



Reimagining **FOCAC** going forwards

An African Assessment of
Needs, Demands and
Opportunities for FOCAC 2021
and Beyond

Authors

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**DEVELOPMENT
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the 8th Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) scheduled to be held in Senegal in the final quarter of 2021, this report seeks to explore the narrative that FOCAC itself has strengthened the cooperation between China and African countries and subsequently provides recommendations for the future, with a particular view to strengthening African perspectives and inputs into the China-Africa partnership.

This report, aimed at both African and Chinese policymakers and citizens, begins with a general reminder, setting out the context for FOCAC and what it should ideally aim to achieve, with a general reminder of why Africa and China cooperate from the perspective of both African countries and China. Specifically, it sets out 5 reasons why China cooperates with African countries, and 7 reasons why African countries cooperate with China.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">5</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">reasons why China-Africa cooperation is important.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Chinese perspectives</p>	<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">7</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">reasons why China-Africa cooperation is important.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">African perspectives</p>
 <p>1 China's international responsibility.</p>	 <p>1 China has channelled finance to African countries that is not attached to any conditions.</p>
 <p>2 African countries are an important new market for Chinese products.</p>	 <p>2 China has been a source of loans for projects that often will not be financed by other bilateral partners and multilateral development banks.</p>
 <p>3 African countries are an important location for offshoring low-cost manufacturing from China.</p>	 <p>3 China is an inspiring partner in Africa countries poverty reduction efforts.</p>
 <p>4 African countries are an important source of diverse imports for China - including raw materials and agriculture.</p>	 <p>4 China is an important source of machinery and tech transfer for African countries.</p>
 <p>5 African countries are important to China for geopolitical reasons.</p>	 <p>5 China is an important new market for existing and future African products.</p>
	 <p>6 China - alongside other emerging economies - offer new and different types of investors in comparison to traditional FDI partners.</p>
	 <p>7 China can support African countries to advance positions in the UN or Bretton Woods Institutions</p>

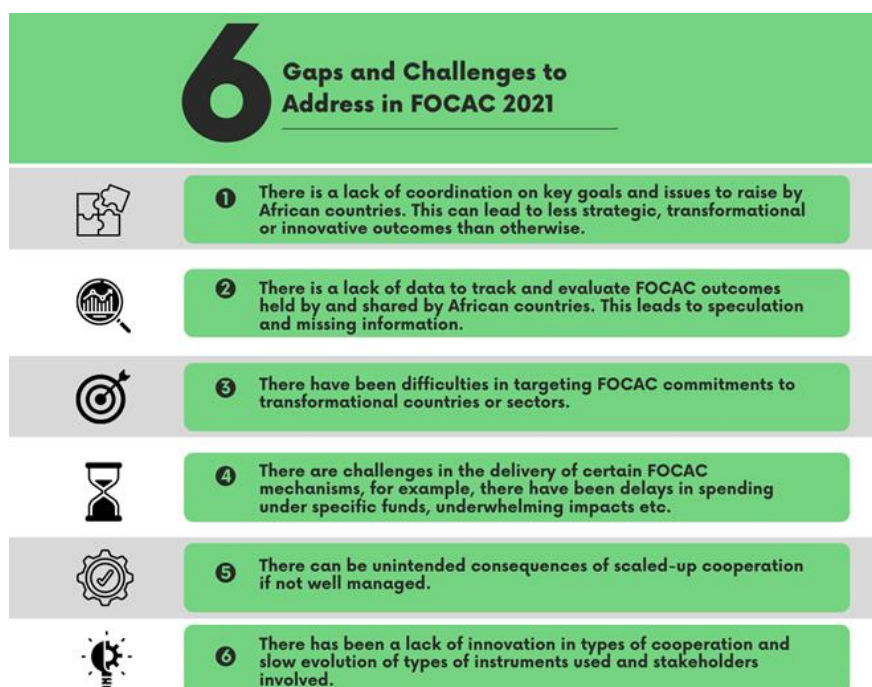
The report then identifies and charts how FOCAC has evolved over time, incorporating more than 40 topics and issues by 2018, grouped under eight major headings. The report finds that with the wide range of topics, FOCAC now has direct links to African Continental Frameworks, African Flagship projects as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The analysis finds that while only 2 out of the 6 African continental frameworks were specifically mentioned in FOCAC 2018 Action Plan, previous China-Africa cooperation has had significant impacts and contributed directly to the frameworks, projects and goals.

The report also spotlights key differences in collaborative processes with China's other regional and plurilateral partnerships, as well as Africa's "plus one summits" – which provide opportunities to advance relationships with other development partners. The report clarifies that for both China and Africa, FOCAC is a unique forum, with unique properties, and therefore is worthwhile continuing, while advancing and using best practice from elsewhere as well.










The report then proceeds to explore the question of how FOCAC has met African and Chinese goals by using two case studies of China-Africa cooperation in agriculture and health, particularly action items under the most recent FOCAC meetings in Johannesburg (2015) and Beijing (2018). The case studies illustrated that while huge progress has been made, nevertheless the cooperation can be improved- through a combination of the following five measures:

- targeting assistance at particular countries with a particular rationale;
- targeting particular sectors or issues;
- expanding cooperation mechanisms to the entire continent;
- working with African counterparts to design new themes or cooperation modes;
- focusing on long-term sustainability of cooperation.

Finally, the report uses these various analyses to propose six priority gaps and challenges that Chinese and African governments can use for FOCAC 2021 and beyond as an opportunity to tackle, with a view to making improvements to the effectiveness of the collaboration in future, deepening it and ensuring the five and seven "why's are met in future.











Subsequently 17 opportunities are identified, ranked according to the transformational potential and their feasibility. The analysis suggests that of the 17 opportunities, **three (total score = 9) and potentially a further five (total score = 8) of the opportunities can be prioritised for agreement at FOCAC 2021 itself**, with a view to introducing the remaining nine measures over time¹.

Opportunity at 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference and beyond.	Action required by African governments, the Chinese government, or both?	Overall Score for FOCAC 2021 (max = 10)
Link all FOCAC actions to Agenda 2063 and cross/sub-regional agendas	Both 	9
Appoint an African China Envoy with clear mandate	Africa 	9
Set up issue-specific African coordination forums for each/selected FOCAC topics	Africa 	9
African governments and organisations publish more data about their China relationship	Africa 	8
African governments publish a domestic China Strategy	Africa 	8
Always utilise both African and Chinese organisations in design and implementation of all FOCAC instruments and funds	Both 	8
Discuss and set out a long-term strategic vision for the China-Africa strategy	Both 	8
Use declarations to propose joint Africa-China ideas/ positions to shape and influence the multilateral system	Both 	8
African governments publish a China Strategy	Africa 	7

List Cont'd.

¹ Note that a continent-wide BRI MOU could be a more feasible precursor to legal instruments, and/or a preferential trade agreement linked to AfCFTA.

Aim to balance trade, finance and people flows in both directions in long-term	Both		7
Request African organisations to provide actionable principles/guidelines on key issues	Both		7
Explore cross-continental legal instruments	Both		5
Initiate overarching FOCAC evaluations led by African co-chair and/or African organisation	Africa		6
Have African and Chinese organisations always jointly evaluate specific instruments	Both		6
Better data collection on and understanding of African countries diversity	China		4
Diversify actors involved in FOCAC instruments	Both		6
Use trilateral cooperation strategically	Both		6

As is clear from the above list, many of the opportunities proposed reflect on the overarching need for African stakeholders to demonstrate more agency through FOCAC as the central coordination mechanism for their cooperation, hence a greater number of the opportunities can be taken forward by African stakeholders, and only a limited number are proposed for Chinese stakeholders on their own.

Overall, there is no doubt that the China-Africa relationship, expressed through FOCAC has had significant impact, not only on broad trade, financial and people flows, but also in specific sectors such as agriculture and health. It is up to both African governments and the Chinese government to now ensure that FOCAC further contributes to supporting African countries to achieve their development goals sustainably, now, up to and beyond 2063.

INTRODUCTION - WHY THIS REPORT?

The longest and the most important standing mechanism for cooperation between China and Africa is the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Established in 2000 at the request of African governments for more coordination in their bilateral relationships with China², there is a belief and narrative that FOCAC itself has strengthened the cooperation between China and African countries.

With the 8th FOCAC meeting scheduled to be held in Senegal in the final quarter of 2021, this report seeks to explore this narrative and make recommendations for the future, with a particular view to strengthening African perspectives and inputs into the China-Africa partnership.

Coming close to two years after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the potential significance of FOCAC 2021 cannot be underestimated. Although the health impacts of COVID-19 have been significant globally, Africa maintained an immediately strong record in managing the pandemic - despite initial expectations and pre-existing vulnerability and risk indexes that ranked most African countries very low. For instance, over 70% of African countries instituted early interventions included enforcement of social distancing measures before detecting ten cases, and in the vast majority of countries policies were introduced to support the economy and vulnerable populations, impacting over 175 million people³.

Throughout the pandemic, Africa has consistently ensured the continent remains under 5% of global cases and deaths. However, exacerbated by the lack of vaccine deliveries, the economic impact relative to African economies' size, has been significant. Moreover, analysis by UNCTAD suggests that COVID-19 has impacted most African countries mainly through their linkages with the global economy – including trade and tourism with China. For instance, there has been a significant drop in world demand and the resultant commodity price drops have affected production and exports⁴, while elsewhere, inflation is expected to rise⁵.

Amid all these challenges lies a key opportunity for improving and upgrading the cooperation mechanisms between Africa and its key development partner China.

In this regard, it is essential that African countries – and Chinese counterparts - take stock of the past FOCAC engagements, commitments and outcomes with a view to coming up with new solutions and ideas that take account of the post-COVID19 reality. The forthcoming FOCAC, for instance, must take account of the increased need for digital access that COVID-19 has accelerated. It must also account for lessons learnt from global pandemic management and multilateral mechanisms for public goods – for instance the need for local manufacturing, more open intellectual property rules, and augmented climate change action.

This background and need for upgraded solutions and ideas provides the main motivation for this report.

² <http://www.focac.org/chn/ltij/ltiz/>, and Zeng Aiping & Shu Zhan “Origin, Achievements, and Prospects of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation”

³ <https://developmentreimagined.com/2021/03/15/its-been-one-year-since-the-first-covid-case-in-africa-chinas-contribution-covid-year-in-review/>

⁴ https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/aldcmisc2020d3_en.pdf

⁵ <https://thediomat.com/2020/03/chinas-coronavirus-slowdown-which-african-economies-will-be-hit-hardest/>

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This report targets policy makers, civil society and the academia, in African countries and China.

Specifically, on the African side, this report targets Leaders, Ministers, officials and diplomats from Africa countries who are engaged in the key discussions around FOCAC 2021, including those who will be actively participating in forthcoming FOCAC 2021 discussions. It also provides a means for think-tanks and non-governmental organisations to centre African needs and perspectives within the FOCAC framework.

On the China side, the report further targets selected government and non-governmental institutions such as think-tanks that have been engaged in conversations around FOCAC and anyone interested in understanding the African reasoning and future for FOCAC.

The hope is that by writing this report and targeting these readers, this report will elicit more effective engagements around FOCAC beginning at the forthcoming meeting in late 2021 – for the benefit in Africa in particular, including in – but not confined to – key areas such as health and agricultural development.

The report begins with a general reminder of *why* Africa and China cooperate, the Africa and China relationship to date, the role of FOCAC in particular as part of this process, and also spotlights any differences in collaborative processes with Africa's other development partners. The report uses these various analyses to propose priority opportunities and challenges for FOCAC 2021 and beyond to aim to tackle, as well as improvements to the effectiveness of the collaboration in future.

The Report is written based on two main sources of information: First, desktop analysis including analysis of data on agriculture and health cooperation between China and Africa; and second, detailed consultations involving joint and individual meetings with close to thirty African Ambassadors and diplomatic representative offices in China, as well as various African leaders and experts.

WHY IS CHINA – AFRICA COOPERATION IMPORTANT – CHINESE PERSPECTIVES

The rationale for and prioritisation of China-Africa cooperation can be considered from the Chinese perspective and from the African countries' perspectives.

There are several ways in which the Chinese government can and does justify the engagement with African countries. In particular, four major reasons typically emerge in government documents and academic literature.

First, is **China's International responsibility**. According to China's most recent White Paper⁶, China views its development cooperation with African countries (and others) as a form of mutual assistance between developing countries. Specifically, China classifies this to be in the realm of South-South Cooperation – including notions of “win-win” and “non-interference” in political and policy affairs of partner countries. By doing so, China distinguishes its cooperation with Africa (and others) from North-South cooperation which is seen to be more benevolent while tainted with colonial baggage and policy conditionality. The White paper suggests that China will continue to shoulder more international responsibilities as it grows, develops and increases its capacity, and further expand forms of cooperation so as to promote joint efforts for common development. No trade-offs are envisioned or mentioned in this process. Second, **China considers Africa an important new market for Chinese products** due to the latter's potential demographic dividend. According to forecasts, Africa is going to experience significant population growth reaching nearly 2.5 billion by 2050 and may overtake Asia's population by 2100.⁷ According to the Economist, Sub-Saharan Africa's population is growing at 2.7% a year, which is more than twice as fast as South Asia (1.2%) and Latin America (0.9%).⁸ Therefore, as long as the current and future African population has disposable income, Africa could become a significant market for Chinese products, and even services. In line with this, while Africa currently accounts for a small percentage of China's overall trade, amounting to only about 4% percent of Chinese foreign trade across the globe, while China absorbs about 11% of Africa's global export of goods⁹, Africa is nevertheless a useful market for China's machinery as well as electronic products – a market in which China can often win against other (more expensive) foreign competitors. For example, Transsion phones whose brands included Techno, Infinix and Intel dominates Africa's smartphone market with 48% share of the Africa's smartphone market.¹⁰

Third, **China considers African countries as ideal potential locations for offshoring low-cost manufacturing** in future. This is the prediction Justin Yifu-Lin, former Chief Economist of the World Bank, has pointed to based on the “flying geese” theory¹¹. As poverty falls, and incomes and wages rise in China, the cost of production in China will inevitably increase, meaning its light industrial manufacturing sectors are likely to look at and relocate to foreign countries where there can be low-cost manufacturing. Again, with demographic dividends expected, even in comparison to some poorer Asian countries such as Bangladesh, many (although not all) African countries offer ideal conditions for this strategy.¹²

⁶ <http://english.www.gov.cn/atts/stream/files/5ffa69cac6d0cc300eea77af>

⁷ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1224205/forecast-of-the-total-population-of-africa/>

⁸ <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2020/03/26/africas-population-will-double-by-2050>

⁹ <https://www.orfonline.org/research/china-in-africa/>

¹⁰ <https://www.theafricareport.com/73472/chinas-transsion-dominates-smartphone-market-in-africa/>

¹¹ <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/557311528692107163/pdf/127015-JRN-PUBLIC-Leading-Dragon-Phenomenon.pdf>

¹² <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/03/what-the-shift-in-chinas-economy-means-for-africa/>

Fourth, **China considers African countries as a source of diverse imports** - including raw materials for its industries. Recent analysis shows that Africa's exports to China in relation to Africa's exports to the world have been steadily increasing since 2000¹³. The main exports of African economies to China include Minerals, metals, agricultural products, and crude oil. However, more recently, trade flows of agricultural products from several African countries to China have risen. These products include Tea, coffee, avocados, chillies, oilseeds, oil meals and grains, and wine amongst others. This diversification appears congruent with a general strategy for food security and other aspects of domestic national security – in terms of relying on varied and diverse global supply chains, rather than one or two big global producers¹⁴.

