



**Statement of the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission,
H.E Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson
of the African Union Commission at the
3rd Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation**

**Beijing, People's Republic of China
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Minister of information

Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen from the media fraternity

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to be here and to participate in this 3rd forum on the China- Africa Media cooperation. This forum underscores the growth of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), from which this media cooperation between China and Africa was born. It is the implementation of one of the outcomes reached during the FOCAC Summit held last year in Johannesburg, South Africa.

This media forum provides us a platform to explore opportunities for future mutual development, and to contribute to promoting world peace, stability and the development of Africa and China. Indeed we need to strengthen our dialogue, consolidate Africa-China traditional friendship, deepen strategic collaboration and enhance the mechanism of practical cooperation between us.

Africa-China relations or Sino-Africa relations date as far back as the 3rd century A.D. Historians postulate that there had been explorations by the Chinese to eastern Africa specifically Somalia, Tanzania and Kenya where it is also believed that they traded with one another. Even during the Ming Dynasty, China sent expedition missions to spread Chinese culture and trade ties from Somalia down to the Mozambican channel.

Current Sino-African ties were fostered around the 1950's when China signed its first bilateral trade agreement with Algeria, Egypt, Guinea, Somalia, Morocco and Sudan. It was in a bid to strengthen China's ties with Africa as well as afford economic, technical and military support to African countries.

We can even see how close Africa and China worked together in their bid to join the United Nations. While other nations attempted to block the People's Republic of China from joining the United Nations because The Republic of China or Chinese Taipei as it is referred to nowadays was already a member of the United Nations. African countries were instrumental in backing the resolution presented by Albania in 1971 to recognize and admit the People's Republic of China and expel Chinese Taipei.

And soon after that China embarked on the largest single foreign-aid d project in Africa which was the construction of the Tanzania Zambia Railway or TAZARA. It was built at a cost of \$500 million, which was 25% of the total government expenditure, from 1970-75 and runs from Dar-es-salaam to Kapiri Mposhi. The idea behind TAZARA was to eliminate Zambia's economic dependence on Rhodesia which now is Zimbabwe and South Africa. South Africa imposed sanctions on Zambia for supporting those fighting the Apartheid regime and made it difficult to import and export their goods through the port of Durban and the building of the line afforded Zambia access to the port of Dar increasing their import and export capacity.

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. China has a population of around 1.4 billion people to Africa's 1.26 billion and yet Africa still depends heavily on China for trade and investment. China's G.D.P. in 2015 totaled more than \$10 trillion while Africa's was only about \$2.6 trillion and in 2015 China overtook The United States of America in foreign direct investments. Foreign firms invested over \$128 billion in China while in the United States they invested \$86 billion. This clearly demonstrates China's economic might and an ideal partner for Africa. Today china is Africa's biggest trading partner. The volume of trade between Africa and China hit a new high of \$200 billion in 2015. This included a 44% growth spurt in Chinese direct investment in Africa.

Africa is major contributor to China's economy supplying over 1/3rd of China's energy requirements. Also it acquires other raw materials from Africa such as cotton from Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin, Cocoa from the Ivory Coast, coffee from Kenya, fish from Namibia and so on. But China's largest industry in Africa is in the service industry where we have seen a boom in terms of wholesale and retail stores, restaurants, hotels and furniture.

At a governmental level, China funds a vast majority of African countries infrastructure projects. The transport networks in Africa have been greatly improved thanks to China as well as the construction of buildings and even schools and hospitals. And despite all that Chinas has done for Africa foreign direct investment from China to Africa accounts for 5-7% of the total foreign direct investment that Africa receives per annum. We were pleased to witness at the end of last year President Xi Jinping's announcement of a package to Africa the amount of \$60 billionth soft loans and technical assistance. This will aid greatly in the vast number of projects being undertaken in Africa.

China also provides a means for the education of African Students. At present there are estimated to be around 150,000 African students studying in Chinese universities and the knowledge that they garner from there is invaluable and once they have completed they can return back to Africa and assist in the growth of our continent. China is also pursuing greater relationships with African 'think tanks' so as to improve and help implement policies on social, political, economic and military issues.

