

**Focusing on New Dimensions of Growth and
Ushering in a New Stage for China-Africa
Cooperation**

—Keynote Speech by H.E. Ambassador-designate Chen
Xiaodong of China to South Africa at the Webinar on “New
Dimensions of China-Africa Development: Trade, Infrastructure
and the Fourth Industrial Revolution”

(Pretoria, October 13)

Honorable Mrs. Sidiropoulos, Chief Executive of the South
African Institute of International Affairs,

Distinguished representatives from think-tanks, media and
business communities,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Good morning,

Very glad to attend the webinar on “New Dimensions of
China-Africa Development: Trade, Infrastructure and the Fourth

hosted by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).

This is the first time for me to attend the event hosted by South African think tank since I assumed the post of the sixth Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of South Africa.

Here I would like to extend my sincere greetings to all friends who have care about and supported the growth of China-South Africa and China-Africa relations!

My colleagues told me that the SAIIA has been rated as the best think tank in sub-Saharan Africa for many years in a row. With strong research capability, SAIIA has launched a dedicated "China in Africa Project" since the mid-2000s, and continues to work on enhancing China - Africa relations across several thematic areas.

Mrs. Sidiropoulos, the chief executive of SAIIA, is a good friend of China. Mrs. Sidiropoulos has made positive contributions to enhancing China-South Africa and China-Africa friendship.

As a project sponsored by the China-Africa Joint Research and Exchange Program, this webinar once again demonstrates the close cooperation between our two sides.

The webinar on "New Dimensions of China-Africa Development: Trade, Infrastructure and the Fourth Industrial

Revolution” in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, addresses timely the core interests and major concerns of China-Africa cooperation.

This webinar brings the think tank scholars, media representatives and business elites from both China and Africa together. It serves as a platform for brainstorming, dialogue and offering insights for China-Africa cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before assuming the post as the new Chinese Ambassador to South Africa, I was the Assistant Foreign Minister covering African affairs. I saw for myself the fast and all-round progress of China-South Africa and China-Africa relations.

Now China-Africa comprehensive strategic partnership has entered a new era of win-win cooperation and common development. Our two sides are working together for a closer China-Africa community with a shared future.

China-Africa mutually beneficial cooperation has entered a new stage of transformation and upgrading, defined by a shift from government-led assistance to market-driven trade and enterprise investment, from general merchandise trade to production capacity cooperation and processing trade, and from project contracting to investment, construction , operation and

financial cooperation.

Trade and investment are brilliant achievements of China-Africa cooperation. China remains Africa's largest trading partner for 11 consecutive years. Two-way trade between China and Africa reached \$208.7 billion in 2019, 20 times that of the year of 2000.

China remains South Africa's largest trading partner for 11 years in a row and South Africa has been China's largest trading partner in Africa for 10 consecutive years, with two-way trade reaching \$42.46 billion in 2019.

South Africa is also the first African country to export beef to China, and China has become the largest consuming market for South African's beef.

At the first China International Import Expo, more than 200 enterprises from over 40 African countries showcased their products.

At the China International Fair for Trade in Services held in early September this year, the tourism products from Angola, Botswana and Rwanda attracted the attention of many Chinese tourists.

China now is opening wider to the outside world, while the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) covering a

market of 1.2 billion people and a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of more than US\$3.4 trillion enjoys huge potential for development. Against such background, China-Africa trade enjoys broad prospects.

China will continue to support African free trade zones, carry out Free Trade Agreements negotiations with African countries that are willing to cooperate with China, and increase imports of African products, especially non-resource goods.

The third China International Import Expo (CIIE) will be held from November 5 to 10. We look forward more products and enterprises from African countries at the upcoming CIIE.

In recent years, China's investment in Africa has increased steadily as well. Up to now, China's direct investment stock in Africa stands at \$110 billion. There are over 3,700 Chinese companies investing and doing business in Africa.

According to rough statistics, China's total investment in South Africa has exceeded \$25 billion, creating more than 400,000 local jobs.

Going forward, China will step up investment and cooperation with Africa in infrastructure, special economic zones and industrial parks, equipment manufacturing, industrial capacity, energy and resources development as well as financing cooperation, so as to help African countries better integrated into

global value and industrial chains.

Infrastructure remains as a strong cornerstone of China-Africa cooperation. Inadequate infrastructure is a major development bottleneck for African countries. Africa's average investment gap for infrastructure amounts to \$100 billion every year, and China has become the largest financier and contractor of Africa's infrastructure.

Over the years, China has helped build in Africa over 10,000 kilometers of roads, 6,000 kilometers of railways, more than 150 stadiums, conference centers and parliament buildings, more than 200 schools and 80 power plants or power stations as well as many airports and ports, benefiting almost all African countries.

Jointly advancing the Belt and Road Initiative has injected strong new momentum into China-Africa infrastructure cooperation.

So far, 44 African countries and the African Union have signed BRI cooperation documents with China. China's infrastructure projects have creates revenues of over US\$50 billion a year for African countries.

The Mombasa–Nairobi Railway has created nearly 50,000 jobs for the local people, driving Kenya's economic growth by about 1.5%, and making outstanding contributions to local

economic and social development.