Beyond these four reasons, some experts suggest that **Africa is important to China for geopolitical reasons**. For instance, Senior Fellow at the National Bureau of Asian Research Nadege Rolland in 2021 published a report on China's "new great game" – which, in her words: "*seeks to outflank the U.S. by mobilizing African endorsement of China's distinctive institutions and governing ideology. To that end, China aims to persuade African countries to adopt aspects of its political and economic system*"¹⁵. Other analysis points to African countries "siding" with China in various UN forums¹⁶.

Overall, in light of the above, whether or not the relationship between African countries and China is political, there is no doubt it that it goes well beyond this. Overall, all reasons offered make the African continent a uniquely important part of China's long-term growth strategy.

However, what about *vice versa* – to what degree is China a uniquely important part of Africa's long-term growth strategy?

¹³ Development Reimagined (2021), From China-Africa to Africa-China; A Blueprint for a Green and Inclusive Continent Wide African Strategy towards China page 16, available at <https://developmentreimagined.com/portfolio-posts/china-africa-to-africa-china/>

¹⁴ Much writing has been done on how international supply chains want to diversify away from China reliance (so called "China plus one" strategies) but not enough on how China is planning to diversity its own supply chains. One example is here: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-11-02/china-s-xi-also-wants-to-diversify-supply-chains-amid-u-s-curbs>

¹⁵ <https://www.nbr.org/publication/a-new-great-game-situating-africa-in-chinas-strategic-thinking/>

¹⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-56717986>

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reasons why China-Africa cooperation is important.

Chinese perspectives



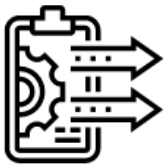
1 China's international responsibility.



2 African countries are an important new market for Chinese products.



3 African countries are an important location for offshoring low-cost manufacturing from China.



4 African countries are an important source of diverse imports for China - including raw materials and agriculture.



5 African countries are important to China for geopolitical reasons.

WHY IS CHINA – AFRICA COOPERATION IMPORTANT – AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

From African countries' standpoint, the cooperation with China is important for the following six reasons.

First, China has to date been channelling finance to African countries – especially aid (grants) but also loans and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that is **not attached to any internal policy conditions of African countries**. In other words, when countries accept grants, loans or equity from Chinese stakeholders, to date they have not had to make internal policy reforms in advance, at the same time or *with* the finance. Seen from the perspective of African countries governments, this is attractive¹⁷.

Second, **China has been a source of loans for projects** that often will not be financed by other bilateral partners and even many multilateral development banks. These projects range from transport (e.g. railway lines and roads), communication, and energy infrastructure. China's ability to play a more prominent role in Africa's infrastructure is based on two key factors. First, compared to other Africa's development partners such as the EU and the US, China has been willing to fund these projects through multiple financing models¹⁸. Secondly China has the technical capacity in the forms of StateOwned Enterprises such as China Road and Bridge Corporation, Sino Hydro Corporation and others who have won various procurement bids from African governments, multilateral contracting, as well as deployed for tied Chinese loans (e.g. from China Exim Bank) in construction projects in Africa. The US and the EU have not on the other hand have not been active in addressing Africa's infrastructure deficit, and have channelled much of their concessional finance through the multilaterals, who have often focused on social infrastructure, overall due to the prevalence of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) up to 2015¹⁹.

Linked to this, and based on China's own experience with global and bilateral concessional finance, the financing arrangements with China are more creative than others and include concessionary loans, and natural resource backed loans such as the arrangements for revenues from oil or other resources such as bauxite, the raw material to create aluminium, being hypothecated in Chinese escrow accounts to finance infrastructure projects, and by doing so also avoiding Chinese capital controls. For instance, in 2018 the Ghanaian and Chinese governments announced a deal under which China would provide \$2 billion in infrastructure loans to be repaid in aluminium²⁰.

Third, **China is an inspiring partner** in Africa countries poverty reduction efforts. In this regard, it is worth noting that whereas there are other countries such South Korea, UAE, Thailand and Malaysia have also successfully implemented poverty reduction strategies, China remains the most comparable to Africa in terms of total size and population, even in organisation of society with large informal sectors and primarily small-scale agriculture, and hence offers an ideal model for African countries. As such, many countries have shown an interest in adapting China's experience to their national context²¹. That said, the challenge for African countries may be even harder than for China. Over the past 40 years, over 800 million Chinese people lifted themselves out of poverty to contribute to over 70 percent of global poverty reduction. In 2018, 13.9 million people in China managed to raise their incomes over the poverty line and it is projected that by

¹⁷ <https://qz.com/africa/1787779/what-the-uk-africa-summit-can-learn-from-china/>

¹⁸ For more discussion on this see Chapter 2 of Development Reimagined (2021) Options for Reimagining Africa's Debt System, available at:

¹⁹ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/04/16/competing-in-africa-china-the-european-union-and-the-united-states/A>

²⁰ <https://www.ccpwatch.org/single-post/2020/02/27/resource-backed-loans-revisited-infrastructure-for-aluminum-in-ghana-and-guinea>

²¹ See FAO , China And FAO Partnering For Sustainable Domestic And Global Food Security available at <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/b04d5c74-e343-4e45-9c74-ae31f557a8c2/>

2024 China will be a high-income country. For Africans to achieve a feat such as this figures suggest the continent has to double this speed. This is principally because China's inspiring rapid pace is slower than the pace needed to meet SDG1 (ending poverty in all its forms everywhere) for the African continent by 2030. For Africa to achieve this, close to 400 million people are required to lift themselves out of poverty over a period of just over 10 years.²² Furthermore, even if they do not directly copy China, African countries can examine and draw important lessons from China in the poverty reduction policies particularly given that China's efforts were largely devoid of aid, based on a largely informal and urbanising society initially, and had been, and continues to be driven by internal policy reforms²³.

Fourth, **China is an important source of machinery and tech transfer** (inbound trade) for African countries. According to World Bank's statistics between 1996 and 2014, 27% of Africa's imports from China comprised of capital goods such as machinery, and electronics. As of 2019, Nigeria and South Africa were the main importers from China in Africa. Both African countries imported from the Asian partner in the value of some 16.6 billion U.S. dollars each. Chinese exports to Egypt followed closely, with a value of 12.2 billion U.S. dollars.²⁴ China is currently the top bilateral source of imports for 23 African countries. The Chinese capital goods imports are boosted in the presence of large Chinese financed infrastructure projects, which frequently include country-of-origin procurement rules. Also, in terms of cost, Chinese products have often been less expensive than similar products imported from the European Union (EU) or the United States, therefore making them attractive to firms and also for individual consumers in African countries.²⁵ Further, both Chinese and international researchers have suggested that Chinese investment practices and technologies may be more appropriate for Africa in some circumstances than those from OECD countries.²⁶

Fifth, **African countries consider China anew market for existing and future African products**. China's rise in world trade as well as its increasing consumer market for raw materials and agricultural products present an opportunity for African countries to ramp up their trade with China. There is no doubt that China has a large market size; it is estimated that currently China has a GDP per capita of more than \$10,000 – 50 times larger than in 1980 – and an economy of around \$15 trillion, 75 times larger than it was in 1980.²⁷ Also China is now the world's largest agricultural importer, surpassing both the European Union (EU) and the United States in 2019 with imports totalling \$133.1 billion.²⁸ The above coupled with China's Duty Free Quota Free Scheme(DFQF) could have significant implications for African countries through increase of opportunities to exports to China.

Sixth, and in particular when it comes to investment, **China – alongside other emerging economies such as UAE – offer new and different types of investors** in comparison to traditional FDI partners. Having developed rapidly in the last forty or so years, having started with very poor infrastructure and large informal economies, investors from China and other emerging economies are not necessarily put off by these factors. They see and perceive Africa differently, and can help problem solve on how to overcome these challenges. They can often be more positive about new investment opportunities and may even have different, creative ideas for new tools for development, such as the role of e-commerce or innovation²⁹ or even natural resource-backed loans. This also means that when it comes to the operation of Chinese

²² <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2019-10-17/China-s-poverty-reduction-was-fast-Can-Africa-s-be-faster--KRbfGQUne0/index.html>

²³ Ibid

²⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1222699/value-of-chinese-exports-to-africa-by-country/>

²⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Event/Africa/Investing%20in%20Africa%20Forum/2015/investing-in-africa-forum-china-and-africa-expanding-economic-ties-in-an-evolving-global-context.pdf>

²⁶ Kaplinsky, R (2013) What contribution can China make to inclusive growth in sub-Saharan Africa? *Development and Change* 44 1295–1316

²⁷ <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/china-and-sub-saharan-africa-trade-a-case-of-growing-interdependence/>

²⁸ <https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/china-evolving-demand-world-s-largest-agricultural-import-market>

²⁹ For some examples of what difference the “China view” can make to development see: <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/e-commerce-and-mobile-money-poverty-reduction-china-lessons-african-countries> and <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/chinas-model-innovation-are-there-lessons-african-countries>

external-facing banks and dedicated funds such as the China Africa Development Fund (CADFund), Chinese (and other emerging) counterparts will be interested in certain types of investment that other traditional investors would shun or find “unbankable” – e.g. investing in Special Economic Zones or certain ports.

Finally, and seventh, **China may well play a geopolitical role for African countries** – for example, in the UN, African countries have since its readmission into the UN supported China being part of the “G77+China” grouping. As China is a permanent member of the Security Council, it is possible for African countries to work with China to achieve UN objectives.

7 reasons why China-Africa cooperation is important.

African perspectives



1 China has channelled finance to African countries that is not attached to any conditions.



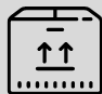
2 China has been a source of loans for projects that often will not be financed by other bilateral partners and multilateral development banks.



3 China is an inspiring partner in Africa countries poverty reduction efforts.



4 China is an important source of machinery and tech transfer for African countries.



5 China is an important new market for existing and future African products.



6 China – alongside other emerging economies – offer new and different types of investors in comparison to traditional FDI partners.



7 China can support African countries to advance positions in the UN or Bretton Woods Institutions

Considering the above it become easy to understand why China- Africa Cooperation is important – primarily for economic reasons, but also to some degree political.

With an understanding of why, the section below turns to explores the main mechanism used by China and African governments in addressing China-Africa cooperation namely FOCAC and the AU Continental Frameworks, with a view to eventually reflecting on whether these forums adequately deliver on the “why” for both African and Chinese counterparts.

THE FORUM ON CHINA – AFRICA COOPERATION (FOCAC) OVER TIME AND IN CONTEXT – A SYNOPSIS

As noted in the introduction to this report, FOCAC is the key plurilateral mechanism for China and African countries to cooperate. Since its establishment in the year 2000, seven key conferences have been held – at Ministerial and Head of State level, convened every three years, in Beijing and African cities (Addis Ababa (2003), Sharm El-Sheikh (2009) and Johannesburg (2015)).³⁰ The upcoming 8th FOCAC in Dakar is not expected to be Summit level due to COVID-19 concerns and protocols, however, Ministers and senior representatives from China, the African Union and the 53 African countries with diplomatic relations with China³¹ will be expected join.

Two key elements of each of the major conferences can be identified.

The first is **high-level, numeric and input-based, continent-wide pledges from China to African countries**. These pledges are often made within the overall “declaration” for the meeting, and/or within speeches by the highest-level Chinese representative.

A key example often focused on is China’s financing commitments (both loans and grants), which increased from US\$5 billion in 2006 to US\$10 billion in 2009, US\$20 billion in 2012, US\$35 billion in 2015, to US\$45 billion in 2018. But there are several other such examples. China committed to training 10,000 African personnel in various fields in 2003, 15,000 in 2006, 20,000 in 2009, 30,000 in 2012, 40,000 in 2017, and 50,000 in 2018. At the 2003 FOCAC, China announced its decision to grant zero-tariff treatment to exports from least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa; at the 2006 FOCAC, the number of such eligible export items was increased from 190 to 440; in 2009, it promised to gradually grant tariff-free treatment to 95 percent of all exports from African LDCs and further increased this number to 97% in 2012.

Similarly, in 2006, China announced it would set up 10 agricultural demonstration centres across Africa, and increased this to 30 in 2009, in partnership with the United Nations’ (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The US\$5 billion China-Africa Development Fund announced at the 2006 FOCAC summit, has since been increased to \$10bn, and has supported Chinese investment in Africa, including 6 Special Economic Zones in 5 African countries: Zambia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mauritius, and Egypt. In 2018, another US\$5 billion special fund for financing imports from Africa to China was pledged.

The pattern of making gradual commitments, piloting, and expanding specific goals is typical practice in China. Given this, China is likely to announce more financing and new initiatives during the upcoming FOCAC 2021.³²

The second key element is the **identification of broad priority areas of cooperation, which provide the backdrop for delivery of many of the high-level pledges** and are typically listed in the “Action Plan”.

