



The Rise of China and the Future of Africa: Win-Win or No Deal

A Report of Roundtable Discussion held on March 14, 2016 at the Africa Policy Institute, Nairobi

Wilson Muna & Wendy Ouma



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Executive Summary

The rise of China into a global economic powerhouse has opened opportunities for African trade, industrialization, technology and knowledge transfer and provided a source of affordable financial assistance. As a developing nation, China has provided a model for African countries. China's huge energy demand to sustain its fast growing economy has heightened its interest on Africa's natural resources, especially oil and gas. However, Sino-Africa relation has produced some trade imbalances in favor of China. Inexorably, China's extraction of natural resources from Africa does not seem to match with its financial and technological assistance to Africa. In addition, charges that some of China's project and products in Africa are low quality have cast aspersions on the stable future of the two partners. Moreover, a slowdown of the Chinese economy since 2015 has created uncertainty around China's ability to continue providing financial assistant to Africa or remains uncertain.

This fueled a debate as to whether Sino-Africa relations is a win-win scenario, a raw deal for Africa or a loss for both partners. These scenarios framed the debate during a recent round table discussion convened by the Africa Policy Institute (API) through its Fanon Center for Strategic Futures. This roundtable was the second by API focusing on the strategic future of Africa. The first was held on January 24, 2014 and focused on "The future of power in Africa to 2063". This inaugural forum identified China as a strategic key player in shaping the future of power in Africa. It also paved the way for this year's roundtable discussion. The aim of the 2016 "African futures" round-table was to engage a more in-depth way in the debate on the significance of the rise of China as a formidable economic and political power to the future of the continent. In a gist, the participants were called upon to interrogate the implication of Sino-African relation on the future of power and development in Africa.

This forum took the form of a brainstorming session involving a pool of experts and policymakers on Sino-Africa relation, including with representation from the Office of the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya; the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS), University of Nairobi; the National Defence College; the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Nairobi; and Africa Policy Institute. The guest speaker was Jonathan Paris, a London-based political analyst with wide research interest in future studies and on Sino-Africa relations specifically.

Participants noted that China has made a monumental footprint in the global development. Its progressive rise to the status of superpower since the beginning of the 21st century is almost unstoppable. However, it is critically important to note that in the last

two decades, the trend has not only been on the emergence of China's power but also the simultaneous rise of Africa.² Whether the growth of both China and Africa can be predicated on the significance of the relationship between the two demands a deeper scrutiny. Participants rightly noted that both China and Africa are driven by their own interests, with each partner continuously forging ways to maximize their gains in the relationship. These interests have to prevail—a win-win situation—for their collective futures to be certain.

At the one level, the outcome of this engagement revealed that mutual relations between China and Africa have the potential to produce a win-win scenario where both players benefit. Africa is bound to benefit from significant financial inflows from China that is already boosting its infrastructural and economic outlook. Beijing remain committed to facilitate the transfer of the much needed technology in Africa and boost its competitiveness in the global market. China on the other hand will continue to benefit from Africa's natural resources to feed its expanding industry in exchange for financial and technological aid to the continent. In addition, the improved African economies and the expansion of the continent's middle class provide China with a growing market for its manufactured products.

At a second level, the forum also highlighted several areas that are bound to produce asymmetrical relationships, with China gaining and Africa losing from the engagement. For instance: fears abound that Africa is not getting an equivalent value for its natural resources, perpetuating Africa's weak position in the global value chain as an exporter of under-valued raw materials and a consumer of over-priced industrial products. Besides claims that China is delivering low quality infrastructural projects and pocketing huge profits from these contracts, critics insist that the damping of low quality products is decimating Africa's emerging industries. Moreover, China is currently focusing on striking deals with Africa's elites and top government officials while paying little attention to county governments and local communities.

Finally, the forum noted that both China and Africa might enter into a no deal scenario where neither of the two partners benefit from the engagement. This scenario is given legs by the recent economic slowdown in China, raising concerns that financial inflows to Africa will continue to plunge and forcing China to reduce its engagement with the continent. In order to ensure a more sustainable Sino-African relations going forward, the forum made the following recommendations:

² Jonathan Paris, Keynote Speech, 14 March 2016

Recognizing that stability is a precondition to sustainable development, Africa needs to prioritize ensuring stability and draw lessons from China's model of maintaining stability to underpin its recent development in the last decades, widely celebrated as "Africa rising".

