

The Promise of China – Africa Partnership: What is China's Partnership Approach to Economic Cooperation with Africa?

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Abstract - This paper will argue that China's interest in Africa is centered not on exploiting Africa's resources or political undertone, as is the case of Western countries or because of raw materials as perceived by the West but based on basic concepts and principles of economic cooperation. The paper specifically examined the relationship between China and Africa on specific values of mutual interest, respect, non-political interference, trade, and international economic cooperation, among others. Additionally, one of the findings is that the China-Africa relationship has existed for a very long time. This has evolved from bilateral relationships and friendships to a strategic partnership with a bright and promising future through practical economic cooperation. The paper also concludes that the empirical evidence of China's pragmatic cooperation with Africa is imminent and worth the partnership for Africa to go East. Evidence abounds that the relationship between the West, i.e., Europe and US and Africa, have deteriorated as a result of a lot of factors ranging from exploitative economic treaties, deprived foreign policies, and foreign aid with a lot of conditions attached to them, loans with unachievable conditions and benchmarks for weak economies of Africa and so on.

Keywords: Bilateral Relationship, Economic Cooperation, Partnership, Common development, Foreign Policy, Mutual Respect, Historical Values.

1. Introduction

What is China's partnership approach to economic cooperation with Africa? Judging from the long friendly historical relationship and the practical cooperation between China and Africa, it will be disingenuous to state that China's interest in Africa is exploitative or intended to have Africa just as a political ally. The post-Cold War period marks the re-emerging of China–Africa relationships. China's role as a developing power has become obvious in providing support and development assistance to developing or underdeveloped countries, especially Africa (Plessis, 2014). Sino-African

economic relationship has only improved since 2000, but the political relationship between China and Africa can be traced back to many decades. The first outstanding official Chinese presence in Africa was in the late 1950s after an early meeting at the Afro-Asian Bandung Talks in 1955 (Sibiri, 2018). China repossessing its seat in the United Nations in 1971 is principally credited to the robust vote of African countries that terminated their diplomatic links with Taiwan for the sake of China (Matthias Busse, 2014). China has become more committed to the partnership with Africa and continues to deepen economic cooperation in various areas with the strategic vision of making Africa her new investment frontier with a shared interest in a win-win situation. Critics and Public opinion or perception, especially in the West (Europe and the USA), to be précised are that China's interest in Africa is moving towards exploiting Africa's rich natural resources for her selfish industrial gains. Western critics like the USA and some European countries are curious that China's penetration in Africa cannot promote the expected economic development since China contends with a very repressive political system that does not uphold democracy which is one of Africa's eminent political values, property rights, and free-market economic system. Note that, however, that China is not doing something dissimilar from what other countries do (Giner-Reich, 2019).

It is evident that China, as the world's second-biggest economy after the USA, nowadays has established economic cooperation in various sectors in Africa and buys over a good fraction of Africa's oil, aside from raw materials like coal, iron ore, timber, and copper. Chinese industries additionally need new markets for their products, and Africa may be a doubtless colossal outlet. China has established itself ceaselessly and strategically for the new Africa that has huge economic potential. Chinese product has flooded markets in urban centers in Luanda, Lagos, Cairo, Dakar, and different cities and villages in Africa. Those products include jewelry, clothing, building materials, and other consumables, and China's largess to Africa is not new considering their long historical ties. However, most of these critics were colonial

masters of Africa that did not do much with the administration over their territories compared to China's practical cooperation to a continent they did not discover nor colonized and most importantly China had either given or aided in building Africa's most essential infrastructures, for example, a hospital in the national capital of Sierra Leone; a road from Zambia's capital, to Chirundu within the southeast; stadiums in various African nations; a sugar mill as well as a sugarcane farm in Mali; and a facility project in Mauritania, and the list continues (Ighobor, 2013). To add to these friendship and economic cooperation gestures, China has committed to building more schools, hospitals including anti-malaria centers, help develop the Agricultural sectors of the continent with a very vast amount of arable land for agriculture to improve food sufficiency and security which is a millennium challenge for Africa, the biggest importer of rice and other staple food from Asia.

