

## INSIGHTS

## Diamond Jubilee of China's Medical Aid to Foreign Countries

## Voice of the World

By Staff Reporters

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the first Chinese medical team sent to Algeria in 1963. Since then, countless heartfelt stories about Chinese medical personnel have surfaced, showcasing their significant contributions to global public health and the well-being of people worldwide.

Over the past six decades, China has dispatched over 30,000 medical personnel to 76 countries and regions across the world, providing medical services to nearly 300 million patients.

Statistics revealed that Chinese medical teams dispatched abroad had trained over 100,000 local medical personnel, significantly enhancing the healthcare expertise in recipient countries, as Xinhua news agency reported.

According to Kenyan journalist Jevans Nyabiage, the *South China Morning Post's* first Africa correspondent, China's support for African countries has expanded beyond sending thousands of healthcare workers to vital infrastructure, China-Africa health cooperation has also included funding for medicines and treatments as well as dis-



A Chinese doctor in Eritrea, northeast Africa in May 2023. (PHOTO: XINHUA)

ease prevention.

Lina Benabdallah, a China-Africa specialist at Wake Forest University and a visiting fellow at the Centre for African Studies at Harvard University, said China's medical diplomacy served to enrich people-to-people engagement in a positive way.

"Chinese doctors and nurses provide important care for patients across

the continent, including eye surgeries, baby deliveries, and so on," Benabdallah said, adding that traditional Chinese medicine had also been growing in popularity.

China-Africa expert David Shinn, from George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, said that while China's programme of sending medical workers to African

countries remained in place, there had also been an expansion in other aspects of healthcare.

According to Shinn, China's focus during the early part of the 21st century was on providing basic health personnel, before turning to include the building of healthcare infrastructure and, most recently, countering infectious diseases. "In recent years, China has devoted more attention to the treatment and elimination of infectious diseases such as malaria, Ebola, and Covid-19," he said.

According to AidData, a research lab at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, China delivered 1,026 health projects, totalling 1.6 billion USD, across 51 African countries between 2000 and 2017 alone. Most of the funds were spent on basic healthcare including medicines and vaccines, malaria control, and health infrastructure.

AidData senior researcher Ammar Malik said that unlike other donors, "China has been incredibly demand responsive since 2004," adding that "China discovered and now plays a significant role in supplying artemisinin-based combination therapies, now standard WHO treatment recommendations for malaria. China is a substantial supplier of long-lasting insecticidal nets."

## Comment

## Renewing STA Serves Interests of All Parties

By QI Liming

On December 15, Nicholas Burns, U.S. Ambassador to China, delivered a speech at the Brookings Institution, during which he mentioned that he had begun talks with China on renewing a landmark scientific cooperation agreement: U.S.-China Science and Technology Agreement (STA).

The U.S. State Department had sought a six-month extension to the pact before it was set to expire at the end of August 2023. When the pact once again is about to expire, renewing the STA should be in the spirit of mutual benefit and shared commitment to the progress of humanity.

**Sci-tech cooperation is a two-way street**

According to Reuters, Burns told an audience at Brookings Institution that the agreement was the "bedrock" of U.S.-China cooperation, but controversy over the renewal of the STA has grown amid U.S. politicians.

As the first accord between the two countries signed in 1979, after the official establishment of diplomatic ties, proponents of renewing the deal argue that without it the U.S. would lose valuable insight into China's technological advances, while some Republicans in the U.S. Congress have the opposite view.

In October, *The Economist* published an article titled *America and China should keep doing research together*. The article pointed out the Republicans are wrong to want to scrap the STA, saying that quitting or watering down the STA would be a mistake.

There are few, if any, examples of academic collaboration harming America's interests. It would be a mistake to think that the gains from collaboration are a one-way street. China's scholars match and even outdo America's in some fields, such as batteries, telecommunications and nanoscience.

