, said Gambian President Adama Barrow.

For instance, China's participation in power and transportation infrastructure projects in Gambia has significantly boosted the country's economic development and the well-being of its people, he said.

Barrow further noted that the goals of the African Union's Agenda

2063 align closely with the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035.

The economic partnership between China and Africa in agriculture, trade, investment and other related fields will undoubtedly help address the continent's need to attract investment, he added.

Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, president of Malawi, said the BRI aligns well with the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa.

Both initiatives advocate the development of efficient, safe, affordable and reliable transportation to ensure the smooth flow of goods, he said.

Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema, the interim president of Gabon, said that the BRI provides an inclusive development model for the world, and particularly for Africa.

He expressed his nation's desire to participate more broadly in China-Africa BRI cooperation.

Actions: African leaders applaud Xi's speech

From page 1

Xi's speech was warmly applauded by African leaders, who expressed excitement about China's support for African modernization.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said the African leaders welcome Xi's proposal to elevate China's bilateral relations with African countries.

"We believe that FOCAC can play an important role as Africa works to build an integrated network of linkages between countries, within regions and across the continent.

We believe that FOCAC is a valuable forum to support the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063," he said.

Bassirou Diomaye Faye, president of Senegal, said, "The new practical measures just announced by President Xi once again showcase his firm commitment to elevate China-Africa cooperation to a new level."

"I'm pleased to see that China is actively promoting greater balance in trade with Africa, assisting Africa in improving export capacity, and facilitating quarantine clearance of

African exports to China," he said.

Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairman of the African Union Commission, said the measures announced by Xi are in alignment with Africa's ongoing efforts for greater productivity and the reduction of deficits.

"I am very happy to see that China is willing to vigorously support the modernization of the Global South, including Africa, and promote innovative development, and would like to pay tribute to the 10 partnership actions proposed by President Xi," he said.

Meeting looks for paths to prosperity

China, African countries exchange experiences on state governance

By ZHAO YIMENG
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China and African countries will continue to share experiences in state governance while exploring development paths suited to their national circumstances to achieve modernization and prosperity, participants said during a high-level meeting at the 2024 FOCAC Summit in Beijing on Thursday.

Zhao Leji, a member of the Political Committee of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, said China and African countries should support each other in exploring development paths suited to their unique situations.

Pursuing an independent path of development is the right choice for developing countries seeking modernization, Zhao said during the meeting.

"We should emphasize self-reliant development, learning from the beneficial experiences of other countries' modernization efforts while focusing on exploring paths that align with our own conditions," he said.

Paul Kagame, president of Rwanda, said effective state governance has been a key contributor to China's global economic achievements.

"China has a strong desire for shared development with other nations based on mutual respect and common interest," Kagame said at the meeting.

China's experiences in poverty alleviation and technology adoption have provided lessons for accelerating modernization efforts in Rwanda, he said.

Kagame said there is no one-size-fits-all approach to governance, and each country must search for its own path that aligns with its unique context, history and mode of operation.

Mohamed Ali Nafti, Tunisia's minister of foreign affairs, migration and Tunisians abroad, said China has shown the world a unique form of state governance, and its development path could

suit different areas in African countries.

"We can learn from each other in terms of development projects," Nafti told media representatives before the meeting. "We have felt the determination from the Chinese leadership in further developing the partnership."

Governance is a universal technique, and each country has its own means and tools to ensure the best practices, he said, adding that "the most important thing is to grow hand-in-hand toward prosperity and a better future."

Frederick Makamure Shava, Zimbabwe's foreign affairs minister, said the meeting was a good opportunity for China and African countries to exchange experiences on state governance.

"We are able to share the way China is advancing its own statecraft and what African countries can learn from that," Shava said.

China and Africa have established an equal and "mutually beneficial" relationship and are cooperating to achieve a "win-win deal," he added.

China's efforts in developing new forms of energy and building related infrastructure were a particular focus at the summit for Sylvie Baipo Temon, foreign affairs minister of the Central African Republic.

China is supporting her country in harnessing solar energy and developing agriculture, with "a lot of new projects in process," she said.

Youlouka Luc Damiba, special adviser to the prime minister of Burkina Faso, said the development of agriculture and the space industry are important symbols of modernization in African countries.

China has been selling modern agricultural machinery and sending grain experts to support Burkina Faso's agricultural modernization, Damiba said.

Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh, Djibouti's finance minister, said he expects more connectivity, not only in trade, but also in "people-to-people exchanges to bring China and Africa closer."

Event ovation



Delegates applaud at the opening ceremony of the 2024 FOCAC Summit at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Thursday.

YAN YAN / XINHUA

Vision: Investment creating jobs, imparting skills

From page 1

Africa is abundantly blessed with resources and also provides a huge market to its trading partners. In this context China, the second largest economy in the world, finds Africa a reliable trading partner. As President Xi Jinping said on March 25, 2013 during his first visit to Africa as president, "We both view the other's development as our own opportunity, and we both seek to promote mutual development and prosperity through closer cooperation." This is the right time to further translate the vision into action.

The trajectory that China has taken to lift more than 700 million people out of poverty, which was achieved in 2020, is full of lessons for Africa, as a population of similar proportion is languishing in poverty in Africa today. China not only alleviated poverty; it continues to work hard to capitalise on its gains by focusing on prosperity and high-quality development, including through rural revitalization with a focus on five key areas — industrial development, human capital, culture, ecological environment and local governance. There are huge lessons here for African nations,

both on how to rise out of poverty and how to sustain the gains.

Chinese businesses are investing and reinvesting their wealth in Africa in a big way. They are expanding their manufacturing bases across the length and breadth of the continent, providing much-needed employment and transferring much-needed skills. What is more, Africa's transportation network is also expanding due to Chinese investments. Chinese funding within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and its investment in railways, road transportation and port development are trans-

forming livelihoods in Africa, apart from creating the opportunity to adopt the technological know-how.

Trading among African countries stands at a low; available data puts the figure at 14 percent. Asian countries, including China, traded around 59 percent of their goods and services among themselves in 2022. The same year, 68 percent of all European exports were to trading partners on the same continent, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Who can be blamed for the state of affairs in Africa? There are myriad factors that are stumbling blocks

to Africa's transformation.

Lack of clean energy, finance, technological know-how and the like could be termed the top challenges on the road to Africa's development. So far, Chinese support has helped bridge what was once an awning gap to a large extent. In a recent article, economic analyst Laurance Freeman summarized the visible impacts China has made in expanding critically needed infrastructure in Africa. According to him, China has contributed toward the "installation of over 25 gigawatts of electricity generation capacity, construction and upgrade of over 10,000 kilometers of railways, 100,000 km of highways, over 60,000 km of submarine cables, almost 1,000 bridges, 100 ports and over 100 health facilities and schools?"

Growing cooperation with China in the spirit enshrined in the theme of this year's FOCAC Summit plays an important role.

With the expansion of manufacturing capacity and transport networks in Africa, there is a likelihood that the lives of Africans will be positively impacted by job creation and availability of basic supplies at local markets.

With the furthering of Africa-China cooperation, that will be boosted by the summit, Africa's ambition to alleviate poverty will become achievable.

The author is editor-in-chief of *The Ethiopian Herald*, a national newspaper in Ethiopia. The views do not necessarily reflect those of *China Daily*.



2024 FOCAC SUMMIT



Peng Liyuan, wife of Chinese President Xi Jinping and UNESCO special envoy for the advancement of girls' and women's education, accompanies guests attending the 2024 FOCAC Summit to an exhibition showcasing traditional Chinese culture and achievements made on women's education on Thursday in Beijing. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

Schooling key to realizing women's empowerment

By MO JINGXI
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Spouses of leaders attending the 2024 FOCAC Summit in Beijing stressed on Thursday the need for China and African countries to join hands for women's empowerment through education.

Noting that the well-being of women reflects and affects the development of society, they said education is a powerful and effective means to empower women and facilitate social progress.

Speaking at a meeting on women's education on the sidelines of the summit, Peng Liyuan, wife of President Xi Jinping, said that empowering women with education is of great significance because

education, knowledge and skills can give women the opportunity to better serve the country, stay in sync with society and embrace a happier life.

As a UNESCO special envoy for the advancement of girls' and women's education, Peng said she has been to many African schools and institutions for the development of young people and women over the past decade.

Peng said China has always attached great importance to the education of girls and women, and the Spring Bud Project, a nationwide campaign helping girls who have dropped out return to school, has provided financial support for more than 4 million girls to continue their education in the past 35 years.

But there is still a long way to go in order to provide equitable, high-quality education for women, she said, calling on China and Africa to go further together on the path of facilitating women's education and creating a better future.

Rachel Chebet Ruto, wife of Kenyan President William Ruto, said that education is the foundation of every form of empowerment, and especially so for women.

Despite the significant progress made over the past two decades in terms of access, completion and the quality of basic education in Africa, disparities persist both within and between countries, she said.

Ruto said only 18 percent of children on the African continent have access to early childhood education,

compared with the global average of 60 percent.

"We are particularly grateful to the Chinese government for its support," she said.

Isaura Nyusi, wife of Mozambican President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, said that the Beijing Declaration — a global policy framework adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, which was held in Beijing in 1995 — has inspired African countries' efforts and policies in achieving equality between men and women.

"Africa and China are indeed side by side in promoting women's empowerment," she said, noting that the Chinese government has been instrumental in supporting African countries by building more schools and granting more scholarships.

Collaboration transcends economic development

By WANG KEJU
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In a world characterized by complex challenges, China and Africa will embrace globalization and trade facilitation even more, and open up broader horizons for mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, infrastructure, agriculture and other areas, an African studies expert said.

"In a unified stance against unilateralism and protectionism, China and Africa should remain steadfast to uphold an open world economy and a multilateral trading system," Ye Hailin, dean of the China-Africa Institute at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told China Daily in an exclusive interview.

The collaboration between the world's largest developing country and the continent with the highest

concentration of developing nations transcends mere economic development, Ye said, with its impact extending far beyond the borders of the two regions to benefit the global community at large.

For the 15th consecutive year, China has solidified its status as Africa's leading trade partner, with the volume of trade between China and Africa steadily increasing its share of the continent's overall foreign trade, Ye said.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce showed that trade between China and Africa was worth a record \$282.1 billion last year, nearly 35 percent more than in 2013.

While the economic partnership between China and Africa continues to strengthen, Ye said there are underlying issues that need to be addressed — particularly the need to diversify the trade structures

between the two regions.

"Fields such as e-commerce and green development present promising opportunities for future growth in China-Africa cooperation," he said.

While trade serves as a cornerstone of China-Africa cooperation, another significant aspect that underscores the depth of the partnership is the surge in direct investment, particularly from China into Africa, Ye said.

By the end of last year, China's cumulative direct investment in Africa totaled more than \$40 billion, solidifying its position as one of the primary sources of foreign capital for countries across the continent, according to the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

To foster even stronger economic ties between China and Africa, Ye said enhancing Africa's infrastructure and connectivity stands out as a

focal point for progress.

However, financing infrastructure projects in Africa continues to pose a significant challenge. The African Development Bank estimates that between \$130 billion and \$170 billion is required for infrastructure development across the continent each year, with a financing gap ranging from \$68 billion to \$108 billion.

While infrastructure investment is encountering bottlenecks in various parts of the world, Africa's infrastructure landscape presents a unique opportunity for China to exhibit its expertise and contribute to the continent's development journey, Ye said.

Rather than focusing solely on grandiose structures, the key lies in matching infrastructure with local realities, so it serves as a catalyst for economic progress and enhances Africans' quality of life, he added.

China, Africa working to boost education on continent

By CHENG SI
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China and African countries are cooperating more on education to ensure quality education is accessible to young people in Africa.

Along with other Global South countries, African nations are still struggling with education challenges, including inaccessible schooling, difficulties in procuring technological education resources and shortages of quality teachers, Stefania Giannini, assistant director-general for education at UNESCO, said at a sideline event of the ongoing 2024 FOCAC Summit in Beijing on Thursday.

The event, organized by Beijing Normal University and supported by the Chinese National Commis-

sion for UNESCO, focused on the need for equitable and quality education in Africa and its overall significance in the development of the Global South.

Giannini stressed the importance of ensuring quality education for marginalized people, including those discriminated against due to their gender, ethnicity, language, religion, nationality, financial situation or from remote rural areas, as well as those hindered by military conflicts.

She said that in Africa, 18 of every 100 school-age children are not in school — a rate that is twice the global average.

Francois Havyarimana, Burundi's minister of national education and scientific research, said at the forum that equitable and quality education is key to the development of African

countries, but remains difficult to achieve.

He said that Burundi has made continuous efforts to ensure its children can receive basic education, and the country's work is paying off.

In the face of such challenges, educational experts have offered some suggestions, including cultivating more educators.

"Figures from UNESCO show that the world still needs 44 million teachers to popularize basic education by 2030, and African countries face a tougher situation," said Chen Jie, vice-minister of education, at the forum.

Chen said that it's important to enhance communication among China, Africa and UNESCO to resolve teacher shortages so the three parties can share their experiences in cultivating teachers and

help African countries explore new and effective ways of training them.

Lin Yigang, vice-president of Zhejiang Normal University, said: "High technology has greatly influenced education, educational resources and the quality of teachers. Thus, we need to enhance cooperation in the sectors of digital education, science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and in the training of teachers in China and Africa, to produce a batch of higher-quality teachers with stronger knowledge in digital and smart education."

Lin said that he hopes that colleges and universities in China and Africa can continue to share their educational resources, research facilities and knowledge, and garner more support from authorities and organizations to consolidate those results.

Premier hails potential of Ethiopia ties

Li calls for expansion of investment, cooperation on emerging industries

By WANG QINGYUN
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Premier Li Qiang and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed held talks in Beijing on Thursday, vowing to deepen China-Ethiopia cooperation in various fields.

China and Ethiopia are all-weather strategic partners, Li said, adding that both countries are major developing countries and BRICS members that enjoy a profound foundation, huge potential and promising prospects for cooperation.

China hopes to work with Ethiopia to implement the important common understandings between their leaders by consolidating mutual political trust, deepening their friendship and expanding cooperation, Li said.

