

## FOCAC: An Effective Platform for Collaboration

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### Opinion

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation has a lot to do with economic growth across countries in the African continent. Africa and China agreed to build FOCAC into a brand for China-Africa collaboration and a flagship example of international co-operation with Africa under the principle of achieving shared prosperity for mankind through discussions and collaboration. China is out to set create a new path for building Sino-African community with a common development. To do this, FOCAC will promote sub regional cooperation, innovation and coordination to benefit all participating members, with Xi Jinping welcoming three new members; Gambia, Burkina Faso, Sao Tome and Principe. FOCAC marks the start of a new beginning and relationship between China-Africa this year. For Over 18years, FOCAC has been a propelling engine for China-Africa cooperation, and in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, they've continued to reshape the China-Africa cooperation.

FOCAC has proved overtime to be an effective platform for China-Africa cooperation and aims to connect with the UN Agenda for sustainable development, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and individual economies development plans for the growth and revitalization of African economies in leaps and bounds with deeper human to human relationship, and sustained friendship. Between 2000-2015, the average annual GDP of 38 African countries was reported by Margaret McMillan, a professor of economics at Tuft University to have increased by 4.9%. This goes to prove that with better policies put in place, African economies will benefit from FOCAC, but in order for sustainability, and development to take place, there would need to be an increased effort in the role of their governments. President Xi Jinping of China highlighted eight major initiatives for China-African Future cooperation during the FOCAC opening ceremony Beijing Summit held on September 3rd and 4th. These initiatives include: promotion of industries, infrastructure connectivity, facilitation of trade, green development, capacity building, healthcare, Exchange between people-to-people, peace and security. Of these eight initiatives, it is clear that there is an increased focus on building and strengthening local capacities, since Africa is yet ascend the ladder of Mineral processing and Manufacturing. Developing skills in African economies that is aligned with African economic priority sectors, and potentials areas needs the assistance of building up local capacity needed to Unlock the African nations full natural resources mining and control which can afterwards be exported to China on a value-added basis. In addition to the above, China has pledged to provide 50,000 government scholarship, also offer exchange programs and vocational training. Xi Jinping says China will set up 10 Luban workshops in different African countries. This "Luban" workshop named after the Father of Chinese architecture during the 4th century BC is designed to promote vocational education, offer both technical and vocation training, and enhance collaboration among vocational schools. This new development involves vocational trainers from China traveling to African countries to teach vocational skills and crafts that boost China-Africa cooperation.

Through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, China is set to develop agricultural productivity for export purposes especially non-resource products. These Forum through Chinese investment and loans, have given priority to some projects in different sectors and fields such as; Academic research, industrialization, Skill transfer, trade, infrastructure development, security cooperation, technical management as they are currently being

expanded. Example of some developmental projects through this cooperation include Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, Kenya's standard-gauge railway. According to China Ministry of Commerce, there was an increase of 18.7% in the trade volume between China and African countries within the first seven month of 2018, and this surge was propelled especially by the construction sector. Not only are constructions taking place, there are also models put in place to enable sustainability and smooth operation of these

projects, depending on the contract agreement. Example include empowerment of local employees to take over the operational work and successively oversee the daily running of these construction projects. With FOCAC, China and the African government are currently playing a strategic role in both infrastructural and technological development and expansion across the African continent.

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