China, Africa agree to strengthen cooperation on peace and security

Cross-section of senior African officials at the 34th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of Africa Union during its opening ceremony held at Africa Union headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia early last month.

Chinese leader congratulates President Buhari on re-election

China joins global action against forced displacement of persons in Africa
China, Africa agree to strengthen cooperation on peace and security

China and African Union (AU) member countries have reiterated their joint commitment to strengthening cooperation on peace and security through the successful implementation of the China-Africa Peace and Security Initiative.

African Ministers of Foreign Affairs held a high-level dialogue early last month, in Addis Ababa with Chen Xiaodong, Assistant Foreign Minister of China, and other Chinese officials on the implementation of the commitments made by African and Chinese leaders during the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) last September.

The African foreign minister have gathered in Ethiopia’s capital Addis Ababa as part of the 34th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, which held from Feb. 7 to 8 at the headquarters of the AU. Mr. Chen, who is also the Chair of the Chinese Follow-up Committee of the FOCAC Summit, noted during the high-level gathering that Chinese and African leaders, during the “successful” FOCAC Beijing Summit last September, have agreed to jointly build a closer China-Africa community with a shared future.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, at the Beijing FOCAC Summit, had announced a host of new measures to strengthen China-Africa peace and security cooperation, and reached important consensus with African leaders on launching the peace and security initiative, Chen said.

Noting 2019 as the first year of implementation regarding the major outcomes of the Beijing Summit, Chen said that the visit of China’s State Counselor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi to several African countries and the AU headquarters in January had brought "important common understanding with African leaders on furthering China-Africa cooperation in the field of peace and security."

"China hopes that the dialogue will create synergy in thinking and action between the two sides, put forward suggestions on how to implement the peace and security initiative, and build momentum for China-Africa peace and security cooperation," Chen said.

The Chinese assistant foreign minister also stressed that "although the situation is improving, risks and challenges facing Africa’s peace and security cannot be overlooked."

"Over the years, China has fulfilled its responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Guided by the principles enunciated by President Xi Jinping for China-Africa relations, namely, sincerity, real results, amity and good faith and pursuing the greater good and shared interests, China has played a positive role in Africa’s peace and security affairs," he said.

Chen also stressed China’s four major principles in its cooperation with African countries in the peace and security sector through “playing a fair, impartial and constructive role, helping Africa build up its own peacekeeping capacity, addressing the root causes as well as the symptoms, and pursuing cooperation for win-win results.”

"China’s efforts to safeguard peace and stability in Africa remain unchanged,” the assistant foreign minister affirmed, adding “China’s actions to participate in the peace and security affairs in Africa remain unchanged.”

China and Africa enjoy ever greater common language, common aspirations and common interests as new opportunities and challenges emerge under new circumstances, Chen said.

“There are new opportunities for us to step up cooperation on peace and security,” he stressed.

He also reiterated China’s readiness “to work with Africa to explore new dimensions for dialogue on peace and security policy and establish a China-Africa peace and security forum.”

The high-level dialogue, co-hosted by the FOCAC Summit co-chairs China and Senegal in partnership with the AU Commission, was attended by foreign ministers and representatives from 23 African countries, including members of the AU Peace and Security Council and the five countries in the Sahel region.

AU Commissioner for Political Affairs Minata Samate-Cessouma, who commended China’s support to Africa’s causes on the international stage, mainly at the UN Security Council, also affirmed Africa’s common position concerning collaboration with China in the peace and security arena.

“China has been actively supporting the AU,” Samate-Cessouma said.

“Over the years, China has been actively supporting the AU’s mediation role in various conflicts in Africa, including the conflict in Sudan and South Sudan as well as the parties within Southern Sudan,” she said.

“There are many important roles and examples made by China,” Samate-Cessouma said, adding that “China has helped all sides to get back to the negotiating table.”

Senegal’s Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mame Baba Cisse also said that “China has been contributing to the peace building and security in Africa.”

Baba Cisse further stressed that China “has become a natural partner for Africa” in maintaining peace and stability in the African continent as well as overall development sectors.

Africa and China “have been engaged in win-win cooperation, and our partnership is based on sincerity, affinity, good-faith, and good results,” he said.

The two sides, who spoke positively of the outcomes of the dialogue, have also agreed that the high-level dialogue was an innovative step in strengthening peace and security cooperation between China and Africa.

The high-level dialogue among other things aimed at deepening communication and discussion on Africa’s peace and security situation, strengthening policy alignment in the sector, as well as building synergy between peace and security actions of China and Africa, and eventually realizes the commitments made by African and Chinese leaders.

Following the successful hosting of Addis Ababa meeting, Chinese ministry of foreign affairs issued a statement, in which the assistant foreign minister, Mr. Chen Xiaodong said that China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, does not overlook the current challenges and risks the continent was facing even though security was improving.

He indicated that his country’s relation with Africa was based on “sincerity, real results, amity and good faith and pursuing the greater good and shared interests,” highlighting the role that China has played in the continent’s peace and security affairs.

The top political figure also highlighted that throughout the process, China has been committed to playing a fair, impartial and constructive role, helping Africa build up its own peacekeeping capacity, addressing the root causes as well as the symptoms, and pursuing cooperation for win-win results.

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Chinese envoy seeks to address root cause of conflicts in Africa

A Chinese envoy has called for international efforts to help silence the guns in Africa by 2020.

Over the past few years, the African Union (AU) and African countries have been vigorously implementing Agenda 2063 and the initiative of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020 along with the steady improvement of the continent’s peace and security situation, said Wu Haitao, China’s deputy permanent representative to the United Nations.

