

China's Rising Roles in Africa's Socio-Economic Good: The Problems and Challenges

Chuka Enuka

Center for Contemporary International Relations, Jilin University, Changchun, Jilin, China

Abstract: The study examines the myriad roles and contributions of China to Africa's social and economic wellbeing within the parameters of the expanding Sino-African relationship. Arising from the age-long interaction between China and Africa has been trade and economic investments, aid, special concessions, debt relief, scholarships, provision of educational and medical training and building of infrastructural projects which flow mainly from China to Africa. This deepening engagement with Africa has generated an alarmist tendency in the international relations scholarship with arguments labeling the behaviour of China in Africa as a form of new colonialism and neo-imperialism but this study argues the opposite. The study posits that China's relationship with Africa has undeniable gains for the continent and has contributed to its socio-economic good. China's expanding engagement with Africa offers the continent, an ample opportunity for growth and progress.

Key words: Myriad, contributions, debt relief, colonialism, the continent, China

INTRODUCTION

The rise of China as a very visible actor in Africa is one of the most striking features of the first decade of the new millennium. During the forum on China-Africa Cooperation, a conference of heads of states from Africa in Beijing in November 2006, it became clear that China seeks deeper ties with Africa. The meeting was attended by 47 heads of state out of a total of 53 African countries that have diplomatic relations with China. It resulted in a plan pledging that China will double its aid to Africa and set up a China-Africa development fund to encourage Chinese companies to invest in Africa.

The Forum on China-Africa cooperation resulted in a 3 year action program. It promised among other things to train 15,000 African professionals and build 30 hospitals, malaria treatment centers and 100 rural schools (Dijk, 2009). The document is full of phrases expressing China's good intentions in Africa such as peace and development etc. Although, China's engagement with Africa has intensified in the recent years, the relationship has been age-long.

China's interaction with Africa goes far back in history and includes trade along the Silk road as well as Admiral Zeng He's travels to eastern Africa in the 15th century (Broadman, 2007; Rotberg, 2008; Taylor, 2006).

China's contemporary engagement with Africa has its roots in the mid 1950s notably in the Bandung conference where Asian and Africa states reinforced nonalignment and sought to promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation. Chinese premier Zhou Enlai's tour of 10

African countries between 1964 and 1965 offered support to Africa's people and leaders and Chinese overseas development assistance became a feature of relations focusing on infrastructure and technological development as well as student exchange visits. The most notable example of the cooperation was construction of the Tazara railway linking Zambia to the coastal port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and thus providing Zambia an alternative route to the sea (Foster *et al.*, 2009). With the taking off of Deng Xiaoping's reforms Sino-African cooperation became less prominent for some time but regained momentum in the 1990s.

President Jiang Zemin who toured Africa in May 1996 presented the 5 proposal points establishing the contours of a new relationship with Africa centering on a reliable friendship, sovereign equality, non-intervention, mutually beneficial development and international cooperation. In October 2000, the first Forum On China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was held in Beijing. The forum reached consensus on a wide range of issues and culminated in the adoption two policy documents: the Beijing declaration and the program of cooperation on economic and social development. The second FOCAC conference was held in October 2006 in Beijing marking the culmination of China's Year of Africa with >40 African heads of state in attendance. At this event, China pledged \$3 billion in preferential loans and \$2 billion in export credits to African states over the next 3 years, created a special fund of \$5 billion to encourage Chinese investment in Africa and established the China-Africa Joint chamber of commerce. This extensive engagement

by China with Africa and China's ascending status in the continent has aroused the hotly debated questions of what China's roles in Africa truly portend. Academic discourses and publications have inquisitively probed the disturbing question of whether the rapidly growing role of China in Africa is one of partnership and cooperation or more akin to neo-colonial patterns and reflective of a new imperialism.

