

# **United Pan-African Voice and Agencies as the Missing Links in the Current Africa-China Partnership**

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# Introduction

- ⇒ Africa-China partnership, both political and economic (trade, FDI and development assistance), is growing from time to time.
- ⇒ While China is projecting its interest through its agencies such as FOCAC, CCTV and Chinese owned Banks; a united African voice and agencies are the missing links in the current Africa-China partnership.
- ⇒ Indeed, this is one of the features of African engagement not only with China but also with traditional and other emerging partners.
- ⇒ Changing the narratives i.e., how African countries best engage partners rather than other development partners engaging African countries is timely and pertinent.
- ⇒ In this regard, policy research works and journalism perspectives from within African countries perspectives are pertinent in analyzing the Africa-China partnership.
- ⇒ This presentation will address the above issue using the experience of Oxfam International's Africa-China Dialogue Platform (ACDP).

# Oxfam International's Africa-China Dialogue Platform (ACDP).

- ⇒ Oxfam International's Africa-China Dialogue Platform (ACDP) launched in March 2016.
- ⇒ The major aims of the Dialogue Platform is to encourage and facilitate a constructive engagement and dialogue of citizens, policy makers, researchers and other stakeholders on the growing partnership between Africa and China.
- ⇒ The platform targets to generate knowledge in order to influence policies and practices that relate to the Africa-China partnership. In this regard, it developed specific streams of work including policy research, knowledge generation, management and dissemination.
- ⇒ The short-term focus areas of the platform are sustainable development goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063, climate change, agricultural cooperation and peace and security.
- ⇒ The platform while looking at the continent, in general, it will have a focus on countries from the five geographical regions that have the most Chinese involvement. For instance, on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of November, a country event in Lusaka on Zambia and China Bilateral Partnership

# Outcomes of the first Africa-China Dialogue Platform on Agricultural Development in Africa

## The Role of China

- ▶ The Chinese development path is a very interesting path University that African should study and emulate: learning from China is absolutely important for Africa.
- ▶ However, Africans should understand that the Chinese context is different and should never be mimicked.
- ▶ The absence of a clear African policy on how to engage China both at continental, sub regional and in most African countries were highlighted. This demands a strategic thinking and coordination on the part of the AU, RECs and individual member countries to be linked to Agenda 2063. Unless China's increasing engagement with Africa has the potential of resulting into dependency.
- ▶ Equally missing as highlighted in the Dialogue was a channel for an independent civil society engagement.

## Outcomes of the first Africa-China Dialogue Platform Continued...

- ▶ A regional approach for engaging China was highlighted through RECs by directing Chinese expansion into areas of national and sub-regional interest; technology and skill transfers and engaging China to finance infrastructure development projects.
- ▶ National strategies with pro-poor macroeconomic policy; policy aims to promote the State, the private sector and civils society organisations are pertinent.
- ▶ Issues facing in African agriculture and the new partner such as gaps: knowledge/research, finance, infrastructure and experience sharing must be addressed.
- ▶ The ill effects of large-scale land investments must be addressed through participation of local communities, protection of environment and promoting transparency and accountability in contract negotiations.

# Outcomes of the first Africa-China Dialogue Platform Continued...

- ▶ Chinese agri-tech companies are promoting new varieties of crops in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Liberia and Madagascar.
- ▶ Yet despite much rhetoric, Chinese, Indian and Brazilian investments, development assistance and trade in African agriculture remain relatively less generally imagined.
- ▶ Interest alignment with Africa's smallholder farmers interest is pertinent and timely. Investments and cooperation programmes do not appear to systematically align with the interests of African governments. For instance, neither rice nor wheat, which spearheaded the Green Revolution in Asia, are of importance to Africa. This is mainly for the reason that the continent's output for each is **only 2 percent of world production**.
- ▶ Rather major crops in Africa such as millet and sorghum, which constitute 40 % and 18 % of world production; yam, plantain and cassava, which represent 95 %, 70 % and 44 % of world production must be given priorities not only in the African green revolution but also in Chinese agricultural development assistance to Africa. Accordingly, African smallholder farmers including womens must be consulted and engaged in project design and implementation.

