



# *A Study on Status Assessment and Path Optimization for China-Africa Anti-poverty Cooperation*

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**Abstract:** Anti-Poverty has long been a major challenge facing both China and Africa. China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation has seen rapid progress since the founding of the People's Republic of China, particularly following reform and opening-up, acquiring some good practices and lessons. However, there have also been problems and new challenges. Based on a review and analysis of relevant domestic and foreign literature published in recent years, this paper provides a summary of the realities, achievements, difficulties and challenges facing the China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation. Then building on this, the authors offer some suggestions on top-level design, cooperation mechanisms, path optimization and safeguard measures in anti-poverty cooperation.

**Keywords:** China; Africa; anti-poverty cooperation; status; path optimization

**P**overty is a recurring theme in human society and the primary challenge facing social development. At present, there remain 700 million people living in extreme poverty worldwide, of which half are living in sub-Saharan Africa. Africa is home to 33 of the 50 poorest countries and nine out of the 10 nations with the lowest GDP per capita. According to a report by the World Bank, in

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the past 25 years, despite of assistance from developed countries including the U.S., Canada and Japan, and newly industrialized countries including China, India and Brazil and the fact that the African economy did grow considerably, impoverished populations on this continent still increased by 100 million to 388 million (poverty line: people living on less than USD 1.9 a day).<sup>①</sup> Thus, Africa still has a long way to go in its anti-poverty cause. Its failure or success is also directly related to the accomplishment of the poverty reduction goals set by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

China has been an active advocate and vigorous promoter of world poverty reduction. Since the founding of the PRC and reform and opening-up, China has impressed the world in poverty alleviation and development, lifting more than 700 million people out of poverty. Tapping into Chinese wisdom, China has contributed to and offered valuable lessons for world anti-poverty practices. Ms. Helen Clark,<sup>②</sup> Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), spoke highly of China's great contribution to world poverty reduction as part of the MDGs. The World Bank<sup>③</sup> recognized that the impressive results of China's poverty reduction efforts drove the drop in the world's impoverished population. African Union (AU) leaders<sup>④</sup> remarked that China's experience in poverty elimination offered valuable lessons to Africa and the wider international community.

Undoubtedly, China is a big developing country and both China and African countries are seeking transformation in their development modes. Developing the economy and getting rid of poverty are shared historic responsibilities for the two parties. Effective anti-poverty efforts for accelerated poverty elimination are a shared ages-old dream of Chinese and African people. Over the past decades, following the principles of equal treatment, mutual support, autonomy and common development<sup>⑤</sup> and facilitated by leaders on both sides, China and Africa have seen the "10 major programs" implemented as planned, increasing cooperation projects and evolving modes of anti-poverty cooperation. These efforts have benefited millions of people, seen vibrant, good results and won wide praise from African countries and people. However, problems also arose in the process, such as a lack of cohesion in cooperation consensus, a lack of coordination in project selection on a country-specific basis, poor funding arrangements, a lack of clear-cut direction in cooperation, poor access to bilateral cooperation channels, and weak cooperation mechanisms, platform construction and organizational building of joint committees. Therefore, circumstances require an objective analysis of the reality of joint anti-poverty efforts within the larger framework of China-Africa cooperation, an assessment of the current status of bilateral or multilateral anti-poverty efforts, and local-specific anti-poverty road maps that draw upon China's experience in poverty alleviation and optimization of approaches to anti-poverty cooperation. All these are of important and practical significance to reinventing cooperation modes, improving the benefits of anti-poverty efforts, contributing to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and working together to create a community with a shared future for mankind.

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① Africa has 100 million more poverty-stricken population since 1990., 2015, October 28.

② The success of Chinese poverty alleviation serves as a valuable experience for the whole world, 2015, June 27.

③ Huang Chengwei: Providing Chinese solutions for global poverty control, n.d.

④ Studying up and out of poverty with African friends (authoritative forum), n.d.

⑤ Li, 2011.

## 1. Practical conditions for anti-poverty cooperation between China and African countries

### 1.1 The long history of China-Africa cooperation and anti-poverty efforts

Modern China-Africa cooperation can be dated back to the early days following the founding of the PRC. As early as 1956, China had put assistance to Africa, then at the height of its independence and liberation movements, on its agenda.<sup>①</sup> Though China had a whole country to rebuild, it did all within its power to help African countries rid themselves of economic dependence on their colonial masters. Early China-Africa cooperation featured heavily unilateral aid provided by China, mostly out of political considerations rather than economic calculations. Nevertheless, China's assistance to Africa was in fact anti-poverty cooperation because then African countries were in poverty as a result of long years under Western colonial rule. By 1964, following Premier Zhou Enlai's visit to African countries, China's assistance to Africa saw new changes. The two sides established the Eight Principles of Foreign Economic and Technological Assistance, shaping a rather complete and clear policy. In particular, with the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway and the sending of Chinese medical aid teams to Africa, China-Africa cooperation opened a new horizon, with modes of cooperation continuously evolving, with projects covering industry, agriculture, education, health care and other sectors, and the scale of cooperation expanding.<sup>②</sup> According to statistics, over the 20 years from 1956 to 1976, China provided assistance worth USD 21.736 billion to 38 African countries. Such assistance has beyond doubt helped these countries cement their fruits of independence and facilitated economic and social development,<sup>③</sup> which in turn helped part of the population shake off poverty. In 1964 alone, China provided USD 22.40 million of loans to Ghana, economic loans totaling USD 47.60 million to Sudan, interest-free loans and commodity credits totaling USD 25 million to central African countries, and long-term interest-free loans of USD 15.20 million and USD 2.80 million of grants to Kenya.<sup>④</sup> Various kinds of assistance and aid China provided to Africa undoubtedly facilitated local economic and social development, enabling more impoverished people to benefit from development dividends.

Following China's reform and opening-up, as the international landscape changed and the Cold War ended, China-Africa cooperation strategies adjusted accordingly, gradually changing in three aspects, i.e., from emphasis to downplaying in ideology, from singularity to diversity in fields of exchange, and from focus on economic assistance to mutual benefit and win-win results in the nature of cooperation.<sup>⑤</sup> Four principles were established, i.e., equality and mutual benefit, pursuing practical results, adopting various ways and seeking common development. The mode of assistance changed from the original "selfless cooperation" to "mutually beneficial cooperation." The ways of cooperation evolved continuously to give rise to diverse modes such as government subsidized concessional loans concerning people's livelihood, humanitarian aid, joint investments in foreign aid projects, and funding international and multilateral organizations. These developments marked the fact that China-Africa cooperation had stepped into a new

① The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2011, April 21.

② Li, 2015.

③ Xue, 2013.

④ Jiang, 2016.

⑤ Xu, 2010.

historic stage.