Air transport between China and Africa has been increasing at an average of 15% each year. China Southern and other airlines have begun direct flights from China to Africa. Whereas Ethiopian Airlines, who has been flying to China since 1973, and Kenya Airways are the major airlines flying to China from Africa. Even still fewer than 30% of air travelers between China and Africa are taking direct flights to and from China, instead preferring to transit through Asia and Europe. There is definitely ample room for growth in this sector for airlines wishing to capitalize on China Africa routes. Also the construction of railway systems in various African countries will help reduce the cost of transportation as well as increase import and export routes through the region. The construction of the Nairobi-Mombasa standard gauge railway at an estimated cost of \$3.8 billion as well as the Abuja-Kaduna rail project is estimated to cost \$874 million are examples of just how important China and African countries alike understand the importance of developing the railway system in Africa.

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At a continental level Sino-Africa relations have been strengthened through the creation of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation or FOCAC. This forum was created back in 2000 was initiated to solidify the bond between Africa and China and enable Africa to learn and grow from China in areas such as food security, agriculture and infrastructure. We were pleased to witness at the end of last year President Xi Jinping's announcement of a loan an aid package for Africa in the amount of \$60 billion for the next 3 years. This will help greatly in the implementation and completion of a number of infrastructure and development programs slated in different African countries. Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that China will roll out 10 major plans to boost cooperation with Africa in the coming three years. Proposing to lift the China-Africa relationship to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the second summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), President Xi said the programs are aimed at carrying out the upgrade. The plan covers the areas of industrialization, agricultural modernization, infrastructure, financial services, green development, trade and investment facilitation, poverty reduction and public welfare, public health, people-to-people exchanges, and peace and security.

The programs, stressed the president, will focus on helping African countries break the three development setbacks of backward infrastructure, talent shortage and inadequate

fund, accelerate industrialization and agricultural modernization, and realize independent and sustainable development. As regards the lack of skilled personnel, Xi said China will establish a number of regional vocational education centers and several capacity-building colleges for Africa, train 200,000 technicians for African countries, and provide the continent with 40,000 training opportunities in China.

Meanwhile, China will offer African students 2,000 education opportunities with degrees or diplomas and 30,000 government scholarships, he said, adding that each year his country will also invite 200 African scholars to visit China and 500 African youths to study in China each year and train 1,000 media professionals from Africa.

On poverty reduction, Xi said China will launch 200 "Happy Life" projects and special programs focusing on women and children and cancel outstanding debts in the form of bilateral governmental zero-interest loans borrowed by the relevant least developed African countries that mature at the end of 2015.

In order to help Africa accelerate agricultural modernization, China will carry out agricultural development projects in 100 African villages to raise rural living standards, send 30 teams of agricultural experts to Africa, and establish a "10+10" cooperation mechanism between Chinese and African agricultural research institutes, he added.

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The Mission of the People's Republic of China to the African Union and the US Mission to the African Union have vowed to strengthen their support for the African Center of Disease Control (CDC). During the tripartite meeting at the African Union headquarter today the two governments have shown their interest to work in cooperation with the African Union.

On security cooperation, Xi announced that China will provide a total of 60 million U.S. dollars in free aid to the African Union (AU) to support the building and operation of the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crisis. The FOCAC forum has also brought China and Africa together in their resolve to bring about reforms at the United Nations, to undo historical injustices to Africa as well as allow for African countries to be represented on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and other agencies as well as resolving the lack of adequate representation for Asian countries.

China has also played a major role in peace and security in Africa. China has pledged \$100 million to the African Union in this matter this year for the purpose of refining the African Unions military unit. We have also seen China's assistance in countries such as South Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Somalia and Mali where we unfortunately witnessed recently the death of one of its peacekeepers in the country. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the people of China and to the family of the brave young soldier who risked his life for the sake of peace in Africa.

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Ladies and gentlemen

Africa is a resource-rich continent with great potential. Recent growth has been due to growth in sales in commodities, services, and manufacturing. Sub Saharan Africa, in particular, is expected to reach a GDP of \$29 trillion by 2050 but its income inequality will be a major deterrent in wealth distribution.

The World Bank expects that most African countries will reach "middle income" status (defined as at least US\$1,000 per person a year) by 2025 if current growth rates continue. In 2013, Africa was the world's fastest-growing continent at 5.6% a year and GDP is expected to rise by an average of over 6% a year between 2013 and 2023. Growth has been present throughout the continent, with over one-third of Sub-Saharan African countries posting 6% or higher growth rates.

Levels of trade in Africa are currently very low compared to other regions. It was estimated at 11 to 12 percent in 2010, growing only to 13 percent by 2015. Through implementation of the Boosting Intra-Africa Trade (BIAT) plan of action, this is expected to almost double to 22 percent before 2022.

