



## CHINA'S VISION FOR A PARTNERSHIP WITH AFRICA ON SECURITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: AN APPRAISAL

Sheriff Ghali Ibrahim<sup>1</sup> and Momoh M. Kabir<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Abuja, Abuja-Nigeria; Fellow at the Centre for Nigerian Studies, Institute for African Studies, Zhejiang Normal University, PRC.

<sup>2</sup>Director General, National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, Nigeria

**ABSTRACT:** *The paper delves into China-Africa partnership in the area of security, fighting poverty and human development. It examines the ambiance of such socio-economic and political interplay, where China seeks to strengthen such partnership on win-win basis. The paper adopts a descriptive research using the library documentation as secondary methodology. Findings show that, there is strong commitment on the Chinese side to making sure that Africa becomes a better place to live and devoid of conflicts. Secondly, it shows how China consolidates efforts training Africans in different areas of science and humanities for the betterment of the lives of the African people. The paper concludes that a shift in Chinese foreign policy of non-interference has already taken place using implicit strategy of creative involvement and constructive intervention, just as the shift in the policy of peace-keeping operation, where China rejected the use of force in the process. This was later changed to the use of limited force when the peace-keepers or civilians are threatened. Interference in a positive manner either in governance, security and poverty reduction if welcome by Africa is a good thing to embrace. Africa will never accept negative intervention at the detriment of its sovereignty and people. It should be noted that, history has shown that if states are in alliance, acceptable involvement and intervention only supports an ally in achieving significant goals. The paper recommends that, development projects as envisaged by China should be feasible and flexible to the consumption and sustenance of Africa.*

**KEYWORDS:** China, Africa, Partnership, Security, Poverty, Human Development

### INTRODUCTION

The economic interplay between China and Africa is one that is being completely misconceived and misinterpreted, especially by people who do not explore more of such relations and only make a comparative synergy with the hitherto colonial system. China was not involved in the scramble for Africa; did not participate in the partitioning of Africa, but rather was a victim of attempted colonial domination of Japan. China rejected all forms of domination, imperialism, colonialism or what is closely related to such. The State of China made revolution against the Kuomintang party as well as imperial Japan which brought about self-determination and perpetual reforms that produced what is feasible in China today. With gradual industrialization and economic growth, China began to establish friendly relations all over the world, not by conquest, not by imposition, not by domination, not by war or even conspiracy, but by peaceful agreements, negotiations and mutual understanding.



The Chinese foreign policy, contrary to the principles of colonialism and imperialism, directs the Chinese state out of political interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state. This is due to the respect China has for sovereignty and equality of all nations all over the world. China as it is known does not impose its culture (as the western colonialists did through the assimilation and Assimilado Policies) on any nation, but allows for cooperation, integration and exchanges against the former. There is a general argument made by self-compelling groups and parties that, the absence of China in the hitherto scramble for Africa is making it emerge as a new colonial power in Africa. This argument is vague and contradicts the veritable tenets of colonial exposition, where the United States was also looked upon and labelled as a new colonial power as a result of the trends of history when it emerged as the world super power.

The concept of development cooperation which emerged after the Second World War is seen as a new form of international relations. Against the backdrop of political economists who categorise any relationship between rich and poor as exploitative, colonial or imperial in nature, does not help in understanding the contemporary nature of the global system. The relationship that emanated immediately after the Second World War between the United States and European States was not imperial or exploitative, but rather a package of the Marshall plan for rebuilding Europe. Prior to the war Europe had already industrialized, but as a result of the devastating nature of the war, Europe needed a kind of an aid package. In the writings of Lauri (1990), cooperation is defined as: any "act of working together to one end." Cooperation is usually the opposite of competition, which means the acts of "seeking or endeavoring to gain what another is endeavoring to gain at the same time.

If cooperation is what is being described above, it is pertinent therefore to understand that, China is moving towards achieving economic prosperity, so also Africa is moving towards the same end with China, this is what entails of cooperation.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework is in tandem with the literature provided in this chapter, where the theory of international development cooperation is discussed as developed by Lauri (1990) and other scholars. In the discourses of development cooperation, Lauri (1990) believes that, there are two major variables that affect cooperation which are:

- a. In cooperation, there is a common goal, toward which the interaction is oriented, and which is shared by the actors,
- b. In assistance, there may be common goals, but the very action of giving aid is oriented towards helping the other part to realize his/her own goals.

