

**THE SUCCESSES OF THE JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT ON THE FORUM ON
CHINA AFRICA CO-OPERATION – 2015.**

IDISI EDERIN LOVETTE

**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, BAZE UNIVERSITY
ABUJANIGERIA**

EZEKANNAGHA VICTORIA ADAKU

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA**

Abstract

This paper examines the successes of the 2015 Johannesburg summit of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation as embedded in the first section of this paper. The paper relied on secondary method of data collection and supported by constructivist theory in order to provide an empirical theoretical ground to the paper. Findings show that the Johannesburg summit of 2015 witnessed some degree of successes which includes enhanced economic and trade cooperation, industrialization and improved standard of living for Africans looking at the amount of money provided as concessional loans by China, which was huge enough to have started the developmental process of Africa countries. The paper concludes that Africa can grow with the support of China unlike what we experienced in the past from slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism. action. The paper recommends that Africa should leverage on FOCAC to deliver meaningful development for Africans.

Keywords: FOCAC; integration; inter-continentalism; mutual trust; strategic partnership.

Introduction

The forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was formally established in Beijing in October 2000 under the joint initiative of China and Africa, with the aim of further strengthening friendly cooperation between the two parties, jointly meeting the challenges of economic globalization and seeking common development. Since then, it has become an important platform of Africa-China collective dialogue and effective mechanism of pragmatic cooperation, and also a stand bearer for the cooperation between the international community and Africa in the past 15 years, the pragmatic China-Africa cooperation has made great progress bringing tangible benefits to the Chinese and Africa people. The major aim of the 2015 summit held in Johannesburg, the republic of South Africa was to draw and adopt new blueprint or new measures for China-Africa cooperation and to show the world the unity and strength of the developing countries.

This paper is set to unravel the overall successes of the 2015 summit as well as proffer viable initiatives which would revolutionize the China-Africa oneness/cooperation in the long run.

Material and Method

In the course of this study, the secondary method of data collection has been adopted, bearing in mind that the paper seeks to explore the successes of the Johannesburg summit on ChinaAfrica cooperation. The paper relied on already existing materials from different researches, such as texts, journal articles, periodicals and reports, among others.

Literature Review

China is the largest developing country in the world, and Africa is the continent with the largest number of developing countries. Shared past experiences and similar aims and goals have brought China and Africa close together. China and Africa will always be a community with a shared future. Developing solidarity and cooperation with African countries has been the cornerstone of China's foreign policy, as well as a firm and long-lasting strategy. In the fight for National Liberation and independence, China and African countries supported each other and expanded mutual political trust in the process. In pursuing economic development and National rejuvenation, both sides have been helping each other and increasing the scope of cooperation in major international and regional issues, they have coordinated their position and jointly safeguarded international equality and justice. Entering the new era, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the principles of China's Africa policy – sincerity, real result, amity and good faith, and pursuing the greater good and shared interest, charting the course for China's cooperation with Africa and providing the fundamental guidelines.

The successes of the Johannesburg summit in 2015 pushed China-Africa cooperation to a new and unprecedented height. President Xi Jinping and African leaders unanimously decided at the FOCAC that the two sides would work to build an even stronger China-Africa community of shared future, advance cooperation under the belt and road initiative establishing a new Milestone in China-Africa relations. China-Africa friendship has not been an overnight achievement, nor has it been from on high, rather it has been fostered throughout the years when China and Africa supported and stood alongside each other in trying times.