Into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as China's economic strength grew and international landscapes reshuffled, China-Africa cooperation deepened and widened, which culminated in the founding of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, ushering China-Africa cooperation into a brand-new stage. China's assistance to Africa has increasingly expanded and diversified with more flexible and mature mechanisms, better approaches to aid projects, and increased humanitarian aid for emergencies. China has assumed its responsibility on the international stage in various aspects, winning wide praise from African countries and their peoples. In terms of project selection, China prioritized those designed to meet national development needs and strengthen the independent development capability of recipients. It can be said that China's assistance shaped closer China-Africa relations, facilitated the economic development of recipients, and contributed greatly to poverty reduction in African countries and the wider world.<sup>①</sup> Currently, the FOCAC rotated between China and Africa every three years, with increasing influence. The Forum also saw its membership expand from the original 44 nations to 50, with cooperation covering diverse sectors including agriculture, environmental protection, investment promotion, debt relief, wider market access, climate change, scientific and technological cooperation, health care, education and people-to-people exchanges.<sup>②</sup> Cooperation projects became diverse and pragmatic, generating better results. As of 2015, in the agricultural sector alone, China had implemented 22 agricultural demonstration center aid projects in poor African countries such as Benin, Namibia, Mozambique, etc. China has sent more than 10,000 agricultural experts to Africa and every year organized 10 agricultural training classes. Such projects greatly elevated the level of "African farming" and increased the farming area. "Chinese solutions" solved difficulties in agricultural produce sales while "Chinese models" boosted grain security. All these helped increase the pace of agricultural modernization and rural poverty relief in Africa. Meanwhile, Chinese businesses invested in and cooperated with African players in large-scale agricultural planting, husbandry, aquaculture, marine fisheries, and processing of agricultural, husbandry and fishery products. Such projects not only benefited China but also transferred technology to Africa, cultivated the local workforce, helped increase grain yields and addressed the livelihood and employment of local people.<sup>③</sup> China-Africa agricultural cooperation reflected the strength of anti-poverty efforts on the one hand, and showed China's positive stance in assuming its responsibility as a big country on the other. Such cooperation won wide acclaim from African countries, increased popular support for China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation and created a good social environment for further cooperation and win-win results.

### **1.2 Complementary resources of China and Africa for the benefit of economic development and people's livelihood**

In today's world, the distribution and possession of resources vary greatly from country to country. This creates favorable conditions for countries to engage in bilateral or multilateral cooperation by leveraging their respective advantages. Africa boasts rich natural resources, including a diversity of proven mineral resources with huge reserves and extremely abundant oil and natural gas resources. As of the end of 2014, Africa

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① Chen, 2009.

② Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Introduction to Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, n.d.

③ Zhang et al., n.d.

recorded 14.2 trillion cubic meters of proven oil reserves, or 7.13% of the world's total, and 14.2 trillion cubic meters of natural gas proven reserves, or 7.6% of the world's total. African crude oil production has reached approximately 10 million barrels per day, accounting for 12% of world's total, which is expected to increase to 15% by 2020 when most of the oil produced in Africa will be exported.<sup>①</sup> The development of energy and mineral resources has become a major driver for economic growth in most African countries. However, given the backwardness of resource mining and processing technology, African countries' ability to transform their resource advantages into drivers of economic growth is limited. In contrast, after four decades of rapid growth since reform and opening-up, China has gone from strength to strength in both economic power and science and technology and accumulated extensive experience in resource transformation and utilization. Strengthening China-Africa cooperation in resource exploitation can not only help African countries develop industrial chains that integrate resources from upstream to downstream, but also help translate their resource advantages into an inherent driving force for economic development.<sup>②</sup> Further, the lagging infrastructure development and poor agricultural technology severely constrain the transformation of resources and the lifting out of poverty of impoverished populations. In comparison, China has acquired mature experience in infrastructure development, technology and equipment, agricultural technology and other fields thanks to 40 years of rapid growth since reform and opening-up. Therefore, China can relocate its production capacity through product exports or industrial relocation to facilitate China-Africa cooperation. This on the one hand can accelerate Africa's infrastructure development in transport, energy and information technology and speed up the flow of resources, goods, information and capital. On the other, such cooperation facilitates alignment with the rest of the world, pushes ahead agricultural modernization, increases jobs and lifts more people out of poverty.

For China, following a dozen years of break-neck growth, the Chinese economy now faces challenges such as a slowdown and lack of driving forces. So, China is in urgent need of creating new drivers for economic growth through industrial upgrading, international capacity cooperation and other means. By contrast, though Africa boasts abundant labor resources, its industrialization progresses slowly and its industrial foundation is weak. As a result, Africa is unable to transform its labor into a growth driver, giving rise to a large number of idle labors and a huge impoverished population. Through capacity cooperation with Africa, China can relocate its excess capacity in steel and cement, among others, and labor-intensive industries such as large-scale infrastructure development and manufacturing to Africa. This will drive Africa to become the next destination of "industrial drift." By developing labor-intensive industries that provide a large number of jobs, Africa can step up its industrialization and urbanization, create more jobs, enhance its ability to develop organically, and stimulate its inherent driving force for getting rid of poverty. Objectively speaking, such complementary and reciprocal cooperation can facilitate China's industrial upgrading and transition and solidly drive for high-quality development of the Chinese economy. It can also help Africa transform its resources into productivity to drive economic growth, create more wealth for the benefit of its general public and help the impoverished shake off poverty.

### **1.3 China's experience in poverty alleviation in reference to anti-poverty cooperation with Africa**

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① Zou, 2016.

② Li, 2015.

Since the founding of the PRC and reform and opening-up, the CPC has led the Chinese people on an arduous struggle against poverty and backwardness. Over time, China managed to generate high-speed economic growth, with its GDP per capita up from USD 210 in 1979 to USD 8,016 in 2015.<sup>①</sup> China has emerged as the world's second largest economy and lifted more than 700 million people out of poverty, contributing to at least 70% of world poverty reduction.<sup>②</sup> In its long-term poverty alleviation and development efforts, China explored and developed a variety of mature theories and models, such as combining rural poverty alleviation and development with national overall development strategies and grassroots Party building in rural areas, combining the feeding of impoverished people with comprehensive development of impoverished areas, combining government's leading role with social engagement, combining government-led poverty relief with self-reliance of the impoverished population, etc.<sup>③</sup> China also adopted "targeted" models including poverty alleviation through developing local industries, relocating people from impoverished areas, ecological compensation, education support, and policy guarantees. All these efforts have won wide praise from the international community. For example, Ms. Helen Clark,<sup>④</sup> former UNDP administrator, spoke highly of China's poverty reduction, saying, "China is experiencing poverty reduction at a speed and scale that is unprecedented in human history!" Bert Hofman, the World Bank's Country Director for China, Mongolia and South Korea, remarked that China has achieved phenomenal success in reducing poverty, the fastest rate of poverty reduction ever recorded in human history. China has made a remarkable contribution to world poverty reduction.