It is therefore discernible that China and Africa have one major goal, which is mutual benefit of the cooperation that binds them together. The second aspect of the above analogy is assistance, where people look at American aid to third world states, concluding that it is not without interest, the Chinese aid to Africa is what Lauri (1990) described as "aid oriented towards helping the other part to realize his/her own goals. Albeit the relationship that defines cooperation can be described as asymmetrical, but the aim and purpose of the cooperation should not be ignored. African states have had what scholars know as obnoxious relations



with the west, but Africa appreciates its relationship with China and willingly signs developmental agreements under the forum on China-Africa Cooperation. More to the understanding of what unfolds between China and Africa, is the interpretation of the concept of international cooperation given by Lauri (1990). It was intellectually put that:

International cooperation designates all "undertakings" allowing international actors to achieve jointly fixed goals by sharing certain resources together. Less than integration, yet more than sporadic common efforts, international cooperation denotes to established relations between sovereign actors willing to share some values together.

The above significantly shows that, cooperation just as it is obtainable between Africa and China, is not aimed at harming any party but carried out in a manner of mutual benefit and win-win situation. In the process of cooperation there is the need for understanding each other, one another-hence the call for cross-cultural studies and language sharing. This, aids in communication in business environment as well improve people-to-people exchanges and give room for trust to flourish. While addressing issues in the field of international relations, we always observe classically the contending paradigms that synthesise conflict, war and cooperation. The realist perception of anarchy and war in the global system may discourage cooperation for peaceful co-existence, making you to understand that you cannot trust even your neighbour and absolute abstinence may be proper. On the contrary, the other classical paradigm (liberalism) appreciates the concept of peace and cooperation, albeit the world is anarchic, but cooperation would surely abate tension, rivalry and conflicts within the global system. It should also be noted that the fear of the anarchy without devising to cooperate, makes states invade others. When there is an instituted authority to govern the conducts of states, states would be restrained in going against their sister states and conduct their behaviours peacefully (Lauri, 1990).

Since the consolidation of the Westphalia system, changing historical conditions have, again, caused modifications in our ideas concerning international relations. Perhaps the most significant change has been caused by the Industrial Revolution, which has brought up three basic developments in the modern international system: (1) increasing differences in power and wealth between the nations, through the distribution of industrial capacity, (2) an expanding world economy, based on a system of industrial division of labor between nations, and (3) an enlarging system of national states, covering now almost all of the land territories of the globe (Adlaer-karlsson, 1976). The changing historical conditions of the global system have made states not to be on the same capability in all ramifications, hence the emergence of industrialized nations and others. This unequal polarization of the world was neither made by China, nor China supported inequality among nations and states.

Thus, a major feature of the modern international system is a multiple state-system, inside of a world economy according to Pearson (1969), characterized by increasing differences in industrial power and wealth among nations. Like any social system, an emerging global system needs certain rules and norms, or an order, for its maintenance. The state system as well as the international economic order is the primary example. The formation and maintenance of an order, in turn, implies cooperation among the international actors. With the existence of large differences in the industrial power among nations within the system, certain economic cooperation has to cope with special requirements. During the colonial era, the relationship between the industrialized European countries and the areas in the Third



World were arranged largely on the basis of the colonial order, with sovereignty belonging only to the former. But after the World War II, with the demise of colonialism and the "civilizing missions" of the European powers, a new order has been emerging (Pearson, 1969). This global order does not force any state or nation to subject itself under servitude, forced labor or colonialism. There are choices in international trade and political relations and states constructively choose their friends.

### **The Nature of Sino-Africa Cooperation in Governance, Security and Poverty Reduction: An Implicit Foreign Policy Shift**

This area may deal with the issues of peace-keeping in governance, political-institutional support and policy area. This will highlight some areas of Sino-Africa interplay in governance as well as the indirect justification of traditional foreign policy shift which re-interprets the policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of states. Peace keeping operation where and whenever it takes place it is part of humanitarian gesture that a state could offer to salvage humanity from the brink. Mulugeta and Liu (2013) wrote that

The first 'Yes' vote China gave to a peacekeeping operation was in 1981 (in Cyprus) and its first troop contribution was to the 1988 mission in Namibia. China endorsed all UN resolutions for a peacekeeping mission on African soil after 1999. This change was concomitant to shift in Chinese rhetoric from anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism to one of engagement (primarily economic) as part of its opening up policy.