The opposite of China is the West that considers Africa merely as donor recipients that should be humble and obedient, not as partners. At the same time, they have a disdainful attitude towards the continent of Africa. The Chinese government has at all times claimed that their formal policy, as well as position concerning Africa, is grounded on a mutual approach of "South-South cooperation," strengthened by fairness, mutual development, as well as a "partnership of equals." (Asante, 2018) Nevertheless, there is a sharp contrast between China and the West regarding bilateral relations or foreign policies and economic cooperation. Where the West usually attached strings to its development programs, on the other hand, China doesn't claim it is aware of what the continent should do to develop. China has argued that it is wrong to impose political and economic strings in exchange for aid. Also, African countries ought to absolve to realize their pathway out of impoverishment.

Moreover, economists in the West are questioning the worth of many conditions obligatory on aid by the West to developing countries over the past few decades. Political conditionality in exchange for assistance by the West has crippled the economies of many African countries instead of promoting or ensuring economic development through free and genuine economic cooperation. That is why the new international economic order will be farfetched.

2. The Promise of China – Africa Partnership: China Partnership Approach to Economic Cooperation with Africa

So many papers have been written on China-Africa Partnership with varying approaches or perspectives concentrating on bilateral relations or ties and foreign aid. However, in this paper, I intend to look at the Promise of

China – Africa Partnership and China's approach to economic cooperation with Africa. Some sections of the global society suggest that China's China-Africa partnership is a mere hoax to exploit Africa of its natural resources for her economic gains. The conventional image of China-Africa relations goes like this: China imports natural and energy resources from the continent, whereas it trades low-cost factory-made merchandise in return. There are fixed limits to the correctness of that perception, and matter the fact, there was to the merchandise trade driving China-Africa relations is already weakening (Tiezzi, 2015). No question reduced prices for imported Chinese goods have profited African clients and manufacturers who depend on imported inputs and investment goods (Tang, 2015). In resource abuse activities, China appears to be aided by the circumstance that it is not too much of a threat to Western countries (Sanfilippo, 2009). China's economic fortunes for the last thirty years are mainly supported exports; however, that's one thing national economies need to maneuver far from because it restructures the country's economy. Instead, China's ideal setup is to handle upward the chain that involves not solely upgrading its capabilities to form an advanced product; it also increases lower-end industrialization capacities in different countries. On the other hand, this will facilitate Chinese corporations or companies be global as they establish factories in different countries. This associate the degree usually unmarked as a part of China's Belt and Road strategy that emphasizes industrialization and infrastructure (Tiezzi, 2015).

No doubt Africa is China's new economic or investment frontier or paradise, but what is very striking to the minds of many Africans, is China's approach on economic cooperation with Africa, which is win-win or mutual economic development and on the foundation of strategic concepts or principles that uphold those shared ideals of similar historical values, mutual respect, mutual needs, and common development. The fundamental principle of China-Africa economic cooperation is to accomplish a win-win situation by promoting mutual economic gain (Sandy Edward Hinga, 2013).

Besides, Africa should know what is good for her in this partnership and make the best of it as China's interest in Africa has triggered China's rivals the West to compete in so many areas of common interest, which could be a leverage for Africa to strengthen the partnership with China in a win-win instead of a win-lose situation with the West. The One-Belt-One-Road initiative is another crucial economic cooperation approach. China should impact Africa or the developing countries and Europe and the rest of the world, especially when it underscores the shared economic prosperity of all developing economies regardless of their geopolitical or economic position. As mentioned earlier, many scholars and

researchers have come up with their arguments of China's very relationship or partnership with Africa primarily to harness or rip off Africa's raw materials for her industrial gains and export cheap and low-quality products to Africa whose market is over 1bn people. China's huge economy that is the second-largest in the world needs immense raw materials and energy resources. Because the near East has become a too chaotic supplier-destination for energy, China found African countries ideal for many required natural resources, like oil, minerals, timber, and cotton (Foizee, 2016).