## Outcomes of the first Africa-China Dialogue Platform Continued...

- ▶ Bringing agricultural transformation and scaling up agricultural productivity, therefore, is the sole responsibility of Africans. In this regard, each African country must develop sound agricultural sector policy and strategy i.e. pro-poor, pro-rural, and a consistent policy that focuses on productivity-based staple crop-led agricultural development.
- ▶ African countries must guarantee China to align to their priorities. Accordingly, Africa-initiated, Africa-owned and Africa-led projects/approaches are timely and pertinent.

# Outcomes of the Second Africa-China Dialogue Platform on African Countries Engagement of China and Other Partners to Achieve SDGs and Agenda 2063

- ▶ Oxfam International's Africa-China Dialogue Platform (ACDP) organised a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the theme African countries' engagement with China and other development partners to achieve SDGs and agenda 2063 on 28 September 2016.
- ▶ The major aims of the dialogue were to discuss and share experiences, as well as forward policy recommendations on how to operate in the evolving global scene, and how to plan, manage and make use of partnerships (be it traditional and/ or emerging) in the context of SDGs and Agenda 2063.
- ▶ Therefore, the theme of the dialogue was indeed timely and pertinent for both the international community and African countries.

## Outcomes of the Second Africa-China Dialogue Platform ... Continued

- ▶ Political and financial determination, powers of advocacy, inter-sector linkages were picked as lesson drawn from the MGDs to achieve SDGs. Here comes the role of Media.
- ▶ Africa still remains the largest ODA receiver. Furthermore, the role of CSOs to curb illicit financial flows in which Africa loses 50 billion dollars per year/ 1 billion dollars per week was stressed. The need for enhanced domestic resource mobilization and the importance of integration to maximize synergies discoursed.
- ▶ China and other emerging power offer opportunities to support African countries to achieve SDGs and Agenda 2063 economically (trade, FDI and ODA), socio-economic (support the health, education, trainings, water and sanitation etc), environmental (clean energy generation technology from wind power, solar and geo-termal), and peace and security support/fund through UN and AU.

## Outcomes of the Second Africa-China Dialogue Platform ... Continued

- ▶ Following the demographic structure (ageing China and young Africa), by 2025 the labour supply in Africa will surpass the global labour supply. At the same time, China's working age population has peaked and will decline in future decades. This will have opportunity of population dividend for African countries coupled with the economy rebalancing in China as labor cost increase.
- ▶ The Challenge is the position of Africa in the global value chain i.e., the import and export of African countries depend heavily on natural resources, rather than intermediate goods. The level of global value chain integration thus will have effect on achieving SDGs and Agenda 2063.
- ▶ Africa needs to better engage with China both bilaterally and multilaterally at the G20, UN, World Bank, BRICS, NDB, and AIIB i.e., Protecting African voice in the UN, G-20, and IFIs. For instance, the recent G-20 agenda in China on industrialisation had a huge spill-over effect on African countries.

## Outcomes of the Second Africa-China Dialogue Platform ... Continued

- ▶ Africa is reactive; no overarching strategy for emerging powers (China, India, Brazil, Turkey, etc.) while these emerging powers all have clear, defined strategy for engaging with Africa.
- ▶ Changing the narratives i.e., how African countries best engage partners rather than other development partners engaging African countries is important. The role of Media comes here also.
- ▶ This leads to the importance of an African agency that spearheads the implementation of SDGs, Agenda 2063 and African countries partnership with other partners. Strong institutional framework from African side as China is doing through FOCAC is timely and pertinent. Africa must move away from dependency syndrome.
- ▶ In this regard, the people of Africa must be part of the solution, and be part of the main actors.

# Concluding Remarks

- ▶ There is knowledge/information deficit in Africa. African agency, therefore, in terms of media and think-tank are pertinent in the production of knowledge and story/information from within Africa.
- ▶ There is an absence of African-owned and lead Media. Projecting African voice through Pan-African news agency/cies are so important. This also helps to project a positive image of the continent and African countries.
- ▶ An independent policy research done from African countries perspectives is so important in analysing the Africa-China partnership.

## Conclusion Remarks ... Continued

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- ▶ <https://oxfamafricachinadialogueplatform.wordpress.com/>

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