At a time of geopolitical tensions, the STA carries important symbolism. Scrapping it without good reason would feed the idea that America views all Chinese researchers with suspicion. If that deterred more talented Chinese from working in America, opportunities for fruitful cross-fertilization would go up in smoke, as American science benefits from its ability to attract the world's brightest minds. That would be impeded if it created the impression that it is a closed shop, *The Economist* described.

**Keeping sci-tech channels open**

An opinion and analysis article ti-

tled *Broken U.S.-China Science Cooperation Needs Repair, Not Persecution* published in *Scientific American* on October 10.

The article mentioned that when Stanford University physicists Steve Kivelson and Peter Michelson received word that the STA might not be renewed just a week before its expiration in late August, they spent the weekend composing a strongly worded letter of objection to the Biden administration.

They argued that the agreement, renewed approximately every five years, should not lapse. Instead every effort should be made to nurture open and transparent scientific cooperation.

American science writer KC Cole, said that, "Science plays an enormous unseen role in keeping international avenues of contact open, even when political doors slam shut. We need to keep those channels open with China."

"As someone who has been observing international scientific collaboration for many decades, and seen previous iterations of these kinds of crackdowns, I've come to conclude that U.S. policymakers don't understand what science is actually for," she said.

Of course, the primary business of science is to discover how the universe and everything in it work. But beyond advancing knowledge, science plays an enormous, often unseen role in keeping avenues of contact open even when political borders shut.

Like the arts, science is an essential part of our common humanity. Scientists share a common language and have ways of connecting that elude politicians; sometimes they provide the only glue that holds a fracturing world together. They allow enemies as well as allies to keep tabs on each other, added Cole.

According to *Science Business*, the agreement itself is a relatively brief document, but that doesn't mean it isn't important, said Deborah Seligsohn, a political scientist at Villanova University and former U.S. science counsellor to China. "These agreements are much more important with China than with other countries," she said.

Meanwhile, Jenny Lee, professor of higher education at the University of Arizona, said the U.S.-China science and technology agreement is a large gesture of goodwill between the two countries to work together on scientific advancement in ways that benefit both countries.

## 'Artificial Sun' Deepens Clean Energy Cooperation

## Opinion

By TANG Zhexiao

The progress and future cooperation of nuclear fusion research was up for discussion among more than 20 global experts at a meeting related to the Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST), held in east China's Hefei in December.

Acknowledging China's remarkable progress in nuclear fusion, the experts hoped to deepen international cooperation for a cleaner future.

Located at the Institute of Plasma Physics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (ASIPP) in Hefei, the

EAST, or China's "artificial sun," aims to create nuclear fusion like the sun via the use of abundant deuterium and tritium in the sea to provide clean energy.

Unlike fossil fuels such as coal and oil that are in limited supply and impact environmental, the "artificial sun" requires raw materials that are almost unlimited on Earth. Fusion energy is considered safe and clean, and therefore a promising long-term option for a sustainable, non-carbon emitting global energy for mankind.

**Acceleration of fusion energy research**

In early December, the JT-60SA fusion device jointly built by Japan and the EU operated successfully, marking a further step forward in the support research for the world's largest "artificial

sun" - the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER).

Scientists at EAST had broken the 100-second barrier for steady-state H-mode plasmas in 2017, according to ITER Newline. On April 12, EAST achieved a steady-state high confinement plasma operation for 403 seconds, which is a key step toward the development of a fusion reactor.

Though China's fusion research started late compared with Europe, the U.S. and Russia, the progress and the dedication of the Chinese program was impressive, according to Tony Donné, Programme Manager at EUROfusion. China is really providing an example to the rest of the world, said Donné.

**Working together - the only way forward**  
Mohamed Abdou, distinguished

professor at UCLA, said that EAST has also contributed to the international nuclear fusion research and engineering megaproject ITER in southern France.

In 2021, a contract was signed in which ASIPP will donate HT-6M tokamak nuclear fusion reactor to the Thailand Institute of Nuclear Technology and assist its installation and operation, marking a major milestone in tokamak cooperation between the two sides.

Currently, China, India, Japan, Russia, the Republic of Korea, EU and the U.S. are engaged in a 35-year collaboration to build and operate the ITER.