Pietro Sebastiani, Director General for Development Cooperation at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, praised China's efforts in facilitating South-South cooperation and establishing long-standing cooperation mechanisms with impoverished areas including Africa, and expected China to work with the rest of the world in world poverty relief and offer Chinese solutions to global poverty governance. Idriss Déby, President of Chad<sup>⑤</sup> commended China as a paragon in poverty alleviation success. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC)<sup>⑥</sup> highly appreciated that China's development experience was valuable to the entire world, particularly regions eager to promote economic and social development such as Africa. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres<sup>⑦</sup> believed that what China had achieved in reducing poverty has a positive "spillover effect" on the rest of the world. In this light, if China shares its successful experience and models learned in long years of poverty reduction and development through bilateral or multilateral cooperation on a targeted and tactical basis for the benefit of African anti-poverty practices, and facilitates its localization, then it will without doubt help China and Africa avoid risks in anti-poverty cooperation, improve the benefits of poverty alleviation, push Africa forward in its poverty elimination, and truly enable "Chinese wisdom," "Chinese experience" and "Chinese solutions" to benefit more African people living in poverty in the process.

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① Li et al., 2016.

② The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China. (n.d).

③ Han & He, 2006.

④ Gansu Finance Department, n.d.

⑤ China.com.cn. China Development Gateway, n.d.

⑥ Chadian President Idriss Deby: China's success has set a model for Us, 2015, October 16.

⑦ Xin, 2017, August 18.

## 2. Overall evaluation of the current status of China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation

### 2.1 Continued achievements

#### 2.1.1 Clear-cut top-level design

Top design serves as a guide to sound anti-poverty cooperation between China and Africa. Into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the two sides put top design of anti-poverty in a very prominent position considering experience and lessons learned in anti-poverty cooperation over the past decades, rolling out a succession of programmatic documents. First, when visiting Africa in 2014, Premier Li Keqiang put forward the “461 Framework” top design. This top design sets out the specifics of China-Africa cooperation, including high-speed rail, expressways and regional aviation networks and resets cooperation goals to build upgraded China-Africa relations.<sup>①</sup> Also, the two sides jointly issued the *Programme for Strengthening Cooperation on Poverty Reduction between the People’s Republic of China and the African Union*, placing health care, agriculture and job creation at important positions in China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation. New ideas were added from poverty reduction goals to specific measures to accomplish the same. The Programme became a programmatic document guiding future China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation. Second, at the FOCAC Summit and the sixth Ministerial Conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa in December 2015, President Xi Jinping systematically interpreted China’s new ideas, concepts, policies and initiatives regarding China-Africa relations and portrayed a new blueprint featuring “1+5+10” China-Africa cooperative development<sup>②</sup> including anti-poverty as an integral part of China-Africa cooperation. Cooperation Plan for Poverty Reduction and People’s Welfare between China and Africa was developed, setting out new measures in anti-poverty cooperation. All such programmatic documents undoubtedly made clearer the direction of China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation at the top design level.

#### 2.1.2 Widened areas of cooperation

China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation has deepened and widened as international circumstances changed and explored and reinvented diverse paths in this process. First, in terms of infrastructure development, the two sides have always given high priority to key livelihood projects in such sectors as transport, communications, water, power, energy, etc.<sup>③</sup> Western countries have long attributed African poverty to institutional deficiencies. As a result, they follow the assistance principle of placing “democratic” systems and institutions ahead of market construction.<sup>④</sup> However, the backward infrastructure severely constrained and impeded the development of African economies, leading to worse poverty and increasing impoverished populations instead. In contrast, in China-Africa cooperation, in light of the practical needs of African countries to improve infrastructure and facilitate the flow of people and goods, China addresses what Africa needs the most and has always implemented infrastructure development as a priority.<sup>⑤</sup> Particularly, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China-Africa cooperation moved onto a fast track, reaping a number

① Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, n.d.

② Forum on China–Africa Cooperation. Map out a new blueprint for China–Africa cooperation, n.d.

③ Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, n.d.

④ Richter, S., 2012, September 3.

⑤ Forum on China–Africa cooperation. Former President of Cape Verde: Africa needs a safe and reliable partner like China, n.d.

of results. For example, in February 2015, the Benguela Railway, a 1,344 km railway built by China and running through Angola, was completed and opened. In April 2016, the Kigamboni Bridge in Tanzania, billed as the “First of its Kind in East Africa” and jointly built by China Railway Construction Engineering Group and China Railway Major Bridge Engineering Group Co., Ltd., was completed and put into service. In September 2016, a 50MW solar PV power plant project in Garissa, Kenya, the largest PV power plant built by China in East Africa, was officially launched. In 2017, the Djibouti section of the Addis Ababa–Djibouti Railway, built and operated by Chinese businesses, was put into use. All such major infrastructure projects greatly accelerated the connectivity between African countries, helped improve their ability to translate resources, created new jobs, and served as a strong driving force to lift tens of thousands of impoverished people out of poverty.

Second, though having abundant resources, Africa lacks the ability to translate these resources. While fast-growing China constitutes a huge market of resources consumption. Speeding up the pace of translating sleeping resources into wealth through strengthened bilateral trade will, beyond a doubt, create more welfare benefits, enabling a group of people to rid themselves of poverty through inclusive development. On the one hand, the manufacturing sectors of most African countries lag extremely behind, while Chinese goods, with their cheap price and varieties, effectively fill such a gap to meet the needs of impoverished populations in wider Africa to improve their standard of living. On the other, machinery equipment China exports to African countries effectively drives the development of the African manufacturing sector, greatly enhancing the total factor productivity of local businesses. In return, natural resources such as oil and minerals China imports from Africa to an extent help ease energy shortage, among other problems, facing China in the process of its rapid growth. In recent years, import and export trade between China and Africa remained at a high level (Table 1). According to statistics, total imports and exports between China and Africa posted USD 149.12 billion in 2016, including Chinese exports to Africa totaling USD 92.22 billion and Chinese imports from Africa totaling USD 56.90 billion. South Africa has been China’s biggest trade partner in Africa for seven consecutive years, while China has been South Africa’s biggest trade partner, export market and origin of imports for eight consecutive years. The “Three Giants of East Africa,” three countries with the best development momentum, all ranked among the top 10 trade partners of China in Africa in 2016.<sup>①</sup> China-Africa trade cooperation increased the exchange of goods between the two sides, gave the impoverished population access to daily necessities and improved their quality of life. Increased trade also facilitated the development of the services sector, created jobs and widened sources of income.

Table 1 China–Africa Import and Export Trades, 2010–2015

Unit: 10,000 USD

Year	Total imports & exports	Total imports & exports	Total imports & exports
2010	12 704 602	5 995 405	6 709 196
2011	16 632 289	7 308 303	9 323 987
2012	19 856 125	8 531 061	11 325 064
2013	21 025 408	9 279 937	11 745 472

① Forum on China–Africa Cooperation, n.d.