At the same time, he said, some regions in Africa remain fragile, with traditional security threats intertwined with non-traditional ones and the presence of some prominent issues such as ethnic tensions, terrorism, transnational organized crime, poverty, unemployment, and refugees.

The regional collective security mechanisms in Africa are challenged with underfunding and other constraints. There are challenges to achieving the goal of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020.

In this context, Wu called for closer cooperation between the United Nations and the AU, the strengthening of Africa’s capacity building in the areas of peace and security, and continued assistance for Africa’s socio-economic development so as to address the root causes of conflicts in Africa.

The United Nations should fully leverage its own strength and provide more assistance to Africa, Wu told the UN Security Council in a debate on silencing the guns in Africa.

The two organizations should work more closely together in conflict prevention and mediation, in the quest for lasting peace, and in addressing the root causes of conflicts in Africa, he said, noting that the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council should further enhance communication and coordination between themselves.

Wu said China welcomes Wednesday’s adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2457 on silencing the guns in Africa, which can help the United Nations lend more support to the AU’s initiative and bring the United Nations and the AU closer together in their joint endeavor.

He called for international support for Africa’s capacity building in the areas of peace and security.

Home to the largest number of developing countries, Africa is the most dynamic continent with the greatest development potential in today’s world. Peace and stability in Africa is key to security and development around the world, said Wu.

AU-led peace and security operations are becoming an important means of responding to crises in Africa, and are complementary to the UN peacekeeping operations in important ways, he said.

The United Nations should actively assist the AU and other regional and subregional organizations in bolstering their peacebuilding capacities and support African countries in resolving African issues in the African way, he said.

China supports the United Nations in providing sustainable and predictable financial support to the AU’s peace and security operations, and in working with the AU to overcome funding issues concerning the AU’s peace and security operations, he said.

Wu asked for international efforts to address the root causes of conflicts in Africa by scaling up assistance for Africa’s socio-economic development.

International partners should increase their contributions to Africa in such priority areas as agriculture, health care, education, economics and trade, and connectivity and other infrastructure sectors, and actively help African countries achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, said Wu.

He also asked for efforts to help regional countries reduce poverty, develop the economy and improve people’s livelihoods.

China has all along been supporting Africa’s pursuit of peace, security, prosperity and development, and has stayed actively engaged in matters pertaining to Africa’s peace and security, he said.

In 2015, China announced the establishment of the China-UN peace and development fund that covers a 10-year period with a total value of 1 billion U.S. dollars. For more than three years, the fund has focused on Africa’s peace and development and provided financial support to a great number of projects related to the initiative of silencing the guns in Africa, said Wu.

In September 2018 at the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Chinese and African leaders agreed to define China-Africa peace and security cooperation as one of the eight cooperation priorities, he said. In addition, China will establish a China-Africa peace and security cooperation fund to encourage greater cooperation on peace and security, peacekeeping, and the maintenance of stability, he said.

China is ready to continue to play a constructive role in promoting peace, stability and development in Africa, said the Chinese envoy.
China’s consistency in pursuing development policy inspires Tanzania, says official

China has been very consistent in its pursuit of eradicating poverty and unleashing the potential for growth and human development, and that sets a good example for Tanzania to learn, according to a senior official of Tanzania’s ruling party.

Humphrey Polepole, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)’s ideology and publicity secretary, made the remarks ahead of the annual sessions of China’s top legislative and political advisory bodies, commonly known as the “Two Sessions”.

“We hope that the major annual meetings will cement and strengthen the landmarks that China has already registered so that some of us from African countries, including Tanzania, would still continue to see China as a role model and example when it comes to developing our own people,” he said in an interview in his office in the commercial capital Dar es Salaam.

He said Tanzania has been a long-time partner and friend of China, adding that the two countries’ relationship is historic and the founding principles of the two countries are very similar.

“They both aim to empower the people and make sure that whatever these two countries are doing is people-centered,” said the CCM senior official.

He said Tanzania and other African countries have taken China as an alternative model, adding that for a very long time most of the African countries, including Tanzania, tried to emulate the Western model of development in theory.

“But we have not made enough progress to liberate our people completely from poverty. China on the contrary, within a very short span of time and (with) a population of over a billion people, has managed to get over 700 million people out of poverty, “ said Polepole, adding that this is a tremendous historical achievement and world record.

On China’s active involvement in global governance and willingness to cooperate with other countries to achieve win-win outcomes, Polepole said the world is “a very small village,” adding that “we expect all countries in the world to have a certain common understanding of how we want this world to be or to become.”

He also commended China’s initiative of building a community with a shared future for mankind and upholding peaceful development.

“The common challenges we are facing in this world can be tackled if we work together,” he said.

Polepole said another landmark initiative that China put forward is the Belt and Road Initiative, in which partnership is based on friendship, business and commerce.

Uganda seeks China’s cooperation in promotion, integration of traditional medicine

Uganda’s minister of state for health has said the country will draw lessons from China on integration of traditional and complementary medicine into mainstream health care system.

Sarah Opendi, minister of state for health in charge of general duties told journalists in an interview that the east African country wants to gain knowledge from China, which is advanced in traditional medicine and modern biomedical technology.

“We need to cooperate with the Chinese government now that parliament has passed the traditional and complementary medicine bill,” said Opendi.

“The Chinese are advanced in this area. Now we need to cooperate with them to see how to clearly integrate traditional and complementary medicine into our own public healthcare system,” she said.