Africa has a large quantity of natural resources including diamonds, salt, gold, iron, cobalt, uranium, copper, bauxite, silver, petroleum and cocoa beans, but also woods and tropical fruits. Much of its natural resources are undiscovered or barely harnessed.

Five countries dominate Africa's oil production. Together they account for 85% of the continent's oil production and are Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Egypt and Angola. Other oil producing countries are Gabon, Congo, Cameroon, Tunisia, Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire. Exploration is taking place in a number of other countries that aim to increase their output or become first time producers. Included in this list are Chad, Sudan, Namibia, South Africa and Madagascar while Mozambique and Tanzania are potential oil producers.

African trade volumes are expected to quadruple by 2030, increasing from 102.6 million tons in 2009 to 384.6 million tons by 2030. Africa's intra-trade only accounted for about 10% of its total trade compared to 17% in developing Asia and 60% in the European Union. Simply put, Africa exports relatively cheaper unprocessed (and often raw) materials to the world's developed economies, and largely imports more expensive finished goods from the same countries.

Solar energy is one of Africa's most abundant natural resources. Most parts of sub-Saharan Africa enjoy more than 300 days of free sunlight every year. Still, an estimated 600 million people on the continent, especially in rural areas, don't have access to reliable electricity. In most cities and towns, power outages are the norm and people often have to

rely on noisy petrol and diesel power generators. Solar energy is free, absolutely clean and abundant. And it provides the best alternative for people in remote parts of Africa who are out of reach of electricity grids.

Agribusiness is Africa's untapped goldmine, and a major potential source of investment in 2016. According to a World Bank report, Africa's agribusiness industry is expected to be worth \$1 trillion by 2030. With up to 60 percent of the world's uncultivated arable land, fertile soils, abundant labour, and all-year sunshine, sub-Saharan Africa surely has the potential to become the world's biggest exporter of food products. Even if Africa decides to ignore export markets, the continent's over one billion people provide a huge and ready market for agribusiness.

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Ladies and Gentlemen

Today we live in the Globalized and digitalized worlds not only for our economies but most importantly for our culture(s) and for our identities.

We have become consumers of content that is conceived without our intervention. It is sent to our computers and our phones. It is invading our lives and goes beyond our control. The Web and associated social media have become a means to control the way we live and the way we do business. We are moving to a "Universal Civilization" in which we are barely actors. I am afraid we are entering a new DIGITAL COLONIZATION ERA. We are losing our culture(s) and a people without culture are faceless people, people forced to disappear. Something needs to be done and to be done NOW.

It is our responsibility as policy makers and as professionals of the media. We need to start now developing our own content. Every medium should impose to itself a minimum quota of national and African content to broadcast. The African Union is ready to work with you and with all our partners to develop the right content. The AU organs have adopted the creation of pan-African TV & Radio channels to promote African culture and identity. We need to implement that as a matter of urgency.

Africa is currently the second fastest growing market for mobile phones, after Asia. These days, African consumers are looking to upgrade from 'first generation' feature phones to smartphones. It's no surprise that the continent's growing population of technology and fashion-savvy youth now presents a multi-billion dollar market for smartphones. However, most 'new-age' smartphone devices like iPhone, Blackberry and Samsung are quite expensive for the average African. This has created a huge opportunity for low-priced smartphones that are now hitting the African market.

Better still, many of these smartphones are built on the Android operating system, have similar features to the 'high end' smartphones and most are just as stylishly designed. In the last eighteen months, over a dozen low-priced smartphone brands have debuted on the African market.

Africa's real estate market is a multi-billion dollar opportunity, and several new millionaires will build their fortunes in this market. In almost every corner of the continent, real estate projects are emerging. The biggest attractions are high-rise hotels and office buildings, residential homes and apartments, and shopping malls. In Nigeria alone, there is a shortfall of 17 million housing units, with a funding requirement of \$363 billion. In Angola's capital, Luanda, prime office rents are among the highest in the world at US\$150 per sq metre per month. In Mozambique, property prices at the sea ports, particularly for warehouses, are one of Africa's most expensive. The key markets for real estate on every investor's agenda are Angola, Nigeria, Egypt, Mozambique, South Africa and Kenya. All of these countries are experiencing a real estate boom like never before in history. Africa's large and youthful population, an expanding middle class, increasing urbanization, influx of expatriates and multinational companies are the key drivers of demand for both commercial and residential real estate.