He also said China stands ready for continued mutual assistance and support with Ethiopia, so that the two countries will enjoy shared growth.

Li called on the two countries to further align their development strategies, expand trade and investment and conduct cooperation in emerging industries such as new energy, the digital economy and artificial intelligence.

China is the largest trading partner, the top investment source and the largest project contractor for Ethiopia, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Bilateral trade rose 14.7 percent

last year to more than \$3 billion.

China is willing to import more high-quality products from Ethiopia, Li said, adding that it is also encouraging more Chinese companies to invest in the African country.

China hopes to work with Ethiopia to promote the implementation of the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, leverage the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway and make good use of China-Africa cooperation platforms, he said.

Ethiopia became a BRICS member in January.

Abiy, who arrived in Beijing on Wednesday to attend the summit and pay an official visit to China, expressed his congratulations on the success of the summit, saying that the 10 partnership actions for modernization put forward by President Xi Jinping are fully in line with Africa's vision for development.

Ethiopia hopes to promote the implementation of the summit's outcomes, learn from China's reform and opening-up experience and further expand trade between Africa and China, Abiy said.

After their talks, Li and Abiy witnessed the signing of multiple bilateral cooperation documents covering areas including the Belt and Road Initiative, trade, the export of agricultural products to China, space technology and geoscience.



An African journalist experiences the making of traditional Chinese glass ornaments shaped like grapes as part of a cultural activity at the 2024 FOCAC Summit's media center in Beijing on Wednesday. YI HAIFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Journalists advocate stronger connections

By ZHAO YIMENG
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While taking part in traditional Chinese cultural activities on Wednesday, African journalists covering the 2024 FOCAC Summit in Beijing underscored the need for stronger ties between China and African nations in fields such as academics, technology and infrastructure development.

Before attending a news conference at the summit's media center, the journalists participated in a cultural tour that included activities such as learning the ancient technique of cloisonné, painting Peking Opera masks and making traditional Chinese kites.

The activities provided a hands-on introduction to some of Beijing's intangible cultural heritages.

Ayanda Mdluli, editor of the Daily News in South Africa, made a kite at the media center, which he said he planned to send to his 9-year-old daughter as a gift. Mdluli advocates academic exchanges between China and South Africa and the expansion of specialist exchanges and cooperation in higher education.

laboration in academics.

Samuel Ayammah, a reporter with the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, highlighted China's support for agricultural development in his country, particularly in combating drought and hunger.

"We need China because we don't have enough facilities and technology," Ayammah said.

Jonathan Marewa, from the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, praised the summit's organization and the media center's facilities, finding the venue easy to navigate.

Marewa, along with other African journalists, was impressed by environmentally friendly products that were on display, such as ties and backpacks made from recycled plastic and leather-like items crafted from fruit peels. He said Zimbabwe is also making efforts to protect the environment and conserve natural resources.

Khadar Hassan, a reporter from the Somali National News Agency, expressed interest in the innovative use of recycled materials in various products. "Although I don't usually wear ties, seeing them made from plastic bottles made me want to wear one," Hassan said. He said he hopes the summit will lead to deeper cooperation between China and Somalia, particularly in education, culture and infrastructure.



2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

Ikenna Emewu

Nigeria-China cooperation fruitful in multiple ways

The 24 years of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) have been beneficial and eventful for both sides. On Thursday, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for building an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future in the new era. The summit, being held in Beijing from Wednesday to Friday, will undoubtedly strengthen the bond between Africa and China, elevating it to new heights.

In many ways and areas, China-Nigeria relations, an extension of the FOCAC, have been fruitful.

My recent book, *The Chinese in the Nigerian Economy*, published in January this year, takes a detailed look at the footprints of Nigeria-China relations, especially in terms of Sino-Nigerian economic relations over the past years.

Nigeria has been a top beneficiary of Sino-Nigerian ties in the economic field and beyond. For instance, the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation has invested more than \$7 billion in infrastructure, including railways, roads, airports and bridges, since 2012. The Chinese enterprise also renovated and upgraded the top four international airports in Nigeria, with the fourth being commissioned on March 22, 2022, in Lagos. Within five years, the CCECC built 717 kilometers of railways in four major projects, with 75 percent of the funding coming from

the Export-Import Bank of China. Between 2023 and 2024, it completed two more railway projects of about 28 km as part of the Lagos metro system.

According to World Bank data, for many years China has been working to boost the industrialization of African countries, contributing an average of 12 percent to Africa's industrial production or manufacturing. In Nigeria, its contribution stands at 9.2 percent.

Between 2010 and 2019, China was the highest employment generator in Africa, creating an average of 18,600 direct jobs per year. In comparison, the United States generated an average 12,000 jobs in Africa, according to the World Bank. And on Thursday President Xi encouraged Chinese and African businesses to invest and start businesses in both regions, keep the value addition of industries in Africa, and create no fewer than 1 million job opportunities for Africans.

When it comes to the distribution of Chinese companies across Africa, Nigeria has the largest share, almost 10 percent of the total number. The reason for this is the size of the Nigerian economy — the largest in Africa with a market of about 200 million consumers — and the friendly attitude of the Nigerian people toward the Chinese people.

The total value of the about 10,000 Chinese companies operating in Africa, including the 920 in Nigeria, according to McKinsey, is about \$500 billion. These companies are funded and operated by Chinese investors, many in part-

nership with African companies.

Tristan Cui, director general of the China General Chamber of Commerce based in Abuja, Nigeria's capital, said that all the companies owned by the Chinese in Nigeria are enormous and in different sectors of the economy.

In 2020, then Chinese Consul General in Lagos Chu Maoming said more than 120 top-grade Chinese enterprises were reportedly doing business in the country, either independently or in partnership with Nigerian companies in sectors such as engineering, oil and gas, financial technology, information and communications technology, construction, manufacturing and agriculture. Also thousands of Chinese nationals are involved in other businesses.

As for promoting human capital, in July 2023, the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation welcomed 85 young Nigerian graduates it had trained in railway engineering and management and then helped them complete their master's in two Chinese universities in Xi'an and Changsha.

Good bilateral relations prompted the two countries to elevate their relationship to a strategic partnership in 2005.

In the fintech sector, OPay and Palmpay, two giants with Chinese funds, have become dominant. The two companies run businesses with assets worth nearly \$4 billion.

These two entities became prominent between December 2022 and April 2023 when the Nigerian economy was hit by the infamous cash scarcity caused by the Central

Bank of Nigeria's decision to redesign its policy.

The situation forced more than 85 percent of financial transactions to pass through the electronic banking system. The sudden development overstretched commercial banks to the point where their online banking platforms could not cope, resulting in collapsed systems that prevented people from completing most transactions. More than 86 percent of tech-based financial transactions failed, causing widespread economic glitches. OPay was the major rescuer during that crisis.

Huawei tops the list of companies powering Nigeria's digital economy, providing hardware services for all the major Nigerian telecom operators. In September 2018, during the last FOCAC Summit hosted in Beijing, then Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari signed a \$328 million deal, on behalf of the Nigerian Communications Commission, with Huawei, according to which Nigeria would provide ICT support services for Nigerians. Today, the company is a major cloud-based ICT service provider. It offers cloud and financial transaction support to almost all Nigerian banks and the majority of oil companies.

Nigeria's fruitful cooperation with China serves as a vivid example of the thriving economic ties between China and Africa.

The author is a journalist and editor-in-chief of Africa China Economy Magazine based in Lagos, Nigeria. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Piao Yingji

Green collaboration promises brighter future

In his keynote speech on Thursday advocating for China and Africa to advance modernization, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated: "We should jointly advance modernization that is eco-friendly. Green development is a hallmark of modernization in the new era."

In recent years, China and African countries have intensified cooperation in green development, and are striving to include green development in cooperation mechanisms in various fields, while promoting the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative and implementing the action plans of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, in order to build a brighter future for China-Africa ties.

First, China-Africa cooperation projects have created green spaces in African cities. Climate change has increased the frequency of extreme weather events, including the urban heat island effect in cities and surrounding areas, making coastal communities even more vulnerable to climate-related disasters. Preserving and creating more green urban spaces can reduce the risks associated with urban flooding and heat waves.

For example, the 870,000-square-meter Malabo National Park in Equatorial Guinea, built by a Chinese company, is the country's first inclusive city park and has become a green urban landscape. And the riverside green development project in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, China's first overseas park construction project, has not only created an inclusive city square but also has reduced pollution and ecological degradation, strengthening the two sides' consensus on green development.

Second, China and Africa are jointly promoting the "Great Green Wall" program, a project adopted by the African Union in 2007 and initially conceived as a means to prevent desertification in the Sahel region and stop the expansion of the Sahara Desert, by planting a wall of trees stretching across the entire Sahel region.

Africa is the region most seriously affected by desertification, with about 45 percent of its land facing varying degrees of desertification. The goal of the "Great Green Wall" project is to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land and capture about 250 million tons of carbon dioxide, creating 10 million jobs in the process by 2030.

In 2017, the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences signed a memorandum of understanding with the Pan-African Agency for the "Great Green Wall" project, including establishing a research center.

They have been working together to improve African countries' ability to control desertification by taking measures such as ecosystem monitoring, sustainable use of land resources, talent training and technology transfer.

China and Africa have been working together to address grassland degradation and shrub encroachment in Ethiopia, too, and their endeavor has helped restore vegetation. New technologies and solutions provided by China for controlling desertification and curbing the erosion of quicksand in the Mauritanian capital of Nouakchott have produced good results as well.

Third, China-Africa cooperation in green energy has helped reduce Africa's energy deficit. Africa is facing the daunting challenge of ensuring energy security and combating climate change. Some 600 million African people don't have access to electricity and about 900 million people don't have access to clean cooking fuel. Although Africa is rich in green energy resources such as solar and wind energy, hydropower and geothermal energy, they have not yet been fully developed due to a lack of funding, technologies and infrastructure.

As global leaders in green energy, Chinese enterprises have been steadily advancing China-Africa green energy cooperation, thanks to their advantages in technologies, equipment and management experience, and helping Africa's energy sector realize green transformation and reduce its energy deficit.

Besides, the De Aar wind power project in South Africa, China's first wind power project in Africa in terms of investment, construction and operation, can supply 760 gigawatt hours of clean energy annually. And the Chinese-built solar power plant in Garissa, Kenya, is the largest grid-connected solar power plant in East Africa; it can generate more than 760 MWh of electricity a year. The cumulative installed capacity of photovoltaic power stations in Africa co-built by Chinese and African enterprises has exceeded 1.5 GW.

And fourth, China-Africa cooperation promotes the green development of African industries, with African countries eager to seize the opportunity to realize overall green transformation, use their rich natural resources and market potential to attract more investments to their green, low-carbon industries, and upgrade the value chain of their green industries.

Thanks to their deepening cooperation with African companies, Chinese enterprises are transferring more and more green products and technologies to Africa and helping the continent move toward green industrialization.

Moreover, an increasing number of African enterprises are seeking Chinese green technologies to promote the local production of electric vehicles (EVs) because China is a global leader in the field. For example, Chinese automaker BYD has partnered with a Rwandan company to build 40,000 electric motorcycles in Kenya and Rwanda by the end of 2026.

On the other hand, Ethiopia's Hawassa Industrial Park, designed and built by a Chinese enterprise, is Africa's first zero-emission textile industrial park and a milestone project in the country's industrialization. Technologies used by the Chinese textile industry have helped the Ethiopian park to recycle up to 85 percent of its wastewater. The government of Ethiopia has invested in more than 10 similar industrial parks in the country based on the Hawassa model.

The climate crisis, which is worsening due to rising emissions and pollution levels, is one of the most serious crises facing the world. China-Africa cooperation in green development has been playing an important role in addressing the climate crisis, advancing the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative and establishing a harmonious relationship between humans and nature.

The China-Africa Dialogue on Environment and Climate Change in August launched an initiative to strengthen cooperation in green and sustainable development, urging China and Africa to hold dialogue and consultations on environmental and climate policies, and share the best practices in areas such as climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation and reducing environmental pollution.

Following this year's FOCAC Summit, China and Africa have the opportunity to embark on a new chapter in green and sustainable development.

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JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Liliane Ahombo

Deep-rooted ties firm footing for DRC's modernization

Themed "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future", the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has brought together African leaders, including Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix Tshisekedi, in Beijing.

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday said the joint pursuit of modernization by China and Africa will set off a wave of modernization in the Global South and open a new chapter for building a community with a shared future for humanity.

The Democratic Republic of Congo's longstanding cooperation with China offers a glimpse of how these deep-rooted ties are promoting the modernization of the African continent.

Although it is officially accepted that China-Africa cooperation in modern times began in 1955 at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia, Sino-African relations are rooted in the centuries-old history of mari-

time contacts across the Indian Ocean.

China's contact with the African continent began about 600 years ago. That was the time when Zheng He, admiral of the imperial Chinese navy and considered the first great modern maritime explorer, led a fleet of over 240 seafaring ships carrying 27,400 soldiers and sailors. He crossed the Malacca Strait, traversed the Indian Ocean, and sailed as far south as the eastern coast of Africa and as far west as the shores of the Red Sea.

But in modern times, China's relations with Africa, particularly after many African countries gained independence in the 1960s, began with Africa's support for the New China. That the two sides' relationship has transformed into a deep friendship is proof of the mutually beneficial nature of their trade and economic ties.

As for the Democratic Republic of Congo's relations with China, history tells us that the first Chinese nationals to set foot on the now DRC's soil helped build the Matadi-Kinshasa railway in the 1890s. The second wave of Chinese nationals arrived after the DRC won independence from Belgium in 1960. The third wave of Chinese nationals

landed in the DRC, then called Zaire, in 1972 after the normalization of diplomatic relations with China. The fourth wave began in 2008, when both countries signed agreements to develop basic infrastructure and increase mining in the African country.

Sino-Congolese economic and trade relations have been strengthening ever since thanks to the deepening cooperation between the two sides in various fields. Apart from mining and infrastructure, the Chinese presence can also be seen in other key sectors including power generation, healthcare and youth training.

Economic cooperation with China, including the launching of joint-capital companies or companies with Chinese capital, has helped the DRC re-emerge on the international circuit of trade, from which it found itself excluded for several decades. These companies, while remaining committed to the "win-win" principle, have boosted the development of local communities in the DRC by implementing the policies set out in the cooperation agreement.