Areas of cooperation under FOCAC action plans have expanded and become more articulated over time, and emphasis has often been adjusted accordingly. **Figure 1** lists a total 56 FOCAC cooperation areas

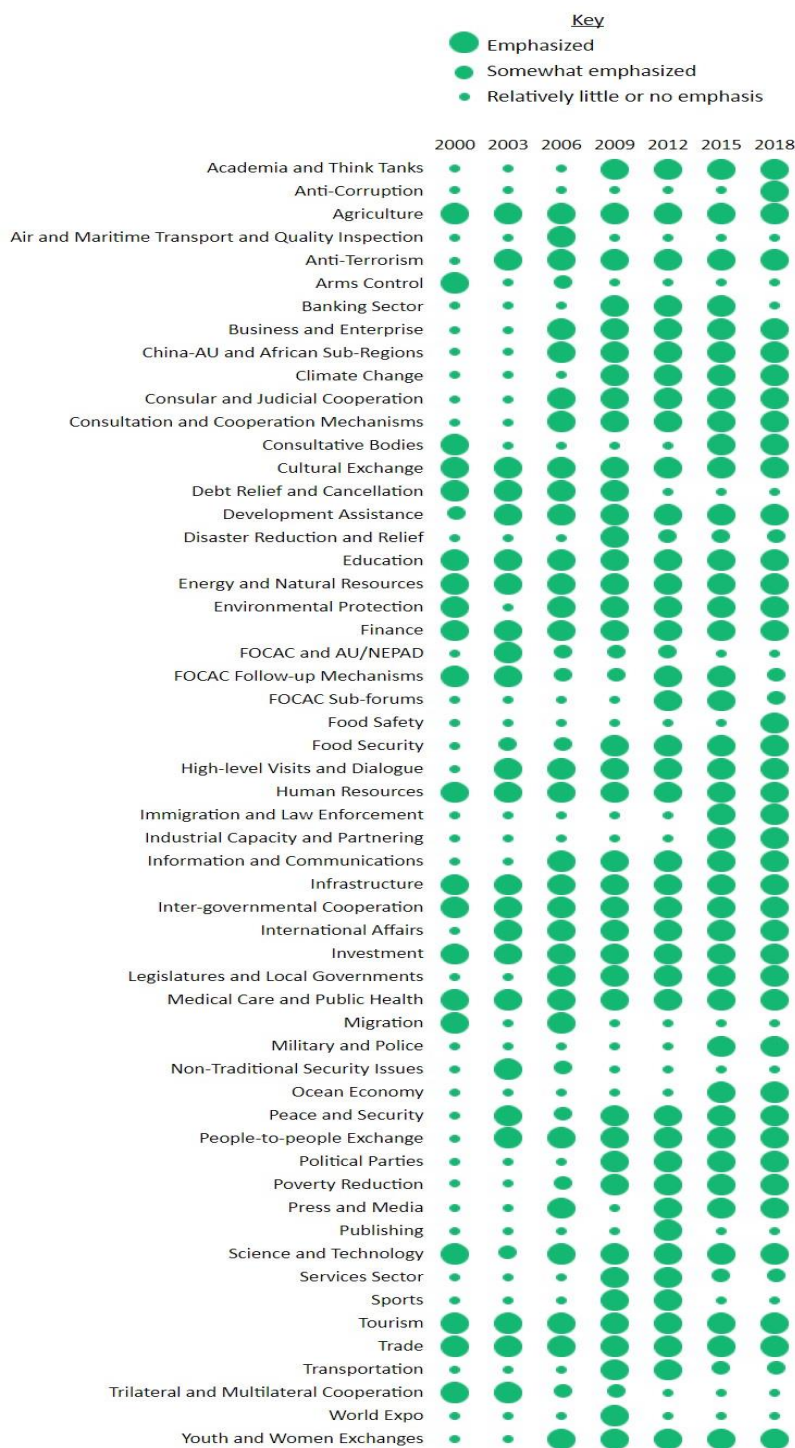
³⁰ http://www.focac.org/eng/lhyj_1/yjcg/P020181026382446204313.pdf

³¹ The two AU Member State exceptions are Eswatini and Saharawi Arab Republic.

³² Ibid

over the years in alphabetical order, and the scale of emphasis reflects the frequency, prominence, and detail of the different cooperation areas as they are noted in the FOCAC action plans.³³

Figure 1: FOCAC’s Cooperation Areas over Time



³³ http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zywj/

As **Figure 1** shows, areas of cooperation have expanded significantly since 2000, and some have remained constant features since 2000. Overall, based on this list of 56 cooperation areas, 20 issues were emphasised in 2000 – and by 2018, 40 issues were emphasised.

Some areas of cooperation have also changed considerably over the 18-year period.

For example, sports exchanges first appeared in the *Beijing Action Plan* in 2006 (two years before the Beijing Olympics). It was originally mentioned under the section “People-to-People, Youth and Women Exchanges,” but went on to constitute its own section in the action plans of the two following forums. Sports exchanges then became less pronounced FOCAC action plans but continued to appear under the “Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges” section in 2018. Other areas, such as climate change, food security, poverty reduction, and think tank exchange, began to receive more attention from 2009 and continued to do so.

In 2015, the inclusion of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and emphasis on training (e.g. via scholarships and study tours), as well as peace and security, took centre stage at FOCAC.³⁴ And in the 2018 Action Plan, topics including food safety, industrial cooperation, and ocean economy were incorporated into the action plan.

Specifically, in 2018, FOCAC included 44 specific commitments categorized under 8 major initiatives.³⁵ A key area of emphasis was trade, reflecting concerns raised by African countries prior to the conference. For instance, in an opening speech, South African President Ramaphosa’s said:

*“Much of what is exported from Africa are raw materials and primary products; much of what is imported from China are finished goods. We export to China what we extract from the earth; China exports to us what it makes in its factories. This obviously limits the ability of African countries to extract the full value for their abundant natural resources and to create work for their people. It is through platforms like FOCAC that we should work to balance the structure of trade between Africa and China.”*³⁶

China responded with new trade initiatives, as well as complimentary proposals for increasing industrialization and agricultural modernization as a means to speed up economic transformation and reduce poverty (**Table 1**).

Table 1: FOCAC’s 8 Major Initiatives and How they are conceived by China

FOCAC INITIATIVE		KEY ELEMENTS OF FOCUS BY CHINA
Industrial Initiative	Promotion	Increasing investment in Africa, formulating agricultural plans, providing agricultural assistance, improving agricultural technologies, fulfilling social responsibility, deepening financial cooperation.
Infrastructure Connectivity Initiative		Strengthen top-level design, Implementation of key projects, deepening of aviation cooperation, expanding financial channels.
Trade Initiative	Facilitation	Provide trade-promoting assistance incl. new expo and trade centers, including to expand exports to China from Africa,

³⁴ <https://developmentreimagined.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/focac-7-briefing-final.pdf>

³⁵ images.mofcom.gov.cn/www/201809/20180920082736333.pdf

³⁶ <https://www.tralac.org/news/article/13436-2018-forum-on-china-africa-cooperation-focac-remarks-by-president-cyril-ramaphosa.html>

		strengthen brand marketing, continue preferential trade arrangements for African LDCs.
	Green Development Actions	implement green projects, reinforce environmental cooperation, establish a bamboo center, raise awareness of environmental protection.
	Capacity Building	Share development experience, establish Luban Workshops, implement returnee's project ³⁷ , train talents, Support innovation and entrepreneurship.
	HealthCare Initiative	Build centers for disease control and prevention, upgrade friendship hospitals, strengthen healthcare cooperation, Free clinics and mobile medical services, Help women and children.
	People-To-People Exchange Initiative	Establish research institutes, conduct cultural and sports projects, strengthen cultural exchanges, deepen media cooperation, advance Chinese teaching, increase people-to-people exchanges.
	Peace and Security Initiative	Establishment of a China-Africa peace and security forum., Capacity enhancement in peacekeeping, more input in peace and security.

According to a press conference update by China's Ministry of Commerce, 85% of the above commitments were implemented by January 2021³⁸. However, this has not been verified by the African side, an issue we return to later in this report.

Based on the above analysis, numeric pledges/commitments and cooperation areas will likely expand during the upcoming FOCAC.

Before we turn to this, we review Chinese and African experiences with FOCAC mechanisms, with a view to understanding ways in which – if at all – FOCAC can be improved to deliver on the “why’s” for both China and African countries, including identifying which cooperation areas and issues may be most helpful to focus on for the next FOCAC, especially for post-COVID-19 recovery.

³⁷ In china this is referred to as the “Head Goose” project – whereby successful business or political leaders return to their hometowns/villages in leadership roles to support its transformation. For an example see: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2019-09-17/From-the-soil-How-one-village-cut-poverty-through-flowers--K3huhilEfS/index.html>

³⁸ <https://africachinareporting.co.za/2018/09/highlights-from-focac-2018/>

COMPARISONS – WHAT CAN BE LEARNT FROM CHINA’S OTHER FOCAC-LIKE MECHANISMS?

Besides FOCAC, China has six other similar “plurilateral” partnership platforms with countries and regions around the world, summarised in **Table 2** below, with the earliest commencement first (FOCAC itself).

Table 2: China’s plurilateral partnership platforms

China’s Partnerships	Year of Creation and Meeting Frequency	Number Non-China Participants	Major Announcements at the Most Recent Event
 <p>Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)</p>	<p>2000 Triennial</p> <p>Latest held in 2018³⁹</p>	<p>53 African countries and AU Commission</p>	<p>\$60 billion pledged: \$20 billion in new credit lines; \$15 billion in foreign aid as grants, interest-free loans or concessional loans; \$10 billion for a special fund for development financing; and \$5 billion for a special fund for financing imports from Africa. The remaining \$10 billion will come from Chinese companies</p>
 <p>Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)</p>	<p>2001 Annual</p> <p>2021⁴⁰</p>	<p>7 countries across Asia</p>	<p>\$31 million in in-kind assistance to the Taliban.</p>
 <p>Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-</p>	<p>2003, 2006, 2010, 2013, 2016⁴¹</p>	<p>8 Portuguese-speaking countries</p>	<p>Leverage the Silk Road Fund, the cooperation and development fund to get major cooperation projects started; facilitate its efforts to set up service platforms for business cooperation: and build well-functioning convention</p>

³⁹ <http://www.focac.org/eng/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/southasiasource/experts-react-2021-shanghai-cooperation-organisation-sco-summit-in-tajikistan/>

⁴¹ forumchinapl.org.mo – not held in 2021.

speaking Countries (Forum Macao)			centers for business cooperation, service centers for SMEs and goods distribution centers.
 China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF)	2004 Biennial 2020 ⁴²	21 Arab League countries ⁴³	Declaration on various issues including health and security cooperation, plan for six cooperation projects to succeed between 2020-2022 under the “execution plan”.
 China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development and Cooperation Forum (CPIC Forum)	2006, 2013, 2019 ⁴⁴	10 Pacific Island Countries	Signed a “Programme of Actions on Economic and Development Cooperation” with 8 broad measures in various sectors (e.g. tourism, infrastructure, trade, investment), and a 2020-2022 Action Plan on Agriculture Cooperation.
 Forum of China and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (China-CELAC Forum)	2015, 2018, 2021 ⁴⁵	33 Latin American and Caribbean countries	No cooperation plan published after 2021 forum, however a 2015-2019 cooperation plan included trade volume (US\$500bn) and FDI (US\$250bn) targets, specific funds such as on agriculture and scholarships and training targets, etc.

As the above table demonstrates, other forums do have fairly comprehensive coverage of areas of cooperation. However, FOCAC appears fairly unique because it was not only the first of the plurilateral forums, it also has the largest number of participants and when it comes to cooperation plans, it has specific financial targets and new instruments (many others do not – they are very general) and where there are such targets they are much larger than those for other forums.

That said, despite the specific commitments at FOCAC, the actual volume of Chinese investment in African remains relatively small in comparison with other regions. China’s foreign direct investment in Africa was

⁴² https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1795754.shtml

⁴³ <https://bricspolicycenter.org/en/forum-de-cooperacao-china-paises-arabes/>

⁴⁴ http://www.china.org.cn/world/2019-10/22/content_75326135.htm

⁴⁵ <http://www.chinacelacforum.org/eng/>

\$3.1 billion - 2.5 percent of China's global foreign direct investment in 2017 - the smallest among all continents. In comparison, Chinese companies' acquisition in Latin America in 2017 was \$18 billion. In terms of investment stock, Chinese investment in Latin America has surpassed \$200 billion by the end of 2017, double that of Chinese investment in Africa, which surpassed \$100 billion by the end of 2017.

In addition, some China-Africa cooperation does take place outside of the FOCAC mechanism. In particular, signed in October 2019, the Mauritius-China FTA is China's first Free Trade Agreement with an African nation, and was not specified under FOCAC.

Furthermore, there are some specific areas under these other plurilateral platforms that FOCAC does not currently cover. This includes library and information sciences (CASCF), population policy (CASCF), as well as a young political leader dialogue (China-CELAC Forum). These may be introduced in future FOCACs, especially if they align with African needs.

COMPARISONS - DO AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE OTHER FOCAC-LIKE MECHANISMS?

As Africa is not China's only partner, China is equally not Africa's only partner. **Table 3** below sets out a number of other plurilateral or "Africa Plus One" Summits (as they have come to be known), where Heads of State or other representatives of African countries and other individual countries/entities meet regularly. They are also set out in order of commencement.

Note that "Summits" where no Head of State from an African country and/or the partnership country have ever been present are excluded from this list.

Table 3: Africa's plurilateral platforms

Africa's Partnerships	Year of Creation & Meeting Frequency	Highest No. of African States Participating	Major Announcements at the Most Recent Event
France-Africa Summit	1973 Annual until 1990, now biennial	29 heads of state (May 2021)	Little specific to France – key announcement was a request to (international community to) re-allocate at least US\$100 billion of Special Drawing Rights to African countries.
Africa-Arab Summit	1977 Triennial since 2010	43 heads of state from BOTH Arab and African countries (2020) ⁴⁶	\$1bn in low-interest loans to African countries over a five-year period; and an annual award on one million dollars to Africa for research (2013) ⁴⁷
Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD)	1993 Every 5 years	42 African leaders + AU representative (2019)	Private investment worth US\$ 20 billion over the past three years (TICAD 2019)
African Union- EU Summit	2000 Triennial	Between 32 and 55 heads of state – all 55 countries represented + AU representative (2017)	Plan for 44 billion euros (\$51 billion) investment in Africa by 2020, joint statement on the migrant situation in Libya.

⁴⁶ <https://www.dw.com/en/africa-arab-summit-urges-economic-ties-and-counter-terrorism-cooperation/a-17242159>

⁴⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2013/11/19/arab-africa-summit-aims-to-promote-ties>

Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)	2000 Triennial	46 Heads of State + AU representative (2018)	US\$ 60 billion package of grant lines, investment, and loans for infrastructure, manufacturing, and SMEs, and more; exemption of Chinese government loans due by the end of 2018 for LDCs and heavily indebted African countries. (FOCAC 2018)
Korea-Africa Forum (KAF); Korea-Africa Forum on Economic Cooperation (KOAPEC); Korea Africa Forum on Industry Cooperation (KOAIFIC)	KAF: 2006, triennial; KOAPEC: 2006, biennial; KOAIFIC: 2008, annual	5 heads of state (2006)	Increase official development assistance to Africa; expand scholarship programs for African students. (Action Plan 2013-2015)
India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)	2008, 2011, 2015	41 heads of state & government (2015)	US\$ 10 billion concessional credit over the next five years; US\$ 600 million grant assistance including US\$ 100 million India-Africa Development Fund and US\$ 100 million India-Africa Health Fund; 50,000 scholarships over the next five years (Indian Prime Minister's Opening Speech)
Africa-Turkey Cooperation Summit	2008, 2014, (next to be held in December 2021)	7 Heads of State (2014)	Tariff-preferences and duty-free privileges to expand trade and investment from US\$30 billion in 2013 to US\$50 billion by 2019 (Joint Implementation Plan 2015 – 2019)
US-Africa Leaders' Summit	2014	50 heads of state & government (2014) ⁴⁸	US\$ 7 billion financing to promote American exports to and investment in Africa; US\$ 14 billion private sector investment in clean energy, aviation, banking and construction; US\$ 12 billion Power Africa initiative (White House Press Release)
German-African Business Summit	2015 biennial	-	The establishment of a German-Ghanaian Business Council, the establishment of a cooperation between Afrika-Verein (German-African Business Association) and Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC).