Ugandan legislators early this month passed the traditional and complementary medicines bill aimed at regulation and integration of traditional medicine into the national health care system.

The new law seeks to regulate indigenous and complementary medicine practitioners in efforts to reduce the importation of traditional medicines and attain universal health care coverage.

It also seeks for the development to encompass protection, cultivation, propagation, and conservation of medicinal plants and aims to contribute to poverty alleviation through the creation of employment and enhancing household incomes, among other benefits.

“Uganda is endowed with all kinds of plants that I believe can actually help in promoting this traditional medicine. The government of China and their universities train specialists in this traditional medicine up to degree, masters and so on,” said Opendi.
Ethiopian, Kenyan leaders inaugurate Chinese-built industrial park

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta have inaugurated the Chinese-built Debre Birhan industrial park, constructed in Ethiopia’s northern Amhara regional state. The Debre Birhan industrial park constructed by China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) at a cost of more than 71 million U.S. dollars is expected to create job opportunities to more than 1,000 Ethiopians. Stretched on 75 hectares of land, Debre Birhan industrial park has eight industrial sheds ready to accommodate prospective investors. The Kenyan president applauded the Ethiopian prime minister for spearheading Ethiopia’s economic change that has seen Ethiopia inaugurate several development projects including the Debre Birhan industrial park, according to the Office of the Ethiopian Prime Minister’s Office. Speaking to the media recently, Lelise Neme, CEO of Ethiopia Industrial Park Development Corporation (IPDC), said Ethiopia aims to commission six industrial parks, including Debre Birhan industrial park, before the end of the current fiscal year 2018/19, in July. “Ethiopia has invested around 1.3 billion U.S. dollars in the construction of around a dozen industrial parks, which it sees as a key strategy of achieving Ethiopia’s industrial ambitions,” said Neme. “Ethiopia has so far built and commissioned five industrial parks and with the anticipated commissioning of six more industrial parks in 2018/19, Ethiopia’s industrialization ambitions will receive a massive boost,” Neme said. With Ethiopia attracting large-scale investment in the export-import-oriented manufacturing sector, especially from Chinese firms, the country sees improving the efficiency and speed of the logistics sector as key to meet national manufacturing revenue goals. Ethiopia plans to increase the number of operational industrial parks from the current five to around 30 by 2025, as part of its efforts to make the country a light manufacturing hub and lower-middle-income economy in the same period. First China-Africa economic, trade expo to see over 1,000 African attendees

At least 1,000 African participants and traders will attend the first China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo in Changsha, capital of central China’s Hunan Province, in June. The expo, scheduled to be held between June 27 and 29, will include conferences, forums and exhibitions. “We hope that the African guests can yield good results through the expo,” Hunan’s deputy governor He Baoxiang said. A signing ceremony for major economic and trade projects will be held during the expo, with a series of forums concerning agriculture, trade, infrastructure and financing, as well as investment promotions and business negotiation activities, according to the organizing committee. The expo was launched under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Hunan’s trade volume with African countries totaled 2.8 billion U.S. dollars in 2018, surging over 50 percent for the fourth straight year. Contracted investment by Hunan firms in Africa amounted to nearly 1 billion dollars.
Rain, Huawei jointly launch 5G network in South Africa

A South African mobile data-only network operator has beaten Kenyan and Nigerian operators in the 5G network rollout race, according to reports from the Mobile World Congress which held in Barcelona, Spain.

At the 2019 Mobile World Congress, Rain, South Africa’s mobile data-only network operator, announced it had launched the first 5G commercial network in South Africa in partnership with Huawei, the leading global ICT solutions provider. This move has made South Africa one of the first countries to launch 5G.

On the continent, Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria have been leading mobile network innovators, maintaining head to head rollout of 3G, 4G and related high-speed network solutions.

With Huawei’s end-to-end 5G solutions, Rain has been able to build the 5G network using its 3.6GHz spectrum. In the first rollout phase, Rain has deployed a number of 5G sites in key areas in Johannesburg.

Willem Roos, chief executive officer of Rain, said the network will provide fiber-like speeds without the installation complexities, time delays and cost of laying fiber in under-serviced areas.

Huawei launched a full range of 5G end-to-end product solutions, from core network, bearer network and base station to terminals in the beginning of 2018. The company also launched 5G phones at MWC 2019.

Apart from deploying new base stations, Huawei’s solutions enable Rain to fully leverage its existing LTE network and allocated spectrum for 5G deployment. This approach of sharing facilities and leveraging existing infrastructure will enable Rain to roll out the 5G network in a quick and cost-effective manner.

Shi Jilin, president of the Huawei Cloud Core Network product line, said it is an important step to work with Rain in bringing the first 5G network construction in South Africa.

“With our solutions, we are committed to working with operators with innovative solutions to build future-oriented networks for smooth evolution and migration for the maximum value out of their investment and the best user experience,” she said.

According to the plan, Rain will continue to expand the 5G network to cover all the major metropolitan areas in South Africa with 5G networks to provide ultra-broadband services to homes and enterprises.

Roos further noted Rain was excited to build South Africa’s first large-scale 5G network, which can provide fast wireless internet to more citizens.

“We are supportive of President Ramaphosa’s investment drive in the country and hope to contribute to readying South Africa for the Fourth Industrial Revolution,” he said.

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China remains Burundi’s friend even in hard times: NGOs

China has remained Burundi’s friend even in the latter’s hard times, Burundian civil society groups have said, a week after the handover of the China-aided Burundian state house.