Considering that China negotiate with Africa as one country and one government while Africa comes to the table as a continent of 54 separate countries, then Africa needs to develop a common policy framework and strategy to effectively and firmly engage China as a collective.

African governments need to establish and strengthen legal and governance systems to ensure that financial inflows from China are used accountably to boost African economies and lift the poor from poverty.

On its part, China must ensure that it is committed to the transfer of skills and technology and delivering quality projects on infrastructure that will propel industrialization and create competitive markets in Africa.

In order to enrich its engagement with individual countries in Africa, China needs to strengthen its people-to-people approach in addition to the already well-established government-to-government relations.

Given that Africa has the youngest population in the world and is expected to be the largest in the world in the next 25 years, the continent's leadership need to borrow lessons of empowering and managing demographic growth from China, which constitutes about 20% of the world's population.

Introduction

China has become an influential power in the world geo-politics. Participants agreed that from the start of the 21st century, China's political and economic development have been on the rise, almost unstoppable. The roundtable debate reflected on the effects of this Chinese growth on Africa, and what it means for the future development on the continent.

Both Chinese and African leaders have celebrated what is seen as shared dreams, based on the long history of relations between the two civilizations. In the light of this emerging partnership, Africa Policy Institute (API) hosted its second roundtable discussion on the Africa strategic futures under the burner of: "The Rise of China and the Future of Africa: Win-Win or No Deal". The round table sought to make sense of the exponential growth of China-Africa relation in the last two decades. Guiding the forum were the following specific questions:

How has the rise of China affected the world's geo-political order?

In what ways has the rise of China affected Africa's growth and development?

Has the entry of China into the world leadership benefited Africa?

What do we envisage to be the future of Africa-China relations?

China - Africa Relations

The emergence of China in the world's geo-political and economic arena has not only evoked fears and raised tension with Western powers like the United States, but also its footprints in Africa have noticeably begun to irreversibly redefine the development contours of the continent. In this regard, some participants noted that Sino-phobia (that is, the fear of China) is on the rise, particularly among Western powers predicated on its dealings with Africa.

Evidently, China is the fastest growing economy and has accumulated massive foreign reserves with an increased military and diplomacy reach in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. In Africa, China has ignited an exponential growth, expanding

its relations to that of the largest investor and the continent's leading trading partner. Participants reflected on many years Chinese engagement in Africa and concluded that there is a lot of benefits that each of the parties have enjoyed. Trade between China and Africa has continued to grow from \$4 billion in 1996 to more than \$300 billion in 2015.³ This has been spurred by the desire for China to obtain a source for raw materials and energy to sustain its fast growing economy and secure new markets for its products.

Sharing the view of Western experts like Tylor ⁴, the forum noted that the expansion of China into Africa has had its benefits and contradictions on the continent. On a positive note, it has contributed to the progressive rising of African states, although some analysts attribute this improvement largely to political and macroeconomic stability.⁵ Recognizing this role of China in Africa's phenomenal growth in the last decade, Beijing is poised to play a major role in shaping Africa's future.

Participants also predicted that it is eminent that in the future, Western-oriented world order will shift in favor of certain emerging powers like China.⁶ How this paradigm shift could affect the future of African states remains of great interest. At the moment, China is already in the mix of power play in matters regarding Africa, a phenomenon that has led to the unsettling of the West.

In the recent past, China has been gradually regarded more as a reliable partner within the African circles. This is because it presents itself differently from the previous donor partners, with a caveat of not interfering with Africa's internal affairs. In respect to aid, the continent has had strained relations with the West – a legacy of colonialism.

As Rotberg ⁷, participants grappled with the question of whether China and Africa can exist and prosper without the other. This, however, has been a point of debate during the round-table with some participants aligning themselves with the African Union's

³ "China-Africa trade approaches \$300 billion in 2015", China Daily, November 10, 2015.

⁴ Ian Taylor, Governance in Africa and Sino-African relations: Contradictions or confluence? Politics, 2007 27(3), p. 139.

⁵ Roxburgh, C., Dorr, N., Leke, A., Lund, S., Wamelen, A., et. al., Lions on the move: The progress and potential of African economies, a report of McKinsey Global Institute, June 2010.