⁴⁸ <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/us-africa-leaders-summit>

Asia Africa ICT and Development Summit ⁴⁹	2018, annual (last held 2020)	Focus was on companies and individuals in the ICT sector, not national representation (2018)	Cooperation between Indian and African companies and innovators in the ICT sector.
EU-Africa Business Summit	2018 annual	-	Cooperation areas: policy, business, academia
Indonesia-Africa Forum	2018	-	US\$587 million worth of business deals in sectors of strategic industries, infrastructure, financing, mining, textile, aircraft maintenance and trade in commodities
Trade with Africa Business Summit	2018 Annual	Attended by government and private sector trade professionals (African Union, Afreximbank, UNECA, World Bank)	Focus on doing business across borders with Africa; caters to small businesses as well as governments. US government keynote on Prosper Africa - highlighting available resources, programs and resources to boost US -Africa trade.
Russia-Africa Summit	2019	-39 African Heads of State	Focus on trade and investment. AU Commission has signed an MoU of cooperation to promote mutually beneficial cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Commission in multiple fields.
UK-Africa Investment Summit	2020	15 African Heads of State and leadership	UK pledged \$1.9 billion worth of projects, and signed infrastructure deals with Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda and the AfDB. UK PM promised to review immigration rules for Africans seeking visas.
Brazil Africa Forum	2020 Annual	Brazil, African and international organisation leadership representatives	Brazil and African cooperation on trade and economy. 2020 focus on pandemic opportunities.

⁴⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0PxKapJ52w>

2021 will have a focus on natural resources and environmental sustainability (November).			
Global Business Forum Africa	2021	Representatives from 55+ countries (October 2021)	Bilateral trade between UAE and African countries; focus on AfCFTA.
U.S.-Africa Business Summit	2021	6 Heads of State (July 2021)	<p>Biden administration has requested \$80 million in additional funding to jumpstart the Prosper Africa Build Together Campaign.</p> <p>Discussed African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), implementation of the AfCFTA and U.S. legislation and policies to promote greater U.S.-Africa trade and investment.</p> <p>Pfizer Biopharmaceutical Group President Angela Hwang, announced partnership with the South African Biovac Institute to manufacture and distribute the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine within the AU – the first such arrangement for African production of the mRNA COVID vaccine⁵⁰.</p>
France-Africa Youth Summit	2021	Youth Representatives (CSOs) from 12 countries	No major announcements made.

Analysis of this list of plurilateral arrangements reveals that FOCAC is similar to other “Africa Plus One” arrangements in several ways, and unique in others.

First, FOCAC covers a variety of aspects of engagement with African countries such as grant lines, investment, and loans for infrastructure, manufacturing, and SMEs. There are some other summits that also attempt to do so, in particular the Turkey-Africa Summit, the US-Africa Summit in 2014, however, many others have a more specific focus or a changing “theme” – for example the AU-EU summits.

Second, FOCAC has generated some of the largest ever financial (and other) commitments to African countries on the part of a single country, but other financial (and other) commitments have been made to African countries in these forums.

Third, FOCAC’s non-African participants are very limited. For instance, the UN has been invited to observe FOCAC only since 2006. From 2012 onwards, the African Union was invited to observe and then participate in FOCAC. This limitation extends also to various specific forums under FOCAC – such as those focused

⁵⁰ <https://www.africanews.com/2021/08/11/big-announcements-at-the-13th-u-s-africa-business-summit/>

on the private sector or poverty reduction. In contrast, Japan’s TICAD has had UN inputs from the very beginning as has the AU-EU summit which for instance had the UN representative from the 2000 inaugural summit onwards. There are pros and cons to different approaches – in particular in terms of setting African priorities

Fourth, FOCAC is highly government-driven, while other forums are designed to focus on particular non-governmental stakeholders, for example business leaders or youth leaders, with a few selected Heads of State joining (if any) and some summits even include non-governmental participants. As with non-African participants, there are pros and cons to different approaches – for instance, the role of civil society in the AU-EU Summit has been contested⁵¹.

Fifth, and last but not least, FOCAC has a specific monitoring and preparation mechanism, which many other forums do not appear to have, except perhaps the AU-EU and TICAD forums. FOCAC’s formal monitoring mechanism however is likely the most complex. It currently consists of three key parts: an internal Chinese Follow-up Committee comprised of 36 agencies and one secretariat of 6 key ministries, established since 2001 and Co-chaired by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce⁵²; a Coordinators’ Meeting (since 2016) and Follow-up Meetings (since 2016). Coordinators’ Meetings are held one year after the Ministerial Conference, where ministerial level officials of the competent departments of China and African countries gather to discuss what has been done and what still needs action. Then, every two years, a meeting between the Chinese Follow-up Committee and African Diplomatic Corps in China is convened to evaluate the action plan progress.

	China	Africa	When
Coordinators’ Meeting	Ministerial level officials	Ministerial level officials	One year after the Summit
Follow-up Meeting	Chinese Committee	Follow-up African Diplomatic Corps in China	Every two years

Overall, these five factors make FOCAC a very important means for Africa to drive forward the partnership with China, although it can continue to be improved, drawing the best of experience from other partnerships as well.

But is there really a need for such improvement? We now turn to reviewing the impact of FOCAC to date, based on African development frameworks and using agriculture and health as case studies to examine this question.

⁵¹ <https://concordeurope.org/2017/11/30/civil-society-africa-europe-summit/>

⁵² <http://za.china-embassy.org/chn/znjl/t1439365.htm>

FOCAC'S IMPACT TO DATE – TWO CASE STUDIES

As has been explained in this report, the eight FOCAC initiatives agreed in 2018 focused on key issues of importance to African countries. These include poverty reduction, agriculture and health. The effectiveness of FOCAC as a framework for realizing these goals depends on the processes that both China and Africa undertake to convert the FOCAC's broader goals into implementable programmes. This section addresses the impact of China - African development cooperation.

This section thus explores the typology of cooperation between China and Africa under FOCAC, using health and agriculture as case studies. Before delving into this, however, it is important to recall African visions and benchmarks for progress.

The African Union's Development Framework

The African Union (AU) has several aspirations for achieving growth and prosperity for African countries, manifested through the AU's flagship development project, better known as Agenda 2063⁵³. Among these aspirations is African prosperity based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, which is also linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁵⁴

The AU's Agenda 2063 also has 15 key programmes and initiatives (known as flagship projects) by which the AU aims to accelerate Africa's economic growth and development as well as promote its common identity. These initiatives cover infrastructure, education, science, technology, arts and culture as well as peace and security. The initiatives are:

1. An integrated High-Speed Train Network;
2. Formulation of an African Commodities Strategy;
3. Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
4. The African Passport and Free Movement of People;
5. Silencing the Guns By 2020;
6. Implementation of the Grand Inga Dam Project (for 40-70GW of hydropower)
7. Establishment of A Single African Air-Transport Market (SAATM);
8. Establishment Of An Annual African Economic Forum;
9. Establishment of the African Financial Institutions;
10. The Pan-African E-Network;
11. Africa Outer Space Strategy;
12. An African Virtual and E-University;
13. Cyber Security;
14. Great African Museum; and
15. Encyclopaedia Africana.⁵⁵

⁵³ See AU's Agenda 2063 available at <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

⁵⁴ See Development Reimagined's 2021 Report "From China-Africa to Africa-China: A Blueprint for a Green and Inclusive Continent-wide Africa Strategy Towards China" available at <https://developmentreimagined.com/portfolio-posts/china-africa-to-africa-china/>



⁵⁵ <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/flagship-projects>.

Further, the AU has Six Continental Frameworks which primarily aim at addressing the development of key sectors such as agriculture, trade, transport, energy and mining in Africa. These frameworks are:















1. Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP);
2. the Programme for Infrastructural Development in Africa (PIDA);
3. the African Mining Vision (AMV);
4. Science Technology Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA);
5. Boosting Intra African Trade (BIAT), and
6. Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA)⁵⁶.




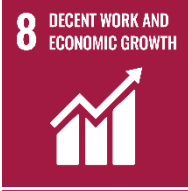







The above AU Projects and Frameworks are expected to guide African sub-regional and national government’s priorities with regards to their engagement with development partners, including China and through FOCAC. They also link clearly to the UN SDGs – as shown in **Table 4** below.

Table 4: Links between AU Agenda 2063 Frameworks, Flagship Projects, and the SDGs

AFRICAN UNION CONTINENTAL FRAMEWORKS	ASSOCIATED AFRICAN UNION AGENDA 2063 FLAGSHIP PROJECTS	ASSOCIATED SDGS
<p>Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP)</p> <p>Aims to: Eliminate hunger and reduce poverty by raising economic growth through agriculture-led development.</p>	<p>Formulation of an African Commodities Strategy</p> <p>Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)</p> <p>The Pan-African E-Network</p>	
<p>The Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA)</p> <p>Aims to: Promote socio-economic development and poverty reduction in Africa through improved access to integrated regional and continental infrastructure networks and services.</p>	<p>Integrated High Speed Train Network, Implementation of the Grand Inga Dam Project</p> <p>Establishment Of a Single African Air-Transport Market (SAATM)</p> <p>The Pan-African E-Network</p>	<p>Direct associations:</p>  <p>Indirect associations:</p>

⁵⁶ <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/continental-frameworks>

		   
<p>The African Mining Vision (AMV) 2009-2050</p> <p>Aims at:</p> <p>Vision of an African mining sector that shifts away from the FDI-dependent and resource rent-centered strategy, including improved environmental management;</p> <p>Tailor-making and implementing reform programs at country level known as Country Mining Visions in accordance with national policies.</p>	<p>Formulation of an African Commodities Strategy</p> <p>Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)</p> <p>Silencing the Guns</p> <p>Establishment Of An Annual African Economic Forum</p>	<p>Direct associations:</p>    <p>Indirect associations:</p>   
<p>Science Technology Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA)</p> <p>Aims at:</p> <p>Building and/or upgrading research infrastructures;</p> <p>Enhancing professional and technical competencies;</p> <p>Promoting entrepreneurship and innovation; and</p>	<p>Africa Outer Space Strategy</p> <p>An African Virtual and E-University</p> <p>Cyber Security</p> <p>The Pan-African E-Network</p> <p>Encyclopaedia Africana</p> <p>Great African Museum</p> <p>The African Passport and Free Movement of People</p>	   

<p>Providing an enabling environment for STI development in the African continent.</p>		  
<p>Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT)</p> <p>It has 7 specific “clusters” of action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trade Facilitation; 2. Trade Policy (under which AfCFTA and other Regional trade arrangements fall); 3. Productive capacities; 4. Trade-related Infrastructure; 5. Trade Finance; 6. Trade Information; and 7. Factor Market integration (including the free flow of labor across the continent). 	<p>Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)</p> <p>Formulation of an African Commodities Strategy</p> <p>The African Passport and Free Movement of People</p> <p>Establishment Of An Annual African Economic Forum</p> <p>The Pan-African E-Network</p>	   
<p>Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA)</p> <p>The strategy aims to mobilise both financial and nonfinancial resources and enhance Africa’s industrial performance.</p>	<p>Integrated High Speed Train Network, Implementation of the Grand Inga Dam Project</p> <p>Establishment Of a Single African Air-Transport Market (SAATM)</p> <p>The Pan-African E-Network</p> <p>The African Passport and Free Movement of People</p> <p>Establishment Of An Annual African Economic Forum</p> <p>Establishment of the African Financial Institutions</p>	   

Research by Development Reimagined has analysed the contribution China has made to the realization of the AU's Continental Frameworks and revealed that only 2 out of the 6 frameworks were specifically mentioned in FOCAC 2018 Action Plan. These are the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) and Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT).

Nevertheless, research also reveals that previous China-Africa cooperation has contributed in eight specific ways to the achievement of aspirations in Agenda 2063, as seen in **Box 1** below⁵⁷. It is important to note that these are set out as **impacts** and are not sector specific (we explore these for agriculture and health in further below). While inputs are significantly more detailed and lengthier, the question is how the inputs translate into impact.