Moreover, African markets are seriously enticing to any export-oriented industrial economy like China, attributable to Africa's giant population (around one.1 billion). For China, invasive African markets are ideal for the immediate export of low-cost factory-made merchandise that it is best in creating, and conjointly ideal for the longer-term export of high-end merchandise and services; towards that China is slowly moving. The continent of Africa can be instrumental for China in its counter to the US that may be a diplomatic, economic, and strategic offensive aimed at undermining Chinese influence and getting ready for war. China is seeking to incorporate Africa among its "One Belt, One Road" strategy aimed toward additional integration of Europe and Asia via land and maritime infrastructure" (Foizee, 2016).

In a strict sense, a win-win situation in the China-Africa relationship underscores the mutual benefits of the two either in kind or through economic or social cooperation. China's foreign policy is very clear about non-interference into the political issues of other nations or sovereign states, as is the West. Therefore to disagree with Foizee's argument that African markets are ideal for the immediate export of low-cost factory-made products that China is best in creating, and additionally ideal for the long run export of high-end merchandise and services, towards that China is slowly moving, I will say that Africa is yet to be called an industrialized continent because of the lack of advanced technology and inadequate resources to transform her raw materials into products of very high quality and international standards at very high quantity to meet the demand of over 1bn people which is a very big economic, social and political challenge for the continent. China's commodities exported to Africa nevertheless may not be of very high quality as perceived but are reasonably priced to meet the income level of the impoverished Africans and other developing countries where they trade their commodities. One of the prospects of Chinese imports is their low prices and affordability, particularly for the deprived. By and large, some Chinese imports can be 75% cheaper than 'equivalent' imports from old-fashioned sources plus up to 50% cheaper than the locally produced substitute products. In a continent with puny purchasing power and a high level of denials and poverty, this

could be a chance to develop the livelihoods of the poor (World Bank/Afrol News, 2010).

Moreover, the argument is that competition from Chinese imports may discourage the removal of super-normal profits from deprived African customers by the outmoded trading partners and indigenous manufacturers, many of whom conspire and chase greedy business practices. It can also encourage the manufacturers of indigenous substitutes to be more proficient and pass on the benefits of such effects to the clients more readily. Lastly, Chinese imports, particularly in small African markets, can generate a more empowering macroeconomic situation. Cheap imports of end-user goods that come obviously in end-user expenses can help in plummeting inflationary stress. As a result, it adds to higher-income inflow if the total capacity of imports increased. It is also definite that incomes accumulating from imports will, unswervingly or indirectly, and *ceteris paribus*, end in a boost in government fiscal stance and lessen stress on the monetary authorities to finance budget shortfalls (Ajakaiye, 2006).

Because of China's strong commitment to deepening economic ties or cooperation with developing countries and Africa in particular, many Africans have seen this partnership as an opportunity to learn the Chinese experience or model of development which China is willing to share and as the Chinese saying goes "If you teach a man to catch a fish then you will not have to give the man-fish every day." Therefore, the Chinese approach to economic cooperation imbibes many fundamental principles that are important to strengthen her relationship with Africa and other developing countries.

Again, China has adopted a flexible approach concerning the African resource market in line with the Beijing Consensus: (i) no interference, (ii) infrastructural development, (iii) friendly relationship and respect (for African leaders, individuals, as well as sovereignty) plus (iv) Chinese approach to development (Foizee, 2016). Therefore, the capital of the Red China agreement, in line with several African intellectuals, portrays China's import of maintaining strict respect for African sovereignty and China's non-interference approach to internal problems with African countries. In line with this policy, China's assistance to Africa with loans and infrastructure comes with no political strings regarding democracy or transparency. Such a Chinese non-interference approach provides African countries enough flexibility to figure out rapid economic development, creating more robust economic integration in Africa.