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Ladies and gentlemen

Let me seize this opportunity to thank the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of China (SAPPRFT) for taking the lead to organize this media Forum. The theme of "Win-win cooperation, common development"...comes at a right time when the African continent is highly attracting international investment and its rapidly increasing population constitutes a large market for the world economic growth. Therefore the media has an important role to play in publicizing and promoting the investment opportunities in both China and Africa.

Such fora provide us with a good platform for peer to peer exchanges. We can learn a lot from each other on how to advance our efforts in reporting about issues that concern us in both our continents. This interaction also plays a great role in supporting the development of both our media industry in China and Africa and subsequently, being able to raise the awareness of our people.

Part of our focus today should be on the need to relook the strategic approaches that are crucial to help us prioritize key elements of development such the FOCAC and how such partnerships can help us unlock the potential in both China and Africa. We need to build the understanding and confidence among our people and to see the opportunities and capacity of all the stakeholders and actors- that is, the government, the private sector and the citizenry to develop our continents.

As the African Union Commission, Effective communications and advocacy around the AU's work is critical to achieving the implementation of the Agenda 2063, a blueprint of the socio-economic and political integration of the continent for the next 50 years..

There is a widespread belief in the management world that in today's society the future of any successful Organisation critically depends on how it is viewed by the public. Many communication initiatives have succeeded in enhancing public awareness, but have failed in going beyond awareness, to stimulate positive changes in attitudes and practices toward creating lasting social change. Therefore, our discussions for these two days should focus on how our communication should impact on sustainable behavior change among individuals, more so the citizenry, groups on a large scale, for a participatory, results-oriented approach towards development of China and Africa.

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Ladies and gentlemen

As I sit here today, I will be interested to hear and learn from you, on among others, how we can make good use of the various forms of media we have, particularly the most common form of media outlet in every household, radio.

While at it, when we talk about practices and ethics, we need to be constantly alive to the need to improve national media practices and standards to align them with the best international practices. Therefore, when we focus on the topic of "Media policies and regulation in China and Africa", we should do that with the background that appreciates how lack of understanding of common media standards and ethics affects the quality of reporting whose effects can be dire. Let me give an instance of that, you have seen how in some countries biased or subjective media reporting has been a recipe of chaos and violence. I believe the media should be guided by ethics to avoid such extreme scenarios.

When we talk about development aspect of the continent, Ladies and gentlemen I have to observe that there is still a lot of work to be done to achieve the needed media cooperation. There is still a fundamental missing link on that front. I encourage you to highlight more of the developmental activities taking place in China, Africa and the partnership between us. This is crucial in many aspects, and would also serve the purposes of showcasing job opportunities, growth expansion and unexplored areas or sectors that would interest the various stakeholders and particularly the youth, who remain our greatest assets.

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Ladies and gentlemen

Access to information in a very dynamic environment is crucial. Therefore, media cooperation and capacity building is paramount. I would call for more and constant training and fora where improving the knowledge and building the skills of journalists is given precedence. This is necessary for equipping you with the ability and capacity to provide the audience with the right context, analysis and further exploring ways to tell the story with angles that useful and relevant to the target audience. The difference that an informed, analytical journalist can make is enormous, more so because citizens need to be informed about threats to their country's and equally, prospects for a better future. We should be

keen to equip the media with the facts and skills to increase the quantity and quality of especially, growth and development-related coverage.

We all appreciate the need for critical technical skills and capacities. Therefore, when we talk about the digitalization of broadcasting and new media development, we need to strategize of how we can use different multimedia forms to customize the information for our different categories of audience. A lot of new forms have come up lately, the social media platforms but the challenge then remains, how to we make good use of these platforms and in a responsible manner to tell our stories.

Information and Communication Technologies have transformed the way we relay information by diversifying the communication landscape. I encourage you the Media to seize advantage to widen your outreach through the effective and efficient use of modern communication tools such as the social media, the electronic media and the use of internet among others.

Of course the traditional means of communicating such as print, audiovisual media and telephonic means still remain an important component of an efficient communication strategy.

IN CONCLUSION,

Let me make three proposals

- 1. Embark on a five year capacity building program, which entails , training, to infrastructure development and institutional building.**
- 2. Enhance Industrialization through Transfer technology**
- 3. Cooperation in cyber security and digitalization**

The institutional capacity of the media needs to be reinforced, as I had mentioned earlier, we need to educate particularly the youths in order to solve our problems. We need to support media cooperation, media networking and media development, as well as capacity building in the field of journalism which remains a key factor to tell our stories and in fostering the development agenda in our continents.

I thank you.