The benefits of Sino-Congolese cooperation are evident especially in the areas such as infrastructure,

industry, trade, economy and social welfare. Among the major projects completed last year are the Kinsuka substation, the Busanga hydroelectric power station, the Saphir Ceramics plant in Maluku and the Sakania dry port, which have greatly boosted the industrial development of the DRC.

Work on several major projects under the "resources for projects" cooperation framework commenced earlier this year, with the highway from Kinshasa to Luabala via Greater Kasai, being especially important, because it is expected to improve connectivity between provinces. Trade between the two sides, too, has been growing, as the trade volume of \$12.34 billion in the first six months of the year indicates, while the DR Congo has become one of the main destinations for Chinese investments in Africa. In other words, Sino-Congolese cooperation has been progressing well, and still holds a lot of promise.

The author is executive director of the Center for Strategic Studies and International Security in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

Chinese medical workers help fight malaria

Significant progress achieved by mass drug administration, building bridges of trust and understanding

By WANG XIAOYU

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Across the dense, tropical forest in the African island nation of Sao Tome and Principe, a team of Chinese scientists is waging an all-out fight against malaria — one of the deadliest diseases for local residents.

Since 2017, they have visited every single one of the country's nearly 300 villages to grasp a clear understanding of the infection's spread, promoted new medicines and trialed innovative ways to deliver them, as well as trained public health professionals.

"In the past, local children were sometimes warned against wandering around due to the high risk of catching malaria. A parent who has four children once told me that hospitals felt like their second home due to the rampant spread of the disease," said Li Mingqiang, a researcher at Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine's Artemisinin Research Center in Guangdong and head of the first team dispatched to the island country.

Thanks to anti-malaria programs led by researchers from the institute based in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, participating villages have seen sharp drops in incidence rates of the illness.

"Nowadays, an increasing number of families feel much more reassured letting their kids outside their home, and the lively scene of healthy children enjoying themselves means a lot to us medical aid workers," he said.

Malaria is a potentially life-threatening disease that spreads to humans through mosquito bites. It is now curable and preventable with new bug sprays, bed nets as well as a growing variety of treatments and vaccines.

Globally, there are around 240 million malaria cases annually, and it kills more than 600,000 people each year. The majority of malaria infections and mortalities are confined to African countries, according to data from the World Health Organization.

"When we first arrived in the nation in early 2017, we knew little about the situation on the ground, and residents there knew nothing about our anti-malaria plans. So our biggest challenge in the beginning was how to communicate with each other and cooperate effectively," said Li.

At the core of the team's malaria-fighting strategy is a self-developed medicine that incorporates the traditional Chinese medicine compound of artemisinin with piperazine.

On top of using the medicine to



Members of an anti-malaria medical team from the Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine run tests at a laboratory in Comoros last month. WANG GUANSEN / XINHUA

treat malaria, Chinese scientists have seen its potential in preventing infections and interrupting transmission by delivering the drug to the entire population in a region — an approach called mass drug administration.

The strategy has yielded great outcomes in other African countries. During the team's first mission in Africa in 2006 in Comoros, a trial program managed to push down the incidence rate by more than 98 percent within three months.

Despite the successful precedent, Li understood that gaining trust, respect and recognition was no less significant. So among the team's first and foremost tasks was surveying the local situation and building a rapport with local people.

"We found that the nation's disease control and prevention center could only provide limited and outdated data, so it immediately occurred to us that it was necessary to obtain a more accurate and updated tally of infections," said Li.

For about eight months, Li and his team visited all of the country's 291 villages, with a total population of less than 200,000 at the time.

They posed simple and basic



Chen Yinhan (left), head of the anti-malaria team sent by the Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine to Comoros, takes blood samples in Moroni, capital of the African nation, last month. WANG GUANSEN / XINHUA

questions such as how many family members were in a household, whether they had contracted malaria in recent years and what symptoms they had experienced.

But progress was slow, and stalled largely due to language barriers.

"The nation speaks Portuguese, and the interpreter we had found it difficult to translate some medical terms we used and was only able to convey about 70 percent of

the gist of our words," said Li.

The team persisted, soliciting help from disease control workers who already had local connections, and the efficiency with interpreters gradually improved. After eight months of traversing rainforests and rivers, and weeks of organizing materials, they managed to obtain a clear picture of the disease's local spread.

However, tougher issues loomed



We have inherited rich and valuable knowledge and experiences from these senior scientists. And we are aiming to spread the Chinese-made strategy to more countries across the world."

Li Mingqiang, researcher at Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine's Artemisinin Research Center and head of the first team of anti-malaria experts sent to Comoros

when they tried to promote Chinese medicine and their strategy of mass administration.

"I was deeply anxious because local people simply didn't know the benefits of our approach, let alone agree to take our drugs," said Li.

The team exhausted all means to construct a bridge of understanding and friendship with them. "We held numerous meetings and talks with

people from all walks of life, from senior public health workers to rural clinic doctors, and from government officials to villagers," said Li.

"In addition, we held international symposiums on malaria control, offered free healthcare services to earn their trust, and even invited our collaborators from Comoros to demonstrate the strategy's outcome."

A turning point came when the team was able to trial their methods in a village in July 2019. The village, with a population of about 500, saw over 1,000 infections each year, meaning each villager contracted the disease twice or more annually.

After three rounds of mass delivery of the Chinese-made medicine, the incidence rate of malaria from the initiation of the program to March the following year dropped by 80 to 90 percent compared to the same period of the past three years.

"The outcome not only won genuine recognition from local health workers and officials, but also boosted our confidence in advancing our work," he said.

Li is now one of the 40 team members of the anti-malaria foreign medical group under the Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine's Artemisinin Research Center. Like Li, 75 percent of team members are aged 35 or under.

The group was founded in 1989 and completed its first overseas mission in Cambodia. But the group's early history can be traced to 1967 when Li Guoqiao, chief professor at the institute, participated in initial research into artemisinin, created a combination therapy and later spearheaded foreign aid in Southeast Asia and Africa.

While Li Guoqiao represents the first generation of the group, Song Jianping, now head of the institute, followed in his footsteps to deliver the medicine to more people across the globe, incorporate traditional Chinese medicine principles into the use of the medicine and promoted the group's anti-malaria strategy based on mass administration in nations that needed assistance.

Li Mingqiang said that he and the remaining team members represent the third generation of the project. So far, they have offered medical aid targeting malaria control to Comoros, Togo, Papua New Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe among other countries.

"We have inherited rich and valuable knowledge and experiences from these senior scientists," he said. "And we are aiming to spread the Chinese-made strategy to more countries across the world."

China-Africa healthcare cooperation expanding

By ZHENG YIRAN

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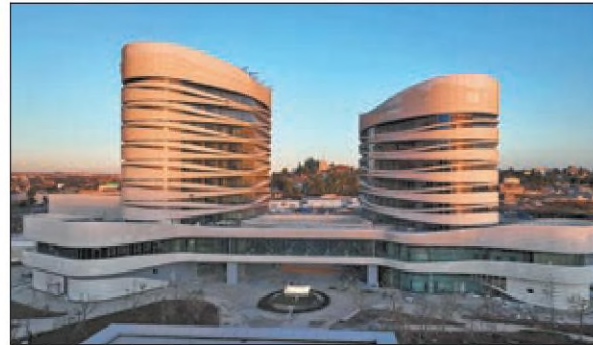
China and African countries are continuing to develop closer ties in healthcare, with the potential for broad cooperation being further explored, said experts in the field.

Under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative, China has been actively building the "Health Silk Road", by sending medical teams, implementing talent training, promoting infectious disease prevention and control, carrying out healthcare assistance, popularizing traditional Chinese medicine and signing cooperation agreements.

Last year, workers at the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention moved to their new headquarters, which was built using Chinese aid.

The building of the new Africa CDC HQ, located in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, was announced as the flagship project of the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

The project, constructed by China Civil Engineering Construction Corp, was completed in January last year, and covers a construction area of 23,500 square meters. The project includes an office building for more than 400 people and a testing facility with 10 laboratories.



The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Headquarters, the flagship project of the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, upon its completion in January last year. DANG HONGLAI / XINHUA

It is the first African disease control center on the African continent with modern office and experimental facilities.

Chinese healthcare companies have been expanding their footprint in Africa in recent years.

Shenzhen-based BGI is a genomic sequencing company that has cooperated deeply with African countries. On April 30, the company inked a deal with the Rwanda Biomedical Center and provided 20,000 HPV tests for local women to promote screenings for cervical cancer.

Albert Tuyishime, director of the Disease Prevention and Control

Department of the Rwanda Biomedical Center, said cervical cancer is a global healthcare challenge, especially for countries with limited medical resources.

The cooperation with BGI is expected to increase the local cervical cancer screening and prevention and control efficiency, and it is hoped that the cooperation can be promoted to other regions, he said.

During the pandemic, BGI established several highly automated novel coronavirus nucleic acid testing facilities in African countries.

The lab established in Addis Ababa Bole International Airport in



Li Bangwei, head of a Chinese medical team sent to Namibia, introduces traditional Chinese medicine to students at a private school in Windhoek, the country's capital, last month. CHEN CHENG / XINHUA

Ethiopia, designed to process 1,000 samples per day, was capable of providing nucleic acid testing services for up to 400 passengers within three hours. With the establishment of the lab, passengers didn't need to leave the waiting hall to undergo nucleic acid testing.

In February last year, BGI provided a gene sequencer, along with the necessary training and technical support, to the South African Medical Research Council to improve its sequencing capability. This capability played a crucial role in the early detection of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in a sample collected at Cape Town International Airport.

"The FOCAC has created valuable opportunities for Chinese companies to expand their markets and exchange technology in Africa," said Chen Songheng, Africa regional general manager at BGI Group.

"With the bilateral support of governments in China and Africa, BGI has worked together with African partners to enhance public health service capabilities, agricultural breeding capabilities and residents' living standards.

"In the future, we will further deepen cooperation, focus on innovation and progress in the fields of public health and agricultural tech-

nology, strive to benefit the people of China and Africa, and work together to build a community with a shared future for China and Africa," he said.

Wang Peng, associate research fellow at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said: "In the past decade, cooperation between China and African countries in the field of healthcare has achieved significant results, demonstrating profound potential and broad prospects for cooperation. This cooperation not only promotes resource sharing, technological exchange and capacity building between China and Africa, but also provides strong support for the development of healthcare in African countries."

He noted that in the future, possible collaborations for China and Africa include deepening cooperation in medicine and healthcare, promoting the development of TCM, strengthening the construction of the public healthcare system and promoting the overall development of the healthcare industry.

Lin Xianping, secretary-general of Hangzhou City University's cultural and creative research institute, said: "When doing business in Africa, Chinese enterprises should respect local laws and regulations as well as customs. They should also adhere to business and professional ethics to maintain business reputation and image."



2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

Rich experience, new technologies provide continent with clean energy

By ZHENG XIN
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As Africa looks to solar power to drive its renewable energy development, cooperation with China and drawing on its expertise is playing an increasingly vital role, industry experts said.

Chinese companies in the photovoltaic energy sector have rich experience and advanced technologies, which have helped deepen cooperation between China and Africa, said Nivedh Das Thaikootathil, senior analyst in the renewables and power department of global consultancy Rystad Energy.

Expanding electricity access is crucial for boosting economic opportunities and people's quality of life in Africa. China is not only the global leader in installed capacity and power generation, but is also the world's largest producer and supplier of solar cells and modules, which aligns perfectly with the continent's needs, she said.

In the past, China's energy investments in Africa have primarily focused on large hydropower and coal-fired power projects. However, in recent years there has been a shift toward solar power projects, she added.

Chinese investments in Africa's renewable energy sector grew at an average annual rate of 26 percent from 2010 to 2020, with solar, hydropower, and wind the leading technologies, according to Rystad Energy.

Kenya pioneers efforts

The Chinese-constructed 50-megawatt Garissa solar power station in northeastern Kenya is the largest PV power project in East Africa. Since it began operations in 2019, the solar power plant has generated over 76 million kilowatt-hours annually, meeting the electricity needs of 70,000 households and more than 380,000 people.

Built by the China Jiangxi Corporation for International Economic and Technical Cooperation in conjunction with Kenya's Rural Energy Authority, the project has not only freed local residents from frequent power outages but also promoted local industrial and commercial development, creating numerous job opportunities, said the company.

It has also made Kenya one of the biggest investors in renewable and clean energy as it is home to the largest grid-connected solar power plant in East and Central Africa.

As it strives for renewable energy development, the station has helped Kenya save about 24,470 metric tons of standard coal and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 64,000 tons annually.

Chinese photovoltaic companies can provide high-quality and competitively priced PV products in Africa, said Wang Jifeng, deputy



A view of the Redstone Concentrated Solar Thermal Power Project near Postmasburg in Northern Cape Province of South Africa on August 20. ZHANG YUDONG / XINHUA

general manager of JinkoSolar in the Middle East and Africa. They have advantages through excellent technology and product strength and are also a leading global presence, Wang said.

Chinese solar companies, in addition, have established comprehensive marketing systems, excellent local teams, and efficient after-sales services over the years. These efforts have enabled them to meet the growing energy demands and diverse application scenarios in the African market, he said.

Since 2021, Longi Green Energy Technology, for example, has directly supplied over 1 gigawatt of PV modules to more than 30 African countries. These modules are used across various sectors including national power grids, industry, commerce, agriculture, hospitals, schools, and public utilities.

In addition to exporting PV modules, Longi has also been stepping up collaboration with educational institutions to provide training in new energy.

The International Energy Agency forecasts that solar photovoltaic energy will comprise 47 percent of the technology's mix for mini-grids and off-the-grid systems power generation in sub-Saharan Africa by 2040, an indication that Kenya is on the right track.

Projects spread

The Garissa solar power station is not the only project of its type being built through cooperation with Chinese companies. Many similar China-Africa cooperation PV projects are located across the African continent, a region that is endowed with large solar resources.