Going forward, China is ready to work with Africa to formulate and implement the *China-Africa Infrastructure Cooperation Plan*, support African countries in making better use of such financing channels as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the New Development Bank and the Silk Road Fund, and support Chinese enterprises in participating in Africa's infrastructure development through investment-construction-operation and other models.

We will focus on strengthening cooperation in energy, transportation, information and communication technologies, and trans-boundary water resources. China and Africa will join hands to implement a number of key interconnectivity projects, We will support the implementation of the Single African Air Transportation Market.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is a brand new opportunity for China-Africa cooperation. In recent years, the Fourth Industrial Revolution represented by artificial intelligence, big data, and the Internet of Things are unfolding and growing rapidly around the world.

Africa is seizing the opportunity brought by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria and other African countries have incorporated the digital economy into their national development strategies.

South Africa has established the Fourth Industrial Revolution Presidential Committee chaired by President Ramaphosa. In the first quarter of this year, the number of registered users of mobile wallets in Nigerian payment company Paga increased by 3.3 times compared with the previous quarter. South African telecommunications company MTN achieved rapid growth in its business in the African market.

China-Africa cooperation in the digital economy has achieved gratifying results. 80% of Africa's backbone network infrastructure is built by Huawei and ZTE. ZTE's products and services have been distributed in 48 African countries. Alipay's mobile payment business has involved more than 10,000 merchants in South Africa. Huawei and Rain, a local mobile data network operator in South Africa, have released the first 5G commercial network in South Africa and built more than 1,000 base stations.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese companies used various digital cooperation platforms to help the export of African specialty products to China through online promotion conferences and live broadcasts.

Alibaba Group's Electronic World Trade Platform (eWTP) has enabled products from Ethiopia, Rwanda and other African countries to have direct access to Chinese consumers through cross-border e-commerce platforms.

In May this year, 3000 bags of Gorilla's Coffee of Rwanda were sold out in one second in the Taobao live broadcast.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has created tremendous opportunities and vast space for China-Africa cooperation. China is willing to work with Africa to expand cooperation in new infrastructure building such as 5G, big data centers, artificial intelligence, ultra-high voltage power transmission, and in new business forms such as digital economy, smart cities, clean energy, and e-commerce.

Our two sides shall conduct in-depth joint research, technical personnel training, and combat COVID-19 with science and technology so as to jointly build a Digital Silk Road that benefits the people's livelihood through win-win cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

President Xi Jinping and President Ramaphosa co-chaired the FOCAC Beijing Summit and successfully exchanged visits in 2018. In June this year, they co-hosted the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19 to explore ways for the growth of China-South Africa and China-Africa relations.

The South African government and enterprises support

China's COVID-19 response. The Chinese government and people from all walks of life have donated millions of rand, more than 6 million masks, hundreds of thousands of testing kits, ventilators, protective suits and other anti-pandemic supplies to South Africa. We will continue to provide new assistance in light of South Africa's needs in the future.

At the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19, President Xi Jinping proposed that China will continue to do whatever it can to support Africa's COVID-19 response. China will continue to help African countries by providing supplies and sending expert teams.

China will start ahead of schedule the construction of the Africa CDC headquarters this year. We pledge that once the development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccine is completed in China, African countries will be among the first to benefit. Now China is stepping up vaccine cooperation with Morocco, Egypt and other countries.

Meanwhile, on the basis of implementing the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and within the FOCAC framework, China has declared to cancel the debt of relevant African countries in the form of interest-free government loans that are due to mature by the end of 2020.

China also calls on multilateral financial institutions and

private creditors to increase support for African countries that are severely affected by the pandemic, including debt restructuring and further extension of the debt relief period.

China-Africa friendship and cooperation has emerged stronger from challenges and difficulties. However, certain forces with ulterior motives have kept fabricating the so-called "debt trap fallacy", "strategic asset plundering fallacy", "neocolonialism fallacy" and "palace diplomacy" to exert pressure on African countries and prevent their cooperation with China in 5G and other fields.

They attempt to drive a wedge between China and Africa and force Africa to take sides. All of their acts are attributed to Cold War mentality and the zero-sum game mindset. They run counter to the trend of the times and are doomed to fail.

We are glad to see that during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, the vast number of African countries represented by South Africa and Ethiopia serve as a staunch force in upholding multilateralism.

In the context of profound changes in the international situation and the COVID-19 pandemic unseen in a century, it is more imperative than ever for China and South Africa, China and Africa to strengthen solidarity and cooperation.

China and Africa must stay committed to the path of

multilateralism, jointly safeguard the UN-centered international system and the WTO-centered multilateral trading system, and take a clear-cut stand against unilateralism, protectionism, racism and bullying.

China has become the first country to bring COVID-19 under effective control and restore economic growth. We are now fostering a new economic dynamic with free flowing domestic circulation as the mainstay and mutually reinforced by international circulation.

Good results have been delivered in South Africa and Africa's COVID-19 response. The African countries are now promoting economic recovery. In light of the post-COVID-19 situation, China is ready to work with Africa to grasp the new dimensions of development and identify the areas for our cooperation, thus ushering in a new stage for China-Africa cooperation.

I wish this seminar a complete success!