The study weighs the benefits that assail China's involvement in Africa. It argues that though many challenges and negative incidents of China's presence in Africa have been chronicled, China's presence has nevertheless brought developments to Africa which in significant and constructive ways have impacted the continent's socio-economic well-being.

CHINA'S EXPANDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC ROLES IN AFRICA

Trade and investment: Beijing's extensive engagement and its ascending status in Africa have resulted in multifaceted roles in Africa which have been interpreted as positively impacting on the continent. One visible area of this engagement is trade. China's trade with Africa is growing at a breakneck pace. China's fast economic and industrial growth have generated increased thirst and demand for new sources of energy and other resources bringing China closer to Africa where the availability of these resources abound.

This situates China's renewed interest in Africa in the recent years. Of all natural resources that capture China's interest in Africa: oil, copper, iron ore, bauxite, uranium, aluminum, manganese, diamonds etc., the most important is oil (Broadman, 2007).

Oil makes up 62% of the total African exports to China with Angola supplying 47% of the total followed by Sudan supplying 25%, the DRC 13%, Equatorial Guinea 9% and Nigeria 3% (Broadman, 2007). China's trade with Africa has increased tremendously within a short period.

Trade has risen from \$2 bn in 1999 to \$11 bn in 2000, \$12 bn in 2002, \$18 bn in 2003, \$30 bn in 2004, \$40 bn in 2005, to \$50 bn in 2006 and extending to \$100 billion in 2008 (Alden, 2007; Chaponniere, 2009; Taylor, 2006; Hellstrom, 2009). China is the major purchaser of timber from West Africa. About 40% of Africa's total export to Asia are to China and about 30% of Asia's total exports to Africa are from China (Rotberg, 2008). China imports timber from Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and Liberia; cotton from Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon; copper from Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo; ferrochrome and platinum

from Zimbabwe; diamonds from South Africa; tin and tantalum from the Democratic Republic of Congo. To the above named countries, China supplies electronic goods, machinery, motorcycle, clothing, footwear and a host of additional low-value consumer items. China's share of Africa's total trade is rising and will soon eclipse America and European annual totals. The protagonists of China's growing development roles in Africa contend that China's demand for raw materials and energy enables the rich resources of Africa to be utilized fully benefiting both Chinese purchasers and African suppliers. This demand, it is argued has stimulated raw material prices, increasing the income of resource-rich countries in Africa and has accelerated African development, turning potential wealth into real wealth. Potentially, Chinese purchases and direct expenditures could lift key African countries out of poverty. Chinese demand for raw material resources has boosted rescued commodity-dependent economies like Zambia (Mingjiang, 2009). As Rotberg (2008) remarked never have the economies of sub-Saharan Africa grown so rapidly. China purchases Africa's unprocessed returns of the subsoil, the land and offshore drilling and offshore drilling and does also invest for the long term.

This expands Africa's permanent capacity in the mining and petroleum sectors. To service these extractive industries and manufacturing capabilities more generally, China also constructs or refurbishes roads and railways creates export processing zones, supplies equipment and builds up national industrial bases. China has become the largest new investor, trader and aid donor in a select number of important African countries and a major new economic force in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) between China and Africa is much more modest than trade but it is nevertheless increasing. While the United States and the European Union, Africa's traditional investors still account for the overwhelming stock of investment on the continent, the recent growth rate of China's FDI flows into Africa is remarkably high. Between 1990 and 2006, China's foreign Direct Investment (FDI) stock grew from <\$50-\$2.6 billion according to official data (Hellstrom, 2009). Almost 3 quarters of China's accumulated outward foreign direct investment in Africa is concentrated in 10 countries with five resource-rich nations at the top: Sudan, Zambia, Algeria, Nigeria and South Africa. The recent upsurge in Chinese FDI to Africa is important for several reasons. Firstly, it occurs in a period of decline of FDI to Africa. From early 1980s to mid 1990s, Africa experienced a process of marginalization, expressed as a decrease in investment and an increase in debts. Amidst undergoing structural adjustments due to pressure from the West Africa experienced massive withdrawal of foreign

companies. Anshan (2008) observed that 43 out of 139 British companies withdrew from Africa. Japan held a pessimistic view of the African situation and its companies in Kenya dropped from 15-2. Consequently, the total debt of Africa was mounting. Secondly, FDI is much needed for Africa to fill annual resource gap in order to meet the Millennium Development Goal. Thirdly, FDI is considered a stable source of finance since it has a long term goal. It usually brings technology and access to international markets.