⁶ This view is shared by scholars like G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?" Council on Foreign Relations 2008.

⁷ Rotberg, R, China into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence. Cambridge: Brookings, 2008.

⁸ African Union, The Africa We Want: Agenda 2063. Available from: http://agenda2063.au.int/en/sites/default/files/agenda2063_popular_version_05092014_EN.pdf Accessed on 22 March 2016.

position that China's presence is spurring Africa's growth and development in line with the Africa's Agenda 2063⁸. However, other participants, in line with authors like Ikenberry⁹, raised the question of whether China's involvement in Africa is purely that of a real development partner or a ploy to underpin its own hegemony.

But other participants, including Chinese diplomats stressed that China is sincere in its relations with Africa. It has taken numerous steps as a means to solidify its relationship with Africa. In the wake of the new millennium, China initiated the establishment of FOCAC platform as a framework of promoting its relationship with the continent. The platform serves as an effective mechanism to enhance practical Sino-Africa relations. Beijing is also a member of multilateral organizations engaged in Africa like UN, IMF, World Bank and G20. China has also established other institutions such as the BRIC Bank to engage developing countries, including Africa.

China's relations to Africa has largely been development oriented, with Beijing fully expressing its interest on Africa's natural resources. In this regard, China is becoming Africa's main export destination. As a result, China's export from Africa increased over time outstripping the United States as the Africa's largest trading partner.¹⁰

In spite of this growing relationship, African leaders must remain vigilant. They must ensure that Sino-Africa relation does not undermine the environment, human rights, or compromise Africa's sovereignty. Continental leaders therefore ought to articulate a well-defined objective and strategy that will guide Africa toward the next decade of its relationship with China.

China has criticized the West for not being in touch with contemporary African needs. But the West sees China's principles of "non-interference" and "mutual-benefit" as posing a dilemma. They would prefer a China that takes a strong stance on governance and human rights issues in Africa. Although an orientation towards liberal values would make China's foreign policy controversial in Africa, Beijing recognizes that it is difficult to secure its investments on the continent without a stable political environment. China has avoided this dilemma by intensifying its peace diplomacy in Africa through multilateral institutions in an effort to end conflict and stabilize countries like Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, and the Central Africa Republic (CAR).¹¹

⁹ Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?" 2008.

¹⁰ Richard Schiere and Alex Rugamba, "Chinese Infrastructure Investments and African Integration." African Development Bank: Tunis, Tunisia 2011.

¹¹ Africa Research Institute, "Between extremes; China and Africa", Briefing Note 1202, 2012.

In perspective of the future growth and development in Africa, Sino-African relation has been conceptualized through three scenarios:

Scenario 1: Win-Win

The first scenario is when China wins and Africa wins. China's trade volume increased from \$10 billion dollars in 2000 to more than \$300 billion in 2015. China has overtaken the United States to become the largest trading partner with Africa. Largely, China's interest has been Africa's rich natural resources while Africa has been attracted by China's capacity and political will to support development and infrastructural projects in the continent.

In the past, it was notable that China had largely supported Africa at four levels: supporting nationalist movements through provision of arms; the construction of mega projects such as the Tazam Railway; provision of medical care through China sending medical teams to Africa; and offering scholarships to China for African students. Participants noted that after the 1990s, following the expansion of Chinese economy, natural resources became a necessity and sought Africa as a valuable development partner.¹²

In the last two decades, China has influenced incredible growth on the African continent. The continent has benefited from a variety of products from China. Participants also noted that Beijing has targeted its support to key sectors in Africa such as infrastructure, private investment, telecommunications, transport, construction, power plants, waste disposal and port refurbishment.¹³

For instance, Zambia has benefited from a deal of \$600 million to construct a hydroelectric plant. In South Africa and Botswana, China has funded hotels and other tourist infrastructure; and Kenya, Zimbabwe and Nigeria have awarded contracts worth \$400 million to the Chinese telecom giant, Huawei. In addition, Chinese firms are constructing roads, bridges, sewage systems and government buildings across the continent.¹⁴ The highest inventories of Chinese FDI stock in 2011 were South Africa, Nigeria, Madagascar, Guinea and Sudan. Furthermore, Ghana, Ethiopia, Angola, Kenya and Tanzania are bound to benefit from ports, water systems, cell

¹² Africa Research Institute, "Between extremes; China and Africa", Briefing Note 1202, 2012

¹³ Harry G. Broadman, "gridlines: Separating fact from fiction in the China- Africa relationship" PWC 2013.