Year	Total imports & exports	Total imports & exports	Total imports & exports
2014	22 166 613	10 603 475	11 563 138
2015	17 879 878	10 854 050	7 025 827

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, <http://www.stats.gov.cn/>

Third, investment, export and consumption constitute the “troika” that drives economic growth, while foreign investment is an important part of China’s “Go Global” strategy. Foreign investment can help China expand the size of foreign trade, enabling China to gain more weight in the system of international division of labor. Also, through cross-border flow of capital for optimized labor capital ratios, foreign investment drives domestic employment, creating more jobs for the impoverished population at home,<sup>①</sup> while helping African countries create jobs, thus helping more people shed poverty through economic development. Since reform and opening-up, while absorbing foreign capital, China has also strongly recommended Chinese businesses with good financial standing and credibility to open factories or engage in diverse forms of cooperation in Africa. For this purpose, in 2007, the Chinese government set up the China-Africa Development Fund to encourage Chinese businesses to invest in Africa. Beginning in 2010, Chinese investment in Africa has been steadily growing, with the stock of Chinese FDI in Africa exceeding USD 34.69 billion (Table 2).

Table 2 Chinese FDI in Africa

Unit: 10,000 USD

Year	Chinese FDI in Africa, net	Chinese FDI in Africa, stock
2010	211 199	1 304 212
2011	317 314	1 624 432
2012	251 666	2 172 971
2013	337 064	2 618 577
2014	320 192	3 235 007
2015	297 792	3 469 440

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, <http://www.stats.gov.cn/>

In addition, according to statistics of the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), China’s non-financial FDI flow in Africa in 2016 totaled USD 3.3 billion, up 14% year on year.<sup>②</sup> As the development of both sides’ step into new stages and China-Africa cooperation deepens, China-Africa economic and trade cooperation has also seen new features, such as the shift away from government aid towards business investing and financing and investment cooperation gradually emerging as the predominant mode of China-Africa cooperation. In 2014, total trades between the two sides and the stock of Chinese non-financial FDI in Africa were 22 and 60 times respectively of those in 2000. By the end of July 2016, FDI and commercial loans between the two sides posted USD 46.553 billion, or 91.73% of total amount of agreements signed by the two sides.<sup>③</sup> As of February 2017, the China-Africa Development Fund alone had cumulatively invested more than USD 4 billion in 89 projects in 36 African countries, covering key sectors such as capacity cooperation,

① Jiang & Wang, 2012.

② Ministry of Commerce, People’s Republic of China, 2017.

③ Forum on China–Africa Cooperation. Director–General for African Affairs at the Chinese Foreign Ministry: New Trends in the Development of China–Africa Cooperation, n.d.

infrastructure, energy and minerals, and agriculture and people's livelihood. These investment projects enabled Chinese businesses to enter the African market and take root,<sup>①</sup> and greatly facilitated social and economic development by creating a large number of inclusive jobs and widening sources of income for the impoverished populations. For example, the Oriental Industrial Park China set up in Ethiopia quickly pooled together production factors to develop local specialty industries, helping local employment. More than 4,000 young people from impoverished rural areas who had not even attended high school not only found jobs in the park, but also learned managerial skills<sup>②</sup> and have led decent lives ever since.

Pushed by governments from two sides, Africa has become the second largest project contracting market and investment target of Chinese businesses in the international arena.<sup>③</sup> China-Africa investment cooperation has played a positive role in facilitating anti-poverty cooperation between the two sides.

Fourth, the vast majority of impoverished populations in Africa live in vast rural areas. So, agricultural cooperation is critical to the anti-poverty cause. Given Africa's slow industrialization progress, low urbanization rate, scattered populations in rural areas and the high incidence of poverty, China-Africa cooperation has always placed agricultural cooperation at a prominent position. As of 2016, China had assisted 21 African countries in establishing 22 agricultural technology demonstration centers, sent 103 senior agricultural experts and 50 agricultural expert teams to Africa, and offered access to training in China for more than 3,500 agricultural officials and technicians from African countries.<sup>④</sup> Despite of its vast territory and rich agricultural resources, Africa's extensive agricultural production leads to low yields in produce, severe grain shortages, and many problems in grain security and supply guarantees. Considering this, Chinese businesses embed their own experience in African agricultural production on a tailored basis to help improve Africa's agricultural productivity through selection of varieties for farming and husbandry, development of agricultural infrastructure, introduction of high-tech equipment, agricultural technical assistance, and improved methods of produce marketing. Chinese wisdom and solutions contribute a lot to poverty reduction in African rural areas.

Fifth, poverty alleviation requires the support of education. Poverty alleviation through education plays an important role in China-Africa cooperation. In this light, the Chinese government has rolled out a succession of policies and cooperation programs to facilitate multiple levels, fields and forms of education cooperation by various means such as assisting Africa to build schools, training school presidents and faculty, mutually sending students overseas, granting scholarships, strengthening vocational and technical education, training high-end professionals in various fields, etc. For example, at the FOCAC Summit and the sixth Ministerial Conference held in Johannesburg in 2015, the Chinese side explicitly put forward the idea of making education and human resource development a priority of China-Africa cooperation, to address the bottleneck of talent shortage that constrained the sustainable development of Africa. Specific measures included: 1) a series of measures such as offering diploma and degree programs and setting up scholarships to help Africa cultivate talents for economic development and technical and managerial professionals; 2) cultivating high-level public servants for Africa leveraging South-South cooperation and development

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① China-Africa Development Fund. Recruitment Notification 2017 of China-Africa Development Fund, n.d.

② CCTV.com, n.d.

③ Li, 2016.

④ Zhang, 2016.

institute platforms; 3) effectively implementing the “China-Africa Inter-university 20+20 Cooperation Program” to facilitate the establishment of inter-university cooperation mechanisms between China and Africa; 4) improving existing and establishing new vocational training centers to provide greater access to training in China and help African youth and women improve their job skills; 5) helping Africa cultivate professionals in poverty reduction and development by offering seminars on poverty reduction policies and practices and offering such degree education programs. These specific measures for the benefit of African talent cultivation are designed to help improve higher education in Africa, increase education coverage to offer greater access to education for the impoverished African population, train more local employees, and enable them to escape poverty on their own.