China Electric Power Equipment and Technology recently signed a



Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta (center) attends the launching ceremony of the 50-MW solar power plant in Garissa, Kenya, in 2019. The plant was designed and built by China Jiangxi Corporation for International Economic and Technical Cooperation. XIE HAN / XINHUA

memorandum of understanding (MoU) to develop a 10-GW solar energy project in Egypt, which aims to boost renewable energy capacity and reduce reliance on fossil fuels in the country.

The completed project will be able to generate nearly 30 terawatt-hours of electricity per year. The project, which is part of Egypt's Green Corridor initiative dedicated to renewable energy development, will also save \$1 billion in annual costs of natural gas.

In recent years, a growing number of Chinese companies have come up with high-quality and affordable PV products in African countries, industry experts said. Investing in and constructing PV power plants in multiple African countries has also boosted local economies and provided reliable and low-cost electricity.

China-Africa cooperation in solar energy development and utilization has continuously made new progress, said Mao Xiaojing, director of the

institute for West-Asian and African studies under the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Powering the future

Energy shortages are a common issue faced by many African countries. By 2030, 660 million people worldwide will be without electricity, most of whom live in the sub-Saharan region, according to an International Energy Agency report.

Africa possesses abundant renewable energy resources, with solar, wind, and hydropower reserves accounting for 40 percent, 32 percent and 12 percent of global reserves respectively, and offering enormous potential for renewable energy development.

Data released by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) showed that between 2011 and 2020, Africa's solar installed capacity achieved an annual growth rate of 54 percent, which is two and a

half times that of wind energy, nearly four times that of geothermal, and almost 17 times that of hydropower.

"Currently, solar energy is the fastest-growing renewable energy in Africa and has become a key area of China-Africa clean energy cooperation," said Mao.

China and African countries are continuously innovating cooperation models in the field of solar and other clean energy to better adapt to the current economic and social development of Africa, Mao added.

Complementary resources

China's advantages in the renewable energy industry chain complement Africa's natural environmental endowments, Mao said, adding this opens up vast room for China-Africa cooperation in solar energy development and utilization.

In recent years, China's PV industry has developed rapidly and formed the world's most complete PV industry chain with multiple advantages in technology, cost, and scale. China is also the global leader in equipment manufacturing and engineering services related to PV applications, including energy storage and power transmission and distribution.

Africa's advantages stem from regions possessing abundant sunshine, giving it some of the richest solar energy resources globally, she said.

Many African countries regard the development of solar and other clean energies as crucial for addressing power shortages and promoting energy transition.

According to Kenya's Vision 2030, the country aims to achieve 100 percent clean energy power generation by 2030. South Africa

has proposed increasing the proportion of clean energy, such as solar power, in its energy mix from the current 7 percent to 40 percent by 2030. The construction of clean energy projects in Ethiopia, Uganda, and other countries is also progressing steadily.

China-Africa clean energy cooperation has effectively improved the power supply shortage situation in African countries and provided strong support for Africa's climate change response and green transition development, said Mao.

According to the IRENA's African renewable energy market report, the continent has about 7,900 GW of solar PV technical potential. As Africa's economic and social development and industrialization advance, local electricity demand will continue to grow.

Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University, said the rapid economic development in Africa in recent years has also led to a practical demand for energy transition, providing momentum for the continent's development of renewable energy.

Developing solar energy in Africa can help eliminate "energy poverty", reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create green jobs, and improve the living conditions of local residents, he said.

"Africa has benefited immensely from China's growing green energy industry, especially affordable green energy products like solar panels and batteries, as Chinese renewable energy technologies are cost-effective, highly applicable, and well-suited for African conditions," he said.

"Strengthening Sino-African renewable energy cooperation not only enhances Africa's sustainable development capabilities but also helps bridge Africa's technological gaps in related fields. Through each cooperation (effort), African countries have learned advanced technologies and management experiences from China."

In the future, China can leverage its advantages in photovoltaics, batteries, and mobile payments to not only supply equipment to African countries but also become developers and operators of PV projects. This commercially oriented approach will inject more vitality into Africa's economy, he added.

According to Mao, in addition to existing forms of cooperation such as aid, trade, equipment supply, project contracting, and enterprise investment, China can explore more cooperation with African countries in solar energy development and utilization.

By strengthening technical exchanges, sharing development experiences, and increasing financing support, new spaces for cooperation can be opened up, she said.

Africa is also rich in other renewable energies like wind, geothermal, and green hydrogen, which are areas where China and African countries can conduct more pragmatic cooperation.



Left: Chinese-made electric multiple unit trains run on the metro track in Abuja, Nigeria, on May 23. GUO CHEN / XINHUA



Middle: Employees work at the Redstone Concentrated Solar Thermal Power Project in South Africa on Aug 20. ZHANG YUDONG / XINHUA



Right: A taxi driver prepares to test-drive a Chinese new energy vehicle in Mombasa, Kenya, on Aug 16. WANG GUANSEN / XINHUA

By ZHENG XIN

Chinese EV makers eye potential of expanding markets

Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers are ramping up their push into Africa, seeking to capture a growing market with untapped potential.

Chinese EV maker Neta Auto — a brand developed by EV startup Zhejiang Hozon New Energy Automobile Company — opened its first flagship store in Kenya in June. The company is aiming to open 100 stores across 20 African countries in the next 2 to 3 years, and sell more than 20,000 vehicles.

In mid-June Chinese EV maker Xpeng Motors introduced its G9 and P7 models to the Egyptian market to expand its international sales — previously focused on Europe — further into the African and Middle Eastern markets.

In the same month, another Chinese EV manufacturer, BYD, signed

a deal with EV tech company Ampersand, based in Kigali, Rwanda, pledging to strengthen its presence in Africa by increasing sales of new energy and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Ampersand boasts the largest charging networks in Rwanda and Kenya. Under the deal, it will purchase batteries from BYD to build around 40,000 electric motorcycles by the end of 2026. The development is part of a broader mission to electrify most of Africa's 30 million commercial motorbikes, the majority of which still run on fuel, said Ampersand.

BYD's batteries and manufacturing scale, coupled with Ampersand's market insights and technical product knowledge, is expected to accel-

erate the transition of Africa's commercial motorcycles from fuel to electric power.

Josh Whale, CEO of Ampersand, said switching the millions of taxis and delivery two-wheelers to EV energy represents one of the world's best value-for-money decarbonization opportunities. The new partnership with BYD will count significantly toward its capacity to continue to provide sustainable, cost-effective, mass-market EV solutions, he added.

Huang Zhixue, head of automotive sales for BYD in the Middle East and Africa, believes BYD can meet South Africa's transportation needs and exceed customer expectations.

The increasing focus on Africa is an attempt by Chinese EV manufac-

turers to diversify their international markets, said industry experts.

Electrifying commercial motorbikes is a good first step toward a larger goal of cutting dependence on gasoline fuels for transportation in Africa, Huang said.

According to the International Energy Agency, the penetration rate of new energy vehicles in Africa and the Middle East is less than 1 percent.

This presents a significant opportunity for Chinese EV manufacturers to leapfrog competitors by expanding product lines and enhancing brand recognition in these regions, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

"Africa represents a largely un-

tapped market with significant growth potential. With a rapidly growing population and increasing urbanization, the demand for vehicles is expected to rise sharply," he said.

"Chinese automobile manufacturers, with competitive advantages such as cost-effective production and a complete supply chain, are capable of offering vehicles at more competitive prices, making them more accessible to African consumers."

Supportive policies and investments from Chinese and African governments have further facilitated the entry of Chinese companies into the African market. Initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative have strengthened economic ties between China and Africa, creating

favorable conditions for Chinese businesses, Lin added.

Many countries on the continent are stepping up efforts to embrace the green transition of the transportation sector. The Ethiopian government, for example, plans to import 4,800 electric buses and 148,000 EVs as part of its 10-Year Perspective Development Plan that runs from 2021 to 2030.

It has allowed the duty-free importation of EV parts as a way to promote the use of EVs as well as knowledge transfer. The prices of EVs are more competitive if they are assembled locally, which can also help boost employment.

The government of Rwanda has incentivized not only the manufacture and import, but also the acquisition of EVs, in a bid to attract investors who want to invest in EV production as well as those who want to invest in import businesses.



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Left: Angolan writer Jose Eduardo Agualusa (center) poses with readers following a dialogue with Wang Yuan (fourth from left), assistant professor of Portuguese from Peking University and a translator of his books, and writer Jia Hangjia (fourth from right), at the Fang Suo Commune Bookstore in Beijing on Aug 17. **Above:** Agualusa during the interview in Beijing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A journey across boundaries

Angolan writer of Portuguese-Brazilian origin talks about memory, forgetting and the significance of trying to understand each other, **Yang Yang** reports.

In mid-August, 64-year-old Angolan writer Jose Eduardo Agualusa paid his first visit to the Chinese mainland. Much as his writing, the trip to China was a journey across boundaries, both spatial and cultural.

Starting on the Island of Mozambique in northern Mozambique where he currently lives, Agualusa flew to the capital, Maputo, then to Lisbon, capital of Portugal, and then to Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, from where he took a train to Shanghai.

He had been invited to China as a guest of the international literary week at the Shanghai Book Fair.

In Beijing and Shanghai, he encountered friendly people and keen readers whose questions showed that they had carefully read three of his novels that have been published in China.

These are *A General Theory of Oblivion*, winner of the International Dublin Literary Award in 2017 and shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize 2016, *The Book of Chameleons*, the first African winner of the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize in the United Kingdom in 2007, and *The Living and the Rest*, which won the 2021 Portuguese PEN Prize.

Sun Ganlu, vice-president of the Shanghai Writers' Association, says that Agualusa's writing makes use of a calm voice, poetic language and a beautiful narrative rhythm to tell serious and cruel stories, a striking contrast that evokes complex emotions.

Agualusa was particularly impressed by the Shanghai Library East, which he compared to a trove in a forest.

When *A General Theory of Oblivion* won the International Dublin Literary Award in 2017, he said he wanted to use the prize money to help build a library on the Island of Mozambique, a wish he has not yet been able to realize mostly due to high property prices.

Like many writers, Agualusa also agrees that "a writer is first and foremost a great reader."

"To nurture a writing community, the first thing needed is to nurture a reading community. If you want to develop hundreds of writer communities, you need a library network," he says.

Agualusa says he was privileged because he grew up in a family which had a small library at home as both his parents, migrants from Brazil and Portugal respectively, loved reading.

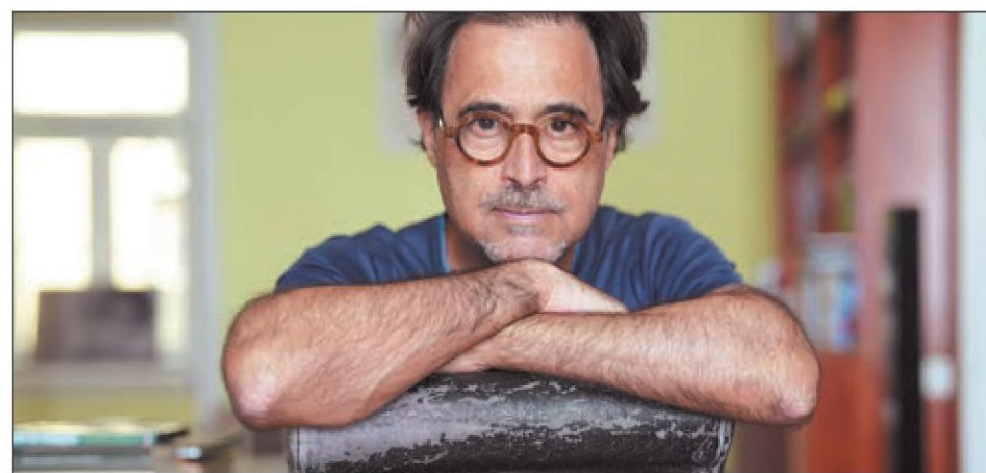
Now, reading excerpts from favorite novels or pieces of poetry has become a ritual before he starts writing every morning.

Agualusa's interest in public libraries also stems from his concern about Angola's collective memory and identity.

"Memory is always related to identity, which has become an important problem for young countries like Angola. When I discuss the topic of memory in my writing, I actually want to explore the issue of identity," he says.

"We say when an old person starts losing memories, he or she actually starts disappearing, so does a country. Individuals' memories constitute the collective memory of a country," he says.

In countries such as Angola and Mozambique, decades of war have left people with many traumatic memories. Agualusa has found that people in differ-



ent countries generally seek one of two solutions. Some choose to forget, to transcend the traumatic history, others keep the painful memories alive before learning to forgive. Agualusa does the latter through the help of writing.

"It is what everyone should do, first keep even the most painful memories, and then you are qualified to forgive," he said in an interview with the Book Review Weekly section of the newspaper *The Beijing News*.

"Only through memories can different sides in a war try to understand each other. In comparison, forgetting can lead to antagonism, especially fabricated forgetting," he said.

"In Angola, we are indeed facing a kind of identity crisis, which is actually due to a lack of a good memory-keeping mechanism, which includes literature, history, newspapers, magazines, and libraries, because identity is about everyday voices that should be preserved, and when this mechanism is lacking, it will cause problems."

Agualusa sees the hope of solving this crisis in young Angolan people, many of whom have shown an interest in his latest book *Vidas e Morte de Abel Chivukuvuku* (Lives and Deaths of Abel Chivukuvuku).

It is a biography of an Angolan revolutionary fighter who experiences trials and tribulations throughout his life. It explores themes such as identity, politics and the human experience in the context of Angola's history and society.

"In this biography, I wanted to explore the problem of identity more. To my surprise, it has been well-received in Angola, the best of all my books, especially among young people," he says.

"People under 30 account for 70 percent of the population in Angola. As more young people are curious about the country's history, it's hopeful," he says.

At the Shanghai Library East, Agualusa delivered a speech titled *The Boundary of Narration*, in which he talked about his pursuit of writing, that is, to fight boundaries.

One of the boundaries is the one between "I" and "the other," which he says can be crossed through reading and writing.