China has aided to the limit of its capabilities the development of Africa and has been grateful for the strong support and selfless help African countries and their people have extended to China for a long period of time. Since the beginning of covid-19 pandemic, China and African countries have continued to provide mutual support, writing a new chapter in China-Africa solidarity and friendship at times of crises (Huaxia, 2021). The forum for China-Africa cooperation held in Johannesburg in 2015, under the theme: "Africa-China Progressing together: win-win cooperation for common development", is expected to adopt the Johannesburg declaration and action plan, which will outline specific measures aimed at consolidating the growing mutual partnership between Africa and China. The FOCAC summit is expected to open new avenues of cooperation and open new opportunities for both China and Africa, which will elevate the relationship to a new level that would have mutual beneficial impact and give impetus to Africa's development, in line with the African Union's agenda 2063; (AU, 2024). FOCAC is a cooperative mechanism to pursue collective consultation and dialogue among developing countries. It is a forum for south-south cooperation set up to address development issues of mutual concern between China and African countries. The forum promises great potential to support the advancement of the course and purposes of the African continent and China, especially in areas with political dimension, infrastructure development, utilization of available market and the business opportunity that could be harnessed by both sides.

Although established following the urgings of African diplomats in the late 1990s, China has taken the lead in FOCAC throughout the existence of the organization. In addition to African request, China had its own rationale for establishing FOCAC, including creating an organization to ensure future political and economic influence in Africa in light of other great and rising powers setting up similar organization, counteracting European Union influences in light of the first Eu-Africa Summit, counter-balancing emerging India-Africa and Turkey-Africa cooperation organization, and advocating for developing country causes (Murphy, 2022).

One out of the numerous successes of the Johannesburg summit is the emphasize on political cooperation between Africa and China. The core political norms that China advocates within FOCAC are its five principles of peaceful coexistence: mutual respect for territory and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affair, equality and mutual benefits, and peaceful coexistence. these principles are a conservative interpretation of the Westphalian norms of state sovereignty (Murphy, 2022). Through FOCAC, China has provided resources to the African countries, China provides aid in the forms of debt Forgiveness, aid, grants, concessional loans and interest free loans (Eisenman, J. Higginbotham, E, 2023). The FOCAC coordinators meeting, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi announced that China would forgive 23 interest-free loans that had matured at the end of 2021 for 17 African countries (FOCAC; 2022). Over the last few years, there has been a rapid increase in bilateral trade between China and the African countries rising from US \$ 10.6 billion in 2000 and most recently to above 45 \$ 20.1 billion as a result of the positive impact of FOCAC (Saiia. Org.2015).

importantly, the FOCAC process highlighted the adoptive nature of China's engagement with Africa, responding dynamically to emerging developments. Most notably, FOCAC promoted the China-Africa cooperative partnership for peace and security, which seeks to provide financial assistance, capacity building and other forms of institutionalized support for Africa's efforts at fostering peace and security on the continent. (Saiia, 2015).

Speaking at the university of cape town in May 2015, China's ambassador to south Africa Tian Xue Jun, mentioned that FOCAC is an important platform to jointly implement cooperation initiatives, such as the building of the three networks (encompassing railway, highway and regional aviation links) and accelerating industrialization in Africa. (Saila, 2015). The 2015 Johannesburg FOCAC summit had also built a China-Africa comprehensive strategies among cooperative partnership which paved way for even stronger China-Africa community of shared future, raising China-Africa relations to a new level. China and African countries conduct close exchange between political parties, legislature bodies and consultative bodies, building multilevel, multi-channel, multi-form, multi-dimensional friendly cooperation. The communist party of China expands exchange and cooperation with political parties in African Countries based on the principles of independence, equality, mutual respect and non-interference in each other internal affairs (Xinhua, 2021).

Among the numerous dividends from the 2015, FOCAC includes rapidly expanding economic cooperation, increasing development assistance, expanding cooperation in infrastructure, facilitating agricultural development in Africa, promoting cooperation in investment and financing, expanding cooperation in digital economy, sharing experience in poverty reduction, enhancing medical and health cooperating, expanding cooperation in education and human resources, stepping up scientific and Technological collaboration, and knowledge sharing, promoting cooperation under the beef and road initiative, etc. (Xinhua, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

In order to give this research a sound footing, the constructivist approach has been adopted. Constructivism is an international relations theory used in analyzing international politics among states. It is a social construction that is changeable using some variables that shape international relations. These variables include ideas, identity, interest and absence of threat. (HOPF, 1998, Barnett, 2018 in Sheriff; Chubado, 2022). The leading figures/renowned proponents of this philosophical approach includes Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget, Lev. Vygotsky and John Dewey. This theory argues that states are likely to relate together if they share common identity, interest and ideas, such states also do not pose a threat to each other. Bearing in mind that China and Africa have a common interest which is to achieve high economic growth and then the Johannesburg summit was meant to further enhance cooperation so as to support China's rapidly growing economy as well as savage Africa's developing economy.