⁵⁷ See Development Reimagined(2021), From China-Africa to Africa Chine: A Blueprint for a Green and Inclusive Continent Wide Africa Strategy Towards China, available online at <https://www.africaunconstrained.com/blueprintforanfricachinastrategy/>

Box 1: Eight Major Impacts to date of FOCAC cooperation from 2000 as they relate to Agenda 2063 goals

1. China has been Africa's largest bilateral trading partner since 2008. China is the largest single source of imports for 23 African countries, and in 2020 was the largest export destination for a fairly diverse set of 8 African countries (specifically in alphabetical order – Angola, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mauritania, Namibia, Sierra Leone, and South Africa). Overall, current exports from Africa to China have become as important in value terms as current intra-Africa exports to African countries. However, the overall trade balance for China-Africa has deteriorated since 2000 - except for 2008 and 2012 where a small trade surplus was recorded. Hence, only 15 African countries have a trade surplus with China. Overall, despite growth, Africa remains a small but growing proportion of China's imports at around 4%.
2. Africa's exports to China in relation to Africa's exports to the world have been diversifying over time – since 2000 there was no significant increase in the top 20 exports from Africa to China – such as petroleum oil products, copper and other base metals and wood - in relation to total exports, while, since 2018, of the top 30 fastest growing and highest-value exported products from Africa to China, two thirds have been non-mineral, non-oil-related – for example agricultural products – bovine products, oil seeds, nuts, coffee, cocoa paste – plus some textiles and small electronic products. That said, overall, non-mineral, non-oil related products still occupy the bottom three in Africa's top ten exports to China (agricultural products).
3. Since 2000, Chinese firms have participated in construction of various infrastructure projects in Africa – either financed by African governments, multilateral development banks, or Chinese development banks – the latter which has been facilitated in particular by financing commitments announced at FOCAC. In total, through these means, It is estimated that Chinese construction firms have been associated with building 10,000km of roads in Africa – equivalent to just under a fifth (20%) of the length of the nine highways in the Trans-African Highway network, or just larger than the length of Liberia's entire road network. Similarly, it is also estimated that Chinese construction firms have been associated with building 6,000km of railways in Africa - which is equivalent to just under 10% of Africa's current rail network, or just under a third of South Africa's entire rail network.
4. FDI from China to Africa has risen on average by 15% per year since 2000, although annual flows have been fairly volatile, creating jobs and increasing incomes. However, construction and mining sectors remain the dominant investment destinations. Between 2005-2017, Chinese firms supplied roughly US\$58 billion to the mining and mineral extraction industries on the continent (which in turn represented a third of Chinese FDI in global mining operations between 2005-2007). Manufacturing as a component of FDI to Africa has risen in absolute terms, but it remains relatively low in proportion to all FDI at 12%. A 2017 study by McKinsey revealed that there are more than 10,000 Chinese-owned companies operating in Africa, accounting for around 12% of Africa's industrial production. Factories have been established in diverse sectors such as agriculture (e.g. a processing centre in Cabo Verde, corn flour production plant in Zambia, etc), health (e.g. in Mali and Ethiopia), as well as labour-intensive sectors such as textiles and apparel (e.g. in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Senegal).
5. Tourism from China to Africa has grown fast over recent years - average of more than 40% per year. African countries accounted for 30% of the top ten preferred destinations for Chinese outbound tourists before the COVID19 outbreak. However, the starting point was very low. Africa hosted 585,211 Chinese tourists in 2018, accounting for just 1.4% of China's tourists worldwide.
6. Between 2011 to 2016, the number of African students studying in China increased at an average rate of 24%. By 2017, students from 25 African countries now choose China as their top destination for studies abroad, as opposed to any other country. That is up from 10 African countries in 2011, and in 2018, with over 80,000 African students, China became the second leading destination for Africans studying abroad after France.
7. Estimates of Chinese people living in Africa and African people living in China are unclear, however it is likely that over the 20-year period numbers have grown, especially of Chinese people living in Africa due

to regular flows of (temporary) Chinese workers to African countries- peaking at over 260,000 in 2015, though such flows have declined since for various African policy, Chinese policy and external reasons⁵⁸.

8. A fairly new means of engagement has been in e-commerce, linked to a number of BIAT clusters. For example, Rwanda and Ethiopia have expressed interest in Alibaba's electronic world trading platform (eWTP), which aims to integrate digital payment, e-trading, and digital entrepreneurship.

Based on this analysis, while these are notable and important impacts, in many cases more significant than achieved with other development partners (especially trade and infrastructure), they could be accelerated and scaled up with further targeted efforts, substantively by more actively linking China's cooperation with the Agenda 2063's projects and frameworks and African SDGs, and in process terms involving African partners in the design and implementation of the inputs going forwards⁵⁹.

However, it is also possible to examine these questions through case studies, for example by exploring the current China-Africa cooperation in agriculture and health sectors with a view to drawing lessons that can be useful in other areas. Choosing agriculture and health in no way suggests that they are the perfect or worst prototypes of how China-Africa cooperation should be designed. Rather, and given their importance to development, they can offer vital lessons that can be replicated in other sectors – both in terms of substance as well as in terms of processes involved.

The Case Study of China- Africa Cooperation on Agriculture – What Impact?

Literature suggests that agriculture played a central role in China's own economic development and sharing these experiences has been a consistent priority in China's engagements in Africa. Further, agriculture cooperation has focused on technocratic and capacity building interventions, thus deliberately steering clear of social and political issues.⁶⁰ FAO also holds the view that that Chinese science and agriculture have much to offer to other developing countries, since intensive small-scale agriculture has been practised in China for centuries, and points out that China repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to helping other developing countries to improve their food security⁶¹. Previous research has also concluded that since the launching of China's Going Out policy and joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO), China has promoted itself as an active member of the global community, encouraging agricultural trade and overseas direct investments.⁶²

From historical accounts, China and Africa have actively collaborated on agriculture for 60 years. China started by providing grants and loans, then cooperation gradually expanded to other activities, namely trade and investment. As regards FOCAC, several input-based commitments on agriculture ranging from modernization to funding support and market entry to China since 2003 have been initiated. Commitments from the two most recent summits are summarised in **Table 5** below⁶³.

⁵⁸ For more on this topic see: <https://developmentreimagined.com/2020/10/08/chinese-workers-in-africa-whats-the-real-story/>

⁵⁹ <https://developmentreimagined.com/portfolio-posts/china-africa-to-africa-china/>

⁶⁰ See Buckley, L. (2013). Chinese Agriculture Development Cooperation in Africa: Narratives and Politics. IDS Bulletin, 44.4

⁶¹ <https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/17603IIED.pdf>

⁶² Supra note 55.

⁶³ See <https://www.ifpri.org/blog/ifpri-report-how-china-and-africa-can-promote-cooperation-agricultural-modernization>

Table 5: FOCAC'S Major Commitments on Agriculture in 2015 and 2018

YEAR & FOCAC	COMMITMENT
<p>2015, 6th Ministerial Conference (Johannesburg Summit)</p>	<p>Johannesburg Action Plan(2016-2018):</p> <p>Agriculture modernization in Africa by strengthening China-Africa agricultural cooperation.</p> <p>Strengthen cooperation in the fields of agricultural policy consultation, planning and design, and support the implementation of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) through assisting to build agriculture technology demonstration centres, sending professionals for technical cooperation, and training agricultural technicians.</p> <p>China sending 30 teams of senior agriculture experts and teachers to provide vocational education to African countries, as well as to increase the number of African personnel trained in agro-technology and administration in China.</p> <p>Developing water conservancy and irrigation projects, implement the project of "Agriculture Leads to Prosperity" in 100 African villages.</p> <p>Agricultural project designing, financing and management under the framework of the CAADP, as implemented through the AU and NEPAD, and offer support to feasibility studies on agricultural infrastructure construction.</p> <p>Establishing "10+10" cooperative mechanism among China-Africa agro-science research institutions.</p> <p>Technical support in grain planting, storage, sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, animal husbandry, agro-processing capacity, forestry, and fisheries.</p> <p>Exchanges on agricultural policies, agricultural infrastructure improvement, development of systems of agricultural support services, modern agricultural development capacity building, and investment in the complete value chain of agriculture.</p>
<p>2018, 7th Ministerial Conference) (Beijing Summit)</p>	<p>Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)</p> <p>Implementing the China-Africa agricultural modernization plan</p> <p>Improve Africa's ability to ensure food security, invest in testing and adaptation of machines to African conditions, establish African dealerships capable of after-sale support and service</p> <p>Supporting Africa countries township and village industries' development, promote inclusive growth and shared prosperity and support Africa in achieving general food security by 2030.</p> <p>Providing RMB 1 billion of emergency humanitarian food assistance to African countries affected by natural disasters,</p> <p>Sending 500 senior agriculture experts to Africa, and train entrepreneurs in agri-business</p> <p>Supporting Africa in enhancing productive capacity in agriculture which comprises promotion of high-tech food production and agro-processing.</p> <p>Capacity building, technology transfer through exchange of scientists and development of new research thrusts in the crops, including molecular detection and identification of plant diseases, pest risk analysis, seed health testing/certification, and management of quarantine containment facilities for high-risk materials with biosecurity levels.</p> <p>Establish a China-Africa Research Center for the Development of Green Agriculture.</p> <p>Cooperation with cotton-producing African countries to help establish high quality standards and enhance their capacity for industrial planning, production, processing, storage, transportation and trade.</p>

The need for entrenching cooperation between China and Africa in this area – based on China’s own agricultural success – is a strong theme within both literature and policy narratives. But what is the African vision for agricultural development, to which Chinese support can and should dock into?

Africa’s Existing Agricultural Plans

The current vision for agricultural development of the African continent is expressed by the AU through the CAADP. CAADP involves eliminating hunger and reducing poverty by raising economic growth through different priority sectors namely Sustainable Land and Water Management, Market Access, Food Supply and Hunger and Agricultural Research. Further, the realisation of CAADP is invariably linked with three SDGs that is SDG1 (No poverty) SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) as well as SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing).⁶⁴

According to the AU, CAADP’s quantifiable targets include the allocation of at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture and rural development by African governments and achieving agricultural growth rates of at least 6% per annum.

How can China-Africa cooperation better link to African agricultural development needs?

China’s agricultural cooperation is (rightly) based on a policy of non-interference, which means it cannot require or push the continent to use or meet the CAADP quantifiable targets. However, using CAADP – and therefore Agenda 2063 – can help China strengthen its support to African countries in the following ways:

- 1) **To target assistance** – for example achievement against CAADP can be used as a means for China to target countries that need the most support (e.g. countries falling behind on targets) or that have the most potential (meeting or going beyond targets). These countries could be targeted for certain inputs such as agricultural demonstration centers, food security support, etc;
- 2) **To target particular sectors or issues** – for example CAADP sets out a number of priority sectors – China can use these to design or determine priority areas and technologies for cooperation – e.g. irrigation technology or certain seeds, etc. Another example is productivity. According to Africa Transformation Report 2017, a key to achieving agricultural transformation on the continent is raising productivity levels on African farms. Africa lags behind the rest of the world in both labour and land productivity in agriculture.⁶⁵ Finding means to support productivity increases or targeting existing instruments towards this can be helpful.
- 3) **To expand cooperation mechanisms to the entire continent** – for example, market access is a key theme in CAADP – linking to trade ambitions of the African continent. China’s Duty-Free Quota Free Scheme (DFQF) from 2010 also Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Agreements already underline China’s trade in agricultural products. However, the DFQF scheme is limited to LDCs for 97% of tariff lines⁶⁶, while numerous non-tariff barriers exist, and SPS agreements so far have only been signed by 11 African countries⁶⁷, for a limited number of products. The CAADP ambitions can be used as a means to extend these arrangements to all African countries and/or sub-regions that have similar agricultural products and/or existing trade arrangements.
- 4) **To work with African counterparts to design new themes or cooperation modes** – for instance market access as an area of CAADP can be used by China to, with African counterparts, explore

⁶⁴ Supra note 2

⁶⁵ <https://acetforafrica.org/publications/african-transformation-report-2017/african-transformation-report-2017/>

⁶⁶ See: <https://ictsd.iisd.org/bridges-news/bridges-africa/news/duty-free-quota-free-market-access-what%E2%80%99s-in-it-for-african-lDCs>

⁶⁷ These countries are Zimbabwe, Morocco, Namibia, South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia, Seychelles, Botswana, Rwanda and Tanzania.

and design new instruments for cooperation. For example, agreements on Geographical Indications between China and the African continent can serve to increase the incentives for African farmers to raise production and sell their products to China. Or, based on the food supply component of CAADP, China can support African countries in using and designing e-commerce to enhance food supply and reduce poverty, as has been done for rural e-commerce in China.

- 5) **To focus on long-term sustainability of cooperation** – for instance, importing vast quantities of raw agricultural products to China from African countries can be helpful in the short-term, but ultimately African countries also need to be able to process the goods and add value at home, especially to create jobs. CAADP and the broader Agenda 2063 goals can help avoid exacerbating (trade) imbalances.

The Case Study of China – Africa Cooperation on Health – What Impact?

China has achieved great improvements in health through a series of health reforms over the past few decades, starting with people-based health promotion programs to share basic knowledge about healthcare, a focus on improving the medical industry from 1978, including promoting Traditional Chinese Medicine, and creating a basic medical healthcare insurance system for all citizens as a public good from 2009 which continues to be improved. Development in the health sector has brought tangible health benefits to Chinese people, with life expectancy increasing from 67.9 years in 1981 to 76.5 years in 2016⁶⁸, maternal mortality decreasing from 88.9/100,000 in 1990 to 19.9/100,000 in 2016, and infant mortality decreasing from 34.7 per thousand in 1981 to 7.5 per thousand in 2016.⁶⁹ Various epidemic diseases have been eliminated in China, including malaria when China was certified malaria-free by WHO in June 2021. The population's major health indicators are generally better than the average of middle- and high-income countries with the UN Millennium Development Goals achieved ahead of schedule. At the same time, government budgets on health spending have increased dramatically, from 70.952 billion yuan in 2000 to 155.1730 billion yuan in 2017.⁷⁰ From 2000-2017, government health expenditures rose on average by 20% each year⁷¹.

At the same time as working on its own healthcare, China began providing medical support to a range of African countries in the 1960s. For instance, in 1963 China sent its first medical team to Algeria. Since then, Hubei province has been in charge of dispatching of medical teams to Algeria. By 2006, Hubei had sent more than 3,000 medical personnel to Algeria as well as to Lesotho.⁷² The first Ministerial Forum on China-Africa Health Development in 2013 was timed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first CMT sent to Algeria.⁷³

Cooperation has taken other forms as well and covered different countries over the years. In particular, China's 2006 "Africa Policy" indicates that China would continue to send medical teams and provide medicines and medical materials to African countries and help them establish and improve medical facilities and train medical personnel. For instance, so far 26 African countries have had support from China for anti-Malaria medication, though the scale of this support is unclear⁷⁴.

⁶⁸ State Council of China. (2017) Development of China's Public Health as an Essential Element of Human Rights

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ National Bureau of Statistics of China. China Statics Year Book 2018.

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Li, Anshan. (2011). Chinese medical cooperation in Africa: With special emphasis on the medical teams and anti-malaria campaign.

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ These 26 countries are: Liberia, Chad, Senegal, Burundi, Uganda, Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Togo, Mali, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Equatorial Guinea, Zambia, Comoros, Madagascar, Sudan, Central African Republic, Ghana, Angola,

Further, it also commits to increase exchanges and cooperation with African countries in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS and malaria and other diseases, research and application of traditional medicine and mechanisms for public health emergencies.⁷⁵

Most recently for COVID19, since March 2020, China dispatched medical experts to 15 African countries. Also in 2020, a total 5.4 million masks, 1.08 million kits, 40,000 sets of protective clothing and 60,000 masks were delivered by Ma Yun Foundation and Alibaba Foundation to 54 countries. 46 Chinese medical teams in Africa also provided trainings, conferences and workshops for local workers to fight the pandemic. While China did not rely on COVAX for its internal vaccine distribution, China has donated vaccines through COVAX, and started to export and donate vaccines to African countries since February 2021, which has had the effect of ensuring a broader distribution of global vaccine resources in African countries than otherwise. By August 2021, China donated more than 6 million doses of vaccines to 36 African countries⁷⁶ and by then 42% of the vaccine secured in Africa (purchased and donated) are from Chinese manufacturers.⁷⁷

This support is all in line with previous FOCAC programs, which have established several input-based commitments on health, starting with a development fund and traditional medicine. Commitments from the two most recent summits are summarised in **Table 6** below⁷⁸.