In his most translated novel, *A General Theory of Oblivion*, an agoraphobic Portuguese woman named Ludo (short for Ludovica), who moves to Angola

Above: Angolan writer Jose Eduardo Agualusa. **Below:** Three books of the writer translated into Chinese: *Os Vivos e os Outros* (The Living and the Rest), *O Vendedor de Passados* (The Book of Chameleons), and *Teoria Geral do Esquecimento* (A General Theory of Oblivion).



with her sister, bricks herself up in her apartment in Luanda for 30 years. Over the decades, the only way for her to "leave" is by reading the collection of books in the apartment.

"Reading liberated her and allowed her to get close to others," Agualusa said in the speech.

He emphasized this observation in a dialogue with Sun, saying that when people asked whether he felt foreign being in another country, he said that he didn't, because he was with readers, who were reading the same books by great writers such as Argentine poet and writer Jorge Luis Borges, and Colombian Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

"Reading the literature we love bridges our gaps," he said.

Through reading, people can stand in the shoes of others and feel their emotions, making the world a better place. Writing has a similar effect, even more so, he said in the speech.

In 1989, Agualusa published his first book, *A Conjura* (The Conspiracy), a fictional documentary about a 1911 rebellion against Portuguese colonization, inspired by news stories written by Africans at the end of the 19th century.

"That led me to think about the anti-colonial war in Angola from 1961 to 1974," he told *Wenhui Daily*. After independence, a civil war broke out in 1975 and lasted until 2002.

"My country might have gone through the longest and cruelest civil war of the time. Why did that happen? My intuition told me that if I don't understand the past, I cannot understand the present," he said.

Writing the book allowed Agualusa to better understand the falsifications and terms colonizers and warlords devised to incite antagonism and suppress goodwill and understanding between people.

Through his writing, he manages to counter these sly verbal tricks, listen to the voices of others, step into their skins, feel their heartbeats, and shed their tears, even if they were supposedly "enemies".

"Writing strengthens the muscles of empathy," he said in the speech.

To provide readers the context to understand "the other," the main mission of a writer is to try to become "the other," Agualusa says, adding that "the beauty of writing lies right in this eternal attempt to become 'the other' — young or old, man or woman, individuals of

human or other species".

For example, *The Book of Chameleons* is narrated in the voice of a lizard.

"As I grow older, and have experience of different places, I increasingly feel that 'the other' is us, and we are 'the other'. The boundary between the two is dynamic," he says, "and getting to know 'the other' is a process of self-discovery, and vice versa."

To become "the other," the first thing is to listen and talk to them, to try to understand them.

In *A General Theory of Oblivion*, he portrays a police officer who has tortured criminals.

"It's more difficult to understand a bad person, but one of my pursuits of writing is to find the humanity in bad people," he says.

Another boundary the writer has been trying to cross in writing is the one between fiction and reality.

In *The Living and the Rest*, for example, writers and poets from different African countries come to the Island of Mozambique for a literary week. As the story develops, writers meet characters from their books in the fictional reality.

Some critics categorize Agualusa's style as magic realism, although the author strongly disagrees.

Magical realism is a storytelling approach often used in Latin American literature, where fantastical or mythical elements are matter-of-factly woven into otherwise realistic narratives. It is seen as an effective strategy allowing writers to examine problems in postcolonial societies.

"When I read Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the master of magical realism, I feel something very familiar and real in his work," he says.

Agualusa found evidence in Marquez's visit to Angola to support this feeling. In 1977, two years after Angola's independence from Portugal, the Colombian writer was invited to visit the country to write about its community of Cubans. In Angola, Marquez found a universe similar to his childhood in Latin America.

"That's why I say there is something very similar between South American and African cultures," he says.

Agualusa says he does not like to be labeled.

"What they call magic realism is actually everyday life in Africa, so I prefer to define it as African realism," he says, adding that "some African writers call it animism instead."

In *The Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka turned a person into a gigantic insect. In *The Living and the Rest*, I wrote about a woman transforming from a cockroach. People call me a magical realist, but nobody labels Kafka that way," he says.

"This kind of label sometimes restricts our recognition of literature, and it is what a writer needs to break," he says.

Agualusa closed his speech by saying that writing transcends the boundaries of possibility. "The impossible paths, the paths that frighten us, are the only paths worth exploring for writers. Writing — like all journeys — is about seeking wonder. I believe that the only limit for writers is their imagination."

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Left: An acrobat from Sierra Leone practices acrobatic moves at Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School on Aug 23. **Center:** Kenyan acrobat Judah Patrick Mulwa shows off his strength and balance at Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School on Aug 24. **Right:** An acrobat from Sierra Leone demonstrates his steady hand and composure at Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School on Aug 23.



Mathias Kavita (right) and Xu Yang (back) assist Kenyan students with acrobatic moves at Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School in Wuqiao county, Hebei province, on Aug 23. PHOTOS BY WU XIAOHUI / CHINA DAILY

Homecoming for China-trained acrobat

Kenyan coach aims to nurture more talent in Africa, inspire new generation

By WU XIAOHUI in Wuqiao, Hebei
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Little did Mathias Kavita, a 14-year-old Kenyan boy, know that after completing two years of rigorous training at the Guangzhou Acrobatic Troupe in South China, it would take him four decades to return to the country he had come to consider his second home.

From 1983 to 1985, Kavita, together with 23 other Kenyan teenagers, spent two rewarding years of intense training marked by both hardship and joy. This unforgettable experience profoundly influenced him, who has since become a respected acrobatics coach in Kenya, training more than 1,000 acrobats.

For almost 40 years, Kavita

dreamed of returning to China. That dream became a reality last year after his story captured media attention and he performed at an event commemorating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Kenya. With support from the Chinese embassy, Kavita made his way back, not to Guangzhou, but to Wuqiao in Hebei province, a county known as the birthplace of Chinese acrobatics.

"Coming here to Wuqiao reminds me of my first trip to China. What I've found here is fascinating because almost everyone knows something about acrobatics," said the now 53-year-old Kavita, his excitement evident.

Xu Yang, a coach with more than 20 years of experience at Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School, shared the

excitement over Kavita's visit. "The other day I mentioned an acrobatic move in Chinese, 'Gu Lu Mao', which means front flips, and he immediately understood it," Xu said, noting that despite Kavita's reduced fluency in Mandarin, he

still remembers all the key acrobatic terms in Chinese.

This year, about 70 acrobats from nine countries, including Bangladesh, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Sierra Leone, have come to Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School for training. In

addition to working closely with his four Kenyan students, Kavita also assists in training beginners, including young children. Witnessing their tears has evoked memories of his own experiences as a child at the Guangzhou Acrobatic Troupe in the 1980s.

"I see my younger self in these kids. I believe that one day, they will be so proud of China and the skills they've learned here. This knowledge will make them travel all over the world and meet different people," Kavita said.

Since 2002, Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School has trained about 700 foreign acrobats from more than 30 countries, with a majority of them hailing from Africa.

"African students often blend the acrobatic skills they learn here with their rich cultural heritage, which

helps spread Chinese acrobatic arts across the continent in a more diverse form," said Liu Chunxiao, the school's office manager. "I hope these students will continue to foster the traditional friendship between China and Africa."

Before the two-month training program in Wuqiao concludes at the end of this month, Kavita plans to visit his former teachers at the Guangzhou Acrobatic Troupe. The troupe is thrilled to learn that the Kenyan students are still very active in acrobatics after all these years, he said.

"This is not the end of my acrobatic journey. I hope to open a school when I return to Kenya to tap more talents. It's challenging but this has always been my dream," Kavita said, adding he believes this is all about creating a shared future.



Left: Mathias Kavita (right) assists Kenyan students with acrobatic moves at Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School on Aug 23. **Center:** A trainee from Sierra Leone shows off her balancing skills at Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School on Aug 23. **Right:** Kenyan acrobat Peter Maina takes a selfie with Chinese students from Wuqiao Acrobatic Art School on Aug 24.

CHINA

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Members from Asia News Network and speakers take group photos at the Forum on Cultural Heritage Conservation in Selangor, Malaysia, on Thursday. ANDY CHONG / CHINA DAILY

Preserving cultural heritage essential for shared future

Forum held in Malaysia highlights media's role in enhancing cooperation

By YANG HAN and WILLIAM XU
in Selangor, Malaysia

Asian countries should make full use of the power of culture and civilization to support regional unity, openness and progress for a shared future, a forum in Malaysia heard on Thursday.

"We should help establish a new Asian model for the development of cultural heritage and for international cooperation," said Qu Yingpu, publisher and editor-in-chief of China Daily, at the Forum on Cultural Heritage Conservation in Selangor, Malaysia.

"In this way, regional countries can jointly contribute to fostering a community with a shared future for both Asia and all humanity," Qu said.

Themed "Shared Heritage, Shared Future", the forum was jointly organized by China Daily, newspaper alliance Asia News Network and the KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific, a think tank.

"We have to work together to promote the exchange and mutual learning of Asian cultural heritage," said Christina Yeo Ken Yin, under-secretary of the International Relations Division in Culture at Malaysia's Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture.

In addition to cooperation programs in cultural heritage with countries such as China, Thailand, Brunei, Singapore and Indonesia, Yeo said Malaysia is preparing to join the Alliance for Cultural Heritage in Asia — an intergovernmental platform initiated by China to promote regional cooperation in preserving regional cultural heritage.

"Civilization exchanges and mutual learning form an important drive for human progress and global peace and development," said Chang Shan, counselor of the cultural affairs department of the Chinese embassy in Malaysia.

With Asia being an important cradle of human civilization, China and countries in the Association of

Southeast Asian Nations are linked by mountains and rivers and share historical bonds, which have led to close people-to-people exchanges, said Chang.

Noting that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Malaysia, Chang said the two countries' cooperation in cultural heritage protection will continue to play an important role in bilateral exchanges.

Mahfuz Anam, chairman of Asia News Network and editor and publisher of Bangladesh's The Daily Star, said cultures speak louder than languages and act as effective communicators among different people.

He urged people, particularly journalists, to devote more energy to learning and comprehending different cultural heritages to reduce misunderstandings in a world with more conflicts and uncertainties.

Ronald Gan, president of Persatuan Peranakan Baba Nyonya Malaysia, said the Baba and Nyonya community is a typical example of cultural exchanges between China and Malaysia, with blended elements in cuisine, attire and architecture.

"We are, after all, the descendants of the wise Chinese who migrated to Nanyang with the values of inclusiveness and mutual benefit," said Gan, who has been organizing a Wangchuan ceremony in Melaka.

The ceremony, jointly nominated by China and Malaysia, was added to the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list in 2020.

As climate change can affect cultural heritage sites, Michael Yeoh, president of KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific, said countries in the region should enhance public, private and people partnerships to protect the environment.

Upholding the 5Ps — planet, people, prosperity, partnership and peace — will ensure a more sustainable future, said Yeoh.

A panel discussion on "Transnational Cooperation for the Conservation of Shared Cultural Landscapes in Asia" was also held during the forum, with experts from across the region exchanging views on future strategies for preserving cultural heritage and landscapes.

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Efforts in tackling air pollution bear fruit

By HOU LIQIANG
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China and Europe recorded below-average levels of hazardous PM2.5 particulate matter in 2023, attributable to declining human-caused emissions, according to a recent report by the World Meteorological Organization.

This continues a trend observed since the annual WMO Air Quality and Climate Bulletin was first published in 2021, according to a media release from the organization on Thursday.

Wildfires over North America caused exceptionally high PM2.5 emissions compared to the reference period from 2003 to 2023, the report said. Above-average PM2.5 levels were also measured in India, due to an increase in emissions from human and industrial activities.

The report also explored the intricate relationship between air quality and climate.

Chemicals that lead to a degradation of air quality are normally co-emitted with greenhouse gases. Thus, changes in one inevitably cause changes in the other, it said, adding that air quality in turn affects ecosystem health as air pollutants settle from the atmosphere on the Earth's surface.

"Climate change and air quality cannot be treated separately. They go hand-in-hand and must be tackled together," said WMO Deputy Secretary-General Ko Barrett.

"It would be a win-win situation for the health of our planet, its peo-

ple and our economies, to recognize the interrelationship and act accordingly," Barrett was quoted as saying in the release.

Her remarks align perfectly with China's current strategy to tackle pollution and climate change, which is officially referred to as "synergizing the reduction of pollution and carbon emissions".

According to the bulletin, ambient air pollution causes more than 4.5 million premature deaths annually and wreaks a high economic and environmental cost.

The bulletin was released for Clean Air for Blue Skies Day, which falls this year on Saturday under the theme of "Invest in Clean Air Now".

In his video remarks for an event in Beijing on Thursday, Siddharth Chatterjee, the United Nations' development system resident coordinator in China, said "Air pollution is preventable and reversible" and "Beijing stands as a testament to the possibilities for reducing air pollution".

Last year, the average PM2.5 density in Beijing dropped to only 32 micrograms per cubic meter, compared with 89.5 mcg/cubic meter in 2013, the first year when Beijing started to monitor the pollutant, according to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment.

"This achievement did not happen by chance or luck. It was the result of a long and arduous journey, with many important lessons learned that can serve as examples and best practices for any nation, district or municipality that wishes to follow a similar path to reduce air pollution," Chatterjee said.



As Typhoon Yagi approaches, vessels are seen being docked at a harbor in Haikou, Hainan province, on Wednesday.

LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Severe typhoon to hit Hainan, Guangdong

By ZHENG CAIXIONG
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Guangzhou

Yagi will be the strongest typhoon to strike the island province of Hainan in the past decade, China's meteorological body said on Wednesday.

Yagi has paralyzed normal operations in the coastal cities of Guangdong and Hainan provinces, it added.

The typhoon, the 11th of this year, grew into a super typhoon on Wednesday, and is estimated to make landfall between Qionghai, Hainan, and Dianbai, Guangdong, on Friday afternoon or later in the evening, said Xiang Chunyi, a forecaster of the National Meteorological Center.

Xiang attributed the formation of the super typhoon to a strong tropical storm.

The typhoon is expected to cause torrential rainfall and gusting winds in cities along the coast of Guangdong from Thursday to Saturday, said Liang Qiaoqian, chief forecaster at the Guangdong provincial meteorological service.

The two provinces upgraded their anti-typhoon emergency response to their top levels on Thursday morning.

In Zhanjiang, Guangdong, which is forecast to be hit hard by the typhoon, vehicles — except for emergency rescue and the kind — have been told to stop operating, while residents have been urged to reduce outdoor activities. Power supply for major outdoor projects

has also been cut beginning Thursday, local authorities said.