¹⁴ Broadman, "gridlines: Separating fact from fiction in the China- Africa relationship" PWC.

¹⁵ Harry G. Broadman, "gridlines: Separating fact from fiction in the China- Africa relationship" PWC 2013.

phone networks, railways and soft infrastructure such as schools.¹⁵

Infrastructural projects initiated by China continue to enhance more connectivity not only within individual countries, but also across regions and the continent at large. China is perceived as fast in design and implementation of projects in Africa. They are able to complete assigned projects quicker than other partners and undertake new projects.¹⁶

The quality of Chinese infrastructural projects notwithstanding, building of key infrastructural projects such as railways, ports, ICT, as well as stadiums has fast-tracked Africa's economic growth.¹⁷ African economies have become more competitive through improved infrastructure.

Participants agreed that Africa's financial outlook has changed immensely from 2000. According to Africa Economic Outlook (AEO)¹⁸, this scaling can closely be linked with the heightened relationship between China and Africa and the inception of the Forum on Africa-China Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000. Africa has benefitted immensely through financial flows from China through foreign direct investments. Between 2009 and 2014, AEO has indicated that China invested about \$11.7 billion in 129 Greenfield projects, creating about 48 000 jobs¹⁹. These investment has concentrated on oil and gas producing countries. More jobs have been created through recent Chinese diversification in transport, construction and clothing. For instance in Ethiopia alone, Huanjin Group, a shoe production factory has created close to 100 000 jobs since its establishment in 2013²⁰. The provision of these financial flows from China has boosted Africa's economy in a significant way.²¹

Africa is at the very beginning of industrialization.²² This presents valuable opportunities for both Africa and China. One of these opportunities is the transfer skills to the young and vibrant population in Africa. It is projected that in the next century, one in ev-

¹⁶ Jonathan Paris, Keynote Speech, 14 March 2016.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Africa Economic Outlook, 2015. Available at http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/aeo/2015/PDF_Chapters/02_Chapter2_AEO2015_EN.pdf Accessed on March 16, 2016.

¹⁹ Africa Economic Outlook, 2015.

²⁰ Africa Economic Outlook, 2015.

²¹ Jonathan Paris, Keynote Speech, March 14, 2016

²² Paris, March 14, 2016.

ery four of the world's population will be an African. Investment in industrial growth in Africa has the potential to provide jobs to millions of job seekers in the continent.²³ Chinese participants informed the forum that Beijing has expressed the will to strengthen Africa's industrial capacity and has identified Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Egypt from among other African countries as its pilot project.

A participant at the roundtable highlighted that as a continent, Africa has the youngest population, averaging below 30 years. Investing in the youth presents China an opportunity is interested in supporting Africa in building a stable future for its population. During the FOCAC summit in Johannesburg 2015, China pledged 2,000 graduate scholarships and a further 30,000 government sponsored scholarships to African countries. Through the same initiatives, China has remained committed to welcome more African youths to study in China with an aim to expanding innovation, training and development.²⁴

Some participants noted that as a country, China constitutes about 20% of the world's population, yet it is able to do so much. Views from the discussion agreed that Chinese experience of demographic management its carries fundamental lessons for Africa. They further urged Africa to adopt what has worked in China in managing its populous human resource.

Through technology transfer, China should prioritize pushing Africa to becoming a middle class society. In this case, more people will have more buying power. This will create a market for Chinese products with more population able to spend.²⁵ In the 2015 FOCAC meeting, China pledged to explore the possibility of establishing a China-Africa aviation school with an aim of transferring technology and expanding aviation industry in Africa.²⁶ Some participants pointed out that China has shown commitment are in agriculture, industrial development, transport, and youth development.

Some participants noted that Africa has enjoyed a lot of value from Sino-African relations due to China's pragmatic approach in its engagement with the continent. China has engendered a paradigm shift in emerging economies in Asia, Latin America and Africa. China challenged the traditional model propagated by the West in transacting business with Africa which involved imposing conditionalities in development assistance and prioritizing development agenda for Africa. On the contrary, China has been able to

²³ Paris, March 14, 2016

²⁴ Forum on China-Africa cooperation (FOCAC), Available on: http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dwjbzjjhys_1/ Accessed on 18 March 2016.