As China-Africa cooperation in general and on anti-poverty in particular deepens, the two sides see more innovative modes of cooperation and wider areas of cooperation. At the FOCAC Poverty Reduction and Development Conference held in Shanghai on September 20, 2016, “capacity cooperation” was made the new theme of China-Africa cooperation on poverty reduction and development. This was intended to accelerate Africa’s agricultural modernization and industrialization through bilateral cooperation, so as to reduce poverty. In September 2017, a forum hosted by Mauritius explicitly floated the idea of fully leveraging the role of the FOCAC Poverty Reduction and Development Conference in international poverty reduction and exchange under the Belt and Road Initiative, with a view to suggesting measures to increase the well-being of Chinese and African peoples, facilitating better alignment of the “Ten Key Cooperation Plans,” including Cooperation Plan for Poverty Reduction and People’s Welfare between China and Africa, with the Africa Unions Agenda 2063, supporting Africa’s economic development, employment and poverty elimination, promoting inclusive and broad-based growth, and enabling the impoverished population to enjoy visible and tangible benefits of development.

Since 2010, the China-Africa Poverty Reduction and Development Conference, already held for seven years, has been focusing on topics such as Chinese and African experience in poverty reduction, agricultural development and poverty reduction, infrastructure development and poverty reduction, industrial development and poverty reduction, etc. Through joint efforts, this conference has become a core platform for China-Africa exchange in poverty reduction and was officially included in FOCAC in 2015. As an integral part of implementing the *Program for Strengthening China–Africa Cooperation on Poverty Reduction between China and African Union*, this conference has received generous support from China, African countries, the AU, the UNDP and other international agencies<sup>①</sup> and played an important role in China-Africa cooperation on poverty reduction.

### 2.1.3 Improving cooperation mechanisms

China-Africa cooperation has a history of more than six decades. From the original “Bandung Spirit” to the Eight Principles of Foreign Economic and Technological Assistance introduced by Premier Zhou Enlai, and from the Four Principles of Economic and Technical Assistance in 1982 to today’s “Sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith, uphold justice while pursuing shared interests,” this cooperation has adhered politically to the principles of mutual respect, equality, mutual benefits and no strings attached. The two

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① Li Zhiwei, n.d.

sides have seen considerable progress in anti-poverty cooperation.

First, reciprocal visits between Chinese and African leaders have been frequent and mutual political trust has been growing. According to statistics, since October 2000, the Chinese leadership has paid 149 visits to African countries, while African leaders have paid 379 visits to China. Particularly, the principle for comprehensive strategic partnership, i.e., “political equality and mutual trust, win-win economic cooperation, mutually enriching cultural exchanges, mutual assistance in security, and solidarity and coordination in international affairs,” put forward by President Xi Jinping during his visit to Africa, has further made clear the guiding principle and direction of full-range cooperation between China and African countries.

Second, programmatic documents have been developed to chart out a road map for China-Africa cooperation. As early as 2000, the Chinese government had offered to establish a “Forum on China-Africa Cooperation” designed to establish a collective dialogue mechanism between China and African countries under the South-South cooperation framework. In the same year, the first ministerial conference of FOCAC was held in Beijing. The conference adopted historic documents including *The Beijing Declaration and The Beijing Action Plan*. Later it passed programmatic papers including *The Declaration of Sharm el-Sheikh*, *Beijing Declaration of the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation* and *The Declaration of the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation*. The placing of bilateral cooperation under institutional arrangements effectively guarantees the continuity of policies governing various areas including anti-poverty.

Third, specific measures have been developed for China-Africa cooperation in the new era to make cooperation more pragmatic. For example, the two sides explicitly put forward a range of initiatives, including “jointly build or upgrade a number of industrial parks,” “train 200,000 local African vocational and technical personnel,” “implement the project of “Agriculture Leads to Prosperity” in 100 African villages,” “establish “10+10” cooperative mechanism among China-Africa agro-science research institutions,” “support African countries in establishing 5 transportation universities,” “support Africa in implementing 100 clean energy and wild life protection projects, environment friendly agricultural projects and smart city construction projects,” “implement 50 trade-promotion assistant programmes,” “implement in Africa 200 “Happy Life” projects and poverty reduction programmes focusing on women and children,” “exempt the outstanding intergovernmental interest-free loans due by the end of 2015 owed by the least developed countries in Africa,” “support cooperation between 20 hospitals of China and Africa from each side on demonstration projects,” “help build 5 cultural centres for Africa,” and “offer 60 billion US dollars of funding support,” including “set up a China-Africa production capacity cooperation fund, with an initial pledge of US\$10 billion.” Such concrete projects are closely related to people’s livelihood and development. The implementation and completion of such projects undoubtedly has helped Africa improve infrastructure and production and living environments, facilitated local employment, boosted rural and urban economies, promoted economic development and social progress, reduced the impoverished population, and elevated the standard of living for African people.

Fourth, in addition to extensive inter-governmental cooperation, China and Africa have established anti-poverty cooperation modes that engage third-parties. For example, the International Poverty Reduction Center of China (IPRCC) and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) of

South Africa, among other non-governmental organizations share their experience in poverty reduction and development through hosting workshops and hands-on seminars. These efforts have greatly expanded exchange and cooperation for anti-poverty efforts between China and Africa.

## **2.2 Difficulties and challenges facing China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation**

### **2.2.1 Lack of an inherent driving force to fight poverty in African countries**

An inherent driving force refers to a self-development capability. In Africa, the lack of such an organic force to fight poverty often leads to unsatisfactory anti-poverty results. Why? First, the health condition of the African impoverished population is a cause for concern. On the one hand, Africa is severely plagued by various infectious diseases due to its warm and humid climate, poor sanitary conditions, and backward traditions and practices. Take HIV/AIDS as an example. In 2015, there were about 36.70 million people who were infected with HIV/AIDS worldwide, of which more than 25 million lived in Africa.<sup>①</sup> In every 1,000 adults aged 15 to 49, 2.72 people were newly infected with HIV/AIDS. On the other hand, following the turmoil in North Africa and the end of the Libyan war, African has been facing increasingly severe security challenges in general, including conventional security threats like civil wars and armed conflicts, and the spread of terrorist activities in Africa and the undercurrents of the “arc of instability.” Africa has also been at the forefront of international counter-terrorism.<sup>②</sup> Social unrest and frequent conflicts directly affect the security and stability of African countries and territories, severely impede the normal economic and production activities of African people and pose great threats to the life and safety of the general public. As a result, Africa is prone to “war-induced disability” and “war-induced poverty.”

Further, African education severely lags, leading to a weak workforce. According to a report by the UNESCO Africa branch, only 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa now have a literacy rate above 50%. This means, approximately 400 million people on the African continent are illiterate, accounting for 60% of the total African population and 40% of the illiterate worldwide. Moreover, 35% of African countries record a school-age child enrollment rate below 40%. Specifically, only 20% of boys and 38% of girls in Africa are able to enroll in elementary school, let alone high school.<sup>③</sup> As of 2016, Africa’s illiterate population aged 15 and above numbered 239 million, amounting to a literacy rate at merely 66.58%, far lower than the world average. Such low cultural competence on the one hand fails to teach the impoverished African population sufficient skills in production and making a living. Narrow vision and backward notions are likely to breed negative attitudes such as “waiting, relying on or begging” for help. The severe lack of the ability to independently get oneself out of poverty and total reliance on others for “transfusion” make it hard to eradicate the “root causes of poverty.” In addition, low education levels also lead to the lack of basic awareness of Africa people to prevent diseases. This contributes to rampant diseases that threaten people’s health and lives. Studies show that the vast majority of patients diagnosed with HIV/AIDS live under the poverty line or have an education level below high school.<sup>④</sup>

Finally, though infrastructure development has always been a priority in China-Africa cooperation, its

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① World Health Organization, n.d.