Evidence suggests that Chinese FDI is qualitatively different from other sources of FDI into Africa (Dijk, 2009). It has been copiously essayed in scholarly reports that the investment of Chinese enterprises has promoted African industries and is breaking the long standing hold that the West has had over trade in commodities between Africa and the rest of the world (Anshan, 2008; Kurlantzick, 2009; Dijk, 2009; Brautigam, 2008). The most impressive demonstration of Chinese-African economic cooperation has been China's tariff relief for African exports.

This has led to increased trade between China and Africa which indicate the positive impact of the Chinese policy of promoting African exports to China. The original 199 zero-tariff African goods to China have increased to 454 types of goods from 26 of the least developed countries in Africa. China's entrance into Africa as an investor has not only promoted African industries but has equally fuelled the revival of a global interest in Africa because of high commodity prices. China's active involvement in Africa leaves key and powerful lessons of growth for the continent of Africa.

China emerged from colonial encroachment, internal chaos and economic destitution to achieve spectacular economic growth and infrastructure development. In the meantime, China can claim that it has achieved political stability and increasing international clout. In the past decades, its achievements have lifted over 200 million Chinese citizens out of poverty. Such national narrative has a powerful resonance in Africa.

Development assistance: The idea and practice of aid giving has been very obvious in Chinese relations with Africa. China's aid relations with Africa in the modern time stretches back to 1950s when China gave its support for revolutionary and independence movements in Africa. Although, China supported some of the independence movements, Chinese official aid to Africa began with a zero-interest loan extended to Guinea in 1960.

The establishment of diplomatic ties was normally accompanied by an offer of assistance, usually a zero interest credit made available for a specific number of

years and which could be drawn on to finance projects agreed on by both governments. One of the many such aid programs was the Tazara railway project that linked Zambia's copper mines through Tanzania to the coast enabling Zambia to avoid shipping its minerals through apartheid South Africa and White-run regime in what then was Rhodesia.

Built toward the end of the cultural revolution, a particularly harsh period of political mobilization in China the Tazara railway represents the signal achievement of China's African aid. China provides technical assistance, scholarships, medical missions and labour co-operation programs. Roughly 44% of China's ODA is distributed to Africa.

This can be compared to US 18% (Brautigam, 2009). China has established approximately 800 aid projects covering nearly every African country. Between 1960 and 1989, China provided an estimated cumulative sum of 4.7 billion US dollars to Africa, accounting for nearly a half of China's total aid flows worldwide for this period (Dijk, 2009). China's aid involvement in Africa increased from 2000 with the organization of the first China-Africa forum and the creation of a development fund to finance vocational training as well as the China-Africa Joint Business Council. On this occasion, China announced the cancellation of 1.2 billion US dollars of debt (Hellstrom, 2009).

At the summit of heads of state in October 2006, China announced the doubling of its aid between 2006 and 2009, the creation of a 5 billion US dollars fund comprising 3 billion dollars in soft loans, 2 billion US dollars in commercial loans and the training of 15,000 Africans. In addition, it announced the construction of several manufacturing free zones for Chinese investors. In May 2007, China hosted the annual African Development Bank conference in Shanghai where it made an additional 20 billion US dollars pledge for infrastructure development in Africa over the next 3 years (Bates *et al.*, 2007).

