



# The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)

A briefing paper by the Centre for Chinese Studies  
Prepared for World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

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August 2009  
By the Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch



CENTRE FOR  
CHINESE STUDIES

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed therein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

## Acknowledgements

This paper draws on field research carried out in 2009 by the CCS, kindly funded by Rockefeller Foundation.

Cover picture courtesy of China Chas: Beijing during the 2006 FOCAC Summit.

### **The author wishes to thank:**

Hayley Herman and Jacobie Muller.

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## List of Acronyms

<b>ADS</b>	Approved Destination Status
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CCS</b>	Centre for Chinese Studies
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>EXIM</b>	Export-Import
<b>FOCAC</b>	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>MOFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>NEPAD</b>	New Partnership for Africa's Development
<b>TRALAC</b>	Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>WWF</b>	World Wide Fund for Nature

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## 1. Overview of FOCAC

The Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is a multilateral platform for collective, pragmatic consultation and dialogue established jointly by Chinese and African leaders in 2000 “[i]n order to further strengthen the friendly cooperation between China and Africa under the new circumstances, to jointly meet the challenge of economic globalization and to promote common development”.<sup>1</sup> The rhetorical focus is on equality, South-South cooperation and mutual benefit, and the Forum “promotes both political dialogue and economic cooperation and trade, with a view to seeking mutual reinforcement and common development”.<sup>2</sup> FOCAC is a diplomatic platform for consultation and formalisation of Sino-African relations, complementing China’s bilateral relations with individual African countries by providing a forum where Chinese and African leaders can set the direction for and consolidate the relationship going forward.

The inaugural FOCAC ministerial meeting was held in Beijing on the 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> October 2000. The meeting “charted the direction for the development of a new, stable and long-term partnership featuring equality and mutual benefit between China and African countries.”<sup>3</sup> Following the meeting, the Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development<sup>4</sup> and the Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation<sup>5</sup> was adopted, and a 27-member Chinese follow-up committee was established.<sup>6</sup>

The subsequent second ministerial meeting was held in Addis Ababa on the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> December 2003. Following the meeting, the Addis Ababa Action Plan 2004-2006 was published, outlining the priority areas for Sino-African relations over the coming three years.<sup>7</sup>

In November 2006 the high-level FOCAC Summit was held in Beijing, summoning 41 heads of state, government and delegation as well as ministers of foreign affairs and ministers in charge of economic cooperation from China and 48 African countries.<sup>8</sup> Following the meeting, the Beijing Action Plan was released, a comprehensive document covering plans both for more high-level cooperation in terms of economic and international affairs, and detailed commitments on human development, infrastructure development and technical assistance.<sup>9</sup> At the Summit, a number of commitments were made and subsequently incorporated into the Beijing Action Plan. These commitments include:

- Doubling of 2006 development aid by 2009;
- Establishment of a US\$ 5 billion China-Africa Development Fund;
- Non-tariff treatment of over 440 African export products<sup>10</sup>;
- Training of 15,000 African professionals in China;
- Establishment of 10 agricultural technology demonstration centres;
- Building of 30 hospitals and 100 rural schools;
- Donation of US\$ 37.5 million towards an anti-malaria campaign;

- Dispatching of 100 Chinese agricultural experts;
- Doubling the number of scholarships for Africans to 4,000 by 2009;
- Provision of US\$ 3 billion in concessional loans and US\$ 2 billion preferential export buyer's credit in 3 years.

Moreover, by FOCAC 2006, 26 African countries had been granted approved destination status (ADS) for inbound Chinese tourism.<sup>11</sup>

By means of the multilateral FOCAC process, China is also seeking to engage with African multilateral fora. In the 2000 Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the 2003 Addis Ababa Action Plan, China pledged its support to AU and NEPAD. In July 2006, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the FOCAC and NEPAD secretariats.<sup>12</sup> The support for AU and NEPAD was subsequently renewed in the 2006 Beijing Action Plan. However, China's engagement with African countries continues to predominantly take place through bilateral frameworks. While a comprehensive discussion around China's engagement with Africa's regional institutions falls beyond the scope of this paper, it is largely at an early stage where challenges both in terms of capacity and incentive for such engagement to date have limited the development of such relations.<sup>13</sup>