China has been on Burundi’s side at political and diplomatic aspects, Jean Marie Nduwimana, chairman of Integral Platform for Civil Society of Burundi, told journalists in an interview in Bujumbura, the commercial capital of Burundi.

China supports Burundi on the international arena against “unfair resolutions” on the central African country, he said.

“All that shows that Burundi has true friends who want to help us and who help us reach sovereignty,” he added.

Chinese Ambassador to Burundi Li Changlin and Burundian Foreign Affairs Minister Ezechiel Nibigira on Feb. 14 signed a handover document on the China-aided Burundian state house. The complex, with a total construction area of over 9,900 square meters, consists of the president’s office building, rooms for guards and equipment, and watchtowers.

“We highly appreciate the donation of the state house which is a prestigious and big infrastructure. It reflects a good image of national sovereignty,” said Hamza Venant Burikukiye, chairman of Coalition of Associations of People Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS.

This infrastructure “concretizes” the sovereignty of Burundi, said Burikukiye.

All Burundian citizens should rejoice for excellent Sino-Burundian friendship, he added.

They also committed China for supporting Burundian people’s livelihood, in sectors of health, education, energy and infrastructure.
Chinese leader congratulates President Buhari on re-election

Chinese President Xi Jinping has extended heartfelt congratulations to President Muhammadu Buhari on his decisive win in the February 23 presidential election in Nigeria.

In his congratulatory message, President Xi said: “On the occasion, of your re-election as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I would like to, on behalf of the government and people of China and in my own name, extend to Your Excellency warmest congratulations and best wishes. I wish you continued success in fulfilling the lofty mission.”

President Xi said, through joint efforts with President Buhari, Nigeria and China in recent years have significantly enhanced political mutual trust and secured fruitful outcomes in practical cooperation, which have delivered tangible benefits to both countries.

“I highly value China’s relations with Nigeria and stand ready to join hands with you to follow through on the outcome of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and take the China-Nigeria strategic partnership to a new height, to the greater benefits of the two countries and two peoples,” President Xi said.

Chinese firm to set up dialysis centers in West Africa

A leading Chinese investment firm will from next month start the process of setting up dialysis centers in some West African countries, a senior executive has disclosed.

Jiang Weihong, vice president of China Silk Road Development Capital Management Company Limited, told reporters recently that the aim of her company was to help improve health delivery.

Jiang signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with representatives of the beneficiary countries during the opening ceremony of the three-day West African International Health Summit.

“We signed an MOU here during the ceremony for the establishment of dialysis centers across West Africa. We will start at the beginning of next month. It is something that is necessary for the improvement of health delivery and the health of African people, so we are ready to invest in it,” she stated.

The health summit under the theme “Collaborating through networking and technology for improved healthcare in Africa” attracted participants from 23 African countries on the opening day.

It sought to create the platform for hospital leaders, policy makers and health professionals across borders to meet and share practical experiences and current best practices in healthcare.

At the same time it offers opportunities for the leaders and decision makers to interface with manufacturers and suppliers of the latest healthcare technologies, products, equipment and services.

“They have been offering free services and through that we have had a lot of transplant, technology and equipment in terms of cardiovascular surgeries and training,” the CEO added.

Hangzhou Supor South Ocean Pharmaceutical Company Limited and Chison, ultra-sound scan machine manufacturers, are seeking to expand their customer base in West Africa.

Ghana’s deputy ambassador to the People’s Republic of China, Charles Dwamena, said the Chinese firms which were exhibiting offered local health institutions the opportunity to learn about the best practices in terms of health technology and treatment options among others.
China joins global action against forced displacement of persons in Africa

China has joined the international community to provide material aid and technical support to tackle Africa’s growing refugee problem and forced internal displacements, winning accolades from the continent’s leaders and people.

Recently, China has stepped up assistance to support the growing number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by conflicts, poverty and climatic shocks in several African countries, providing a new lease of life for many on the continent.

The world today is witnessing the highest level of displacement on record. Globally, about 68.5 million people have been forced to leave home, among whom nearly 25.4 million are refugees and over half are children, according to statistics from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Africa hosts nearly a third of the world’s refugees and IDPs, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said when addressing the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) on Sunday.

The AU summit was rallied to address the issue of forced displacements in Africa through donations of food, humanitarian assistance to support the growing number of refugees and internally displaced persons in the region including Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad, creating a new refugee crisis.

Countries like Cameroon and Central African Republic (CAR), which are experiencing sectarian and tribal conflicts, have also been seen a growing population of IDPs, who are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Recurrent droughts in the Horn of Africa are likely to fuel further displacement of civilians given the weak capacity of host countries to cater to emergency needs.

Nevertheless, there is a consensus that African countries must reach out to both traditional and new allies when seeking a durable solution to the growing burden of refugees. The mental and physical health of the refugees and IDPs are another concern.

Under the theme of “The Year of Refugees, Returnees and IDPs: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa,” the two-day session of the AU heads of state is also deliberating the establishment of a continental free trade area.

The issue of forced displacements in Africa remains sadly remarkable, Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairperson of the AU Commission, said at the opening of the 32nd AU summit.

“It is important to tackle more deeply the causes of the phenomenon,” he said.

Countries like Kenya and Uganda are hosting refugees who have fled during the turmoil in countries such as Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Africa’s refugee burden has yet to ease despite the international community’s concerted efforts to restore normalcy in some hotspots. Meanwhile, terrorism has affected a large swath of the Sahel region including Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad, creating a new refugee crisis.

China has pumped large amounts of material and financial resources to refugees living in camps in food-insecure northern Kenya due to insufficient funds.