Discussion of findings

In the course of this paper, it was discovered that the 2015 Johannesburg summit of FOCAC has been a major blue print for China- Africa relations in the past few years. Despite the fact that the initial rationale behind China's establishment of FOCAC was to create an organization to ensure future political and economic influence in Africa in light of other great and rising powers setting up similar organizations, the 2015 Johannesburg summit has recorded a good number of successes, notably increasing development assistance. While pursuing its own growth China supports African countries in seeking development and improving their people's lives. In the new era, China has scaled up assistance to Africa. Foreign aid from 2013 to 2018 was estimated to RMB270 billion. From this sum, 45 percent went to African countries in the form of grants, interest free loans and concessional loans. China helped African countries build more than 13,000 km of roads and railway and more than 80 large scale power facilities, and funded over 130 medical facilities, 4 sports venues and over 170 schools, it also trained more than 160,000 personnel for Africa.

The Johannesburg summit has also contributed to industrialization in Africa, a prerequisite for the continent to achieve inclusive and sustainable development, and is also the key to creating jobs, eradicating poverty and improving living standards. China and Africa have seen economic and trade cooperation expanding rapidly in scale and extent. The ten major cooperation plans adopted at the 2015 FOCAC Johannesburg summit raised China-Africa economic and trade cooperation to a new level.

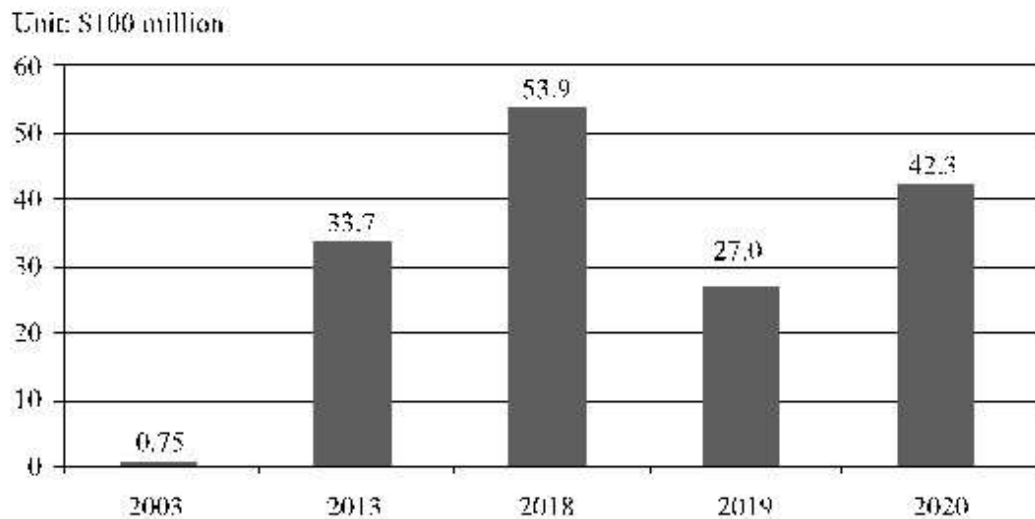


Figure 3 China's Direct Investments in Africa

Conclusion

China has eliminated the historical problem of absolute poverty and achieved moderate prosperity in all respects. It has embarked on a new journey towards building China into a modern socialist country by the time the PRC celebrates its centenary in 2049. Africa is experiencing a flowing tide of solidarity and self-strengthening, and the continent's influence in international affairs continues to grow, accelerating industrialization, and heading towards the bright future envisioned in the AU's agenda 2063. As a result of the 2015 Johannesburg FOCAC, China will continue to work together with African countries, thus making a greater contribution to lasting world peace and prosperity, and to a global community of shared future.