In 2002, the African Union formally commenced to fast-track socio-economic cooperation and upholds peace, security, and political stability in Africa. China has been continuously articulating in favor of such African integration in almost all

China-Africa summits, symbolizing China's intention to see Africa in unity. However, China invests in building African infrastructures, which includes highways, railways, dams, seaports, and airports. Such projects produce substantial employment opportunities for many thousands of young Africans. These are quite discernible benefits that appeal to Africans of all ages and all spheres of life in the direction of requiring more Chinese participation in Africa (Foizee, 2016).

Industrialization is another area of economic approach of China on her partnership with Africa. Although some schools of thought and scholars view China's industrialization move in Africa from a different perspective, what is very important is the positive economic impact industrialization creates to improve economic growth and employment growth. Industrialization happens to be precisely what several African countries are aiming for so far. With world demand for commodities shrinking (in half owing to China's economic slowdown), African countries that formally relied on the exportation of their natural resources are looking forward to creating the transition to industrial economies. And China has already offered to facilitate, with Foreign Minister Wang Yi calling the capital of Red China (Beijing), a most fascinating and reliable long partner for the continent of Africa to realize huge industrialization potential.

Consistent with the policy paper, China can support manufacture in Africa by supporting the creation of business parks and "economic and trade cooperation zones." capital of Red China conjointly pledged to still build up industrial capability by addressing the "two major bottlenecks clogging development, namely, backward infrastructure and inadequate skilled and masterful personnel." (Tiezzi, 2015). The evidence of the industrialization move by China in Africa is evident in Ethiopia, South Africa, Kenya, and so on. This is a welcoming move by Africa as industries will boost trade and positively affect the capitalization of the market and economic growth.

3. Emerging Questions

In examining the Promise of the China-Africa relationship and China's approach to economic relations, following the narrative leaves readers with some key questions. In describing the phenomena of the China-Africa partnership and approach to economic considerations, I attempted to give answers to the following questions:

1. What are the common areas of interest between China and Africa?
2. What are some of the potential challenges of the China – Africa Partnership?

4. Areas of Common Interest and Some Potential Challenges with China – Africa Partnership

China-Africa partnership is synonymous with a win-win situation and common interest so far as the partnership is built on five fundamental pillars of common interests such as political equality and mutual trust, promoting win-win economic cooperation, reciprocally enriching cultural exchanges, reciprocal assistance in security and solidarity as well as coordination in international affairs and to achieve these, China has listed ten strategic plans. These plans are gearing towards helping Africa's overall economic development in various areas such as Agriculture and Industries, infrastructure, Energy, Human capital development to improve Africa's human resource base, fair trade, etc. However, the plans if achieved will change the face of Africa from the rest of the world in terms of rapid economic transformation. Still, one should note that Africa needs stronger institutions which are considered to be the fundamental reason for economic development and are relevant for the coordination of these plans in line with China. The plans include the following: 1) China-Africa industrialization plan 2) China-Africa agricultural modernization plan 3) China-Africa infrastructure plan 4) China-Africa financial plan 5) China-Africa green development plan 6) China-Africa trade and investment facilitation plan 7) China-Africa poverty reduction plan 8) China-Africa public health plan 9) China-Africa cultural and people-to-people plan and 10) China-Africa peace and security plan.