China's total assistance to Africa is difficult to quantify both because Beijing does not publish thorough official statistics and because it remains unclear what percentage of China's announced aid actually qualifies as aid under Development Assistance Committee definitions (Alden, 2007). Chinese aid is generally given through projects but can also be given as cash for direct budget support. Aid can also finance vehicles, equipment and material goods. Humanitarian aid is generally given in kind and China also has programs for trainings, scholarships, team doctors, debt relief and a new volunteer program. Chinese loans and credit lines are estimated to be about 19 billion US dollars (Hellstrom, 2009). A handful of oil and mineral exporters namely Angola, Equatorial Guinea,

Sudan, Republic of Congo and Nigeria are on the receiving end. Offering preferential loans to Africa is a means for Beijing to develop favourable long-term relations on the continent. Beijing proudly acknowledges its support for African economic development in terms of aid and investment in infrastructure and construction sectors. Official statements boast mutual benefit and win-win cooperation agreements with Africa. In addition, China is pioneering the establishment of special economic zones or export processing zones throughout sub-Saharan Africa. China's current prosperity can be traced in part to Shenzhen and other three special economic zones opened along the coastal regions in the 1980s. Drawing on this model, the Chinese government decided in the 11th 5 year plan (2006-2011) to establish at least ten industrial zones abroad as part of the Going Global strategy (Brautigam, 2008).

The goal is to attract foreign direct investment to the zones and to be the new growth nodes the drivers of the African economic forward surge. Each zone is to be linked to transport corridors or to be attached to thriving harbours. In both cases, infrastructural upgrading will be necessary with anticipated Chinese assistance. Indeed, China is already working to refurbish the poorly maintained and now dilapidated Tazara Railway from Dar es Salaam to Kapiri Mposhi and the long-abandoned Benguela rail line from the Congolese Copper-belt to Lobito on the Atlantic Ocean in Angola (Rotberg, 2008). This will have a positive impact on regional economic integration.

Perhaps even more important given the neglect of arteries of commerce throughout Africa in recent decades, Chinese action in these infrastructural areas could potentially prove enormously beneficial to Africans socially as well as economically. In Africa, the existing and contemplated zones presume customs duty waivers, preferential tax rates, flexible management and access to productive labour. They also imply technology transfer mostly from China.

The special zones are integral of China's grand plan for Africa and for the developing world at large. Such Chinese initiatives will potentially lift Africa's economic prospects and its GDP per capita faster and more completely than actions by other trading and investing partners or by international lending organizations.

Education: Since the establishment of relationship with Africa, China has contributed meaningfully to the growth and development of Africa's education using various means. In the early years of China-Africa interaction, China sent volunteer teachers to many African countries beginning with Egypt in 1954. The following years

witnessed an increase with teachers sent to many more African countries (Gillespie, 2001). In 2003, there were 238 teachers in >30 African countries who taught at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels (Anshan, 2008). By June 2004, the first Confucius Institute in Africa was planned for the University of Nairobi. Since then Confucius Institutes have been founded in Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and South Africa (Zuojun *et al.*, 2007). Likewise, the number of African students in China has been on the increase. At the time of the first FOCAC meeting in 2000 there were 1,388 African students in China. In 2005, the number was 2,757 (Anshan, 2008).

Besides the enrolment of African students in the universities in China, the government of China through the ministry of education and its universities holds seminars, training courses and symposia that concentrated on fields such as management capabilities, engineering skills and school administration. By the end of 2003, China had established about 53 educational and research programs in areas such as agriculture, Chinese medicine, long distance education and computer technology (Xiuqin, 2004).