② He, 2015.

③ Retrieved September 22, 2017 from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>.

④ Silverman, 2016.

status still does not allow for optimism. According to the data published by the World Bank in April 2017, over the past 20 years, electricity production per capita in sub-Saharan Africa remained almost unchanged. This means only 30% of African residents had access to electricity. In transport infrastructure, sub-Saharan Africa was the only region in the world that recorded a decline in highway density over the past two decades.<sup>①</sup> In this light, the World Bank has, on many occasions, called for the international community to focus on the weak points in African infrastructure development, with a view to facilitating economic development in Africa through improved infrastructure.<sup>②</sup> Weak infrastructure not only substantially increases the production and living costs of African people, but also severely constrains resource exploitation, investment, trade and other economic activities, rendering both “inherent forces” and “external forces” unable to work.

### 2.2.2 The pathway for China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation needs to be optimized

As for China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, a clear top-level design has been developed, and the cooperation mechanism is being improved. A pathway for China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation has been



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*Infrastructure development has always been a priority in China–Africa cooperation.*

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① The World Bank, n.d.

② Ibid.

established in many areas, such as infrastructural development, economy and trade, talent training, and people-to-people exchanges, and a series of fruitful results have been achieved. However, many challenges still need to be addressed.

First, in terms of perception, the surveys conducted by some poll agencies including Afrobarometer found that although most of the African people recognize the positive impacts that China has brought to Africa, they do not think that the China-Africa cooperation has made significant contribution to promoting anti-poverty efforts which are closely related to African people including job creation. On one hand, both China and Africa have brought positive impacts to China-Africa cooperation on anti-poverty through some signature projects by depending on government authorities to promote cooperation. On the other hand, since these cooperation projects “ignore the input to African society,” “neglect the potential of African markets” and “fail to provide support to the projects concerning people’s livelihood at local and micro levels,”<sup>①</sup> these projects fail to offer more substantial and direct help to lift some African people out of poverty, making the general public less aware of the significant role that Sino-Africa anti-poverty cooperation has played in fighting against poverty in Africa. Meanwhile, with the rapid rise of China, western countries are not comfortable with the fast growth of China-Africa relations, worrying that their vested interests might be damaged. Therefore, they try to politicize China-Africa economic cooperation, resulting in social confusion and even misunderstanding. In addition, a format of bilateral cooperation is often used in China-Africa anti-poverty projects. China’s diminutive participation in the cooperation with Africa under multi-lateral international cooperation frameworks has led to the fact that China lacks communication with international multilateral organizations and other relevant countries. As a result, some NGOs in Africa, the western academic community and mainstream media distort the truth and trumpeted the ideas of China’s “Neocolonialism” and “plundering resources.” This created a negative view of China among some African countries and people which has had a negative impact on China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation.

Second, some problems also emerge in the practice of anti-poverty cooperation in multiple areas between China and Africa. For instance, in terms of China-Africa economic and trade cooperation, the commodities made in China are very popular with African consumers due to their low cost, although they put pressure on some local businesses in Africa and hinder the development of the African manufacturing industry to some extent. Take Nigeria as an example. The textile industry has long been a key sector in the country. However, due to the poor operational and production capacity of the traditional textile industry in Nigeria, it could not deal with the external shocks from China and other countries on its local textile industry. The Nigerian government has adopted some policies, such as restrictions on the involvement of foreigners in the textile retail industry to protect its local textile industry. But these policies showed little success. As of April 5, 2016, a total of 145 textile companies in Nigeria closed, causing many workers to lose their jobs and return to poverty. Apart from that, some fake and low-quality Chinese products and poor service quality of some Chinese companies have tarnished the image of Chinese companies in Africa. In 2016, a total of 183 batches of commodities exported from China to African markets were returned. Among them, 134 batches of goods were returned due to poor quality, accounting for 73.2%. The percentage of goods returned due

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① Zhou, 2016.

to poor quality has remained stubbornly high.<sup>①</sup> On the other hand, in the process of cooperation, some Chinese companies lack understanding of the legal systems in Africa, and they just copy their system design from China. Also due to communication barriers in cultures and languages and differences in religions, contradiction between some Chinese companies and local African workers often arises. The cases of doing things with good intentions but ending with bad results can be repeatedly seen, which has had a negative impact on the cooperation benefits and the image of the Chinese government and companies in some African people.

Third, on one hand, as traditional donor countries such as the USA and the EU, and emerging donor countries including India and Vietnam have paid greater attention to Africa, the African countries have more choice in receiving assistance, while China faces increasing competition from other countries. On the other hand, over the recent years, the awareness of African countries on long-term strategic planning of their future development continues to rise, and will definitely put pressure on the strategic space of China-Africa cooperation.<sup>②</sup> This requires China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation to be aligned with the long-term strategic plans in Africa. For instance, Agenda 2063, issued by the African Union (AU), focuses on such areas as the manufacturing sector, trade and investment, and human resources development in the first decade, highlighting the importance of strengthening skills training for young people, especially women. Although these strategic plans provide system designs for African countries over the next ten years, they have also imposed restrictions on key areas and the scope of China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, which poses challenges and brings uncertainty to these efforts in the future.

In this context, it is important to analyze in an objective manner the problems facing China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, and comprehensively understand the risks and challenges that China and African countries may face in the future. Based on reinforcing the existing model and practical path, efforts should be made to optimize and innovate the path of China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, which will play a significant role in deepening the cooperation in this regard.

### 3. China and African countries work together to optimize the path of anti-poverty campaign

#### 3.1 Implement the top-level design to draw a new blueprint for China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation

Top-level design plays a crucial role in conducting China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation and is of vital importance for its success. So far, some clear top-level design programs such as the 461 Framework and the 1+5+10 Program have been made available. However, it is also important to quantify the design programs, and identify specific road maps according to the current status of different African countries in fighting against poverty so as to better implement the top-level designs.

First, China has already made remarkable achievements in fighting against poverty, and has established a

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① Cao et al., 2017, March 3.