However, the author found the speech of the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, very inspiring when he said, "China and Africa share a common future. We, Chinese and Africans, have forged a profound friendship through our common historical experience and in our common struggles. What has made the China-Africa company durable and vigorous is that our two sides have always been a result of the principle of treating each other as equals, promoting win-win development and common future, and enhancing genuine relationships and collaboration. China and Africa will always continue to be good friends, good partners, as well as good brothers (CGTN NEWS LIVE, 2018). In the new age, we should forge ahead of the traditional China-Africa friendship and transform the strengths of our traditional friendship into driving forces to boost solidarity. Development, so we are going to deliver additional tangible benefits to our people and build more considerable contribution to the world in a very balanced and comprehensive manner and to the building of a brand new model of international partnership supported win-win cooperation (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa, 2015). To further strengthen the practical cooperation and achieve the common or mutual

interest between China – Africa partnership with the President of China, Xi Jinping highlighted the following plans:

Accordingly, President Xi maintained that the first plan is for China to actively promote trade partnering and production capacity cooperation and encourage a lot of Chinese enterprises to create business investment in Africa. China intends to build or upgrade a variety of commercial parks in collaboration with Africa, send senior government consultants and advisers to Africa and create regional education centers and faculties for capacity building. China will train two hundred thousand technical personnel and supply forty thousand coaching opportunities for African personnel in China.

The Chinese President said that China would implement a China-Africa agricultural modernization plan. China is more than willing to share its expertise in agricultural development with Africa and transfer applicable technologies to it. Further, China intends to encourage Chinese enterprises to interact in large-scale farming, agriculture, and grain storage and process in Africa to form a lot of native jobs and increase farmers' financial gain. China can do agricultural development in hundreds of African villages to boost rural living standards, send thirty groups of agricultural specialists to Africa, and establish a "10+10" cooperation mechanism between Chinese and African agricultural analysis institutes. China is exceptionally aware of the poor harvest caused by El Nino in several African countries and can give RMB one billion of emergency food aid to the affected countries.

China will implement China-Africa infrastructure to arrange and maximize interdependent cooperation with the continent of Africa in infrastructure, coming up with the design, construction, operation, and maintenance. China intends to support Chinese enterprises' active participation in Africa's infrastructural development, notably in sectors like railways, roads, regional aviation, ports, electricity, and telecommunications, to boost Africa's capability for property development. The President stressed that China would conjointly support African countries in establishing five transportation universities.

China will implement a China-Africa financial statement. China can expand its RMB settlement and currency swap operations with African countries, encourage Chinese money establishments to line up additional branches in Africa, and increase its investment and funding cooperation with Africa in multiple ways in which to produce financial backing and services for Africa's manufacture and modernization drive.

China will implement a China-Africa inexperienced development arrangement. China can support the continent in bolstering its capability for inexperienced, low-carbon, and

property development and support the continent to develop clean energy, defend life, promote environment-friendly agriculture, and build sensible cities.

China will implement a China-Africa trade and investment facilitation arrangement. China can perform fifty aid-for-trade programs to enhance Africa's capability. China is prepared to barter with countries and regional organizations incontinent comprehensive trade agreements covering trade merchandise and services and investment cooperation and will increase the import of African products. China can support African countries in enhancing enforcement capability in areas like customs, quality scrutiny, and taxation. China will conjointly cooperate with the continent in standardization, certification, certification, and e-commerce.

China will implement a China-Africa poverty reduction arrangement and deepen its poverty reduction efforts; China intends to aid Africa. China wants to cancel outstanding debts within the kind of bilateral governmental zero-interest loans borrowed by the relevant least developed African countries that mature at the tip of 2015.

China will implement a China-Africa public health arrangement. China will help Africa strengthen its public health bar and its capacity building by building the African Center for Sickness Management. China will support pacesetting cooperation between twenty Chinese hospitals and twenty African hospitals and upgrade hospital departments. The Chinese government will still send medical groups to Africa and supply medical help as the "Brightness Action" program for cataract patients and maternal and Children's care. China will offer additional anti-malaria compound artemisinin to Africa and encourage and support native drug production by Chinese enterprises to extend Africans' access to drugs.