“I thank China for its generous donation, which will allow the WFP to give us more food and make our hard life a bit easier,” said Ceaser Okulo Unu, a refugee from Uganda lining up for the food aid.

China has actively participated in humanitarian interventions in Somalia, where decades of conflict and recurrent drought have pushed civilians to the margins.

In April 2018, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA), a Chinese non-governmental organization, and Mercy Corps, an international humanitarian organization, jointly launched a 1-million-dollar program to help refugees in Uganda become more self-reliant.

The “Bright Future Program” involves giving the beneficiaries small grants and training them in better farming practices in a bid to boost agricultural production and increase household incomes.

The program also seeks to train young refugees in business entrepreneurship. About 19,000 refugees and Ugandans are expected to benefit from the 15-month project.

“Though there are challenges in communication due to cultural differences, I am happy to contribute to Chinese humanitarian aid overseas,” said Liu Liangchuan, manager of the program.

The organization came to Uganda to share its experience of poverty alleviation and help refugees maintain their dignity, said Wang Xingzui, executive vice president of the CFPA.

According to the CFPA, the program is expected to be long-term, focusing on the social and economic development of the refugee camps.

In April 2018, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation donated 5 million U.S. dollars through the WFP to provide emergency food aid to more than 200,000 people in Somalia, fulfilling its long-term commitment to assisting the Horn of African region in the displacement of civilians.

China has also provided food aid and financial support to facilitate the resettlement of refugees in Uganda, many of whom came from neighboring South Sudan and DRC.

In May 2018, the Chinese government donated 5 million dollars in emergency food aid to the drought-affected areas in the Karamoja region of northeastern Uganda. And a month later, China provided 500,000 dollars to support the resettlement of refugees.

Ugandan Minister of Finance Matia Kasaija said the Chinese donation came at a critical time as the over 1.4 million refugees in the country are in desperate need of humanitarian relief.

In addition to the donations, China has also contributed to improving living standards for refugees.

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Eric Manguyuni, a senior fellow at Nairobi-based Ern-Pioneer Development, said China’s timing is crucial.

“By China coming in, this is a big relief to many African countries that are struggling or burdened due to crisis in neighboring nations like Kenya and Uganda,” said Manguyuni.
Cooperation in peace, security demonstrates deep China-Africa partnership –Sierra Leone’s FM

Growing China-Africa cooperation in peace and security demonstrates the overall deep partnership between Africa and China, Sierra Leone’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Alie Kabba has said.

Kabba, in an exclusive interview with reporters, said that the growing China-Africa cooperation in the area of peace and security “is a demonstration of the deep partnership between the two sides.”

“It is time when the focus on peace and security in Africa is at the central stage in the African Union’s efforts to make sure that Africa becomes a continent where there is no conflict, and we have the capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts,” Kabba said.

“The opportunity to having China and Africa round the table to talk about peace and security in Africa is a demonstration of the deep partnership between the two sides,” the foreign minister stressed.

Kabba also commends the progresses made in the implementation of the China-Africa Peace and Security Initiative as part of the commitments made by African and Chinese leaders during the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) last September.

“We welcome this initiative, because it shows the long-term commitment of China to make sure that Africa is a continent with a focus on long-time development and, therefore, the focus on peace and security is part of the efforts to create a condition for the rapid aspiration of the pace of development in Africa,” he said.

“Overall, the state of cooperation between Africa and China is excellent,” Kabba said, adding “Excellent precisely, because for a long time China has been a consistent and reliable partner of Africa.”

“All African countries express similar opinion. In fact, the common consensus in Africa is that China is a true friend of Africa, and we see the opportunity in peace and security sector as one more step forward in deepening the ties,” he affirmed.

“We want to place on record our gratitude to the people of China and the Chinese government for this great cooperation,” he said.

Sarah Opendi, Uganda’s State Minister for General Duties, said “they (Chinese medical teams) bring in specialists in different areas, (and that) the services offered to our people are of good quality. We really appreciate them”.

Health Minister of South Sudan Riek Gai Kok appreciated the Chinese medical teams, saying “this is the generosity of the People’s Republic of China to send this dedicated team to South Sudan to help us fight these worst health indicators in the world”.

Namibian patient praises Chinese medical aid

Going back to work in Namibia shortly after the Spring Festival, the Chinese medical staff received probably the best new year greeting for doctors—a thank-you letter from Lea Tikotoke, a healed patient.

The 30-year-old Namibian had been unable to walk due to severe hip and back pain. Local doctors failed to diagnose any disease after a series of tests including X-rays in December.

Tikotoke had to walk with a walking stick until she received a needle technique massage on her back and hip from Chinese doctors at Katutura Immediate Hospital in January.

“From that day on, I started walking without a stick,” Tikotoke recalled.

Chu Hailin, a senior doctor with the Chinese medical team who has been serving for a third term in Namibia, said a lot of patients went back to their Chinese doctors to say thank you, and some even sang and danced in the clinic to show their joy and gratitude.

Namibia’s founding President Sam Nujoma said the Chinese medical team is doing very well and they are the representatives of the China-Namibia friendship.

For half a century, Chinese medical teams have scattered like pearls on the Africa continent, a report by China’s National Health Commission wrote.

In 1963, the first Chinese medical team arrived in the northern African country of Algeria. Since then China has sent about 20,000 doctors to a total of 51 countries and regions in Africa, where, together with local doctors, Chinese medical staff have saved more than 200 million lives.

When the Ebola virus broke out in West Africa in 2014, China sent more than 1,200 medical staff and public health experts to the region. They won praises from the governments and people of the recipient countries.