Table 6: Timeline of FOCAC'S Major Commitments on Health Cooperation in 2015 and 2018

YEAR	FOCAC	COMMITMENTS
2015	6 th Ministerial Conference (Johannesburg Summit)	<p><i>Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018)</i>⁷⁹</p> <p>Assisting Africa to develop public health systems and policies, help African countries to improve the public health, surveillance, epidemiological and prevention systems, strengthen prevention and treatment of malaria and other common infectious diseases.</p> <p>Enhancing the assistance in maternal and child health, reproductive health and other major public health fields in Africa, support cooperation between 20 hospitals of China and Africa from each side on demonstration projects.</p> <p>Upgrading hospital departments, and will continue to train doctors, nurses, public health workers and administrative personnel for African countries.</p> <p>Supporting the building of an African Union Disease Control Centre and regional medical research centres, reinforce laboratory and diagnostic capacities.</p> <p>Sending medical teams to Africa, including short-term medical teams consisted of clinical experts to African countries.</p>

Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. List derived from Li, Anshan. (2011). Chinese medical cooperation in Africa: With special emphasis on the medical teams and anti-malaria campaign.

⁷⁵ See Lin, Shuang & Gao, Liangmin & Reyes, Melissa & Cheng, Feng & Kaufman, Joan & El-Sadr, Wafaa. (2016). China's health assistance to Africa: Opportunism or altruism?. *Globalization and Health*. 12. 10.1186/s12992-016-0217-1.

⁷⁶ <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1672454935522701395&wfr=spider&for=pc>

⁷⁷ <https://developmentreimagined.com/2021/08/20/halfracancitizenscouldhavebeenprotected/>

⁷⁸ See <https://www.ifpri.org/blog/ifpri-report-how-china-and-africa-can-promote-cooperation-agricultural-modernization>

⁷⁹ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1323159.shtml

		<p>Supporting the investment by Chinese medical and health care enterprises in Africa, encourage Chinese medical institutions and enterprises to jointly operate hospitals and produce medicines in Africa, improve health information systems.</p> <p>Strengthening high-level exchanges in health, build an institutionalized high-level dialogue between China and Africa and agree to incorporate the Ministerial Forum on China-Africa Health Cooperation as an official sub-forum under the framework of FOCAC.</p>
		<p><i>Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)</i></p> <p>Scaling up medical assistance to African countries and will carry out exchange and information cooperation on public health in order to improve the latter's health situation.</p> <p>Supporting Africa in improving its medical and health service and hospital management to provide better services to the African people.</p> <p>Upgrading 50 medical and health aid programs for Africa, particularly flagship projects such as the headquarters of the African Center for Disease Control and Prevention and China-Africa Friendship Hospitals.</p> <p>Carrying out anti-malaria projects with African countries, in support of the Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB and Eliminate Malaria in Africa by 2030.</p> <p>Strengthening quarantine cooperation bilaterally or through the African Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Regional Collaboration Centers (RCCs).</p> <p>Assisting Africa to strengthen health systems and policies towards achievement of universal health coverage.</p>

The need to entrench cooperation between China and Africa in health is seen as fundamental by China. While improving the basic medical and health conditions of African people, the health projects help establish a positive image of China in Africa, create markets for China's exports of medical and health equipment and medicines. Indeed, health is seen as a “breakthrough” form of cooperation beyond direct economic engagement⁸⁰. Not only this, over time, as Chinese firms scale up operations in African countries, it is likely that health outcomes of local employees will become fundamental concerns. From the African perspective, as **Table 6** demonstrates, it is not unusual for African countries to pursue health cooperation with development partners.

But what is the African vision for health progress, to which Chinese support can and should dock into?

⁸⁰ 翟曹敏. 中国对非洲医疗卫生援助研究. (Doctoral dissertation, 上海师范大学).

Africa's Existing Health Sector Development Plans

Healthcare systems in some African countries have been ranked amongst the worst in the world. For instance, in a 2018 WHO index measuring whether countries provide all the possible health and related services that their population needs, within Africa Algeria scored highest at 70 percent – against an average for the entire region of 48 percent⁸¹.

Much of this is a result of insufficient, inconsistent investment in the sector not only by African governments but also by development partners. However, while the African response to Covid-19 has been well coordinated and robust, nevertheless, in particular due to its extended nature and repeated waves globally, Covid-19 has weakened health systems further. Essential finance is also now being deployed by most countries towards acquisition of vaccines, which will also limit progress.

The AU's STISA is about centring science, technology and innovation in Africa's socio-economic growth and development and is further concerned with the impact the sciences can have across critical sectors such as agriculture, energy, environment, health, infrastructure development, mining, security and water among others. STISA prioritizes: eradication of hunger and achieving food security; prevention and control of diseases communication (physical and intellectual mobility); protection of our space; living together in peace & harmony to build the society; and wealth creation.⁸²

Tambo *et al* in their research on China- Africa health cooperation have called for strengthening of this kind of cooperation:

“Strengthening the China-Africa health development agenda towards collective commitment and investment in quality care delivery, effective programs coverage and efficiency, preparedness and emergency response are needed in transforming African health information systems, and local health governance structures and management in emerging epidemics”⁸³

Capacity building in the production of vaccines and medicines is one of the ways of delivering on this ambition, and can provide a helpful template for the future. For instance, as part of its COVID-19 response, Morocco has signed a deal with China to start using the established facilities of a Moroccan pharmaceutical firm to make 5 million doses a month of Sinopharm vaccines.⁸⁴ Further, in July 2021 Egypt managed to produce the first 300,000 doses of the Chinese vaccine through the Egyptian Holding Company for Biological Products and Vaccines (VACSERA)⁸⁵

How can China-Africa cooperation better link to African health sector needs?

China's health cooperation with African countries is (rightly) based on a policy of non-interference, which means it cannot require or push the continent to reform their health sectors and/or invest specific amounts of finance into the sector. However, using the STISA – and therefore Agenda 2063 – as a guide can help China strengthen its support to African countries in the following ways:

⁸¹ <https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/State%20of%20health%20in%20the%20African%20Region.pdf>

⁸² <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/continental-frameworks>

⁸³ See Tambo, E., Ugwu, C. E., Guan, Y., Wei, D., Xiao-Ning, & Xiao-Nong, Z. (2016). China-Africa Health Development Initiatives: Benefits and Implications for Shaping Innovative and Evidence-informed National Health Policies and Programs in Sub-Saharan African Countries. *International Journal of MCH and AIDS*, 5(2), 119–133. <https://doi.org/10.21106/ijma.100>

⁸⁴ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202107/1227990.shtml>

⁸⁵ <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/105580/WHO-congratulates-Egypt-on-producing-Sinovac-vaccine-doses>

1. **To target assistance** – for example achievement against STISA can be used as a means for China to target countries that need the most support (e.g. countries falling behind on epidemic control) or that have the most potential (e.g. countries progressing on local research and development (R&D), etc). The former countries could be targeted for basic support such as medical teams or donations (e.g. vaccine donations, or anti-malaria medication), while the latter countries could be targeted for collaboration – for example in local manufacturing or joint R&D;
2. **To target particular sectors or issues** – for example STISA indicates the African priority is prevention and control of diseases not just general health sector improvements. With this knowledge, China can use this to design or determine priority areas and technologies for cooperation – e.g. China’s existing cooperation focused on vaccines and medicines fits well into this framework. However, logistics improvements (including digital access) can also be shaped to support prevention and control of diseases, so programmes of work in this area could be initiated.
3. **To expand cooperation mechanisms to the entire continent** – for example, China’s existing support for the Africa CDC fits well into this framework, because it supports the entire African continent with essential coordination among health stakeholders and is building health research integrity⁸⁶. The STISA ambitions can be used to increase support to Africa CDC, both at the headquarters as well as including regional hubs that may need strengthening.
4. **To work with African counterparts to design new themes or cooperation modes** – for instance STISA can be used by China to, with African counterparts, explore and design new instruments for cooperation. For example, instead of being dependent on government cooperation, China could involve the participation from other sectors, such as private sector, NGO, research institutes as well as individuals nationally and internationally. Diversification of actors could bring more resources in terms of funding, technology and innovation that can contribute greatly to China-Africa’s health cooperation.
5. **To focus on long-term sustainability of cooperation** – for instance, exporting vast quantities of medicines to African countries can be helpful in the short-term, but ultimately African countries also need to be able to manufacture their own medicines. STISA and the broader Agenda 2063 goals can help avoid falling into a (trade) dependency trap. Strengthening health systems is also crucial to scaling up health and medical skills transfer to achieve universal coverage, health equity and overall long-term benefits of improved quality healthcare delivery towards sustainable national development and growth.⁸⁷

Overall, the two case studies illustrate that while China-Africa cooperation to date has been extensive, and consistently ramped up over time through FOCAC, there remain both substantive and process-based challenges going forwards. The substantive challenge is to relate the China-Africa cooperation to directly and more comprehensively support African countries, while the process-based challenge is to find a means to utilise African views and actors more actively to shape and ultimately deliver the cooperation. However, the case studies also illustrate why doing this will ensure China-Africa cooperation can have a more lasting and sustainable impact into the long-term.

With this understanding, we now turn to analyse these gaps and opportunities in more depth, in particular with a view to recommendations for the forthcoming FOCAC 2021 in Dakar, Senegal.

⁸⁶ Supra note 2

⁸⁷ See Ernest Tambo, et al(2016),China-Africa Health Development Initiatives: Benefits and Implications for Shaping Innovative and Evidence-informed National Health Policies and Programs in Sub-Saharan African Countries available at;

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOCAC TO ADDRESS GAPS AND CHALLENGES

As this report sets out, there are important reasons why China and African countries cooperate, which differ for both parties, and imply certain objectives for the cooperation. Having explored the progress of FOCAC in delivering these objectives, including through the case studies of agriculture and health, we now turn to identifying the opportunities going forwards to address gaps and challenges going forwards to make the relationship more mutually beneficial and achieve the long-term aims – the “why’s” and ensure a set of transformational cooperation areas and issues for the next FOCAC, including for post-COVID-19 recovery.

In the tables below we identify a set of six overarching gaps and/or risks, and linked opportunities that can be utilised in the forthcoming FOCAC. Under some of the gaps and/or risks, more than one opportunity is identified. In addition, in some cases, opportunities proposed can be helpful to addressing other gaps/risks set out here.

Identified Gap or Risk	<i>1. Lack of coordination on key goals and issues to raise by African countries – can lead to less strategic, transformational or innovative outcomes than otherwise</i>
Explanation	<p>Since the establishment of FOCAC, there has been insufficient initiative from the African countries to coordinate the Forum’s activities. Previously an observer, the African Union (AU) Commission became a full FOCAC member in October 2011. In May, 2015, China became the first country to set up a “fully dedicated permanent mission” to the AU, and an AU mission was in turn set up in Beijing at the end of 2018.⁸⁸ The operational African Union Representative Office in Beijing adds an important layer of coordination in Africa’s relations with China⁸⁹. However, there remain barriers to coordination, attributable to two major factors.</p> <p>First, is a perception by some African countries that China-Africa relations is some form of competition for finite loans or aid from China⁹⁰. Second, the experience that African countries have had working with other donors (e.g. the Paris Club) who normally coordinate among themselves has had an effect in deprioritising regional coordination and accountability of African leaders vis-à-vis these external relationships to their citizens.</p> <p>As such, whereas the various commitments have been made by China in all the meetings, realization of them has been largely through bilateral engagements between China and individual African countries. A purely bilateral approach can lead to underwhelming results and/or challenges. For instance, the Kenyan Standard Gauge Railway was originally conceived as an East African regional project, linking to several planned industrial zones in the region, which could have enhanced its return and impact⁹¹. On the other hand, there are some very successful examples of regional investment by China, facilitated through FOCAC. China’s support for Africa CDC is one such excellent example, which has been at the forefront of Africa’s COVID-19 response</p>

⁸⁸ <http://english.cri.cn/12394/2015/05/08/3745s877793.htm>

⁸⁹ Mthembu, et al (2021) Africa-China Cooperation Towards an African Policy on China?

⁹⁰ See Lin, S., Gao, L., Reyes, M. et al. China’s health assistance to Africa: opportunism or altruism? *Global Health* 12, 83 (2016). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-016-0217-1>

⁹¹ <https://chinaafricaproject.com/2021/03/16/the-star-editorial-board-sgr-needs-to-go-regional-to-repay-its-chinese-creditors/>

	<p>as well as more broadly enhancing human resources in health on the continent and productive capacity in Africa's pharmaceutical industry⁹².</p> <p>Furthermore, it has been observed that the manner in which the China–Africa debate has been framed reflects as much, if not more on the seeming absence of strategically pro-active African diplomacy as it has on non-African perceptions⁹³, and a general perception of opacity around the external relationships of African governments.</p> <p>Scholars on China-Africa relationship have weighed in on the subject. For instance, Bob Wekesa in <i>A Call For An International Policy Framework Towards China</i> has noted that asymmetry in the relations between China and Africa traversing political, economic and cultural spheres is a reflection of Africa's lack of a coherent policy framework towards China while China is guided by a policy architecture that charts its highly successful strategy in and with Africa. He therefore suggests that there is a need for a reorientation and thinking toward an Africa- China policy as opposed to a China-Africa Policy⁹⁴.</p>
<p>Opportunity at 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference and beyond</p>	<p>Link all FOCAC actions to Agenda 2063 and cross/sub-regional agendas; appoint an African China Envoy with clear mandate; explore cross-continental legal instruments.</p>
<p>Explanation</p>	<p>There is a need for the African countries to the coordinate their policies towards China using FOCAC as a starting point, while also constantly analysing the progress that other regions are making in their relationship with China. This can be done via a range of mechanisms – some more light-touch and others more formal and bureaucratic.</p> <p>On the more light-touch end, explicitly aiming to link and benchmark FOCAC outcomes more clearly to already agreed African policies such as Agenda 2063, the ten-year frameworks and projects can help to ensure FOCAC is more in line with African strategic needs going forwards. Doing so will also likely increase the regional nature of projects delivered under FOCAC, which can spread risk and return more broadly so as to avoid debt challenges in particular countries.</p> <p>In addition, the African Union Chairperson or African Union Commission could appoint an African China Envoy with the credibility, mandate and resources to convene a select team of African scholars and intellectuals to come together to spearhead a policy agenda and present it to African Heads of State and relevant Ministers before the next FOCAC meeting.⁹⁵ The Envoy could also be charged with producing a strategic plan for public consumption by African citizens, so as to increase accountability.</p> <p>On the more formal end, Professor Won Kidane has suggested that FOCAC should be transformed into a legal instrument or treaty – such as the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (which does not cover trade), or a Free Trade Agreement, with relevant formalised monitoring, reporting and dispute resolution mechanisms.</p> <p>The basis for Kidane's proposition is that close to 98% of trade between China and Africa happens on the basis of unilateral concessions which are in fact not enforceable, and Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITS) that do exist between China and African</p>

⁹² <https://africacdc.org/our-work/>

⁹³ Francis A. Kornegay Jr Regionalizing Sino-African Diplomatic Engagement: Kagame and Overcoming the 'One and the Many' Paradigm.