FOCAC forms a crucial part of China's strategy towards Africa. Another important component of this strategy is the White Paper on China's African Policy, released in January 2006 ahead of the third FOCAC summit in November 2006. The White Paper thoroughly outlines how China envisages its relations with Africa in terms of political, economic and developmental cooperation.<sup>14</sup>

The third FOCAC ministerial meeting will take place in November 2009 in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt. The themes of the meeting are infrastructure and agriculture/food security. The themes were set during the senior officials meeting in Cairo on the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> October 2008 following consultations between African and Chinese government officials. Government officials in Angola, the DRC, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda confirmed in interviews with the CCS during January-April 2009 that these themes are very well aligned to the developmental priorities of many African countries. Furthermore, the 2009 FOCAC meeting will focus on identifying regional developmental priorities in terms of agriculture and infrastructure projects that China can support.

Ahead of each FOCAC ministerial meeting, preparatory senior officials meetings are held. As mentioned, the senior officials meeting ahead of FOCAC 2009 was held in October 2008 in Egypt. The preparatory meeting for the inaugural FOCAC meeting in 2000 was held in Beijing from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2000, and the senior officials meeting ahead of the Addis Ababa ministerial meeting in 2003 was held in that city on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

In the African capitals, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs are coordinating their countries' diplomatic engagement with China, both the preparations for their participation in the FOCAC meetings, as well as in the implementation of the FOCAC commitments. In Beijing, the FOCAC Chinese Follow-up Committee within the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is coordinating all FOCAC related activities.

## 2. Implementation of the FOCAC 2006 commitments

The FOCAC commitments, although presented in a multilateral forum, are implemented bilaterally. The specific FOCAC development projects and other opportunities arising from FOCAC are planned and executed on a bilateral level by the African government and the Chinese Embassy in each African country. The Centre for Chinese Studies (CCS) carried out field research during January-April 2009 in Angola, China, the DRC, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda to evaluate the implementation of the FOCAC commitments. The field research indicated that most of the development projects pledged by China in the 2006 Beijing Action Plan are currently either already implemented or being implemented.<sup>15</sup>

Medical teams have been dispatched to all five countries and students from the respective African countries are regularly being sent to China on Chinese government scholarships. The projects that involve construction (mainly schools, agricultural demonstration centres, malaria research centres and hospitals) are in various stages of implementation, realised by Chinese contractors. A number of projects have been completed, while others are under construction or in the planning phase. Common among all the case study countries was that the developments had in some cases been delayed by what was identified by the Chinese respondents as bureaucratic impediments on the African side, such as delays in the allocation of land for construction of the donated schools/agricultural centres etc.

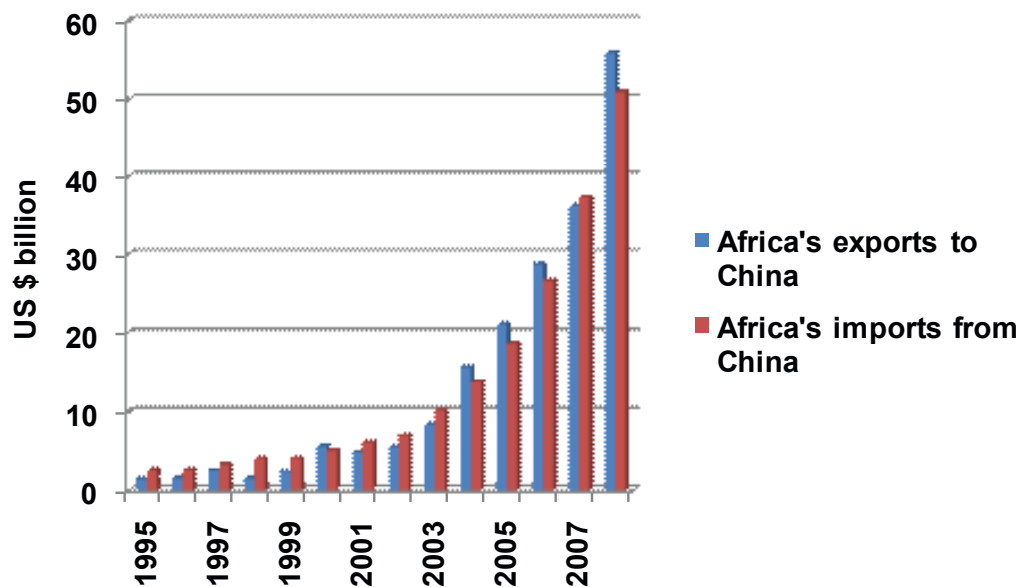
Other than the specific FOCAC commitments, the FOCAC framework has also facilitated large-scale infrastructure projects financed by China Export-Import (EXIM) Bank concessional loans. For example, Huawei has constructed an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) backbone in Uganda (Kampala, Entebbe, Jinja and Bombo municipalities) worth US\$ 30 million. In Mozambique, a concessional loan of US\$ 75 million has been extended for the expansion and modernisation of the airport in Maputo.