Between 2002 and 2006, Jilin University trained 225 Africans in long-distance education. Northeastern Normal University also set up a base for training Africans. Since 2002, it has run seminars for over 200 administrators from >30 African countries. China Agricultural University also manages seminars that have trained up to 206 experts, scholars and officials from Africa. Through the Zhejiang Normal University, the Chinese Ministry of Education set up the first center for African Education Studies in China. Since 2002, the University has trained African teachers and administrators. As a response to the demands of the forum on China-Africa cooperation, Addis Ababa Action Plan, the Tianjin University was designated as the Ministry of Education assistance base for vocational education training programs. The university has trained >200 students from Africa and sent out 84 teachers in recent years to facilitate vocational education in African countries (Wang, 2005). The China International Poverty Alleviation Center, established in mid 2005 to strengthen international exchanges on poverty reduction and facilitate international collaboration on poverty reduction has hosted two 15 day training courses allowing visiting African officials to gain a first-hand understanding of China's poverty reduction programs in some of its poorest provinces. The Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture had also jointly sent five working groups to more than a dozen African countries to plan the establishment of Agricultural Technology Demonstration centers in order to enhance collaboration on seed production technologies, water-saving and biological

technologies in agriculture, food security and animal health and plant protection. Under the auspices of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC), China is committed to contributing to the development of human resources in Africa by establishing fund that is used by the Chinese ministry of education and Chinese Scholarship Council to train African personnel. Scholarships for over 1,500 African students are annually awarded by China. During the FOCAC Ministerial Conference that held in 2009 at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt, premier Wen Jiabao made an announcement of China's intention to build 50 China friendship schools and train 1,500 African school principals and teachers offer 5,500 Chinese scholarships to Africa by the year 2012 and train 20,000 professionals of various fields for Africa over the next 3 years.

Peace and security: Realizing the imperative for peace and knowing that prevalence of conflicts the way it has become in Africa does not mean well for the continents lacked but needed development, China has contributed in numerous increasing ways to curb the spate of devastating conflicts in Africa.

Chinese understanding of the nexus between conflict and economic retardation is manifested in its growing involvement in Africa's peace process and deployment of peacekeepers to Africa's troubled zones in order to restore calmness where chaos had reigned. China began in the early 1990s to send small numbers of personnel to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa.

The numbers started to increase significantly in 2001 when China sent more 200 troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo and soon followed this with other large contingents (Shinn, 2009). In 2007, Major-General Zhao Jingmin became the first Chinese to command a UN peacekeeping operation in the Western Sahara.

By the end of 2009, China had about 1,745 troops, police and observers assigned to six of the UN's seven peacekeeping operations in Africa. The largest units were in Liberia, Southern Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo. In all about 4000 Chinese peacekeeping troops have participated in seven UN missions on the continent of Africa (Alden, 2007).

The majority of Chinese peacekeepers are based in Africa making China the largest contributor of all the permanent member states of the UN Security Council to peacekeeping operations. Concurrently, China has also provided financial support to address the Darfur crisis. In 2006, Beijing announced the provision of 3.5 million US dollars in support of the African Union peacekeeping operations in that war-torn region. In addition, China deployed early in 2009 two destroyers including the

Wuhan, one of its most sophisticated warships and a supply ship to help combat Somali piracy in the Gulf of Aden (Shinn, 2009). Consistent with Beijing's reluctance to interfere in the affairs of a sovereign state, the composition of Chinese deployments is generally on the softer side of such military interventions. Of the total number of Chinese personnel contributing to missions around the globe, 5% are military observers, 14% are police and 81% are troops (Parenti, 2009). In Africa, the troop's component of China's contribution is even higher, at 91%. Troops carry out a variety of tasks and functions.