⁹⁴ Wekesa B,A call for an African Policy Framework Towards China ,in Mthembu, et al (2021) Africa-China Cooperation Towards an African Policy on China.

⁹⁵ See Wekesa B,A call for an African Policy Framework Towards China ,in Mthembu, et al (2021) Africa-China Cooperation Towards an African Policy on China.

countries are largely not fit for purpose. As such, currently there is no meaningful legal structure that binds China and African countries. ⁹⁶	<p>However, while a formal treaty may be an ultimate destination for FOCAC, and with the AfCFTA in place and expected to eventually include a number of relevant African-designed protocols including investment, competition and dispute resolution on which to build, it is worth noting that work towards the EU-China agreement was initiated in 2012, and ratification efforts are currently suspended⁹⁷. A treaty process between Africa and China will no doubt take many years to complete.</p> <p>As such, a continent-wide BRI MOU could be a more feasible precursor to a legal instrument, and/or a preferential trade agreement linked to AfCFTA could also be a feasible and more transformational, action-oriented precursor as well⁹⁸.</p>
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Identified Gap or Risk	<i>2. Lack of data to track and evaluate FOCAC outcomes held by/shared by African countries – leads to speculation and missing information</i>
Explanation	<p>While some international data such as trade statistics are available and provide a means to assess certain trade goals of FOCAC, beyond this very little other data and outcome information is published on the FOCAC website, and relevant platforms. As such, China’s overall engagement as well as in specific sectors remains highly contested.</p> <p>An example of this inadequacy can be seen from the country level data from the China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), which is not easily comparable across countries. It is noteworthy that there are some think tanks which have endeavoured to fill this gap of lack of data through varied databases and methods, such as the Johns Hopkins China Africa Research Initiative (CARI)⁹⁹, Aid Data¹⁰⁰, the Global Development Policy Center¹⁰¹. These estimates also differ in terms of understandings of trajectory and implications re: regional focus, balance of grants and loans, etc.</p> <p>There are also other sources of data, especially for instance those that focus on particular regions, or on particular types of development cooperation, using both official sources as well as media reports. The Lowy Institute¹⁰² – based in Australia - provides development cooperation data on the Pacific region. Development Reimagined has provided certain types of development cooperation data on the African region – for instance Confucius institutes¹⁰³, global data for debt relief provided over the last 10 years by China¹⁰⁴, and more recently COVID-19 support from China to Africa – and were the first to identify that China has contributed more vaccines to African countries</p>

⁹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO0KZYI7zfs&t=2792s>

⁹⁷ <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=2115>

⁹⁸ See Fu, Yike and Eguegu, Ovigwe, 2021: China’s BRI and the AfCFTA: Potential Overlaps, Complementarities and Challenges, <https://saiia.org.za/research/chinas-bri-and-the-afcfta-potential-overlaps-complementarities-and-challenges/>

⁹⁹ <http://www.sais-cari.org>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.aiddata.org>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.bu.edu/gdp/>

¹⁰² Mapping Aid and Influence in the Pacific Islands: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/news-and-media/multimedia/audio/mapping-aid-and-influence-pacific-islands>

¹⁰³ Countries Along the Belt and Road: What Does It All Mean? <https://developmentreimagined.com/2019/09/26/countries-along-the-belt-and-road-what-does-it-all-mean/>

¹⁰⁴ Infographic: Who’s Helping Young African People Become Global Citizens? -

<https://developmentreimagined.com/2018/09/09/infographic-whos-helping-young-african-people-become-global-citizens/>

	<p>than COVAX¹⁰⁵. Bridge consulting provide global estimates of China’s vaccine sales and donations¹⁰⁶. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), collects China-related global data including estimates of Chinese Aid for their “China Power” project¹⁰⁷.</p> <p>However, independently produced data does have pros and cons. While it can elicit useful debate to help re-orient the Africa- China relationship, estimates vary widely, and some non-African-led institutions produce more “narrative-based” publications and/or select issues to analyse that can affect the discourse on Africa-China relationship in ways that do not necessarily meet priority African concerns. There is often a persistent lack of analysis of both African and Chinese perspectives¹⁰⁸. As an example, while many organisations gather information on volumes of loans, few explore data on impacts, loan disbursements, and employment or local content aspects of contract terms. Yet, African borrowers and their citizens are interested in these practical, contract negotiation-related issues.¹⁰⁹</p> <p>Furthermore, with the myriad of Chinese stakeholders involved in delivery, some African governments are not fully aware of commitments delivered in their own countries, and more broadly African citizens cannot track the progress of FOCAC.</p>
<p>Opportunity at 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference and beyond</p>	<p>Initiate overarching FOCAC evaluations led by African co-chair and/or African organisation; African governments and organisations publish more data about their China relationship; for citizens; have joint African and Chinese organisations always jointly evaluate specific instruments</p>
<p>Explanation</p>	<p>Within both the 2015 and 2018 FOCAC action plans, there were commitments for joint reviews of FOCAC outcomes by the Chinese and African co-chairs (initially South Africa and now Senegal). These reviews have to date been led by China, however, going forwards it could be clarified that the African co-chair will be in the lead in future.</p> <p>To deliver on this, the African co-chair could appoint an organisation – such as an independent African think-tank or agency such as AUDA-NEPAD or UNECA to conduct the review and collate FOCAC commitments in detail and collectively, enabling comparisons of deliverables across African countries and thus timely feedback in terms of overall prioritisation and therefore impact in time for the next FOCAC. This will complement the analysis by China.</p> <p>Furthermore, both governmental and independent African stakeholders and/or international organisations should in the meantime increase their efforts to collate and publish data on the China-Africa relationship. African governments in particular can use various international processes such as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation to share comparable data on Chinese aid with other (African</p>

¹⁰⁵ Infographic: China Has Delivered More Vaccines to Africa Than COVAX, How? -

<https://developmentreimagined.com/2021/06/07/chinamorethancovax/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://bridgebeijing.com/our-publications/our-publications-1/china-covid-19-vaccines-tracker/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://chinapower.csis.org>

¹⁰⁸ See Buckley, L. (2013). Chinese Agriculture Development Cooperation in Africa: Narratives and Politics. IDS Bulletin, 44.4

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1759-5436/issues](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1759-5436/issues)

¹⁰⁹ <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/a-new-database-reveals-chinas-secret-loans-think-again/>

	<p>and non-African) countries¹¹⁰, as well as publishing data on Chinese loans and contracts through their Debt Management Offices¹¹¹.</p> <p>Last but not least, when it comes to evaluation of specific instruments or <i>types</i> of coordination, while China often takes the lead in this, consulting with stakeholders on the ground¹¹², it could be more useful to going forwards always initiate joint evaluations between Chinese stakeholders and African stakeholders, such as AUDA-NEPAD or UNECA or a relevant Regional Economic Community (REC), so that African perspectives, impacts and concerns can be better taken on board.</p>
Identified Gap or Risk	3. Difficulties in targeting FOCAC commitments to transformational countries or sectors
Explanation	<p>China's cooperation with African countries is (rightly) based on a policy of non-interference and a policy of being demand-driven, which means it cannot require or push the continent to reform certain sectors before investing or <i>ex ante</i> prioritise certain countries. This means, for instance, that Chinese engagement can be highly concentrated in particular countries – for example, by the end of August 2021, over 60% of vaccines from China have been delivered (mostly purchased) to just 3 African countries while 21 African countries hadn't received any vaccines from China as yet¹¹³. While this is a wider distribution than other vaccine donors (e.g. 27 African countries have not received any vaccines from the US), the question is whether this specific distribution is optimal from an African perspective, and if not, what opportunity there is for Africans to shape the distribution in the continent's collective interest.</p>
Opportunity at 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference and beyond	Better data collection by Chinese counterparts on and understanding of African countries diversity; African governments publish a China Strategy
Explanation	<p>The suggestions provided above for Gaps/Risks 1 and 2 would also help to address this challenge. In particular, stronger consultation with African countries or organisations and linkages to Agenda 2063, the ten-year frameworks and projects during design of programmes would help significantly</p> <p>Furthermore, better data collection regarding and understanding of African countries' situation (e.g. SDG achievement) by Chinese counterparts in order to at least provide benchmarks for countries that need the most support or that have the most transformational potential.</p>

¹¹⁰ <https://developmentreimagined.com/portfolio-posts/chinas-aid-from-the-bottom-up-providing-data-driven-research-on-chinese-development-cooperation/>

¹¹¹ Nigeria and Cameroon present some of the best practice examples on this – e.g. see <https://www.dmo.gov.ng>

¹¹² E.g. as discussed here in this Q&A with Professor Xu Xiuli, Dean of the College of International Development and Global Agriculture (CIDGA) at China Agricultural University (CAU): <https://chinaafricaproject.com/analysis/qa-measuring-the-effectiveness-of-chinese-agricultural-assistance-in-africa/>

¹¹³ <https://developmentreimagined.com/2021/08/20/halfricancitizenscouldhavebeenprotected/>

	<p>In addition, were African governments to publish a “China strategy”, for example based on this report, the template of Development Reimagined’s “Blueprint”¹¹⁴ and/or identifying specific priority sectors for cooperation linked to FOCAC 2021 agenda items, this would not only help African citizens have a better understanding of where their government is seeking to engage with China and why, it would also help orient Chinese stakeholders on which countries might be most transformational to engage with.</p>
Identified Gap or Risk	4. Challenges in delivery of certain FOCAC mechanisms – e.g. delays in spending under specific funds, underwhelming impact, etc.
Explanation	<p>There are a number of examples of China-Africa instruments which, while having delivered very interesting and important results, have nevertheless faced challenges or delays in implementation or spending.</p> <p>One example is CAD Fund which was announced in 2006 and set up in 2007, funded and controlled by the China Development Bank (CDB). While the Fund was initially expected to raise its own funds on the private equity market after an initial infusion, further instalments were made by CDB¹¹⁵, and the fund still faces some challenges in disbursements, in particular finding projects of an appropriate size and return.</p> <p>Another more recent example is the biennial China-Africa Trade Expo (CATETE) initiated in 2019. This is a welcome initiative intended to raise the exports of African nations to China, however it has faced challenges in attracting high-value African products, instead featuring mostly agricultural goods such as coffee, cocoa and nuts¹¹⁶. While some of this challenge is due to poor African manufacturing capacity, there are hundreds of high-end brands in Africa, but few Chinese counterparts are aware of them¹¹⁷.</p> <p>A final example is of FOCAC-sector specific forums, such as on poverty reduction, which face challenges in translating meetings and conferences into real action. This is not a challenge unique to China but nevertheless since “training” is such a large component of China-Africa cooperation it is worthwhile reflecting on. For example, in agriculture African countries do not just want seeds from China, but rather they want to know what China’s fertiliser policy was and how it worked across provinces¹¹⁸. However, there is evidence that many forums as they are currently designed do not appear to transfer sufficient understanding of China’s policy landscape to African countries¹¹⁹.</p>
Opportunities at 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference and beyond	Always utilise both African and Chinese organisations in design and implementation of all FOCAC instruments and funds

¹¹⁴ See: <https://www.africaunconstrained.com/blueprintforanafricachinastrategy/>

¹¹⁵ <http://www.chinaafricarealstory.com/2015/03/is-cad-fund-sovereign-wealth-fund.html>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1233274.shtml>

¹¹⁷ <https://developmentreimagined.com/portfolio-posts/designed-to-disrupt-2-0-africa-reimagined-at-the-second-china-africa-economic-and-trade-expo/>

¹¹⁸ <https://developmentreimagined.com/2020/07/13/is-china-helping-or-hindering-africas-efforts-to-future-proof-food-security/>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/07/14/does-china-actively-promote-its-way-governing-do-other-countries-listen/>

Explanation	<p>A key feature of many of the instruments agreed so far under FOCAC is that they have been led and designed by Chinese counterparts, who, despite good intentions and also excellent knowledge of Chinese innovations, may not have the breadth of knowledge and understanding of details in African countries to make them a success. For both African countries and China, sometimes this is entirely new territory – for example collaborations around African and Chinese Traditional Medicine.</p> <p>Going forwards, to avoid these challenges, it is crucial that Africans are not just consulted on the agreement of the instruments through the FOCAC meeting itself, but are thereafter actively and equally involved in their design and implementation. This thus requires “untying” some of these instruments from delivery by only Chinese organisations, as well as understanding the landscape of African organisations that can assist in this regard. Doing so will not just ensure more win-win from the instruments but will also lead to greater success and impact, and easier monitoring.</p>
Identified Gap or Risk	5. There can be un-intended consequences of scaled-up cooperation, if not well managed
Explanation	<p>While the economic and financial relationship between African countries and China has scaled up, it can bring with it risks of certain unintended consequences. For example, on trade, while the overall volumes have increased, for many countries trade deficits have intensified and dependency on extractives has increased. Similarly, some African countries that China has lent to have experienced debt distress and had to request debt relief. When it comes to FDI, some companies investing in Africa have not adhered to local environmental or social standards. More recently, at the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Africans in China experienced racist treatment. In response, the Chinese government reiterated its anti-racist stance, and introduced new measures¹²⁰. This does not mean the trade, lending, investment or African people in China were not warranted or needed, but it indicates the need to more carefully manage scaled up relationships.</p>
Opportunities at 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference and beyond	Aim to balance trade, finance and people flows in both directions in long-term; set up issue-specific African coordination forums for each/selected FOCAC topics; request African organisations to provide actionable principles/guidelines on key issues
Explanation	<p>While it is important for FOCAC to continue to facilitate more trade, finance and people-to-people flows between China and Africa, there is a strong case for all sides to work harder in future to ensure the flows are balanced in both directions where possible (e.g. trade and people to people flows, and eventually investment).</p> <p>A key suggestion in this regard would be for issue-specific African coordination forums to be set up – for example, African trade ministers could meet every 6 months or annually to analyse and discuss trade flows and agreements with China (such as phytosanitary agreements) and plan appropriate strategic measures. African finance Ministers could also meet to discuss various parameters of loans agreed, so as to</p>