²⁵ Jonathan Paris, Keynote Speech, March 14, 2016.

²⁶ Forum on China-Africa cooperation (FOCAC), Available on: http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dwjbzjjhys_1/ Accessed on 17 March 2016.

identify with Africa needs and priorities. Some participants argued that China has been able to identify the needs of its target market to win Africa's trading partner in recent years.

Scenario 2: Win-Lose / Raw Deal

The second scenario envisages a situation where China wins and Africa loses. This scenario was captured by six fold arguments articulated during the roundtable discussion:

First, as part of the agreement, China is to support Africa in building and develop its infrastructure in exchange for natural resources. Fears have been expressed that China is more interested with exploitation of Africa's natural resources and less with taking the continent to its next level of development and industrialization. Some participants, like Straw, have accused China of being a new colonizing power in Africa through exploitation of its natural resources.²⁷ Participants agreed that Sino-Africa relation must therefore be founded beyond the extraction of natural resources.

Second, the quality of Chinese built projects has come into question from the participants. In the discussion, they identified a dilemma: whether Africa is interested more with greater connectivity or quality. It was noted in the meeting that the Chinese contractors are producing poor quality projects, particularly in the area of infrastructure. Participants, in line with the Ethics Institute of South Africa (EISA) alleged low quality delivery by Chinese contractors is attributed to the fact that when big Chinese companies are awarded the contracts, they end up subcontracting to smaller companies that are often inexperienced. The Chinese end up pocketing huge amounts, leaving behind a shoddy job behind.²⁸ Chinese participants insisted that China is setting standards that are reining on rogue contractors.

Some participants expressed their concerns that China is not keen on building quality infrastructural projects in Africa as it does in Western countries. The question that arises therefore is whether Africa is getting a raw deal vis-à-vis what the West is getting. Other participants felt that some may justify this disparity to mean that Africa is not willing or does not have the capacity to pay the price

²³ Jian Junbo, China in Africa: From Capitalism to Colonialism? Available on: <http://www.cesfd.org.cn/magazine/ch/china%20in%20africa.pdf> Accessed on 16 Mar. 16.

²⁸ Ethics Institute of South Africa (EISA), Available on: http://www.ethicsa.org/phocadownloadpap/Research_Reports/AfricanPerceptionSurveyChineseBusiness-WEBSITEVERSION.pdf Accessed on 16 Mar. 16., p. 10. ²⁵ Jonathan Paris, Keynote Speech, March 14, 2016.

for quality projects, yet China is willing to deliver in accordance to the amount of money its client is willing to pay.

Third, the expansion of Beijing into Africa has raised concerns over its position on human rights. Echoing Western Scholars like Taylor ²⁹ some participants argued that the aggressive expansion of China into Africa has attracted huge criticism, especially regarding its implications for human rights on the continent.

Development and human rights are not mutually exclusive. Some participants rejoined that the challenge for the Chinese presence in Africa is how they can facilitate development and at the same time promote values of good governance of human rights in their engagement with the continent. They noted that human rights and democracy are values associated with liberalism as an ideology. Some participants argued that China is not guided by liberalism in dealing with its own people and beyond its borders as well. Others noted that China privileges stability over human rights issues in approach to development.

Fourth, stability has been identified to be a critical element in development, and is identified as a foundation for human rights and democracy. A participant stated that with 1.3 billion people, China has managed to stabilize its politics, thus creating an environment that is conducive for development. However the Africa continent is weighed down by conflicts. Persistent instability and escalation of security and humanitarian crises in some countries like Somalia, Burundi, South Sudan, Northern Kenya, part of Ethiopia, Eastern DRC and Central African Republic are becoming a threat to advancing Africa's development.

Some participants argued that the model for future development in Africa should first be to ensure stability in Africa's fragile states. Only thereafter can we advance values and principles of human rights. In fact, some noted, the only reason that Kenya is able to talk about human rights and democracy is because we have made significant strides in attaining a degree of stability.