It is also axiomatic that China's global political influence is waxing due to its contribution to global peace and security, which also places China as the 15th largest contributor to peace keeping worldwide and the largest contributor among the permanent members of the UNSC. China has been embracing the concept of change in in all ramifications of its survival. This is also manifest not only in the opening up, but in its perception of the use of force by peacekeepers: "in the 1980s China resisted the use of force under any circumstances, but the crises in Bosnia and Somalia forced it to change its stance and accept use of minimum force if peacekeeper or civilians are threatened, and by end of 1990s if the mission has a UN authorization" (Mulugeta and Liu, 2013).

Peace building for effective and sustainable governance from the Chinese perspective is more realistic when poverty is downgraded. Hence, China has been trying to build its economy and the economy of Africa, which is seen as a major priority for the two sides. China also operates based on the liberal teachings of non-interference and maintenance of global peace, which according to Mulugeta and Liu (2013):

China supports AU initiatives and practices, within the bounds of its non-interference principle and not engaging in the interventionist praxis of liberal peace-building. An alternative modality is presented in which China perceives peace as "a historical inevitability" to materialize after dealing with development challenges... China-Africa relations is a give-and-take process with each side having something to offer and receive...The APSA envisages operating independently with the support, not interference, of the international community. The very principle of the APSA is for the continent to do its homework by itself, and master the technique of "making peace



happen” in an African way. In this regard, and remembering the “regular interference” of the West in African countries, China seems to have offered a better alternative.

Political observers hold the belief that China will not be able to indefinitely apply the non-interference policy in the classical sense, because the non-interference principle is a product of global conditions of the past decades. In the coming one, China’s role in global affairs is expected to increase and this policy to evolve up to the demands of the time. The nature of Chinese involvement in governance in Africa has been named creative involvement (Wang, 2011) and constructive intervention. What has been highlighted is the ambiance of change in the interpretation of the non-interference principle by describing China’s response to the Arab Spring. It abstained during the approval of the No Fly Zone against Libya and vetoed sanctions against Syria four times and later constructively engaged with the respective countries. It is pertinent to note that both China and Africa recognize their relationship as “strategic” and value dearly non-interference in each other’s affairs. It should also be noted that, the Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security adopted in mid-2012 “seems to define the style and substance” of how China intends to constructively involve in African affairs within the wider framework of the non-interference principle (Mulugeta and Liu, 2013).

### **Security Partnership**

Peace and security cooperation is already one of the most important pillars of the comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership between China and Africa, and its significance is growing. The Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security (ICACPPS) launched at the 5th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in July 2012 is one major area of such strategic cooperation between the two sides. Peace and security cooperation was included in China’s first Africa policy white paper, issued in 2006. In a 2015 update, China said it will deepen military cooperation, help Africa secure peace and security and support African efforts to confront non-traditional security threats (Chun, 2016).

At the December 2015 FOCAC Summit in Johannesburg, China and Africa promised to implement the ICACPPS, support the building of a collective security mechanism in Africa, and jointly manage non-traditional security issues and global challenges. China-Africa peace and security cooperation is proceeding on bilateral, regional and international tracks. Bilaterally, China has close cooperation with those African countries with which it has diplomatic relations. Twenty-eight African countries have defence attachés in Beijing and China maintains 18 defence attaché offices in Africa. There is also a delegation of over 100 Chinese People’s Liberation Army officials in Tanzania to help it build military capacity. At the regional and continent-wide level, China has cooperated with a number of organisations, including the African Union, the East Africa Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community. One prominent example is China’s support for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development as the core platform for mediating in South Sudan’s civil war (Chun, 2016).