Zambian Minister of Health Chitalu Chilufya said his government appreciates the professional, ethical and hardworking culture of the Chinese medical teams that have been coming to the country since 1978.

“We We want to place on record our gratitude to the people of China and the Chinese government for this great cooperation,” he said.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Alie Kabba, Sierra Leone’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International cooperation, at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.
China and Djibouti have pledged to step up implementation of the outcomes of the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in order to push forward the development of their bilateral strategic partnership.

In a meeting with Djibouti’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mahamoud Ali Youssouf in Beijing, Vice-President Wang Qishan said both nations should enhance cooperation under the guidance of the consensus reached between the two heads of state during the summit in September.

Calling the African country a good friend and good brother, Wang said China stands ready to strengthen exchanges with Djibouti in state governance.

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a separate meeting with Youssouf earlier on the same day that the two countries should work together to promote cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative.

Both sides should make efforts to take into consideration Djibouti’s needs and China’s strengths, and translate the consensus of the two heads of state as well as the eight major initiatives on China-Africa cooperation into tangible benefits, the state councilor said.

President Xi Jinping announced eight major initiatives to enhance cooperation with African nations at the 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit, covering such fields as industrial promotion, infrastructure connectivity, trade facilitation and green development.

The all-around and strategic cooperation between China and Djibouti displays the friendship and political mutual trust between the two countries, and also represents the mutually beneficial and win-win results being sought, the state councilor said.

China is willing to intensify collaboration with Djibouti in maritime escort operations, peacekeeping and anti-piracy efforts so as to make even greater contributions to peace and security in Africa, he added.

Youssouf said his country welcomes the eight major initiatives that Xi announced and supports China in playing a more significant role in promoting peace and security on the African continent.

Djibouti looks forward to close cooperation with China in such areas as the Belt and Road Initiative, and peace and security operations, he said.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Djibouti.

Youssouf hailed bilateral ties between China and Djibouti as a model of China-Africa cooperation, saying his country values the solid friendship with China. He added that the African nation will continue to remain committed to the long-term relationship, support China in international bodies such as the United Nations and safeguard the common interests of both countries.

Djibouti welcomes investment and trade from Chinese enterprises to help the country achieve sustainable development, he added.

Belt and Road Initiative mutually beneficial: Rwandan foreign minister

The Belt and Road Initiative is a partnership that is mutually beneficial for Rwanda and addresses Rwanda’s development challenges, Rwandan foreign minister Richard Sezibera has said in Rwandan capital city Kigali.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a good initiative, which addresses development requirements of China’s partners, said Sezibera when responding to a question on the Belt and Road Initiative and second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation at a press conference held by Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

China is an important partner for Rwanda at all levels, and Rwanda welcomes the growing partnership with China, he said, adding that Rwanda and China have important relationships in infrastructure development, party-to-party and people-to-people exchanges, and at the political level.

The second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation is going to be held in April in Beijing.
Chinese bank to roll out trading in Chinese yuan

Kenya’s regional bank NIC-Bank has announced it will make available Chinese yuan to all its customers, as it seeks to cash in on the growing Sino-Kenya commercial ties.

NIC Bank said in a statement released in Nairobi that it will offer the Chinese currency to both business persons and travelers.

“We are pleased to introduce to you the Chinese yuan currency which is a new addition to our offering. This solution will allow you access to the best rates at any NIC Bank branch country wide,” NIC Bank said in the statement.

The regional bank which has presence in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania will also provide an opportunity for its customers to open a Chinese yuan account.

NIC Bank joins a long list of financial institutions in Kenya such as Stanbic Bank that have a yuan trading facility that makes the Chinese currency locally available.

Government data indicates that China has become the largest trading partner, foreign investor and project contractor of Kenya.

In order to trade with China, the Kenya business community has been forced to purchase US dollars for conversion to the yuan, while availability of the Chinese currency locally will reduce the cost of business transaction between Kenya and China.

Kenya also hosts a vibrant Chinese community that currently operates over 300 firms in many sectors of the economy.

China-aided state house handed over to Burundi

Chinese Ambassador to Burundi Li Changlin and Burundian Foreign Affairs Minister Ezechiel Nibigira have signed a handover document on the China-aided Burundian state house.

The handover is a sign of sincere friendship and cooperation between China and Burundi, Li said at the signing ceremony in the new state house in Mutimbuzi district, north of Burundi’s commercial capital Bujumbura.

The Chinese embassy has mobilized translators to render Burundi’s National Development Plan into the Chinese language, which will help identify priority areas for cooperation between the two sides, said the envoy, adding that the Sino-Burundian cooperation will focus on improving the well-being of Burundian citizens and working conditions of Burundian civil servants.

Nibigira thanked China for offering a state house that Burundi had never owned since the country’s independence on July 1, 1962.

“This is the first time in Burundi’s history to get such a nice infrastructure. It proves the strongest political and diplomatic relations existing between Burundi and China,” said Nibigira.

The Burundian government will do its best to continue boosting Sino-Burundian relations, he added.

Burundian Second Vice-President Joseph Butore also attended the ceremony. Before signing the document, officials of Burundi and China had a tour of the state house.

The complex, with the total construction area of over 9,900 square meters, consists of the president’s office building, rooms for guards and equipment, and watchtowers.

Tunisia, China sign protocol of cooperation over sending Chinese medical mission

Tunisia and China signed a protocol of cooperation on sending Chinese medical mission to Tunisia, the Tunisian Foreign Ministry said in a statement late last month.