In Hainan, 34,707 fishing boats have been secured in harbors or designated safe areas, and 78,261 individuals working off the coast have been relocated to land, the local government said.

Wenchang, Hainan, another city at high risk, has charted plans to relocate around 240,000 residents to safe areas.

Meanwhile, coastal tourist attractions and beaches in Guangdong and Hainan have been told to close temporarily, and ferry services across the Qiongzhou Strait have also been suspended from midnight Wednesday until Sunday.

In Zhuhai, Guangdong, about 40 flights were canceled on Thursday to ensure safety. Similar measures were adopted in Hainan.

Trains were affected as well. As of 6 pm on Thursday, all trains on the high-speed railway loop in Hainan and Haikou urban rail lines were suspended, with expected further suspensions through Friday and Saturday.

The marine department of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge will be closed temporarily starting at 9 pm on Thursday. It has already introduced traffic controls for inland river vessels, banning riverboats from operating under the bridge to avoid any accident on Thursday, according to the bridge authority.

Chen Bowen in Haikou contributed to this story.

China seeks partners for Martian soil retrieval

By ZHAO LEI
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China is likely to bring Martian soil back to Earth in the near future, and is encouraging foreign scientists to take part in this ambitious interplanetary endeavor.

Liu Jizhong, a leading scientist in China's deep-space exploration programs and chief planner of the Martian soil-return project, said on Thursday in Tunxi, Anhui province, that the nation plans to collect Martian samples and then bring them back to Earth around 2028 via a historic mission named Tianwen 3, the third in China's inter-

planetary exploration schedule.

The primary scientific goal of this mission is to look for traces of life on the red planet, he said, adding that Chinese researchers are working on essential technologies to be used in the robotic expedition such as sampling and liftoff on the Martian surface.

Liu said China is open to cooperation with foreign scientists in the Tianwen 3 program, encouraging them to take part in payload design, sample and data analysis, and long-term planning for a Martian scientific outpost.

He made the remarks at the Second International Deep Space

Exploration Conference, also known as the Tiandu Forum, that opened on Thursday, with about 400 attendees from over 40 countries, regions and international organizations.

According to mission planners at the China National Space Administration, the Tianwen 3 probe will have four components — a lander, an ascender, an orbiter and a re-entry module — and will be launched on two Long March 5 heavy-lift carrier rocket flights from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province.

If everything goes according to plan, the samples could become the first to be returned to Earth from

Mars, and will help scientists look for traces of life on Mars, learn more about the planet's geology and inner structures, and understand its atmospheric cycles.

China launched its first Mars program, Tianwen 1, in July 2020. It was the country's first independent interplanetary exploration endeavor.

In another development, Wu Yanhua, chief planner of the nation's deep-space exploration programs, said the China-initiated International Lunar Research Station will take initial shape around 2035 and become a comprehensive science base before 2050.

Country opts not to impose tariffs on EU brandy

By WANG KEJU
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After an eight-month investigation, China has opted not to impose provisional anti-dumping measures on imported brandy originating from the European Union, a move which experts view as a proactive step toward de-escalating tensions.

By refraining from immediate punitive actions, China is signaling its willingness to engage in constructive dialogue and negotiation with the EU, setting a tone of cooperation and mutual understanding in addressing trade disputes, they added.

He Yongqian, spokeswoman for the Ministry of Commerce, said at a

news conference on Thursday, that while brandy imported from the bloc involves dumping, no temporary anti-dumping measures will be imposed in this case for the time being.

In January, China launched an anti-dumping investigation into brandy imported from the EU following a request from the China Alcoholic Drinks Association on behalf of the domestic industry.

Moving forward, relevant authorities will continue to progress with on-site verifications and subsequent investigative work in accordance with the law, aiming to render an objective and impartial final ruling, He added.

This decision by the Chinese

authorities stands in stark contrast to the actions taken by Brussels, which has pushed ahead with sharply raising tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles despite facing opposition within the EU, said Bai Ming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

The European Commission announced on Aug 20 that it plans to slap five-year import duties of up to 36.3 percent on Chinese-made EVs after the two sides had engaged in over a dozen rounds of technical consultations since late June.

As the essence of collaboration between China and the EU lies in mutual benefit, China has dedicated itself to resolving the trade dis-

pute through dialogue and consultation with the EU so as to avert any further escalation of trade tensions, Bai added.

The goodwill extended by China, however, should not be taken for granted. China will not hesitate to employ necessary actions to protect the legitimate rights and interests of its companies in the face of blatant protectionism, experts said.

Cui Fan, a global trade professor at the University of International Business and Economics, said it is hoped that the EU will match China's efforts and demonstrate genuine goodwill in future negotiations, so that it can provide a resolution that satisfies the interests of both sides, Cui added.

GLOBAL VIEWS



Editor's note: The world has undergone many changes and shocks in recent years. Enhanced dialogue between scholars from China and overseas is needed to build mutual understanding on many problems the world faces. For this purpose, the China Watch Institute of China Daily and the National Institute for Global Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, jointly present this special column: The Global Strategy Dialogue, in which experts from China and abroad will offer insightful views, analysis and fresh perspectives on long-term strategic issues of global importance.

SONG JING AND BENSON IRERI

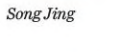
More power from FOCAC and beyond

Enhancing China-Africa collaboration can prove crucial to closing sub-Saharan Africa's energy access gap

The world is well off-track to meeting its shared goal of providing affordable, reliable and sustainable energy to all people by 2030.

Indeed, the number of people without electricity access increased in 2022 for the first time in a decade, rising from 675 million in 2021 to 685 million.

Eighty percent of people without access to electricity — and 18 of the 20 countries with the biggest energy access deficits — are in sub-Saharan Africa.



Song Jing



Benson Ireri

Addressing Africa's substantial energy access gap requires an estimated investment of \$20 billion annually by 2030, according to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) estimate. And China could play a key role in filling that need. China, Africa's largest bilateral trading partner and

a major source of foreign aid, is well positioned to support African countries in expanding clean energy across the continent. As the world's leading manufacturer of renewable energy technology, China has the potential to play a pivotal role in bridging this gap, which should be done in collaboration with African countries' national and local governments to meet each country's unique needs.

Historically, China's renewable energy investments in Africa have focused on large, utility-scale installations. For instance, the 50-megawatt solar power station in Kenya, supported by the Chinese government, has generated over 76 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually since its launch in 2019, benefiting more than 380,000 people in 70,000 households. However, these large-scale projects often fail to meet the decentralized, small-scale



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

energy needs in remote areas with limited access to energy. The disconnect between centralized energy supply and dispersed demand has made it challenging to expand energy's reach to where it is most needed.

An Africa Solar Belt program, officially pledged by China at the first Africa Climate Summit in Kenya last year, represents a significant shift in China's approach to renewable energy investments, emphasizing smaller, socially impactful initiatives.

Between 2024 and 2027, the program will allocate 100 million yuan (\$14.03 million) to provide solar home systems to 50,000 African households, supporting local livelihoods. Despite its potential to enhance access to electricity, the initiative faces challenges, including accurately assessing electricity demand, developing sustainable business models, and building local capacity for operation and maintenance.

As China prepares to host the 2024 Sum-

mit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, improving access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa should be a priority. This focus aligns with the summit's theme of "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future". The world will be watching as leaders from China and Africa explore solutions to unlock new clean energy investments under the Africa Solar Belt program and similar programs.

To achieve meaningful progress, scaling up both public and private investment in clean energy initiatives is essential. As China shifts its investment focus away from overseas coal-fired power plants, there are increasing opportunities to redirect funding into sub-Saharan Africa's distributed renewable energy sector. However, this requires a transition from traditional financing models used for utility-scale projects to innovative approaches tailored to the needs of decentralized renewable energy systems.

Fostering business opportunities between China and sub-Saharan Africa's private sector is crucial. Distributed renewable energy is most needed in rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa, where local contexts — including terrain and cultural dynamics — will determine the success of projects. Collaboration with local renewable energy companies is therefore critical to the effective implementation of "small and beautiful" projects.

Moreover, partnerships with credible local and international institutions are vital to providing reliable, granular data at both the national and local levels, which can inform energy planning and investment decisions. Tools such as the World Resources Institute's Energy Access Explorer can help identify areas with viable renewable energy demand, whether for household electrification or powering productive uses such as agriculture and healthcare.

Continuous policy dialogue at the nation-

al, regional and international levels will play a key role in deploying distributed renewable energy throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Engaging with key organizations to amplify voices from the Global South in strategic policy and regulatory discussions is essential. Collaborating with demand-side policymakers to raise awareness among investors and renewable energy developers about investment opportunities, as well as strengthening South-South cooperation on strategic global platforms — beyond FOCAC — to influence regional and international policy on renewable energy investment will be critical. Empowering existing cooperation mechanisms, such as the China-African Union Energy Partnership, should also be encouraged.

Sub-Saharan African countries, rich in critical minerals for renewable technologies, currently export these raw materials at low cost while importing expensive finished products. By facilitating technology transfer and building local manufacturing capacity, China can help these countries reduce costs, create jobs, and ensure the long-term scalability of clean energy.

China and Africa should work together to create sustainable, long-term solutions for energy access. Such collaboration will not only advance the continent's development but also contribute to global goals of sustainability and equity. The progress and achievements made at FOCAC 2024 can set a transformative course, ensuring that millions in sub-Saharan Africa gain access to the energy they need for a brighter, more prosperous future.

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HUANG MEIBO AND ZHANG YUNING

Band-Aid alternative

China strives to provide long-term remedies for the treatment of African countries' pandemic-induced debt problems

The Chinese government has provided a large amount of much-needed development funds for African countries through foreign aid, export credit, development finance, equity investment and other means, effectively alleviating their financing pressure and gradually becoming



Huang Meibo



Zhang Yuning

one of the most important sources of financing for African countries. This funding has helped African countries make significant progress in infrastructure construction and contributed to their intrinsic growth momentum.

Before 2020, China handled debt issues with other developing countries mainly through bilateral channels. During the debt crisis and economic crisis of African countries in the 1980s, China negotiated with African countries on solving the debt problem — mainly by extending the repayment periods. For example, China extended the repayment period for the Tanzania-Zambia Railway project several times. From 1983 to 1990, China lengthened the repayment period for a dozen African countries, including Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

Since 2000, the Chinese government has been providing debt relief for African countries by canceling interest-free loan debts that matured and could not be repaid.

Between 2000 and 2019, China canceled at least \$3.4 billion in African debt. It has provided large-scale debt cancellation for Zambia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Sudan, Cameroon, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mali Guinea and other African nations. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, China announced that it had written off interest-free loans for 15 African countries that matured in 2020. Later, at the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-

Africa Cooperation, China announced that it would exempt the least developed African countries of debt incurred from interest-free loans matured at the end of 2021. At the follow-up video conference held in 2022, China announced that it had waived 23 interest-free loans for 17 African countries which had matured by the end of 2021.

For concessional loans, preferential buyer's credits and commercial loans, China tends to treat them without reduction of principal. Although the debt treatment method in each case is different, the main way is to reduce the net present value of the debt by lowering the interest rate, extending the grace period and significantly extending the repayment period.

Between 2000 and 2019, Chinese lenders restructured or refinanced approximately \$15 billion of debt in Africa, of which \$4.378 billion was restructured. Of that, after 2014, in the wake of the global commodity price plunge, China actively carried out debt restructuring with African countries to help them cope with the unfavorable international environment. In 2016, China provided \$7.5 billion in new financing to Angola, making Angola one of the largest beneficiaries of China's outbound investment and financing loans in Africa. From 2017 to 2019, China has carried out debt restructuring with Chad, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Niger, Republic of the Congo, Cameroon and other African countries.

From the perspective of debt forgiveness for Africa, China's governance plan, which emphasizes "bilateral channels" and adherence to the principle of "noninterference in internal affairs", is different from that of the Western providers such as the International Monetary Fund and the Paris Club.

Generally, China does not simply offer debt forgiveness, and loans are made on the basis of a project's future earnings rather than short-term economic conditions. This is because China believes that debt write-offs only solve problems on the surface and do not guarantee long-term debt sustainability. If the debtor has difficulties in paying on time, China will consider helping the project revitalize through such means as rescheduling and increasing the grant, or

hiring a Chinese company to assist operations. China aims to ensure the interests of both parties by increasing the "blood-creation" capability, to help the project get back on track and earn profits.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the debt sustainability of African countries has once again come under the global spotlight. Facing the rising possibility of debt defaults, China has been actively participating in the treatment of African countries' debt problems and providing African countries with solutions based on a long-term perspective.

China has actively carried out debt moratorium and debt restructuring with African countries through bilateral and multilateral channels to reduce their debt repayment pressure. In this process, China has fully considered the development needs of African countries and is committed to promoting their long-term sustainable development.

China's participation in the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Common Framework for Debt Treatments marks the beginning of China's transition from a bilateral approach to a multilateral approach in addressing debt problems.

In 2020, China and the other G20 members jointly launched the DSSI and the CF. China has actively coordinated the joint negotiations of official bilateral creditors, which is not only the improvement and upgrading of China's debt governance concept, but also a reflection of its integration into the international sovereign debt governance system.

Two official bilateral creditors, the China International Development Cooperation Agency and the Export-Import Bank of China, started to provide G20 DSSI to countries worldwide in April 2020. Other Chinese banks including the China Development Bank and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China also provided debt relief to other countries outside the G20 program.

China ranks first among the G20 members in terms of debt deferral amounts under the DSSI for African countries. As of October 2021, China had suspended \$5.7



MA XUEJING / FOR CHINA DAILY

billion of debt service payments for 26 countries, more than all the Paris Club members combined and accounting for around half of the world's total debt service suspension. China is also a major bilateral creditor for the three CF debt relief applicants — Chad, Ethiopia and Zambia.

In the process of providing development financing to Africa and dealing with the corresponding debt problems, providing debt relief is only a stopgap measure for solving the urgent need, but not a long-term solution. The international community should take measures to innovate the development financing mechanism, improve the economic structure of African countries, upgrade the mode of economic growth, and form a virtuous cycle between debt and economic development to fundamentally avoid a debt crisis.