② Zhang, 2015.

complete set of theoretical systems, models, practices and methods. To successfully apply these best practices in China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, China needs to design an optimal path of introducing Chinese experiences in poverty alleviation into Africa, explore ways of applying the anti-poverty Chinese model in China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, and summarize best practices through small-scale pilot projects. On one hand, efforts should be made to fully consider and examine the different conditions, advantages and external environments of different African countries, help these countries learn from the best practices of China in poverty alleviation and development, and encourage them to explore their own ways of fighting against poverty. On the other hand, it is necessary to summarize the best practices and experiences of China and African countries in anti-poverty cooperation and consolidate them into theories on anti-poverty to provide better theoretical references for China, African countries and other developing countries to fight against poverty.

Second, it is important to link China's strategy towards African countries with Agenda 2063, developed by the African Union, and integrate the China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation into these countries' national initiatives and strategies. These cooperative projects need to be arranged by stages to ensure their smooth implementation to better play their leading role in poverty alleviation. Third, while enhancing the inter-governmental anti-poverty cooperation and focusing on signature projects, it is also necessary to pay much attention to short-term projects which can help African countries improve their people's livelihood, and bring more substantial benefits to poor people in Africa, so as to enhance the impact of China among African people and lay a solid social foundation to conduct China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation.

### **3.2 Optimize the cooperation mechanism and innovate the path for China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, has established an effective platform for the countries along the BRI routes to consolidate economic factors and development resources at the global level, promote global governance in poverty alleviation through strategic alignment, production capacity cooperation, trade and investments, and jointly tackle the challenges facing the world in anti-poverty. Clearly integrating Africa into the scope of the BRI is considered an inevitable choice to deepen the China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, meet the expectations of the African people in poverty alleviation and development, and achieve a win-win situation to build a community with a shared future for mankind. More importantly, it is the only way for China to promote its industrial go-global effort under the BRI, actively respond to the new normal in economic development, and drive the high-quality economic development so as to lift more poor people out of poverty and achieve win-win cooperation.

1) China needs to fully leverage the existing cooperation mechanisms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) to further consolidate the resources, build the BRI into a new platform for China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, and share the Chinese experiences on poverty alleviation and development in Africa through practical anti-poverty cooperation projects to benefit more poor people in Africa.

2) China needs to bring together talent, funds, technology and other factors that are lacking in Africa in the process of building agricultural parks and promote production capacity cooperation, technical transfers and industrial alignments between China and Africa by leveraging state-of-the-art technologies and equipment in China. Efforts should also be made to effectively develop the idle land resources in Africa

through building agricultural and industrial parks, fully leverage the comparative advantages of African countries in natural and human resources, and help these countries improve their agricultural productivity and added values and build their own quality industries.

3) China needs to work with Africa to build China's "Enclave Economic Corridor" in Africa by depending on infrastructure interconnectivity projects, promote cross-border economic cooperation and accelerate regional economic integration in Africa. By consolidating the advantageous production capacity and resources in China and Africa, China needs to drive the free flow of production factors, stimulate economic dynamism and market potential in Africa, and promote cooperation between China and Africa in multiple areas. Meanwhile, it is important to expand its influence in surrounding areas through the development of economic corridors, promote economic development in Africa and accelerate its pace of lifting people out of poverty.

4) China needs to fully leverage the role of NGOs and volunteers, encourage, support and regulate NGOs and volunteers' activities through various means. For instance, platforms can be provided to actively support NGOs in China and Africa in conducting anti-poverty exchanges and cooperation, encourage influential Chinese NGOs to set up offices in Africa, providing opportunities for Chinese NGOs and volunteers to directly communicate with African people and disseminate ideas and concepts such as "Knowledge can change your destiny," "helping poor people to establish ambitions and promote their literacy" and "targeted approach to alleviating poverty." They are also expected to teach poor people in Africa the expertise of poverty alleviation, improve poor people's skills for new jobs, enhance understanding and mutual trust, and achieve the objective of people-to-people connectivity under the BRI.

5) China needs to innovate its financial mechanisms to provide funding support for China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation. Capital accumulation is the key to the anti-poverty campaign. To address the problems facing China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, such as large demands for funding and difficulty in financing, China needs to fully leverage the financing platforms including the AIIB and the Silk Road Fund, and the internationalization of the RMB to innovate financial products and services, expand financing sources and stimulate market vitality. More reputable and influential social capital should be attracted to engaged in China-Africa cooperation in terms of infrastructural development, economy, trade and investments, which are aimed to fill the gaps in funding and accelerate the building of projects related to people's well-being. The partnership of "Finance + Industry" needs to be deepened to expand cooperation in terms of mineral resources development, agricultural and industrial park building, and contracting of foreign projects. More mature technologies, advanced equipment and smelting production capacity in China should be introduced to Africa to create more opportunities for African people to be lifted out of poverty, and push China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation to a new level.

### **3.3 Innovate the path of promoting anti-poverty through China-Africa economic and trade cooperation, and address the key issues in cooperation**

Experience has proved that the economic and trade development between China and Africa has played an active role in promoting China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation. It has helped improve the African people's livelihood and their life quality, created jobs for many poor people in Africa, improved the health and literacy of African people, promoted the industrialization process in Africa, and fundamentally raised poor people out of poverty. Meanwhile, it has made it possible for Chinese companies to expand their

markets, achieve economic restructuring, industrial transformations and upgrading, and promote economic development in China.

First, in terms of trade cooperation: 1) China needs to enhance its communication with African countries, and fully recognize the impacts of China-Africa trade on local industries in Africa, particularly Africa's more competitive industries as this will directly create more jobs for African people and increase their incomes. 2) China needs to take measures to reasonably adjust the import of some Chinese products to African countries, provide space for the growth of more competitive local industries in Africa, and create more jobs for African people. 3) The Chinese companies are required to leverage their advantages in technology, management and funding, work with local African partners to establish more joint ventures that can create productive jobs, promote the technical transfer from China to Africa and the industrial alignment, and provide assistance to the African local manufacturing sector.

Second, in terms of investment cooperation: 1) China needs to fully understand the investment conditions in Africa, and regulate their cooperation management system to make business management better comply with the international standards. On one hand, it is important to fully leverage the roles of government in guiding and providing effective sources for Chinese companies to understand the information on African markets and the investment risks by building an information base, enable Chinese companies that have gone global to fully understand African markets, laws, standards and risks through different formats such as panel discussions, lectures and the media. On the other hand, the investments of Chinese companies need to focus on training and assigning talents who have an international perspective, advanced management ideas, and are familiar with African market conditions. Establishing a sound risk identification, assessment and response mechanism, as well as a management system for Chinese companies to go global according to international standards can allow Chinese companies to pay more attention to management efficiency and human resources development in their investment activities in Africa and train more localized talents. 2) China needs to establish a sound supervising and accountability mechanism to better control and regulate the investment activities of Chinese companies in Africa, prevent and solve a series of problems, including industrial disputes, that Chinese companies may face in Africa, require Chinese companies which fail to comply with relevant regulations to make rectification and impose corresponding punishments on them. The ultimate goal is to ensure that Chinese companies can help African people lift themselves out of poverty, and promote local socio-economic development while accelerating the Chinese companies' own pace of going global in the process of China-Africa cooperation. 3) In China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, China should establish a green development concept, and pay much attention to environmental protection. This is particularly true when Chinese companies are working with African partners to run resources-based joint ventures. In the process of building industrial and agricultural parks, Chinese companies cannot just seek short-term benefits at the cost of local environmental conditions. Otherwise, the image of Chinese companies in Africa might be tarnished. 4) China needs to provide stronger support in terms of policy and finance to Chinese companies investing in Africa and encourage Chinese companies of various types to go global. Chinese companies are required to be involved in anti-poverty cooperation by investing and establishing plants in local areas, employ more local workers in Africa, and build the capacity of the local work force in fighting against poverty and avoiding the return to poverty while creating jobs for them. Meanwhile, it is important to help African countries develop human resources, train more local technicians and managers to