Chinese Ambassador to Tunisia Wang Wenbin and Tunisian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Sabri Bachtobji signed the protocol, which highlighted the cooperation of the two countries in the field of health.

The 23rd Chinese medical team arrived in Tunisia last November and has been providing free medical services in Tunis, Jendouba, Sidi Bouzid and Medenine.

“The Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also hailed the remarkable achievement on cooperation between Tunisia and China in several areas, including economic, cultural and artistic,” said the statement.
A senior Zambian government official has said that the country needs to accelerate investment in science, technology and mathematics if it is to attain the economic development levels attained by China.

Minister of Higher Education Nkandu Luo said China, as well as other Asian nations such as Japan, did not attain the level of economic development without investments in the three areas which were vital in unlocking development.

"China and Japan are today doing well because the countries first invested in education, science and technology. Zambia cannot afford to lag behind," she said during an award ceremony for university students for the Huawei ICT competition.

According to her, Zambia needs to move with the times by investing in science and technology in order to spur economic development.

The ministry, she said, will focus on skills development in order to create a cadre of young people who will drive the country’s development agenda, adding that the current education system has failed to move with the times.

The Zambian minister expressed concern that some of the students coming from the country’s universities failed to fit in industries because of lack of experience during their training.

The ministry, she said, was working with universities to create career centers at the learning institutions where industries could go and provide tips on the students before they graduate.

She added it would now be mandatory for all students to undergo industrial attachments in their respective fields.

Zambia and China can strengthen their bilateral ties by concentrating on training young people in high-tech jobs, an expert has said.

Lamech Mbise, president of Funzeleo, a United States-based non-governmental organization aiming to inspire and prepare youth for high-demand science and math-based careers, said training young people in high-tech job was vital in ensuring sustainability of Zambia’s economic growth.

He said Zambia, as well as the rest of the African continent, was blessed with a high population of young people below the age of 30, who should be trained in high-tech jobs.

"The over 50 years of bilateral relationships between China and Zambia should be of benefit to both countries," he said.

"China should consider training the educated Zambian youths in various high technology jobs, as a way of sustaining the cooperation between the two peoples.”

China, he said, was endowed with skills and high technology which could be transferred to Zambia through training of young people.

The expert is in Zambia for a projects training workshop for secondary teachers in science and mathematics. Since last year, about 30 teachers have been trained on various science and mathematics projects.
China accelerates Uganda’s green energy drive to fast-track development

Isimba Hydropower Plant constructed by Chinese companies in eastern Uganda will fast-track the country’s green energy drive after it passed tests from engineers, environmentalists and conservationists.

The Isimba power plant will generate the installed capacity of 183 MW, which is currently about 19 percent of the country’s power generated. The country generates up to 974.84 MW, which experts say is inadequate and expensive.

After commissioning of all the units, the Isimba power plant will generate 183 MW, which is currently about 19 percent of the country’s power generated. The country generates up to 974.84 MW, which experts say is inadequate and expensive.

At the peak of the power crisis in 2014, Uganda’s government resorted to using diesel generators to power the country’s economy, which raised the cost of power.

Throughout the construction period, a government multisectoral task force subjected the project to tests and monitoring on a quarterly basis.

As Isimba nears commissioning, CWE is undertaking a detailed environmental and social impact assessment. This assessment usually has proposed measures to mitigate against the impacts of the project. As for wildlife, we relocated the species that were there,” Hangi said.
Chinese-built railways foster friendship, development in Africa over last four decades

The Chinese-built Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA) started operation in 1976 and has become an economic catalyst for eastern and southern African nations, which also turns into a symbol of friendship between the peoples of China and Africa.

Some 40 years on, the China-funded Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) is serving as a new engine of Kenya’s economic growth and makes the whole eastern African region more dynamic.

The two railways not only transformed people’s lives, but also witnessed the development of China-Africa cooperation.

FRIENDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Benedict Henry Mkanyago, a 69-year-old Tanzanian who retired from TAZARA in 2002, has witnessed changes brought by the railway, for the country and also for himself.

Mkanyago was born in the region of Mbeya in southwestern Tanzania. Before TAZARA passed through, the landlocked town was impoverished and poorly accessible.

However, upon the completion of TAZARA, the small town began to attract farming migrants and entrepreneurs and became a regional business hub in a few years. Mbeya City is now a growing metropolis and business center for Tanzania’s southern regions and the neighboring countries of Malawi and Zambia.

The railway also changed my life,” said Mkanyago, who joined the TAZARA construction team in 1970 in his early 20s, where he made friends with his Chinese counterparts and got trained in different positions. Benefiting from his rich working experience, Mkanyago was later promoted to chief of the Mbeya station.

According to official statistics, TAZARA has transported more than 30 million tons of cargo and more than 40 million passengers since operation began.

Former Tanzanian Minister of Communication and Transport Mark Mwandoysa said: “Those of us who are fortunate enough to have witnessed the construction of TAZARA will forever be grateful to China.”

In April last year, Tanzania’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Augustine Mahiga said the construction of TAZARA formed a solid foundation of friendship and cooperation between Tanzania and China.

He made the remarks at a commemoration event to salute the construction of TAZARA will forever be

Keny’s SGR launched operation in May 2017, becoming the newest addition to the list of Chinese-built railways in Africa.

The 480-km railway cuts the journey from Kenya’s capital to the Mombasa Port, the biggest port in East Africa, from 12 hours to just over four hours.

While the railway brings about much-awaited convenience and efficiency, it also succeeds in accommodating wildlife movement needs, thus causing minimal interference to animals.