China will implement a China-Africa cultural and people-to-people arrangement. China can build five cultural centers in Africa, supply satellite TV reception to ten thousand (10,000) African villages, and offer Africa two thousand instructional opportunities with diplomas or degrees and thirty thousand (30,000) government scholarships. Every year, the Chinese government will sponsor visits by two hundred African students and study journeys by five hundred young Africans to China and train one thousand (1,000) media professionals from Africa. China intends to support the additional direct flights between China and Africa to spice up our commercial enterprise cooperation.

China will implement a China-Africa peace and security arrangement. China can offer US\$60 million of the grant to support the building and operation of the African Standby Force and also the African capability for the Immediate Response to Crisis. China can still participate in international

organization peacekeeping missions in Africa and support African countries' capability building in defense, counter-terrorism, riot bar, customs, and immigration management.

To guarantee the fruitful execution of those ten cooperation policies, China resolves to produce US\$60 billion of funding. It includes US\$5 billion of grant associated zero-interest loans; US\$35 billion of loans of concessional nature on additional favorable terms and credit line; a rise of US\$5 billion to the China-Africa Development Fund and also the Special Loan for the event of African SMEs, respectively; and also the China-Africa Fund for Production capability Cooperation with an initial contribution of US\$10 bill (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa, 2015). On the other hand, much as I uphold the argument that China's interest in Africa is centered not on the exploitation of Africa's resources or raw materials as is the case of the West or because of political undertone but based or centered basic concepts and principles of cooperation, there are some challenges worth noting to overcome for a much brighter future of China-Africa partnership.

There is no relationship or partnership without challenges, and these challenges, if handled well, can be transformed into opportunities. The opposite could be a risk, and such risk can sometimes be systemic that can affect or negatively impact the entire system and degenerate the partnership. The opportunities for Africa in the cooperation with China are enormous in different areas of their common interests as stressed in the addressed of the Chinese President, Xi Jinping on the five pillars of China-Africa partnership, and the ten listed plans China had put together to achieve them. China's investment in Africa increased in volume over the years, and economic cooperation became more practical. It is, therefore, crucial for both China and Africa through the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) to draw their agendas and strategic plans on how they envisioned continuing to strengthen the partnership and handle the visible and invisible challenges caused by asymmetric information on both sides. The two sides revised with contentment the progress of relationships between China and Africa, as well as acclaimed the Forum for its finely honed structure and improved productivity over the past 18 years since the beginning of the Forum, and for the Forum's input in supporting China-Africa relationships, progressing profound China-Africa cooperation across the board in addition to leading and supporting international collaboration with the continent of Africa (China-Africa Forum, 2019).

Economic relationships between China and African countries have produced abundant interest among development professionals and specialists over the last 20 years. Behind this attention lies great risks for Africa

concerning the opportunities and challenges involved in the deepening relationship with China (International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, 2018). African governments are, therefore, faced with the challenge of transforming this potential advantage into a reality. Therefore, should African governments accept a recurrence of the Dutch disease disorder that pigeon-holed previous booms; thus, the opportunity may be wasted away like previous ones. Should African governments misunderstand the liberty to independently decide on their development paths to mean a permit to carry on extravagantly misuse their resources on white elephant developments plus squirreling them in overseas banks, then the consequence will be even more catastrophic; besides, African growth may be tardy for a very long time to come. Added to that is the danger of the rise of Chinese monopolies in the intermediate to long term. After this, they may equally get on collusive and predacious business activities and draw out of monopoly rents the same as the current operators. However, this is particularly the case since a good number of Chinese businesses are still state-owned otherwise are closely controlled by the central government or the different local governments and can be part of the international approach of the Chinese state. Perhaps the more major challenge is the fact that cheap Chinese imports might dampen product diversification based on these African markets away from crude agricultural and mineral products towards manufacturing plus ultimately service or knowledge-intensive activities.