In addition to combat units tasked with defending UN installations and personnel as well as local civilians in immediate danger, this component includes enabling units such as engineers, logistics staff and medical personnel. Unlike the contingents of police and military observers which are composed of a mixture of personnel from all contributing countries, troops are deployed in their organic home units which leave the contributing countries with substantial influence on their deployment whereabouts and though rare, the ability to utilize those troops for projects other than those mandated by the mission (Levy, 2009). In Africa, the vast majority of China's peacekeeping troops fall within the category of enabling units. China's contribution to United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) consisted of a 315 member engineering contingent dispatched to help with the construction of camps, roads and bridges. Well diggers and relevant equipment were also sent by China to Darfur region to solve the problem of water shortage facing the hybrid African Union-United Nations force. Similarly, in Southern Sudan, China contributed to UN Mission in Sudan 460 engineers, transport experts and medical personnel. In all, according to the vice director of the Peacekeeping Affairs office of China's Ministry of National Defense, Wei Yanwei, Chinese peacekeepers worldwide have built or repaired >200 bridges and 7,500 km of roads, airports and water supply infrastructures and they have treated nearly 50,000 local patients. The pattern is similar in Liberia where China's 530 peacekeeping troops consist of engineering, transportation and medical staff.

Of the approximately 200 Chinese peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 175 were engineers and 40 medical personnel who provided applauded medical support in Central Africa. China has received widespread praise from African leaders, the UN and the United States for its willingness to send peacekeepers to the continent of Africa.

Health: Arising from the expanding China-African relationship has been a lot of health benefits to Africans. Since 1963 when China deployed its first medical team to Africa, nearly 20,000 medical personnel in 47 African

countries have been deployed. According to statistics from Chinese Ministry of Health, about 200 million patients in Africa have been treated by the Chinese medical personnel (Shinn, 2006). In 2006 there were >900 Chinese medical staff assigned to 94 hospitals and clinics in 34 African countries.

China's Gansu province for example has sent 14 medical aid teams to Madagascar since 1975, reportedly treating 12.7 million patients in Madagascar and nearby countries. Some 1,550 Chinese doctors have worked in Tanzania since 1964 and reportedly treated 3.3 million people.

Beginning from 1996, China began to send doctors from the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. A Chinese team of 11 members were deployed and have since then treated >17,000 patients conducted 3,000 operations provided emergency treatment to another 400 and trained 59 local doctors and nurses.

Chinese medical teams offer an array of medical specialties in addition to traditional medicine. The team of 27 that arrived in Mauritania included specialists in scanning, orthopaedics, epidemiology, gynaecology, surgery, ophthalmology, water chemistry, bacteriology and virology (Mingjiang, 2009). They often serve in rural areas, something that many African doctors do with great reluctance. China's medical cooperation with Africa over the years has included the construction of hospitals and clinics. Donations of medicine and medical equipment have become more important part of China's medical program. Recent examples include the donation of one million US dollars of a Chinese anti-tuberculosis drug and 50,000 US dollars worth of Cotecxin anti-malaria medication to Kenya (Shinn, 2006). Togo became a beneficiary of China's 100,000 dollars worth of medicine, to aid the country in fighting malaria, cholera and meningitis. On the list is also Burundi, 60,000 and Tanzania, 13,000 amongst plethora of other African states in battling the health challenges that bedevil the continent. It is worth mentioning that the government of China has a 40% share of an Ethiopian company that produces anti-retroviral drugs free of charge for HIV patients. The reality of Africa's health crisis situation situates the importance of China's enormous assistance. Africa faces a growing health care crisis.

Maternal mortality in Africa is twice the rate for developing countries. Most Africans die well before the age of 60. Africans comprise about 60% of the world's population living with HIV/AIDS. Some 90% of deaths due to malaria occur in Africa. In 2004, Africa accounted for the 99% of the cases of the 99% of deaths due to cholera (Ruchita, 2007). Africa faces a critical shortage of medical personnel on nearly all levels. Sub-Saharan Africa

has about one physician per 40,000 people. Malawi is at the bottom of the list with one physician to 100, 000 persons. Africa's rapidly expanding population and the brain drain of many African doctors and nurses to Europe, North America and Australia exacerbates the problem. This shocking revelation of Africa's health situation makes Chinese contributions to the continent very appreciable.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Some Western analysts have criticized China's developing relations with Africa as based purely on securing oil supplies and other natural resources which has led to claims that China supports authoritarian regimes at the expense of democracy and human rights (Princeton, 2005).