A participant argued that the lesson Africa can draw from China's experience is that; irrespective of what you do, first ensure that there is stability as the basis of development. To paraphrase Nkrumah, "Seek ye the political (stability) kingdom first, and the rest (economic and human rights) shall be added unto you" ³⁰. Some participants indicated that what is apparent is that there is a need to

²⁹ Jian Taylor, Governance in Africa and Sino-African relations: Contradictions or confluence? Politics, 2007 27(3), p. 139.

³⁰ Mboneko Munyaga, How ready are we to mark Africa Human Rights Year? Available on: <https://citizentv.co.ke/news/mboneko-how-ready-are-we-to-mark-africa-human-rights-year-102900/> Accessed on March 22, 2016.

develop a hierarchy of needs and be able to address our most pressing ones. In Africa, this day and age, what is of priority is first to ensure law and order (stability) and other principles of good governance will be added. Others clarified that this is not to mean that democracy and human rights do not matter at all, but are can only be realized in a stable environment.

Chinese participants in the workshop challenged the view that Beijing does not care on human rights, democracy and freedom. They argued that Chinese foreign policy has been misinterpreted. They noted that the philosophy guiding China's involvement in world's affairs is guided by the Confucian heritage of *minben* which can loosely be interpreted as "the people are the root of the country" – and can normatively be reconstructed to mean a communitarian concept of human rights.³¹ Thus, association of Chinese government with oppression and suppression of human rights is a false claim traded by the West.³² Thus China sees stability as the gateway to human rights including social and economic rights.

Fifth, in regards to the transfer of technology, China will need to be aware of the mistakes that Western countries have made in Africa. Participants lamented that even after years of independence, Kenya still exports coffee beans for processing to the Europe where they are processed and re-exported back as overpriced industrial products. Some participants lamented that Africa's development partnership with the West has not produced tangible benefits in the form of industrialization for Africa. The challenge for China therefore is how it can assist Africa in developing strategic technology which will add value to its products. Continued exportation of raw materials and natural resources from Africa to China for processing undermines Africa's industrialization endeavors.

Sixth, some participants brought to the attention that China is perceived to strike deals and undertake projects with elites from the national government and is seen to retreat when it comes to supporting community and county government projects. Any development must be anchored in building social capital. Chinese mode of development is really of high level, which is track one level of engagement – only with the elite. A participant identified that the challenge for China is how it can engage with ordinary citizens and build social capital and build their capacity and resilience in strengthening their outlook on development. China must therefore take the challenge and advance and support technology not only in terms of production, but also aim at strengthening the culture

³¹ Han Sang-Jin, Confucianism and human rights. Available on: http://www.spa.ndhu.edu.tw/ezfiles/45/1045/img/1164/7_Confucianism_and_Human_Rights_Confucianism_in_Context_.pdf Accessed on 18 Mar. 16, p. 1.

³² Randall Nadeau, Confucianism and the problem of human rights. *Intercultural Communications Studies*, XI: 2, 2002, p. 107.

that will ensure sustainability.

It is important for China not to become complacent in its engagement with Africa. The Chinese participants defended China's position saying that its relationship with Africa is mutual and interest based. Some participants noted that anxiety is building up in Beijing as more and more emerging powers like Japan, India, Indonesia and Malaysia express their interests in Africa.

Some participants opined that if Beijing is to retain its privileged position in trading with Africa, it must remain committed and truthful in its dealings with the continent. They outlined that strategic engagement requires more humility, and China-Africa close relations should not be allowed to mutate into arrogance of the might over weak economies.

Scenario 3: Lose-Lose/No Deal

Participants, almost echoing the AEO brief,³³ acknowledged that the Chinese economy is experiencing an economic slowdown. In the light of this, the question of whether China will continue with their financial flows becomes of great concern.³⁴ In 2015, China recorded its slowest economic slowdown in 25 years³⁵, and the trend is expected to persist.³⁶ Participants were concerned that if the Chinese economic slowdown lingers on, it remains unclear whether she will continue with its steady and progressive financial flows to Africa.

Some participants noted that currently, the largest interest of China in Africa is its enormous natural resource base. However, the character of these resources is that they are limited. The question of whether China will continue with its engagement in Africa beyond the depletion of natural resources remains unclear.

³³ Africa Economic Outlook, Available at http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/aeo/2015/PDF_Chapters/02_Chapter2_AEO2015_EN.pdf Accessed on 16 Mar. 16., p. 54.