Multilaterally according to Chun (2016), China participates in various international efforts for improving African peace and security, for example, President Xi Jinping announced at the Johannesburg Summit that China will provide \$60 million in grants to support the building and operation of the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for the Immediate



Response to Crisis. "China will continue to participate in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and support African countries' capacity building in areas such as defence, counter-terrorism, riot prevention, customs and immigration control", he said. At the UN Peacekeeping Summit last September, Xi said China would also send the first peacekeeping helicopter squad to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, and announced \$100 million in military aid to support the AU.

On security cooperation, President Xi announced at the Johannesburg FOCAC summit that China will provide a total of 60 million U.S. dollars in free aid to the African Union (AU) to support the building and operation of the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crisis. "China will continue to participate in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and support African countries' capacity building in areas such as defense, counter-terrorism, riot prevention, customs and immigration control" (FOCAC, 2015). These are key areas through which the partnership between Africa and china will yield a positive result.

### **Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development**

Development is only obtainable when poverty is reduced to the lowest level and the society provides even development between the rural and urban areas. Dudley Seers in his discourses of development provides that, three questions have to be asked in order to understand a society is developed or not. The questions are: what happens to poverty, inequality and unemployment? China has been trying to deal with these questions as millions have been lifted out of poverty, equal opportunities are provided in education, employment, promotion and other relevant areas of social equality. This, china sees imperative to adopt in its partnership with Africa in making sure that Africa earns the same values. It is on poverty reduction that Xi made a position that China will launch 200 "Happy Life" projects and special programs focusing on women and children and cancel outstanding debts in the form of bilateral governmental zero-interest loans borrowed by the relevant least developed African countries that mature at the end of 2015.

For Africa to develop, women and children must be economically empowered just as president Xi Jinping highlighted above. Africa as engulfed in different forms of conflicts, terrorism and violence, if women and children are not supported, it is going to be a vicious circle of terrorism, conflict and violence.

According to David (2000), it was reported that one of the major causes of crime is an abused childhood. This encompasses a lot of variables ranging from child abuse itself, child poverty, juvenile delinquency, broken home, but most importantly according to David is fatherlessness. In 1983, the US Department of Health and Human Services found that 60% of child abuse is inflicted by mothers with sole custody of their children. Almost all of the rest comes from other members of her entourage, especially boyfriends and second husbands. The scourge of conflicts has made women widows and children orphans. David (2000) argues that, fatherlessness in children constitutes a major threat to the growth and development of children, which if not properly checked, may lead the children into committing crimes in the society as there is no proper agent for socialization that defines and enforces societal rules and regulations at primary level. Based on the research conducted on the relationship between fatherliness and crime, David (2000) wrote that:



- (i) 85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes (U.S. Center for Disease Control);
- (ii) 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes (U.S. Bureau of the Census);
- (iii) 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes
- (iv) 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes (U.S. Dept. of Justice, Special Report, Sept 1988);
- (v) 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home (Texas Dept. of Corrections 1992).

David (2000) also agreed that there is a drastic correlation between crime and fatherlessness from, from depression, suicide, dropping out of school, teenage pregnancy and drug use. Consequently, David (2000) concluded that, fatherless children are:

- (i) 5 times more likely to commit suicide;
- (ii) 32 times more likely to run away;
- (iii) 20 times more likely to have behavioural disorders;
- (iv) 14 times more likely to commit rape;
- (v) 9 times more likely to drop out of high school;
- (vi) 10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances;
- (vii) 9 times more likely to end up in a mental institution;
- (viii) 20 times more likely to end up in prison.

In order to help Africa, accelerate agricultural modernization China will carry out agricultural development projects in 100 African villages to raise rural living standards, send 30 teams of agricultural experts to Africa, and establish a "10+10" cooperation mechanism between Chinese and African agricultural research institutes. "China is greatly concerned about the poor harvest caused by El Nino in many African countries and will provide one billion Yuan (156 million dollars) of emergency food aid to the affected countries," he said (FOCAC, 2015).

It is discernible from the above that, it is without doubt that China is not only a friend to Africa, but a great partner for development. There is the need to synergize all efforts in making sure that these dreams become a reality.

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The paper has discussed the ambiance of China-Africa relations in the areas of governance, security, poverty and rural development. The paper deconstructs the idea of imperialism, colonialism or the domination of Africa by china in this era of mutual understanding and



liberalist approach to economic and political relations. Cooperation and partnerships are carried out with the purpose of achieving some designated goals, especially of growth and development. In such partnership, one party is willing to assist the other to achieve that goal and in the process, the assistant may also derive some benefits. This is done under the maxim of win-win situation which best describes China-Africa relations.

