

CHINA-AFRICA

REPORTING PROJECT

AFRICA-CHINA JOURNALISTS FORUM 2016: Perspectives on Africa-China Reporting

Since 2009 the Wits China-Africa Reporting Project (the Project) has organized annual seminars and workshops bringing together media practitioners and academics focused on Africa-China issues. This year the Project is convening a new and expanded ***Africa-China Journalists Forum*** (the Forum) on November 10 at Wits University to mark a turning point in the Project's mission and vision. The Forum will coincide with Wits Journalism's recalibration of the globally acclaimed Power Reporting Conference as the African Investigative Journalism Conference on November 7-9, 2016, that will include an Africa-China session.

The first of its kind on the African continent, the Forum will see the participation of some of the leading African, Chinese and foreign journalists to discuss the state of *Africa-China* reporting, and will be an interactive and engaging event.

Africa-China reporting: Accentuating the African perspective

The designation *Africa-China*, as opposed to the more commonly used China-Africa phrase, is deliberate. Journalists and authors have tended to use the phrase China-Africa to frame relations between China and Africa across economic, political and cultural themes. Evidently the China-Africa framing indicates the view of China as the larger partner and Africa as the secondary partner.

By instead utilising the designation *Africa-China*, the Project seeks to accentuate a hitherto largely muted African perspective for understanding journalistic representations of relations. The African, Chinese and foreign Forum delegates are called upon to take a step back from Chinese and/or Western perspectives to contemplate an *Africa-China* journalistic viewpoint based on reporting experiences in their respective African countries and/or regions. The Forum will feature short presentations by the attending journalists based on their recent and current reporting on the ground in Africa, followed by interactive discussions.

By means of people-centred journalism that breaks down the often grand and monolithic narrative on engagements, the Project encourages presentations and debate that grapples with the *Africa-China* journalistic practice from the perspective of real impact on the people of Africa. Delegates are encouraged to prepare presentations that address the following themes and questions:

- Is an African journalistic perspective a preserve for African journalists who live and have been socialized in Africa only, or is it possible for Chinese or Western journalists to report from an African perspective? What evidence do we have from current reporting?
- Are policies and projects reported in such a way as to reflect the interests of the African people? Which sectors of society are reported on most? What evidence do we have from current reporting?
- How have the people of Africa benefited from relations with China and how have their lives been impacted on the ground for better or worse? Have their interests and experiences been properly reflected by means of proper *Africa-China* reporting on the continent? Are there gaps in this regard, and if so how can they be addressed?
- Do Chinese and Western interests enjoy disproportionate focus in the media relative to African ones, and if so which media?
- Are journalistic instincts more geared towards elites and sub-elites rather than the vast majority of the African people?
- How does Africa-China reporting feature in the various journalistic specialisations namely news, features, business, opinion and commentary/editorials, photography, talk shows etc?
- What is the place of investigative reporting in media coverage of the Africa-China story?

Delegates to the Forum are requested to prepare short (10-15 mins.) presentations focused on their respective African countries/regions, and to submit presentation titles to the Project by no later than October 21, 2016.

A full programme for the event will be distributed at the end of October.

Launch of the Africa-China Reporting Project

The Forum will also serve as the launch of the Project's rebranding as the *Africa-China Reporting Project*.

