

China proposes priority areas to boost Africa ties

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Hu said in the next three years, his government will take measures in five priority areas to support the cause of peace and development in Africa and boost a new type of China-Africa strategic partnership.

First, he mentioned that the Chinese side will expand cooperation in investment and financing to support sustainable development in Africa.

President Jacob Zuma, who was invited by President Hu, arrived in China on Wednesday for the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

China will provide \$20 billion of credit line to African countries to assist them in developing infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Secondly, China will continue to increase assistance to Africa to bring the benefits of development to the African people.

Projects falling under this include more agricultural technology demonstration centres as necessary to help African countries increase production capacity.

This will be in addition to the "African Talents Program" - where China plans to train about 30 000 personnel in various sectors for Africa, offer 18 000 government scholarships, and build cultural and vocational skills training facilities in African countries.

Another envisaged project in China is medical and health cooperation which will see China sending about 1500 medical personnel to Africa, and continue to carry out the "Brightness Action" activities and provide free treatment for cataract patients.

China will also help African countries enhance capacity building in meteorological infrastructure and forest protection and management and will continue to carry out well-drilling and water supply projects in Africa to provide safe drinking water for the African people.

The third, priority, according Hu, is that China will support the African integration process and help Africa enhance capacity for overall development.

He said a partnership with Africa on transnational and trans-regional infrastructure development, support related project planning and feasibility studies and encourage established Chinese companies and financial institutions to take part in

transnational and trans-regional infrastructural development in Africa.

The fourth priority aims to enhance people-to-people friendship and to lay a solid foundation of public support for enhancing China-Africa common development. China proposes to carry out "China-Africa people-to-people friendship action" to support and promote exchanges and cooperation between people's organisations, women and youth of the two countries.

There is also a proposal to set up a China-Africa Press Exchange Centre in China to encourage exchanges and visits between Chinese and African media, and China supports exchange of correspondents by media organisations of the two sides.

The fifth priority is that China should promote peace and stability in Africa and create a secure environment for Africa's development.

China will launch the Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security, deepen cooperation with the AU and African countries in peace and security in Africa, provide financial support for the AU peace-keeping missions in Africa and the development for the African Standby Force, and train more officials in peace and security affairs and peace-keepers for the AU.

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