The China-funded modern railway is estimated to have boosted the African country’s GDP by 1.5 percent and has provided 46,000 jobs to locals. About 300 domestic enterprises were subcontracted during its construction, according to official figures.

Raphael Tuju, secretary general of the ruling Jubilee Party, said in an interview with Xinhua that Kenya and other African countries regard China as a strategic partner in their quest to boost trade and infrastructure development.

“If you ask any Kenyan about China, the first thing that crosses their mind is the standard gauge railway linking Mombasa and Nairobi, and Guangzhou, where Kenyans go to buy clothes and other items,” Tuju said.

Kenya’s budding entrepreneurs agreed that the SGR has not only promoted China’s image in the country but has also been instrumental to transforming regional commerce. Shadrack Kimeu, a 30-year-old owner of a hardware shop, said his revenue streams have expanded thanks to faster, cheaper and more efficient means of transportation for construction materials guaranteed by the SGR.

Lilian Awinja, executive director of the East African Business Council, said traders from Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan and northern Tanzania are now able to import and export goods without a hitch thanks to the SGR.

“The SGR has reduced the travel time for imports and exports out of the East African region,” said Awinja at a recent business roundtable in Nairobi.

The SGR has improved logistics while reducing the cost of transporting bulk goods in the region, she added.

The mega infrastructure project, which was implemented by China Road and Bridge Corporation, affiliated with China Communications Construction Company, is also deemed as an early result of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative aiming to build trade and infrastructure networks connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient Silk Road routes.

Gerishon Ikiara, an international economics lecturer at the University of Nairobi, said the modern commuter and cargo trains will promote growth, prosperity and cohesion in the larger eastern African region.
The 2019 China’s annual Two Sessions meetings come early with expectations

By Ehizuelen Michael Omoruyi O.

As we mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China and its achievements and simultaneously the year of the pig which symbolizes in Chinese culture good fortune and wealth, I can say that during these seven decades, China has moved from “been through” to “breakthroughs”. Having said that, China’s “two sessions” – the 13th National People’s Congress (NPC) and the top political advisory body – will hold in Beijing on March 5th, 2019. While the sessions of these two groups, also known as the Two Meetings, largely exit to formalize the announcement of predetermined government policy for the year. The meetings are significant markers on the nation’s carefully choreographed political stage as well as to announce policy changes and personnel reshuffles. This year the NPC which comprise of the almost 3,000 Communist Party members and 2,000 non-Party members of the National Committee of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) will occupy the seats of the National People’s Congress at the Great Hall of the People. These 5,000 delegates which include national party chiefs, government officials, firm executives, provincial deputies, military commanders, celebrities, business people, tech billionaires, other parliament members such as President Xi Jinping and all the other members of the Politburo Standing Committee are expected to rubberstamp key constitutional changes that will elevate the nation to the next level.

Having said that, the NPC runs simultaneously with a gathering of China’s top political advisory body, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. Together they are generally identified as lianghui, or the “two sessions”; the meeting will last for 15.5 days as translated in the agenda. Although the guest list of the people that will attend the NPC and CPPCC has yet to be announced, it is likely that the list will look similar to last year list. This year meeting is expected to emphasis on the major seven risks President Xi Jinping mentioned during a meeting for all provincial and ministerial officials on January 21, 2019, in Beijing. He asserts that these seven risks are the challenges the communist party both inside and outside the communist system, at home and abroad is encountering presently. The various risks include political risk, ideological risk, science and technological risk, social risk, external environmental risk, party-building risk, and economic risk. I will view the risk from a political and economic perspective. Notably, politically, as for the internal threat, the annual meeting is expected to focus on finding a solution on the crackdown on minority Muslim Uighurs in the far western region of Xinjiang that is attracting global condemnation of China’s human right record. Also, China’s party members are concerned about how the nations more than 1 billion people will behave on the 30th anniversary coming up in June, 2019 of the bloody crackdown on Tiananmen Square. Based on these concerns, President Xi Jinping summoned top officials to Beijing in January for arare warning regarding the “major risks” listed above and urge for an urgent solution.

Economically, as for the external threat, the annual meeting is expected to also focus on the trade war dispute with Donald Trump’s government. The trade dispute could lead to new tariffs on hundreds of billion dollars’ worth of Chinese products if a pact is not reached. As a result of the huge tariffslevied on Chinese products, the trade war has hurt China’s economy in some ways as multinational firms are shifting their production out of China to circumvent paying the United States import duties. Also, China’s slowdown has started hitting home, with provinces slashing their growth targets as the trade war fuels its weakest growth since 1990. Notably, according to a report from Reuter, President Xi Jinping and the other Party members are planning to set a target range for national economic growth of either 6 or 6.5 percent for 2019. This is an indication that the Chinese policymakers are awake to the economic and political problems surrounding the Chinese economy and are inserting the economic slowdown and political problem into their goals for the year 2019.

As such, the early timing of the annual “two session” meetings will take place as a result of the fact that President Xi Jinping on fixing the economic and political problems wants to obtain complete backing within the communist party to sort out the political and economic problems. That was why he spoke about the “seven must-solve” risks listed above so as to revive the Chinese economy, plus a long-term effective mechanism to make sure that economic vitality is injected back into the Chinese economy that will enable President Xi Jinping and his party members find solution to the challenges facing the small and medium-sized firms from getting financing and ensuring the nation’s employment rate bounce back to normalcy as well as ensure that the economy grow in a stable and healthy manner. As such, the early national meeting which was themed around “preventing and resolving major risks” this year needed to be extremely urgent as well as imperative.

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