Based on respect for African countries

and African people, China will continue to cooperate with African countries in infrastructure, trade and investment through China-Africa cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative, to promote the long-term stable development of African countries and fundamentally improve their development capacity and debt repayment capacity.

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WORLD

Project brings relief for villagers in Kenya

Chinese-backed facility ensures clean water is accessible for domestic use

By **RADING GERRO**
in Nairobi, Kenya
For *China Daily*

Residents of Kipsebwa village in western Kenya's Nandi Hills, which was facing a severe water shortage, are smiling, thanks to the launch of a cutting-edge water treatment and supply facility in the village that provides clean water for domestic use.

Launched by Kenyan President William Ruto in August, the \$3 million project, funded and built by China Railway No 10 Engineering Group, entailed the establishment of massive water tanks. It also involved the rehabilitation and upgrading of the existing water distribution system within the village, water kiosks and three ablution blocks, as well as the development of a new water source at the nearby river.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, Ruto said the project is currently supplying 250,000 liters of water every day to 1,000 households, adding the project will be expanded to benefit at least 10,000 households over the next three years.

Ma Qiwen, project manager of China Railway No 10 Engineering Group, said the project, a part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, seeks to uplift Kenya's livelihood development.

"The goal is to ensure the community and its environs have access to clean water for domestic usage, which will help prevent waterborne diseases."

Ma said more new water treatment plants are being built in the coastal areas of Kenya.

“For decades, our children suffered from cholera and bilharzia diseases as a result of drinking contaminated water from the local river but now we do not need to worry anymore because the Chinese have connected our houses with clean water.”

Lawrence Bett,
a village elder in Kipsebwa

Like many other areas in Kenya, there is a shortage of clean water due to lack of water treatment facilities. For decades, the locals in Nandi Hills have been forced to use contaminated water for domestic purposes, posing health risks.

Janet Tarus, a mother of four in Kipsebwa village, could not hide her joy of having access to clean water.

She says the water facility is like a dream come true for her and her family. Previously, she had to travel 15 kilometers to fetch 20 liters of clean water for domestic usage which was not enough for the family, she said. Now, she can get clean water within a few minutes from her home.

Lawrence Bett, a village elder, said that previously the villagers had dif-

ficulty in getting clean water.

"For decades, our children suffered from cholera and bilharzia diseases as a result of drinking contaminated water from the local river, but now we do not need to worry anymore because the Chinese have connected our houses with clean water," he said.

Schools benefited

He also said the schools in the area have been connected to the county water pipeline, a move he terms as vital for providing students with more time to spend time in the class.

"Previously, the school-going children were not able to concentrate in class because once they got back home, they were tasked with fetching water kilometers away. But now with the majority of the homes connected to clean water, we are going to see tremendous improvement in their performance," he said.

The clean water project has also inspired some villagers to venture into agribusiness.

Gladys Jerobon and other women in the village plan to start a plant nursery project, which will help them earn a decent living and contribute to the welfare of their families.

Jepkosgei Tai, who owns a dairy farm, used to pay \$200 every month to purchase water from a nearby vendor. She found it expensive.

Now that her home is connected to the water supply line, her water bill has been reduced by more than half. "The water bill used to eat into my profits, but now that I am connected to the supply line, I can invest the extra cash into acquiring more animal feed."

The writer is a freelance journalist for *China Daily*.

War's young victims



Palestinian children wounded in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip are treated in a hospital in Deir al-Balah on Thursday. ABDEL KAREEM HANA / AP

Chinese restaurants in US look to elevate the dining experience

By **RENALI** in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

39%

Percentage of Asian restaurants in the US serving Chinese food

In the diverse culinary landscape of the United States, there are nearly 100,000 Asian restaurants where Chinese cuisine is prominent.

Yet, despite the popularity of Chinese food — which is featured on 39 percent of the menus at Asian restaurants — leaders in the Chinese catering industry are calling for a shift in focus.

At a recent industry meeting, experts emphasized that while taste remains crucial, the future success of Chinese restaurants in America hinges on enhancing the overall dining experience.

Amy Duan, founder of Chihuo and initiator of the Taste of Asia event, stressed that thriving in the competitive American market requires more than just flavor; it demands an investment in ambience, service and cultural storytelling.

"Food is the language that (means) you like people, so there's no politics, no barriers... everyone will enjoy the beauty of good food," Duan told *China Daily* at a recent North America Asian food industry conference and exhibition in Los Angeles.

Hundreds of people in the catering industry attended the conference to discuss franchise models, marketing and brands, localization strategies and supply chains.

As American consumers increasingly seek authentic, globally influenced culinary experiences, Chinese restaurant owners are encouraged to adapt and innovate, learning from the successful models of American chains like McDonald's and Burger King, to build a loyal and diverse customer base, Duan said.

Chinese cuisine is renowned for its rich and diverse flavors, yet Westerners might not fully appreciate the intricate techniques and cultural significance behind its preparation.

Many Chinese dishes in the US have been adapted to suit American tastes, often resulting in a sweeter, less-complex flavor profile. That has led to Americanized Chinese food becoming the primary representation of the cuisine.

"Most of the Chinese restaurants are feeling lonely. They don't know if it's the best way to do the business in America and how to promote the Asian food culture in America," Duan said.

While discussing expanding a restaurant chain globally, the industry leaders emphasized the importance of understanding local markets, adapting to customer preferences and overcoming cultural barriers.

Zhao Yong, president of the Asian American Hospitality Alliance, highlighted the challenges facing Chinese cuisine in the US, describing the industry as being in a "red ocean" state — saturated with competition but lacking in cohesive strategy.

He said there are three main problems: low prices leading to a decline in quality, a lack of standardization, and the use of cheap labor, which hinders the industry's growth and potential for public recognition.

"For example, if there is a small restaurant in a small US town with a population of 20,000, soon there will be 10 Chinese restaurants in that town, more than McDonald's, but everyone is undercutting prices, and prices can't go any lower. This has been the traditional expansion method for Chinese restaurants in the US — competing against each other," Zhao said.

To address those issues, Zhao suggested creating national Chinese food festivals, such as Hot Pot Day or Soup Dumpling Day, to promote culinary brands and encourage investment in the Chinese food supply chain.

Such efforts would raise the profile of Chinese cuisine, he said.

However, some experts expressed doubts about introducing too much of the original culture into the US market.

Cervantes Lee, professor of hospitality business at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said that while authenticity is important, it's crucial to respect local customs and culture.

"The business should be managed by a team familiar with the local market, and the food's flavor must be adapted to suit local tastes," Lee said.

"It's important not to assume that Americans will immediately appreciate our authentic dishes," Duan said.

For Asian restaurants in the US, the focus is often on delivering the best flavors and tastes. However, American customers seek more than just good food; they are drawn to the overall atmosphere — whether classic, upscale or casual — and the story behind the restaurant.

Service is also crucial, as dining out is about enjoying a complete experience, a point emphasized at the gathering.

"Unfortunately, many Asian or Chinese restaurateurs tend to overlook the importance of environment, vibe and service, concentrating solely

on taste, which isn't enough to satisfy American diners," Duan said.

Still, Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Thai restaurants are increasingly being included on Michelin's list in recent years. They become popular in the US partly due to adapting their offerings to local palates.

"This approach contrasts with simply copying menus from their home countries and trying to sell them directly to non-native audiences," Duan added.

If the greatest challenge for a Chinese restaurant is to preserve the traditional flavors and cultural heritage of Chinese cuisine while adapting to local American tastes and building a loyal customer base, then Lao Sze Chuan in Chicago has achieved both.

Former Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel is a loyal customer, often bringing his wife and son to dine there. Emanuel's favorite dish is the dry chili chicken, recognized by the *Chicago Tribune* as a landmark dish of the city.

His wife favors the sweet lemon crispy shrimp, a contrast to her husband's spicy preference, while their son enjoys the dry-fried string beans with tofu. Meanwhile, at the Lao Sze Chuan branch in Washington DC, former Cabinet secretary Elaine Chao could be savoring the Peking duck at the same time.

Founded in Chicago in 1998 by Tony Hu, also known as Chef Tony, the upscale Chinese restaurant has become more than just another pepper steak spot.

"We develop the menu into four sections to cater to different tastes and preferences," Hu told *China Daily*.

He said the menus are divided into four sections: traditional hometown dishes for older Chinese immigrants; popular spicy hot pot dishes for young people and international students; American Chinese cuisine like sesame chicken, with a unique twist; and innovative creations such as lemon crispy shrimp.

"Eighty percent of our customers are local Americans; many of them discover flavors and enjoy for a lifetime," Hu said.

Lao Sze Chuan has 16 branches across the US, with eight more in planning stages, turning into destination dining experiences in cities such as Chicago, Washington and Houston, and in the states of Minnesota, Connecticut and Ohio.

"We offer over 20 brand-specific dishes and are continuously developing more," Chef Tony added. "We welcome local partners to join us."

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Common challenges,
Common responsibilities,
a shared future!

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GLOBAL LENS



International practitioners face the rising sun, adjust breathing and calm their mind at the Tianma peak on the morning of Aug 19.



Alan (left) from Ireland and Dariusz from Poland practice *dizi*, Chinese flute, and *xiao*, a Chinese woodwind instrument, at the summit of the Tianma peak on Aug 10.



London resident Lola practices Chinese martial arts at the Tianma peak on Aug 19.

By China Daily

As sunlight piercing through the mist and illuminating the forest at the Tianma peak in Shiyan, Central China's Hubei province, Alan from Ireland and six others faced the rising sun, adjusting their breathing and stretching their bodies.

This marked the beginning of their 15-day immersion in traditional Taoist culture.

A group of people from different countries, captivated by Chinese traditional culture, has journeyed to the Tianma peak in August.

The peak, as one of the 72 peaks of the Wudang Mountain, home to a famous complex of Taoist temples and monasteries, has attracted hundreds of foreigners from all walks of life since 2005, including corporate executives and film actors.

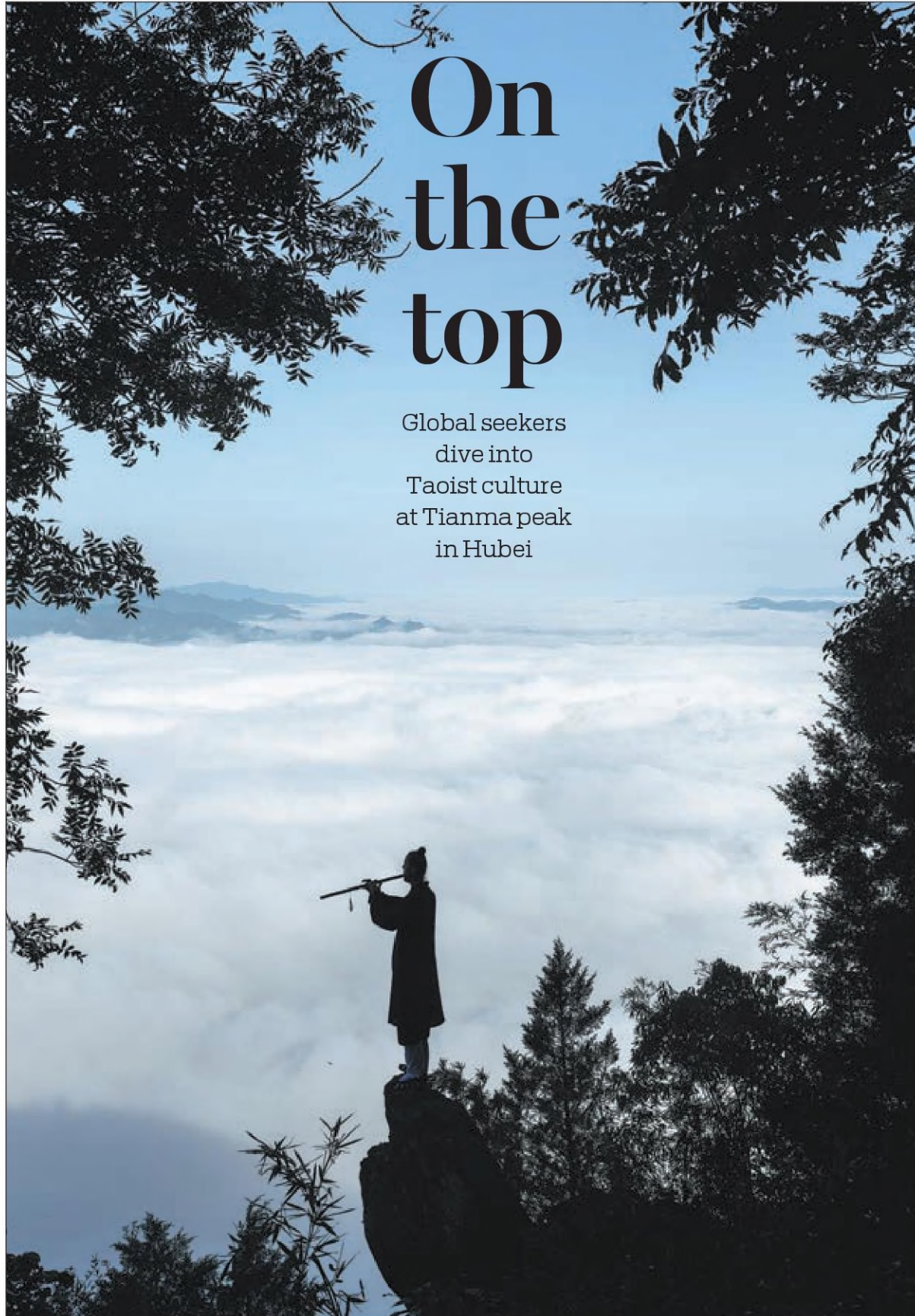
According to Hubei Daily, in their exploration, participants can study the Taoist classics, the *Book of Changes* and *Tao Te Ching*, and learn about sound therapy, fire therapy, and herbal medicine in practical sessions.

Most foreign participants have their own jobs and live in their countries. Some visit the Tianma peak annually as a regular vacation spot, integrating it into their lives.

Others, like a participant from Portugal, have changed career paths upon returning home by opening a wellness school, while a German participant started his own publishing house to translate classic Chi-



Irish practitioner Alan (left) and Chinese practitioner Li Mei hike to the Tianma peak on Aug 8.