³⁴ Jonathan Paris, Keynote Speech March 14, 2016.

³⁵ Mark Magnier, China's Economic Growth in 2015 is slowest in 25 years. Available on: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/china-economic-growth-slows-to-6-9-on-year-in-2015-1453169398> Accessed on 16 Mar. 16. January 2016.

³⁶ Liyan Qi, Economists react: 2015 GDP shows China wrestling with slowdown. Available on: <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2016/01/19/economists-react-2015-gdp-shows-china-wrestling-with-slowdown/> Accessed on 16 Mar. 16. January 2016.

Africa is looking up to Chinese investment to create jobs for the youth. This is however not the case. It is estimated that about 1 million Chinese citizens are working and living in Africa while only 10,000 African traders are currently working in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou.³⁷ Imports from China have undermined small and medium enterprises in Africa. In South Africa for instance, it is estimated that 78,000 industrial jobs were lost ³⁸. This has led to widespread charges that Chinese are importing un-employment and not jobs to Africa. Owing to these allegations, some participants, in line with Rice, Manson and England ³⁹ urged Beijing government to reconcile official rhetoric with action.

In Sino-Africa relations, Beijing can no longer retain the upper hand in its engagement with Africa. Africa is beginning to think long term based on what it wants from the deal. More than ever before, Africa is now basing its negotiation with external powers – both West and East on the basis of its own priorities and interests. ⁴⁰ Based on this realization of power, Africa is unlikely to sign deals with China if its interests are not met.

³⁷ “In Southern China, A Thriving African Neighborhood”, available at: <http://www.npr.org/2012/04/27/151300553/in-southern-china-a-thriving-african-neighborhood> accessed on, 07 March 2016.

³⁸ John Schellhase, “China’s Chad courtship”, *The Diplomat*, June 26, 2012.

³⁹ Xan Rice, Katrina Manson, Andrew England, “Beijing exports weigh on Africa’s producers”, *Financial Times*, July 20, 2012.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Paris, Keynote Speech, March 14, 2016

Conclusion

For the last two decades, the rise of China as a formidable power in the world's geopolitics and economy has had a significant effect on Africa's infrastructural outlook on development.

The forum underlined that the precursor to China's fast-growing economy is its ability to maintain stability through the enforcement of law and order. As a result of political crises in numerous regions of Africa, the continent is unable to realize its full potential. Thus, this forum called on Africa to learn from China's model of maintaining stability as a *conditio sine qua non* to development, human rights and democracy. Despite the fact that Beijing has been criticized, largely by the West, regarding their stance on human rights, freedom and democracy, it remains apparent that its emergent success is underpinned on creating a sustainable stable environment. Therefore, before faulting China's role in Africa vis-a-vis governance and human rights, analysts need to understand both China's governance model and human rights discourse.

This forum also recognized the fact that now, more than ever before, African governments and agencies have become more articulate in pushing for the "Africa/development we want" when negotiating with their development partners. This forum called upon African governments and agencies to be more comprehensive and firm in their negotiations with China.

China has exponentially increased its financial inflows into Africa for the last two decades. However, glaring corruption in recipient African countries have stifled the realization of intended development outcomes. This forum urged African governments to build and support systems that will ensure accountable utilization of financial inflows from China, which will in turn boost its economies and eventual development.

China has been hailed for its systematic model of demographic management. The Chinese are about 20% of the world's population, yet they are able to do so much. Therefore, Africa can learn more from the Chinese demographic management by tapping from the enormous potential of its population, particularly the youth.

China is perceived to deliver low quality projects and products to Africa as opposed to Western countries. This forum established that if China is to remain a relevant development partner for Africa, then, its commitment to delivering quality infrastructural projects is indispensable. This is expected to propel Africa to becoming a competitive market in the wake of its industrialization.

Last but not least, Beijing has been accused of ignoring local governments and communities in its engagement with Africa. She is perceived to relate with those in the top echelons of power and that their link to community participation is particularly weak. This forum called upon China to review its engagement structure especially with lower-level governments and communities in individual African countries, ensuring that their establishment are more people centered and not only serving the interests of the elite.

On the balance, Sino-Africa relation reflect a win-win situation. Africa's future development looks certain to move Africa from agrarian raw material exporting region to an industrialized continent.