Brown and Sriram (2008) contended that Chinese behaviour and public stances legitimize human rights abuses and undemocratic practices under the guise of state sovereignty and noninterference. It is their position that China resisted United Nations sanctions against supplying weapons to Sudan, irrespective of the tenuous security situation of the country. Rotberg (2008) lent credence to the above argument by adding that politically, China has been supportive of Zimbabwe, shielding it from international opprobrium and binding UN sanctions.

There are many criticisms against China's absolute adherence to the principle of noninterference even in the face of human rights violations and political corruption in African countries but as Ansha (2007) points out, China does not consider itself qualified to make judgments on the domestic affairs of African countries and considers the African Union more qualified to do so. China's policy of noninterference does not equate to ignoring humanitarian disasters, rather China respects the sovereignty of nations and acknowledges its limits in solving such a crisis. On the issue of Darfur, China has consistently opposed economic sanctions on Sudan. China believes the Darfur issue is an issue related to development where sanctions would only bring more trouble to the region. China's aid targets the root cause of conflict-poverty.

China has aided infrastructure development such as schools, hospitals and water projects for Sudan. China has already given US\$10 million in humanitarian aid and promised to offer more (Anshan, 2008). China has used its ties with Sudan to persuade the Sudanese government to cooperate with the United Nations.

Since China has sought to alleviate the suffering of the Sudanese people with a solution agreeable to all parties, the Sudanese government trusts China. Recently,

the Sudanese government has accepted the hybrid peacekeeping force in Darfur. The turning point for the political process resulted from negotiations with the Sudanese government based on equality-not coercion or the threat of sanctions. China's aid practices in Africa have come under intense international scrutiny. China insists on extending aid without attaching conditions to it, in accordance with the second of its eight principles of foreign aid.

This has caused concern among international aid organizations which fear that such practices undermine their efforts to encourage reforms by attaching conditions to credit. The lack of conditions attached to aid such as democratic reform and adherence to human rights norms, differentiates Chinese assistance from that of the western countries. Other donor nations complain that it has become harder to bring about democratic change, including good governance due to China's no-strings-attached aid practices.

Critics also assert that Beijing's development assistance is closely linked to its trade and investment interests which is contradictory to existing lending practices set forth in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) agreements. In October 2006, World Bank president, Paul Wolfowitz accused China of not respecting the Equator principles when providing loans to Africa (Zhengxu and Seng, 2007). He labeled the loans as bad borrowing and stated that it will only fuel corruption, deepen Africa's debt problems and encourage more human rights abuses. Similarly, a report published in 2007 by the African Union and the UN Economic Commission pointed out that rising importance of China as a source of concessional loans for poor African countries had increased the risk of further debt accumulation (Chaponniere, 2009).

Concerns are expressed that China is opportunistic, extractive and exploitative (Rotberg, 2008). Particularly in the extractive industry and Africa's development future, the behaviour of China has been labeled a form of new colonialism and neo-imperialism (Naiadu, 2007).

Discontent communities in which Chinese enterprises operate, perceive the companies as not contributing enough to local economies and employment. Chinese entrepreneurs rarely employ local workers from Africa. They are rather accustomed to bringing labourers from China and most management positions are filled by Chinese nationals (Ansha, 2007). Importing Chinese labour to complete Chinese organized infrastructural and mining projects inhibits skill transfers and reduces indigenous employment growth. Africans and Westerners certainly complain. Examples of critique directed against China's role in Africa include is unfair competition by offering low-cost products. So many African markets are

flooded with Chinese goods which are often better of better quality and cheaper than local products. While some African consumers may be happy, parallel domestic industries especially textile industries suffer as a result. This fact is evidenced by the two mass demonstrations in Dakar, one in support of Chinese merchants, the other in opposition (Ansha, 2007). Similar protests have occurred in South Africa. In the case of South Africa, tensions dissipated when Sino-South African government discussions over the issue led China to unilaterally impose quotas upon its textile exports in order to allow the South African producers, time to make their products competitive.