On the top

Global seekers dive into Taoist culture at Tianma peak in Hubei



Angele from France practices kung fu at the Tianma peak on Aug 9.

Chinese cultural texts for international readers.

Alan from Ireland, who has spent over seven years intermittently on the mountain, said: "Here, one cannot only practice Chinese martial arts, but can also learn traditional Chinese medicine and play traditional Chinese instruments, which offers a comprehensive experience of Chinese culture."

Lola from Russia, who resides in London, began practicing Chinese martial arts at the age of nine with the aim of alleviating asthma and sinusitis, and gradually fell in love with Chinese culture. In 2013, she opened a Chinese medicine health center in London, attracting hundreds of Britons each year.

Like Lola, Simona from the Czech Republic opened a TCM health center in her hometown after graduating from university, and she has been running it for 29 years. She hopes to delve into the core of Chinese medicine and learn its health principles to achieve well-being through self-adjustment.

Alan said he first came to the Tianma peak in 2011, and the following years of exploration helped him overcome his spiritual struggles. "Chinese traditional culture values harmony in diversity and does not emphasize adversarial thinking. Many are moved by this inclusivity, including myself."

"This inclusive and open-minded approach is precious in our society," he said.

Lu Huimin contributed to this story.



Simona from the Czech Republic rests on a hammock at the Tianma peak on Aug 19.



Practitioners learn to identify herbs with a Taoist master at the Tianma peak on Aug 19.



An aerial view of the Tianma peak where practitioners learn kung fu on the morning of Aug 19.



Practitioners learn traditional musical instruments from a master at the Tianma peak on Aug 19.

Shanxi's wonders inspire art of hit game

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Success of *Black Myth: Wukong* spurs sharp rise in tourist visits to province

On Aug 20, the highly anticipated *Black Myth: Wukong* — A Chinese self-developed AAA game — made its domestic and global debut, immediately becoming a hit in the industry.

Notably, the game has also sparked interest in Chinese culture, as it is deeply rooted in Chinese mythology and inspired by the legends of the Monkey King — or Sun Wukong — in *Journey to the West*, a Chinese classic novel that has been represented in numerous films, TV shows and cartoons.

Black Myth: Wukong is a follow-up to or a recreation of the novel. With the game, players control a young monkey who, inspired by the legend, decides to follow Wukong's footsteps to the West, overcoming various difficulties and trials, ultimately achieving success, according to the players' own actions.

Another distinguishing characteristic of the game is that its art design has taken inspiration from ancient Chinese architecture and other traditional cultural elements.

This cultural feature of the game has resulted in additional benefits outside the game industry, arousing fervent enthusiasm from netizens to experience the Chinese cultural heritage displayed in the game. Thus, according to Chinese media reports, it has generated a new touring option — following in the footsteps of Wukong to see the Chinese cultural attractions.

Shanxi is no doubt one of the biggest beneficiaries of this cultural tourism boom as the North China province boasts the largest number of locations where the game takes place.

Of the 36 scenic spots featured in the game, 27 are located in Shanxi, according to Shanxi's cultural and tourism officials.

Shanxi's landmark sites of ancient buildings, like Foguang Temple, Nanchan Temple and Jingke Temple in Xinzhou; Xuankong Temple in Datong; Shuanglin Temple in Jinzhong, Chongfu Temple in Shuozhou; and Yuhuang Temple in Jincheng, are the standout settings of the game.

Officials at the Shanxi Culture and Tourism Department said that Shanxi was selected by the game's development team as the major destination for filming because it boasts some 28,000 sites of ancient buildings — the largest number in China's provincial-level regions. With preserved buildings constructed in a period from Tang (618-907) to Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, Shanxi has the richest varieties and styles of ancient architecture.

Developers at Game Science, the producer of *Black Myth: Wukong*, have also endorsed Shanxi's unique position in the preservation of ancient Chinese architecture and other cultural assets.

The developers' team, headed up by Yang Qi, art director of the game



Clockwise from top: Jinci Temple in Taiyuan. HAO SHENGYU / FOR CHINA DAILY Xuankong Temple in Hunyuan. LI YAO / FOR CHINA DAILY Xiaoxitian in Xixian. FENG SIQUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY These are among Shanxi's attractions featured in *Black Myth: Wukong*.

and cofounder of Game Science, had visited the sites of historical interest in Shanxi many times before the production of the game.

Yang's team began to visit Shanxi's ancient relics sites for pre-production research four years ago. During the visits, he paid special attention to the ancient structures, the statues and wall paintings featuring various Buddhist and Taoist legends in 20-plus locations in Shanxi.

His team used 3D modeling and shot videos for an astonishing number of figures and images of these sites, under the approval of Shanxi's cultural heritage authorities.

"The figures of 10 Yama Rajas (Kings of Hell) in Chongqing Temple in Zhangzi county, the 24 devas (angels) in Tiefs Temple in Gaoping city, the 28 constellations in Yuhuang Temple in Jincheng city, are all the amazing things that I can borrow inspiration from," Yang said in his Weibo account, just naming a few.

The team's extensive and intensive journeys in the province would result in an extravagant show of Shanxi's culture and tourism throughout the game, which was what local cultural and tourism officials expected when they received the team's visits. So they showed strong support to the team.

"When they had their last shooting trip here in July, a deputy head of our county government, who is familiar with local history and culture, offered to become their guide," said an official in charge of the Xiaoxitian — or Small Western Paradise — scenic area in Xixian county.

Shanxi's tourism and cultural heritage authorities also attached great importance to the game production team, requiring local officials to offer assistance.

The cooperation between Shanxi and Game Science has achieved a win-win result. Shanxi's tourism authorities and operators have been authorized to use the game to promote its cultural tourism attractions.

In June, when Game Science began to launch presale promotional campaigns, the Shanxi Culture and Tourism Department also began a series of promotional campaigns featuring the Wukong-related scenic sites.

Following the game's launch, the department released a promotional video entitled *Travel Shanxi with Wukong*. The video follows in the footsteps of the Monkey King and takes viewers on a virtual tour of renowned attractions, including the Yungang Grottoes and Huayan Temple in Datong; Nanchan Temple in Xinzhou; Yingxian Wooden

Pagoda and Xiaoxitian.

Officials at the department also said that social media uploaders are encouraged to create new works for Shanxi's ancient buildings featured in *Black Myth: Wukong*. Excellent works will be awarded and subsidized by the department.

During the 2024 Digital Culture and Tourism Brand Innovation Conference held in Taiyuan from Aug 22-25, the Travel Shanxi with Wukong campaign was officially launched, introducing three themed tourism routes and an eight-day Shanxi ancient architecture self-driving tour.

These routes connect real-life locations depicted in *Black Myth: Wukong*, inviting tourists to experience Shanxi through the game's lens.

Several travel platforms and institutions, including Tongcheng and Ctrip, have launched dedicated packages for these routes. They are cooperating with hotels and scenic spots to offer accommodation, ticket discounts, and cultural and creative gifts to attract more tourists from across the country to Shanxi.

As *Black Myth: Wukong* becomes a hit domestically and globally, Shanxi has seen an immediate rise in popularity in its tourism industry.

The game is available on multiple online game platforms, including PS5, Steam, Epic Games Store and WeGame.

According to media reports, just minutes after its release at 10 am

on Aug 20, the game surged to the top of global app store best-seller lists, maintaining its high visibility until well past 10 pm, when it set a record for concurrent users on Steam.

At 8 pm, 10 hours after its official release, the game realized a global sales volume of 4.5 million copies, garnering 1.5 billion yuan (\$210.6 million) in revenue. It sold 10 million copies in the first three days. Goldman Sachs expects the game will rake in 5 billion yuan on Steam.

In Shanxi, scenic sites relating to the game are also seeing a rapidly growing number of tourists, who want to see the real things that have been rendered into their familiar game images.

Over the past two weeks after the game's release, Huayan Temple in Datong, for instance, reported a 50 percent increase in tourist visits compared with the same period of last year, according to local officials.

Yuhuang Temple — also known as Jade Emperor Temple — in Jincheng city is one of the sites gaining increasing popularity thanks to *Black Myth: Wukong*.

Local officials said that Yuhuang Temple used to be a quiet place as it was a less known destination among tourists.

"Over the past two weeks, we have seen full reservation of tickets thanks to the release of the game," said Yin Zhenxing, an official in charge of the scenic site's operation.

The official said a

unique selling point of the temple is the many figures of deities governing the 28 constellations, which are among the sources of inspiration for *Black Myth: Wukong*.

According to ancient Chinese astrology, the universe is composed of 28 constellations governed by various deities. As the deities are always accompanied by a certain animal, they are named after the animal plus one element out of sun, moon, metal, wood, water, fire and earth. For instance, Kangjinlong — the stereotype of a much loved figure in the game — literally means "Soaring Metal Dragon".

"Figures of 28 constellations are commonly seen in many sites of the Taoist religion," Yin said. "But the ones in Jincheng's Yuhuang Temple have unique historical and aesthetic values."

He explained that all the colored statues of constellation deities there were created by famous Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) sculptor Liu Yuan. "They are well preserved and feature vivid facial, emotional expressions you can hardly find elsewhere."

The official added that there are many other things with similar historical and cultural values, like the structures built in the Song (960-1279) and Jin (1115-1234) dynasties and wall paintings created since the Song Dynasty.

"Over the past few years, we have devoted much energy to promote the value of the temple among tourists," Yin said. "We are receiving an increasing number of visitors this year — about 50,000 visits to date."

He noted many of the visitors are young people taking part in study tours like fine art students and designers portraying the statues and wall paintings.

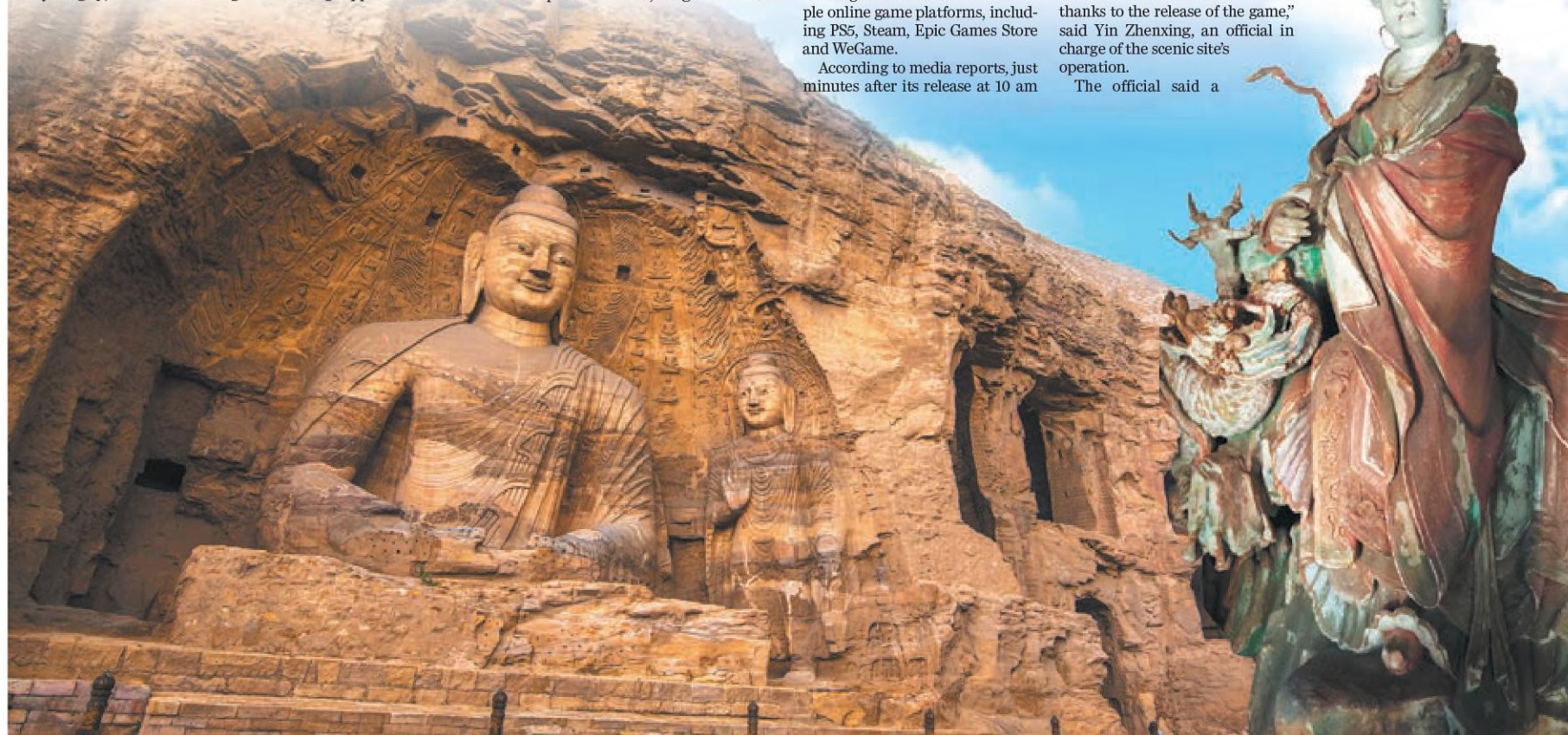
The official added that the successful launch of *Black Myth: Wukong* ignited a drastic increase in visits at the end of last month.

A tourist surnamed Li, who is from Guangzhou, Guangdong province, is among visitors arriving at Yuhuang Temple after the release of the game.

"I'm here to see the 'angry goddess' of Kangjinlong," she said. "To my delight, I've found exactly the same thing in the temple."

Latest media reports predicted that Shanxi will be among the hottest destinations during the coming National Day holiday in early October thanks to the game. On popular online travel platform Qunar, the number of searches of Shanxi soared by 1.2 times in August compared with the previous month.

Hao Hong contributed to this story.



A huge Buddha statue in Datong's Yungang Grottoes (left) and the colored statue of Kangjinlong — or Soaring Metal Dragon — in Yuhuang Temple in Jincheng. The figures of both Buddhist and Taoist religions are the source of inspiration for the popular game. PHOTOS BY HAO SHENGYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

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