

Sino-African Relations Enter New Era

Voice of the World

Edited by GONG Qian

Sino-African relations have entered a new era of building a high-level community with a shared future, said the report titled *Yellow Book of Africa: Annual Report on Development in Africa (2022-2023)*, published by Chinese think tanks, including Institute of West-Asian and African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, on August 29.

Over the past two decades, the China-Africa partnership has made remarkable achievements with both sides delivering concrete results beneficial to their people in many areas.

Expanding practical cooperation

China has been Africa's largest trading partner for 14 consecutive years. According to data from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, the trade volume between China and Africa reached 282 billion USD in 2022, up 10.9 percent year-on-year. Chinese imports from Africa in the past 23 years have accumulated to 1.42 trillion USD, official data showed.

Also, China is a significant source of foreign direct investment in Africa. The FDI from China is mostly directed at agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure, environmental protection, and the digital economy, which bring African countries opportunities.

Now, beyond their potential to elevate food security and production capaci-



An African PhD candidate in Hunan Agricultural University conducts an experiment under the guidance of his supervisor (right), in June 2023. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

ty in China and African countries, China-Africa relations focus more on industrial production, job creation and investments that lead to African exports, and productivity-enhancing agricultural and digital technology opportunities, said Lauren Johnston, senior researcher at the University of Sydney. This will place Africa in an important position for grasping new opportunities and shaping related areas of cooperation at home and globally.

Contribution to peace and security

The third China-Africa Peace and Security Forum was held in Beijing from August 28 to September 2, under the theme "Implementing the Global Security Initiative and Strengthening China-Africa Solidarity and Cooperation."

With the constant changes in the global security landscape, the peace and security architecture and governance approach in Africa are being challenged, and African countries share common interests with China in security, stability, common progress, and other areas, Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, said at the forum, according to African News Bulletin. It is critical for the African Union (AU) to forge a mutually beneficial relationship with China, he said.

In fact, China has emerged as a significant contributor to UN peacekeeping operations in general and in Africa, Theo Neethling, professor of political science at the University of the Free

State, wrote in his article published in *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*.

China is already contributing to the peace and security objectives of the AU through capacity building for socio-economic development and education for social transformation, said African conflict studies specialist Dries Velthuizen, in his article published in *The Conversation*.

Promoting African modernization

China will launch three proposals to help Africa fast track its modernization. Two of the proposals focus on supporting Africa's industrialization and agricultural modernization. The other is the *Plan for China-Africa Cooperation on Talent Development*, which includes a plan to train 500 African principals and high-caliber teachers of vocational colleges, and 10,000 African technical personnel in both Chinese language and vocational skills for Africa each year.

Actually, China has long been providing training opportunities for African government officials and other sectors and has provided increasing growth opportunities for students, as evidenced by the approximately 80,000 African students in China, according to the Wilson Center, a Washington-based think tank.

"It is quite clear that China and Africa have eternal hope to carry forward the traditional friendship, enhance solidarity and coordination, and bolster cooperation across the board and set a fine example in the building of a community with a shared future for humankind," Maurice Okoli, professor at Russian Academy of Sciences, wrote in his article published in *Eurasia Review*.

Hi-tech Products Highlighted at 2023 CIFTIS

The 2023 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) captured visitors' attention not only for business and cooperation, but also for science and technology. A number of hi-tech products from fields such as medical equipment and AI were highlighted at the 2023 CIFTIS, which concluded in Beijing on September 6.



Visitors experience the naked-eye three-dimensional display. (PHOTO: ZHOU Weihai/S&T Daily)



A visitor uses a brain-computer interface system based on EEG to conduct AI-assisted diagnosis. (PHOTO: TANG Zhexiao/S&T Daily)

Long-term Harm of Releasing Nuclear-contaminated Water

Comment

Edited by QI Liming

Fifteen days have passed since Japan released nuclear-contaminated water from its damaged Fukushima power plant into the Pacific Ocean. In addition to the country's local protests, the international community showed great concern over the security of the marine ecosystem and the opacity of Japan's actions.

International scrutiny of Japan's action

According to IDN-InDepthNews, the non-profit international press syndicate, Fiji's protesters against the Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water release, marched through downtown Suva on August 25 and ended up at Albert Park, where participants voiced their apprehension about the potential environmental and health impacts of the action.

The protest was marked by speech-

es from civil society leaders who condemned Japan's decision and called for immediate reconsideration. It was also attended by Fiji's former Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama and former Attorney-General Aiyaz Sayed Khaiyum.

Alliance for Future Generations' (Fiji) Lavetanalagi Seru, a youth activist and one of the organizers of the protest, urged leaders to exercise good judgment and adopt a stronger regional stance against Japan's plan. The protesters emphasized that this issue wasn't just about the present, but also had lasting implications for future generations.

Meanwhile, as *Bangkok Post* reported, the Thailand Consumer Council has asked the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Fisheries to take strict measures to screen seafood imported from Japan, for fear it could be contaminated by a radioactive isotope.

According to *The Nation Thailand*, Thavorn Thunjai, deputy director-general of the Fisheries Department, said on August 28 that the department has acknowledged public concern following re-

ports of Japan releasing nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean.

Thavorn said that the department has stepped up checks on seafood imported from Japanese cities close to Fukushima, including Tokyo, Saitama and Nagano. If any contamination is detected, the entire shipment of the imported seafood will be rejected and returned.

Problems continue to cascade

Maxime Polleri, an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at Université Laval, Canada, who studies the governance of nuclear catastrophes, with a focus on the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, speaking to *The Diplomat*, said the release and the fierce protests it engendered are stoking anxiety, mistrust, and even geopolitical tensions.