As China increases its presence in Africa, it has been exposed to confrontations in form of riots, attacks and other forms of economically and politically motivated violence that has been directed at Chinese citizens and investments in Africa. This is partly explained by the fact that Chinese companies have been inclined to take bigger risks than their Western counterparts and even looking for business opportunities in locations left vacant by others (Hellstrom, 2009).

While Chinese investments and citizens are at times the victims of indiscriminate violence and crime in high-risk rates, they have also been consciously targeted in several situations. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in Nigeria has been conducting attacks against the government for years on the grounds that the oil producing areas do not receive a fair share of the oil revenue. MEND warned the Chinese and other foreigners against investing in the Niger Delta area. More than a dozen of Chinese nationals from a variety of Chinese companies were kidnapped eventually but were later released (Shinn, 2009; Naiadu, 2007).

Similar experiences have been the case in Southern Kordofan which borders Darfur where oil operations protected by Sudan's government have come under attack. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) seized Chinese oil facilities as a warning to China that its support for Khartoum should cease. Concern that China's interest in African resource extraction will increasingly become a source of conflict is receiving wider attention. The presence of Western powers has been felt in Africa-from the colonial legacy and their geo-strategic influence during the Cold War to the current advantage that their transnational corporations hold on the continent. Western countries still consider Africa in terms of their spheres of influence and China is usually considered as an external player in the region (Berger, 2006). As the Chinese presence in Africa spreads and deepens, it is increasingly likely that conflict between Chinese and Western interests will emerge particularly in the competition to secure energy supplies.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that China has a huge positive impact on the African continent, the influence of which spans the economic, social and political spheres. But at the same time, deepening involvement of China in Africa has generated an alarmist tendency in scholarship with arguments labeling the intentions of China imperialist. The incidents of China's negative influence on Africa may have been chronicled but there does not seem to be sufficient evidence for describing China as neo-colonialist in Africa.

China's multifaceted beneficial roles in Africa is premised and understood within the context of its position as a global South power which implies good will to Africa. The operationalization of China's South/Developing World policy in Africa is manifested on a variety of contributions towards Africa's socio-economic development. Within this framework, China is providing African nations with a friendship that helps them to broaden their prospects internationally and that might assist them in accelerating their own economic growth and development. Following the economic boom that accompanied China's reform since the recent decades, China's relationship with Africa became defined by that new reality. It became a win-win interaction where Africa has something to sell and China wants to buy. China's demand for raw materials and energy enables the rich resources of Africa to be fully utilized, benefiting both Chinese purchasers and African suppliers.

Chinese demand has stimulated raw material prices increasing the income of resource-rich African countries and accelerating African development. For example, Nigeria has paid off its outstanding loans; Sudan has gone from being a net oil importer to exporter. As a result of intensified trade links with China, Africa has enjoyed higher growth rates, better terms of trade, increased export volumes and high public revenue. The dynamics of this new phase of interaction between China and Africa is by many respects salutary to Africa's development.

The investment of over 800 Chinese enterprises has promoted African industries and is breaking the long standing hold that the West has had over trade in commodities between Africa and the rest of the world. Such investment is also enhancing the autonomy of African countries in production, sales and investment which offers Africa more opportunities in terms of market options, investment partners, product prices etc. Sino-African trade in resources has the potential to help Africa win greater and truer independence. More so, the emulative Chinese economic dynamism has the potential to catalyze new growth to fundamentally

transform the African economy. What has already begun to occur is a Chinese version of the East Asian development process is incorporating Africa into Asia as previously, Japan integrated Southeast Asian countries into Japan's flying goose pattern in which the leader pulls willing followers forward, creating economic tigers out of previously tortoise-like societies.

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