Consequently, this is a factual challenge since new investors might either find it unappealing to vie with cheap Chinese imports or find it pointless. After all, Chinese imports are enormous, leaving no substantial surplus demand, which new competitors can meet. In that situation, instead of the Sino-African trade corporation assisting in the transformation besides the development process in Africa, it will cut it. On the other hand, this, together with the de-industrialization effects of cheap Chinese imports, will reverse the improvements of industrial progress made during the first two decades of independence in Africa. (Ajakaiye, 2006). Consequently, regardless of these challenges, the fact remains that the Partnership between China and Africa is firmly becoming an economic bond on the foundation of win-win or mutual benefits than just mere friendship.

5. Social and Practical Implications of Sino-African Relationship

There are very critical social and practical implications with the growing China-Africa relationship. Most of these implications are grounded on the socio-political and economic interest China sought to strengthen in her relationship with Africa. Nevertheless, there is a real political and economic

rivalry between China and the West (United States of America), specifically in Africa. Who wins depends on how Africa perceives their genuine roles in promoting its development plan in different frontiers of trade, politics, peace, security, etc. For example, African leaders acclaim China's contributions to their countries' infrastructure, underlining noticeable developments that add to stretched out economic activity, employment creation for the indigenous labor force, as well as concrete developments to roads, rails, bridges, in addition to other transportation systems which are all benefits to the ordinary citizens (Larry Hanauer and Lyle J. Morris, 2013).

However, critical minds in Africa view the Chinese labor approach in most infrastructural engagements in Africa as exploitative and undermining the mantra of China “win-win Corporation” with the continent that has the majority of its youthful population unemployed. Some in Africa, on the other hand, are critical of Chinese commitment in the region. Workers’ unions, civil society organizations or groups, as well as other sections of African countries, disapprove of Chinese businesses for deprived employment conditions, unmanageable environmental practices, as well as unsatisfactory job placement (Larry Hanauer and Lyle J. Morris, 2013). On the area of governance, the perception about China’s interest in Africa by Good Governance Experts is unfair, although China maintains a commitment or principle of not being involved in the politics of other countries. China has presented itself differently from colonial powers by appealing common benefit as well as non-political interference as one of the uncomplicated principles of Chinese foreign policies(Zheng, Q., 2014). Good-governance regulators warn that China negotiates imbalanced agreements that take advantage of African governments' comparative weaknesses and promote exploitation besides extravagant decision-making(Larry Hanauer and Lyle J. Morris, 2013).

Nevertheless, the economic implications of the China-Africa relationship look bright and promising. China’s engagement in Africa has renewed Africa’s geopolitical and economic importance (Asongu, Simplice A and Aminkeng, Gilbert A. A, 2013).

6. Findings/Conclusion

Western perception about China in Africa and how critics perceive China to a greater extent can be unfair, pointing at the strategic commitment in deepening the practical economic cooperation China is investing in the partnership with the continent of Africa. The following findings somehow draw the reader's attention to the critical issues that characterized the China-Africa partnership and in answering the question of

"What is China's partnership approach to economic cooperation with Africa?"

China-Africa partnership or economic cooperation is on the foundation of basic concepts and principles of cooperation such as 1) Development partners, not "donor-recipient" 2) Promising continent, not "hopeless continent" 3) Equality and mutual respect 4) Bilateralism and co-development 5) No-political strings attached and non-interference of domestic affairs 6) Stress on the capability of self-reliance.

The Forum of China-Africa Cooperation is a critical platform for both China and Africa to draw up or formulate agendas or plans that will strengthen the cooperation, manage their diversities, and mitigate imminent or foreseen challenges, especially in the area of economic cooperation.

There are challenges associated with the Sino-Africa trade that could reverse the gains of industrial developments made over decades in Africa, particularly in the areas of Chinese commodities imported in Africa and the level of competition with local or indigenous industries on regional trade and investment in Africa.

The inspiring address of the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, during the Opening Ceremony of the Johannesburg Summit of FOCAC on the December 4, 2015, and the ten plans he listed to strengthen the practical cooperation further and achieve the common or mutual interest between China – Africa partnership, is a precursor of China's strategic commitment to the partnership and economic cooperation with Africa.

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