While the debate is raging around the dangers of tritium, it also revealed that the government was ill-prepared to deal with the aftermath of a nuclear catastrophe. It will do so by bringing anxiety toward food safety, hampering citizens' trust in their government, and fu-

eling geopolitical tensions with Asian neighbors, said Polleri.

And even worse is knowing that removing Fukushima's melted nuclear fuel will be harder than the release of the plant's nuclear-contaminated water, according to Associated Press News.

"The best way to eliminate the contaminated water is to remove the melted fuel debris," said Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings spokesperson Kenichi Takahara. But Takahara said the scarcity of information from inside the nuclear reactors makes planning and development of the necessary robotic technology and a facility for the melted fuel removal extremely difficult.

Japan has stuck to its initial 30-to-40-year target for completing the decommissioning, without defining what that means. Rushing the schedule could cause more radiation exposure to workers and more environmental damage. According to experts, it would be impossible to remove all the melted fuel debris by 2051 and would take 50-100 years, if achieved at all.

Opinion

BRI Responds to Needs of the Times

By Hasan Daud Butt

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which includes China's support to developing countries to bridge trade and connectivity gaps and steer them toward growth and prosperity amidst economic crises.

The BRI is a truly massive project, spreading across over 100 countries from Uganda to Djibouti and from Laos to Gwadar in Pakistan. The initiative is meant to connect the east with the west, under the spirit of the ancient Silk Road, using a complex network of interconnected routes that are meant to facilitate the exchange of goods, ideas, cultures and knowledge.

The BRI had a portfolio of infrastructure including bridges, tunnels, high-speed railways, energy, and transportation and optical connectivity, as well as several people-to-people exchange programs including cultural initiatives, educational projects, scholarships and Confucius Institutes.

The Chinese government continues to promote initiatives like BRI, GDI, and the Global Security Initiative, to formulate action plans and major policies based on Socialism with Chinese characteristics for a New Era, under the vision of shared prosperity and development.

In the past decade, the BRI has generated nearly one trillion USD, launched over 3,000 cooperation projects, created over 420,000 jobs, and lifted 40 million people out of poverty through contributions to development that are commercial, noncommercial, financial and non-financial like grants, in nature.

The BRI has remained active over the past ten years, responding to the historical trend of economic globalization and the needs of the times that advocate for changes in the global governance system. It has continued to offer new opportunities for participating countries and to promote and enhance their development as one of the most important aspects of their human rights.

With its four pillars of seamless trade facilitation, policy interconnection, interpersonal engagement, and wider investment to ensure the growth of partner nations, the BRI is seen as a glimmer of hope in global development.

Since its launch in 2013, the BRI has continued to shape international commerce and globalization, facilitating the trade of valuable goods, as was the case centuries ago, when the ancient Silk Road helped the movement of

goods such as silk, spices, precious metals, ceramics, textiles and more between Asia and Europe. Movement of people along the ancient Silk Road also facilitated the exchange of knowledge in various fields including science, medicine, astronomy and mathematics.

It is believed that a wider recovery of BRI investments is likely to move forward. Therefore, the partner countries need to prepare well and create an enabling environment for investment flow.

In this regard, the role of these governments will be crucial, supported by a public-private engagement and providing attractive opportunities, offering a favorable risk-reward balance for investors and ensuring a stable political climate, rule of law, and transparent regulatory framework.

While some people's ambivalence of the BRI will undoubtedly persist, in the past 10 years, the initiative has remained resilient and successful and will continue to provide opportunities to partner with countries along the route to boost their economies.

Today, the world is confronted with immense challenges to sustainable development and enormous disparities of opportunity, wealth and power exist. Natural resource depletion and adverse impacts of environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity exacerbate the list of challenges that humanity faces.

Similarly, geoeconomic issues including decreased investor confidence, decreased risk appetite, and increased financial market volatility are having adverse impacts on the world's economies.

Amidst this, the only way to achieve development as a top priority for the entire globe is by firmly moving in the general direction of peaceful development, realizing that this is in everyone's best interests.

Therefore, the XV BRICS Summit in South Africa from August 22-24 is crucial for sharing experiences and tailoring new approaches to the unique strengths and opportunities of respective countries, diversifying funding sources, and reducing risks and accelerating the work on uncompleted projects.

All this will require flexibility and pragmatism by leadership and collective wisdom under the win-win spirit of the ancient Silk Road.

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CIFTIS: Providing New Opportunities for Int'l Cooperation

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The forum, organized by AICPA & CIMA, shed light on the Digital Management Accounting (DMA) talents' development.

Liu Dongjin, director of China International Talent Exchange Foundation, stressed that promoting the DMA knowledge system and certification within

China and integrating cutting-edge international management accounting knowledge with advanced digital skills will provide knowledge concepts and method tools that are in line with international standards. It will also inject new vitality into the cultivation of international and digital management accounting talents that are in short supply in China.

Promoting G20's Role in Global Sustainable Development

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Under Italy's 2021 G20 presidency, China and other members of the G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG), with the goal of scaling up sustainable finance that supports the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and goals of the Paris Agreement, has developed the G20 Sustainable Finance Roadmap.

At the Bali summit, China stressed the importance of providing funding,

technology and capacity-building support for developing countries and promoting cooperation on green finance.

The G20 comprises 19 countries and the European Union. Its members represent around 85 percent of the global GDP, over 75 percent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

The G20 Summit is held annually, under the leadership of a rotating Presidency.