help them advance the manufacturing sector and accelerate the industrialization and urbanization process in Africa.

### **3.4 Promote the development of infrastructure in the education and medical industries to activate the inherent driving force for poverty eradication in an all-round way**

A key factor leading to poverty, Africa's weak infrastructure base also hinders anti-poverty actions on this continent. By making the cooperation in infrastructure development a key task and an opportunity for both sides, we can smash the bottleneck of poverty alleviation progress in Africa and find a progressive path for Chinese industry. Governments should enhance construction of roads, railways, airlines, postal routes and other transportation facilities as well as internet and wireless communication services in order to lower the production and living costs of impoverished people and make it easier for foreign investments. African countries should communicate more frequently with the international community, bringing in more good businesses to help improve the living standards of poor groups through socio-economic development. China and Africa should, based on an interconnected infrastructure system, strengthen industrial cooperation, explore natural and cultural resources, and support the development of featured tourism, thus pushing the advancement of Africa's agricultural modernization and industrialization thus creating more wealth to benefit the impoverished. By increasing infrastructure development regions and subregions of Africa can become more interconnected and together can achieve faster economic growth. On the other hand, both sides should give more support to cooperation in the medical and educational sectors to escalate the inherent driving force for poverty elimination. For cooperation in the medical sector, China should actively participate in Africa-targeted medical programs supported by the WHO, not only to familiarize Chinese teams with local medical policies and services in Africa, where different medicine and physician administration systems apply, but also accustom African people to China's medical products, technologies, and standards.<sup>①</sup> A more detailed medical aid and investment assessment system should be in place to enable efficient data statistics and information management for better evaluation of the scope and effect of China's assistance,<sup>②</sup> establishing a sound basis for improvements in medical cooperation. In addition, China could set up dedicated local administration agencies to provide jobs and encourage poor locals to apply for posts for maintaining their living environment to improve public sanitary conditions and prevent infectious diseases, cutting disease-induced poverty at its root.

As for educational cooperation, both sides should: 1) launch more major programs to broaden the scope of cooperation, attach importance to education at all stages and balance vocational and elite education. On the one hand, training should be provided particularly for impoverished individuals possessing productive abilities to learn necessary skills; and labor coordination for work-nearby and other systems should be developed depending on local conditions so that people could have more employment choices. On the other hand, given the fact that Africa countries generally lack talents in medical care, agriculture and industrial production, China should train more talents in anti-poverty aids and introduce proven experience and models to Africa, promoting them to other sectors through anti-poverty practices for playing more important roles. 2) work on innovative education modes. Greater attention from internet giants has ushered Africa's

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① Xu, 2016.

② Lins et al., 2016.

internet industry into a promising era. In addition to traditional models in educational cooperation, such as exchanging college students and assignment of Chinese teachers and experts to Africa, both sides, in response, should enhance cooperation in remote education to maximize the number of beneficiaries who can escape from poverty by learning more skills. 3) encourage and support capable Chinese colleges and hi-tech companies to jointly build “Chinese colleges” as their branch campuses or vocational colleges, recruiting more students from poor regions and families to improve their capacity for self-development and prevent the transfer of poverty across generations.

### **3.5 Actively participate in Africa-targeted multilateral cooperation frameworks and joint efforts for poverty elimination**

Establishment of international relations often involves multilateral cooperation frameworks and the development of Africa has been a global concern. Active engagement with Africa-targeted multinational frameworks against poverty not only helps form a global force by integrating international resources, improve multilateral anti-poverty cooperation mechanisms, and facilitates anti-poverty communication and collaboration among countries for exploring new approaches to poverty alleviation, it is also a significant opportunity for China to break restrictions on traditional China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation, resolve the Western World’s misunderstandings and misinterpretations regarding such cooperation, fit into the global governance system faster, build a positive international image as a responsible power, and nurture a favorable international environment for China-Africa anti-poverty cooperation. Under the said Africa-targeted multilateral frameworks, China should: 1) try to communicate with international organizations and relevant countries over efficient dialogues, in order to enhance political mutual trust and understand their strategies and needs. 2) give positive response to and actively participate in multilateral actions, gaining more experience and fitting into the international cooperation faster, or even playing a leading role. 3) do a better job in human resource development by training and bringing in more inter-disciplinary talents who know international rules well and have international perspectives and by building a think tank of experts for better development of China-Africa cooperation policies under multilateral frameworks. Meanwhile, China should, as it is engaged in the international cooperation, be aware of the limits of the Africa-targeted multilateral assistance system currently dominated by Western countries, and protect our own interests. We should further enhance our voice in cooperation, present independent policy-making opinions by combining our rich experience against poverty and develop cooperation policies jointly with other countries. China should seek to play a leading role and shift itself from a participant to a rule maker in order to make Chinese contributions and propose Chinese solutions to innovation and optimization of a multilateral cooperation approach.

### **3.6 Establish an early-warning system for evaluation and control of risks in the poverty alleviation cooperation**

Given the fact that some African countries/regions suffer potential safety risks, it is highly recommended that: 1) a well-operated early-warning system is in place for the organization of inter-agency coordination establishments, which will provide assessments of partner’s safety situations and provide specific advice as a basis for decision-making. 2) candidate partners/programs must be selected strictly to reduce risk by balancing practicability and long-term benefits to ensure a win-win result. At present, investments should only go to stable countries/regions with favorable natural conditions and a solid cooperation foundation

in order to build more quality models. 3) the “Go Global” policy should be implemented with effective control to give access to truly capable, experienced businesses and ensure their stable growth and avoid the irresponsible release of swarms of companies. 4) Chinese companies operating overseas, as well as their management and employees, should be provided with safety trainings in order to develop a stronger awareness of safety. This requires development of response plans and risk control road maps, and specific tasks should be assigned to companies and persons in charge, respectively. 5) a feedback system should be in place to allow for timely information collection for analysis of problems and development of specific response actions.

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