A shift in Chinese foreign policy of non-interference has already taken place using implicit strategy of creative involvement and constructive intervention, just as the shift in the policy of peace-keeping operation, where China rejected the use of force in the process. This was later changed to the use of limited force when the peace-keepers or civilians are threatened. Interference in a positive manner either in governance, security and poverty reduction if welcome by Africa is a good thing to embrace. Africa will never accept negative intervention at the detriment of its sovereignty and people. It should be noted that, history has shown that if states are in alliance, acceptable involvement and intervention only supports an ally in achieving significant goals. If not because of Russian intervention in Syria as accepted by the Assad regime, Syria would have been annihilated by divergently entangled forces; France intervene in keeping peace in Mali, Central Africa Republic and give supports to Francophone countries more than any other former colonial power in Africa. The United States supports South Korea, Japan, Philippines and other allies' all-over the world either militarily, economically and strategically. The Chinese intervention is not to make regimes change, but to aid in the defence of African sovereignty and personality; aid in the fight against terrorism and other related crimes as these are all considered in China-Africa partnership.

The traditional security area of intervention recognised by China also signifies little implicit change in the foreign policy direction, as hitherto, such intervention did not exist. The China-Africa alliance should be consolidated to a complete alliance (political, economic, security, education, military and cultural), which will make the two partners confident of unforeseen contingencies.

The First World War was fought in order to protect weaker allies (albeit the Chinese interest is not war, but political and peaceful solutions to conflict). The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was an intervention into the conflicting atmosphere of Europe, where France convened the conference, which served as a major intervener. The League of Nations though internationally recognised was able to solve many political crises among states, especially with the intervention of Great Britain and France. What should be noted here is that, whatever intervention that had taken place in Europe was in solidarity with European sisters' interest, and whatever intervention the Chinese would make in Africa, should also target her African sister' interest, with whom it shares the same identity, interest and ideas.

The contribution of China towards governance, security and poverty reduction in Africa is embracing by Africa and it wishes to make use of such partnership in achieving the desired objective of the partnership. China should consider more foreign policy shift of non-interference to a policy of more involvement especially in Africa in order to stand the test of contemporary world politics. China must ensure a peaceful Africa, only which can guarantee the future of Chinese investment in the continent and the relevance of the partnership to the two parties. Security must be consolidated to protect lives, property, investments and infrastructure. Failure to invest more in the security partnership may result in policy and cooperation fiasco. Development projects as envisaged by China should be feasible and





flexible to the consumption and sustenance of Africa. Africans must not completely rely and depend on china; it must be prepared to contribute to its own development by fighting corruption, providing scientific and technical knowledge, training of manpower, job creation and industrialization. From the above, Africa should be able to take off to the path of development.

## REFERENCES

- Adler-Karlsson, G. (1976): *The Political Economy of East-West-South Co-operation*. Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche: Studien über Wirtschafts- und Systemvergleiche, Band 7. Wien & New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Chun, Z. (2016): *Thinking Strategically on China-Africa Peace and Security*. FOE, 02 November.
- FOCAC (2016): *Xi Announces Ten Major China-Africa Cooperation Plans for Coming Three Years* 08 December.
- Lauri, S. (1990): *Political Theories of Development Cooperation: A Study of Theories of International Cooperation*. Wider Working Papers of World Institute of Development Economics Research of the United Nations University, July.
- Mulugeta, G.B. and Liu, H. ed, (2013): *China-Africa Relations: Governance, Peace and Security*. Addis Ababa, Institute for Peace and Security.
- Pearson, L.B. et al. (1969): *Partners in Development: Report of the Commission on International Development*. New York: Preager.
- Wang, Y. (2011): *Chuanzaoxing Jieru: Zhonguo Waijiao de Xinquxiang (Creative Involvement: A New Direction in China's Diplomacy)*. Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe.
- Zheng, Z. (2017): *Chairman's Address Submitted to the Editorial Body on the Company's Profile*. 26<sup>th</sup> October.