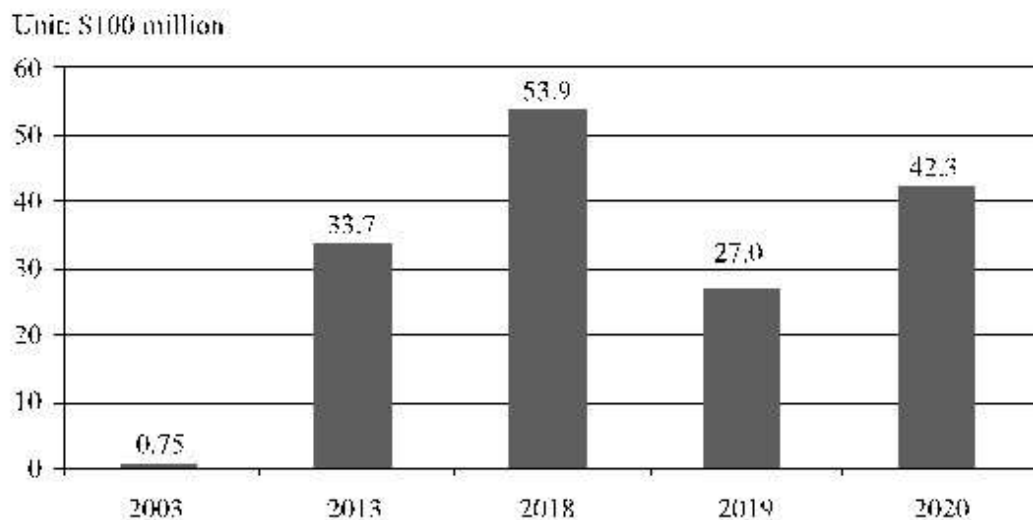


Figure 3 China's Direct Investments in Africa

Recommendations

Notwithstanding the successes of the 2015 Johannesburg summit, the global governance system and the international order are changing at an accelerating rate currently, and the international balance of power is undergoing a profound adjustment. China and Africa need to further consolidate their partnership, and build a China-Africa community of shared future in the new era.

The two sides will steadfastly reinforce their traditional friendship, promote mutual beneficial cooperation, and safeguard common interest. They will continue to set the pace of cooperation through FOCAC, support the belt and road initiative, bring the China-Africa comprehensive strategies and cooperation partnership to a higher level, and deliver a brighter future together.

There should also be a boost of common development and nurturing new drivers for expanding mutually beneficial cooperation. International cooperation should be promoted so as to enable the establishment of a fairer and more equitable international order.

Lastly, China-Africa relations should be raised to a new level. The two sides have employed far-sighted vision.

Following the new historical starting point under the guidance of Xi Jinping thought on socialism and foreign affairs, China should adhere to the principles of sincerity, affinity, good faith and practical results, uphold the values of shared interest and the greater good, and work together with African countries to advance high quality cooperation and build a China-Africa community of a shared future.

REFERENCES

Eisenman, J., Heginbotham, E.(2023). China's relation with the global south: in Kerenski, Kristina Tuscany, R.Q (Rds). Contemporary China: a new super power. Routledge: ISBN 78-1- 003.

Ian, T.(2012). The forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Routledge: ISBN, London.

Joint Statement of the coordinators meeting on the implementation of the follow-up actions of the eight ministerial conferences of the forum on China Africa Cooperation(FOCAC). www.fmprc.gov.cn. Retrieved 2022-08-28.

Murphy, D.C. (2022). China's rise in the global south: the middle east, Africa and Beijing's alternative world order: Stamford university press, Stamford, California.

Shinn, D.H., Eisenman, J. (2023). China's relation with Africa: a new era of strategic engagement. Columbia university press: New York.

Saiaa.org.(2023). FOCAC background and 2015 focus priorities. Retrieved 17 December 2022.