"We can only make fusion work if we work together," said Donné.

## Mooring UAVs Light up Earthquake Sites



The mooring unmanned aerial vehicles. (PHOTO: VCG)

## Hi-tech

By GONG Qian

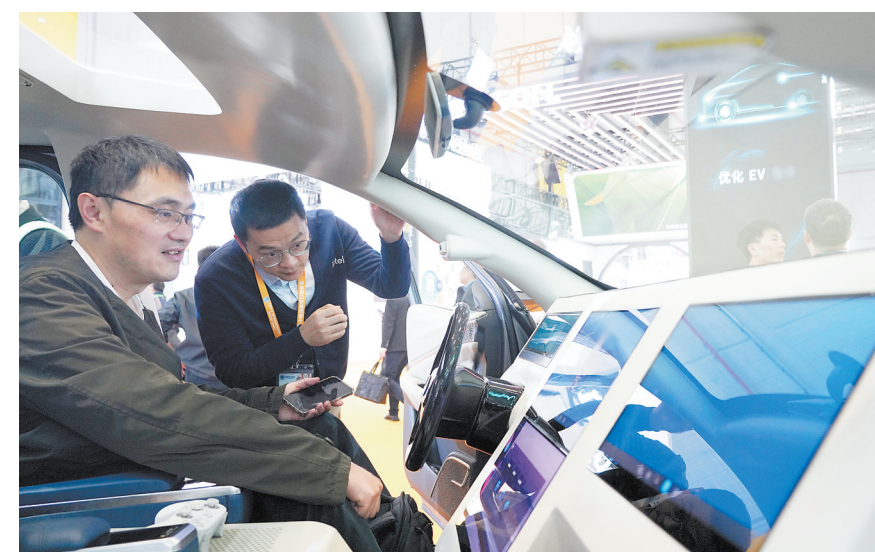
After a 6.2-magnitude earthquake rocked Jishishan County in northwest China's Gansu province on December 18, the mooring unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were deployed on site for rescue and relief.

A mooring UAV is mainly comprised of a ground power supply base station carrier, a mooring cable and a UAV. Different from the general UAV powered by a lithium battery, the mooring UAV is powered by the ground power supply transmitted by tethered cables, which makes it capable of hovering

in the air for a prolonged period.

One of the most important applications of mooring UAVs is as an illuminating system in disaster relief sites where the power supply has been cut off. Usually, a lighting system fixed on a pole is used. But due to the nonadjustable height of the pole, the light sometimes cannot cover the entire area that needs to be illuminated, making it disadvantageous.

Thanks to its major advantage, the mooring UAV is widely used in earthquake relief and emergency communications. It can solve the problem of incomplete lighting coverage and insufficient brightness intensity of lighting sources. Additionally, the mooring UAV is easy to carry, which makes it perfect for rapid deployment.



Visitors experience Intel's intelligent cockpit platform at the 6th China International Import Expo on November 8, 2023. (PHOTO: VCG)

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The China-ASEAN Information Harbor's digital economy exhibition center showcases a daily increase in cross-border trade on its electronic display. Serving as a platform for customs declaration data connectivity with 25 countries globally, it offers customers a comprehensive, one-stop digital service for cross-border trade, enabling same-day

trading and customs clearance of border exchanges. As of December 17, the platform's trade declaration amount for the year had exceeded 590 billion RMB.

## China, ASEAN Focusing on Digital Cooperation

An initiative on Southeast Asia digital economy development cooperation was launched at the 2023 Southeast Asia Regional Cooperation Conference in Ja-

karta, Indonesia, on September 1.

The initiative was jointly launched by China Mobile, the country's leading telecommunication operator, and part-

ners from Southeast Asia, including Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Brunei. The initiative aims to accelerate the digital transformation of indus-

tries in Southeast Asia and foster the region's digital economy.

Gao Tongqing, executive vice president of China Mobile Communications Group, told the conference that his company saw the event as an opportune time to move forward with its partners to accelerate collaboration between the digital economies of China and Southeast Asia.