¹²⁰ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1769241.shtml

	<p>increase the quality and return of the debt while avoiding high interest rates. Ultimately, this will be in China's interests by avoiding debt distress. African Planning, Investment, Tourism and Education Ministers could also coordinate on the state of businesspeople, visitors and students in China and African locations.</p> <p>In addition, certain principles and detailed guidelines may be useful to provide on an <i>ad hoc</i> or annual basis, ideally written by African counterparts with consultation with Chinese counterparts, to avoid unintended effects. For example, African organisations such as AUDA-NEPAD or UNECA could be commissioned to draft guidelines for Chinese companies operating in African countries, and this translated and disseminated by relevant Chinese partners.</p> <p>Last but not least, proposals under Gaps/Risks 1 and 2 and 3 will also contribute to improvements here.</p>
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Identified Gap or Risk	6. Lack of innovation in types of cooperation and slow evolution of types of instruments used and stakeholders involved
Explanation	<p>As is evident from the case studies of agriculture and health, some of the mechanisms China has used to support African countries with have been in place since the 1960s. While there may be a continued need for them, there is also no doubt that many African countries have developed over that period, and some types of traditional “aid” instrument such as emergency medical teams might be less warranted, while others such as localising agricultural and health product manufacturing may be needed now. For instance, the cooperation between Egypt and China COVID-19 vaccine production offers African countries a glimpse of what strategic cooperation can achieve.¹²¹</p> <p>However, initiating change within an embedded system is always a challenge, and can take time. This point is best illustrated by the fact that the list of commitments in FOCAC over 20 years has tended to grow rather than simply evolve. In addition, for example, commitments to build hospitals and malaria treatment centres at FOCAC meetings in 2006 and 2009 were barely indistinguishable. The local contexts in African countries provide a continuous challenge even to simple technology-transfer models, and often the effectiveness of aid depends on the resourcefulness of aid experts and staff on the ground.¹²²</p> <p>In addition, there are new instruments that have emerged or are used by other regions or partnerships, which could be useful to use in FOCAC to enhance the impact of the relationship. In an area such as trade, for example, Geographical Indications are a useful instrument for driving up the value of agricultural products sold in third markets, and are the subject of a China-EU agreement¹²³. To date have not been proposed under the FOCAC framework by either African countries or China.</p> <p>Last but not least, all FOCAC declarations refer to the importance of the multilateral system, and for example, joint African and Chinese views on the future of the UN Security Council.</p>

¹²¹ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2021-07/19/c_1310069099.htm

¹²² See Lila Buckley, Chen Ruijian, Yin Yanfei and Zhu Zidong Chinese agriculture in Africa Perspectives of Chinese agronomists on agricultural aid, Discussion Paper January 2017 available at <https://pubs.iied.org/17603iied>

¹²³ <https://developmentreimagined.com/2020/01/24/geographical-indications/>

Opportunities at 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference and beyond	Set out a long term strategic vision, diversify actors involved in FOCAC instruments, use trilateral cooperation strategically, use declarations to propose joint Africa-China ideas/positions to shape and influence the multilateral system
Explanation	<p>Opportunities under Gaps/Risks 1 and 5 in particular will also contribute to improvements here.</p> <p>Furthermore, it could be useful to agree some sort of strategic vision document which might confine the areas or sectors of collaboration for the next ten or so years, while indicating how these areas can evolve over time as Africa and China develop, and as different African countries develop as well, targeting various instruments to different needs and development levels. For example, Chinese stakeholders can play a productivity enhancing role in African countries through several channels, not just aid. Chinese firms could increase the productivity of African agriculture and manufacturing through investment, technology upgrading and knowledge spill overs. Chinese financing of much-needed infrastructure could unlock further investment from African and other foreign firms. Furthermore, Chinese companies could generate employment creation in high-productivity sectors of the economy.¹²⁴ All this will not only have impact it can also help avoid unintended effects (Gap/Risk 5) – for example avoiding trade dependency.</p> <p>In addition, actively seeking to diversify actors involved in FOCAC instruments (e.g. making use of private sector and/or youth forums and/or non-governmental organisations such as the China- Africa Business Council formed in 2006¹²⁵ to design and deliver entrepreneurship instruments) could bring more resources in terms of funding, technology and innovation that can contribute greatly to China-Africa cooperation.</p> <p>Furthermore, triangular cooperation, which entails partnerships between two or more developing countries, supported by a developed country or multilateral organization could also play a role in innovation.¹²⁶ Triangular cooperation was emphasised in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Agenda) in 2015¹²⁷.</p> <p>Finally, it could be useful in future to utilise FOCAC declarations to further advance joint international positions. For instance, for the 2021 conference, African and Chinese perspectives could be aligned on the use of Special Drawing Rights for the COVID19 response, reform of risk rating agencies, reform of the World Bank and IMF, climate change action, climate finance, and more broadly the financing for development agenda. It may even be possible for Africa and China to advance new ideas through FOCAC – for example the UNECA’s Liquidity Sustainability Facility, or a Development Reimagined’s borrower’s club¹²⁸.</p>

¹²⁴ Linda Calabrese and Xiaoyang Tang (2020) Africa’s economic transformation: the role of Chinese investment Available at: <https://odi.org/en/publications/africas-economic-transformation-the-role-of-chinese-investment/>

¹²⁵ <http://en.cabc.org.cn/?c=abouts&a=index>

¹²⁶ Ibid

¹²⁷ https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

¹²⁸ <https://www.africaunconstrained.com/options-for-reimagining-africas-debt-system/>

These six gaps/risks and identified opportunities are not by themselves a panacea to enhancing FOCAC or the China-Africa relationship, nor avoiding trouble down the line. Notably, even if all the identified opportunities were incorporated into FOCAC 2021, a key issue is that their implementation is highly dependent on the intervention of African countries – including in some cases through budgetary allocations and even ratification and an effective legislative framework at the national level. However, many pan-Africa commitments do not always translate into national commitments. For instance-, the delivery of the priorities under CAADP also requires financial investment by the respective African governments – much of which has not been achieved¹²⁹. Similarly, some cross-African commitments take years to be implemented, even at regional level. An example is the African Monetary Fund in respect which only 12 countries have ratified so far, and the ECOWAS's common currency framework which is yet to take off.

On the Chinese side, it is also possible that domestic policy concerns or challenges can lead to a lack of implementation of FOCAC commitments or overall ambition. The COVID-19 crisis for instance has led to some project delays and China's current restrictions on travel and quarantine requirements have meant that African students and businesspeople cannot travel easily to China, while Chinese businesspeople and tourists are reticent to leave the country¹³⁰.

Nevertheless, these six gaps/risks and opportunities together provide useful insights for what can be achieved at FOCAC 2021 and beyond, if the will on both the African and Chinese sides is there.

¹²⁹ See FAO(2021) Public expenditure on food and agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa Trends, Challenges And Priorities, available at: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB4492EN/>. The countries covered in the FAO analysis are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

¹³⁰ <https://www.economist.com/china/2021/01/30/covid-19-disrupts-chinas-rise-as-a-destination-for-foreign-students>

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

FOCAC is the longest and the most important standing mechanism for cooperation between China and Africa. This report, aimed at both African and Chinese policymakers and citizens, began with a general reminder setting out the context for FOCAC and what it *should ideally* aim to achieve, with a general reminder of *why* Africa and China cooperate from the perspective of both African countries and China.

The report summarised **five reasons** why China cooperates with African countries, and **seven reasons** why African countries cooperate with China – ranging from the economic to political.

The report then proceeded to chart the Africa and China relationship to date and the role of FOCAC in particular as part of this process. The report identifies and charts how FOCAC has evolved over time, incorporating more than 40 topics and issues by 2018, albeit grouped under eight major headings. While this bears witness to the important role FOCAC has had, it also creates more complexity and rising expectations, which can be challenging to manage. That said, the report also finds that with the wide range of topics, FOCAC now has direct links to African Continental Frameworks, African Flagship projects as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The analysis finds that while only 2 out of the 6 African continental frameworks were specifically mentioned in FOCAC 2018 Action Plan, previous China-Africa cooperation has had significant impacts and contributed directly to the frameworks, projects and goals.

The report also spotlights key differences in collaborative processes with China's other regional and plurilateral partnerships, as well as Africa's "plus one summits" – which provide opportunities to advance relationships with other development partners. The report clarifies that for both China and Africa, FOCAC is a unique forum, with unique properties, and therefore is worthwhile continuing, while advancing and using best practice from elsewhere as well.


The report then proceeds to explore the question of how FOCAC has met African and Chinese goals by using two case studies of China-Africa cooperation in agriculture and health, particularly action items under the most recent FOCAC meetings in Johannesburg (2015) and Beijing (2018). The case studies illustrated that while huge progress has been made, nevertheless the cooperation can be improved- through a combination of the following five measures:


- targeting assistance at particular countries with a particular rationale;
- targeting particular sectors or issues;
- expanding cooperation mechanisms to the entire continent;
- working with African counterparts to design new themes or cooperation modes;
- focusing on long-term sustainability of cooperation.


The report argues that these five measures will help take the sector-specific support and action plans to a new, reimagined level.


Finally, the report uses these various analyses to propose **six priority gaps and challenges** that Chinese and African governments can use FOCAC 2021 and beyond as an opportunity to tackle, with a view to making improvements to the effectiveness of the collaboration in future, deepening it and ensuring the five and seven "why's are met in future.


6 Gaps and Challenges to Address in FOCAC 2021


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1 There is a lack of coordination on key goals and issues to raise by African countries. This can lead to less strategic, transformational or innovative outcomes than otherwise.
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2 There is a lack of data to track and evaluate FOCAC outcomes held by and shared by African countries. This leads to speculation and missing information.
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3 There have been difficulties in targeting FOCAC commitments to transformational countries or sectors.
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4 There are challenges in the delivery of certain FOCAC mechanisms, for example, there have been delays in spending under specific funds, underwhelming impacts etc.
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5 There can be unintended consequences of scaled-up cooperation if not well managed.
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6 There has been a lack of innovation in types of cooperation and slow evolution of types of instruments used and stakeholders involved.

The report then identifies a list of opportunities identified in the report, listed below, as the opportunities arose in the analysis. From this it emerges that there are a total of **17 opportunities identified**.

In **Table 7** below, each measure is given a score for how important it is (“transformational potential”) as well as how feasible it might be in the short term. For “transformational potential” the scale can be interpreted as follows – 1 indicating that an opportunity would be useful to grab but is not essential, and 5 indicating that an opportunity is so crucial that if not grabbed FOCAC may have a lower impact going forwards. For feasibility, the scale can be interpreted as follows – 1 indicating that it will require significant negotiation in the future over a period of at least five or even ten years, and 5 indicating that an opportunity is very easy to introduce within the next few months (and/or in the FOCAC declaration/action plan).

It is important to note that the vast of the majority of these opportunities can and need to be agreed and implemented by both the African governments and the Chinese government or other stakeholders together. However, there are some which only require action by an African government or stakeholder, without the involvement of Chinese counterparts, and vice versa. This is reflected in both the transformational potential and feasibility assessments, where the need for more stakeholders to be involved introduces some degree of complexity, but nevertheless may also lead to more transformational impact. Nevertheless, many opportunities proposed do reflect on the overarching need for African stakeholders to demonstrate more agency in the relationship, hence a greater number of the opportunities are Africa-facing.

Table 7: Assessment of 17 Opportunities to Enhance FOCAC in 2021 and Beyond

	Opportunity at 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference and beyond	Action required by African governments, the Chinese government, or both?	Transformational Potential (Scale = 1-5)¹³¹	Short-term Feasibility (Scale = 1 hard -5 easy)¹³²	Overall Score for FOCAC 2021 (max = 10)
1	Link all FOCAC actions to Agenda 2063 and cross/sub-regional agendas	Both	4	5	9
2	Appoint an African China Envoy with clear mandate	African governments	5	4	9
3	Explore cross-continental legal instruments ¹³³	Both	4	1	5
4	African governments publish a China Strategy	African governments	4	3	7
5	Initiate overarching FOCAC evaluations led by African co-chair and/or African organisation	African governments	3	3	6
6	African governments and organisations publish more data about their China relationship;	African governments	4	4	8
7	Have African and Chinese organisations always jointly evaluate specific instruments	Both (China to make initial decision)	3	2	6
8	Better data collection on and understanding of African countries diversity	Chinese government	2	2	4
9	African governments publish a domestic China Strategy	African governments	5	3	8
10	Always utilise both African and Chinese organisations in design and implementation of all FOCAC instruments and funds	Both (China to make initial decision)	5	3	8

¹³¹ Each score represents our own internal analysis based on our expert opinion, and at the time of writing has not (yet) been discussed specifically with others.

¹³² Each score represents our own internal analysis based on our expert opinion, and at the time of writing has not (yet) been discussed specifically with others.

¹³³ As noted in the earlier analysis, a continent-wide BRI MOU could be a more feasible precursor to this, and/or a preferential trade agreement linked to AfCFTA could also be a feasible and more transformational, action-oriented precursor as well.

11	Aim to balance trade, finance and people flows in both directions in long-term	Both	5	2	7
12	Set up issue-specific African coordination forums for each/selected FOCAC topics	African governments	5	4	9
13	Request African organisations to provide actionable principles /guidelines on key issues	Both	3	4	7
14	Discuss and set out a long-term strategic vision for the China-Africa strategy	Both	4	4	8
15	Diversify actors involved in FOCAC instruments	Both	4	2	6
16	Use trilateral cooperation strategically	Both	3	3	6
17	Use declarations to propose joint Africa-China ideas/positions to shape and influence the multilateral system	Both	3	5	8

As highlighted in the table, this analysis suggests **three (total score = 9) and potentially a further five (total score = 8) of the above opportunities can be prioritised for agreement at FOCAC 2021 itself**, with a view to introducing the other remaining nine measures over time.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that some of these opportunities are complimentary – they can reinforce each-other and make it easier to deliver on others. For instance, publishing more data (Opportunity 6) could be helpful on the route to publishing a domestic China strategy (Opportunity 9).

In sum, there is no doubt that the China-Africa relationship, expressed through FOCAC has had significant impact, not only on broad trade, financial and people flows, but also in specific sectors such as agriculture and health. Nevertheless, this does not mean improvement is not possible. With such a high potential relationship, as expressed through the five and seven “why’s”, constant evolution is a necessity. The question is how? Several African scholars have recently pointed to the need for Africa enhance its agency in the relationship with China through ensuring the cooperation enables of the achievement of the AU’s continental frameworks so to align it with the continent’s economic, development and even security priorities.¹³⁴ This report suggests this is an initial, essential step. Through thorough expert analysis, this report provides a total of seventeen opportunities that both African governments and the Chinese government can grab together – through FOCAC as the central coordination mechanism for their cooperation – to take this relationship to its next level, and ensure in particular that FOCAC really contributes to supporting African countries to achieve their development goals, now, up to and beyond 2063.

¹³⁴ Mthembu, et al (2021) Africa-China Cooperation Towards an African Policy on China?