### 3. Sino-African trade and FOCAC

Closely related to FOCAC, China's African Policy and other political-level developments within Sino-African relations, is the development of Sino-African trade. The development of economic relations and trade between China and Africa was identified as a priority in the Beijing Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development adopted after the first FOCAC meeting in 2000, and also by the FOCAC ministerial meeting in 2003 and the Addis Ababa Action Plan. There has been a remarkable increase in trade since the inaugural FOCAC meeting, as illustrated in the graph below, although a great deal of structured research is needed to further explore the extent to which FOCAC and China's African Policy has played a role in terms of facilitating trade in an increasingly globalised world.

As illustrated in the graph below, China's trade with the African continent has grown exponentially over the past decade, particularly over the last five years. Between 2003 and 2008, Sino-African trade increased from US\$ 18.6 billion to US\$ 106.8 billion, a 474 percent increase.

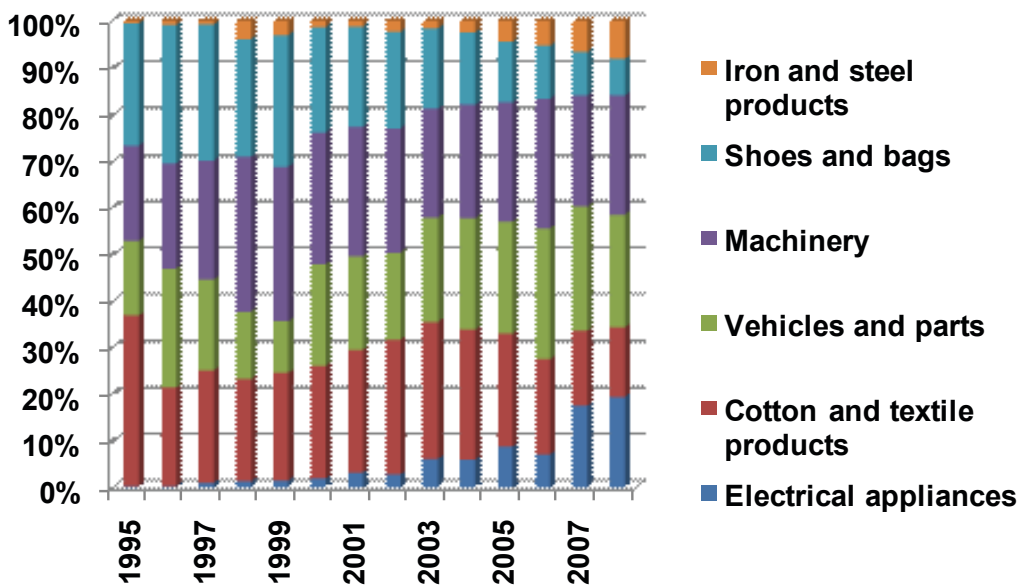
Figure 1: Trade between Africa and China 1995-2008



Source: World Trade Atlas data

China's exports to Africa largely comprise of manufactured goods, notably electrical appliances, textiles, machinery and vehicles. The shares of the respective products in the overall trade profile have remained relatively intact over the last decade.

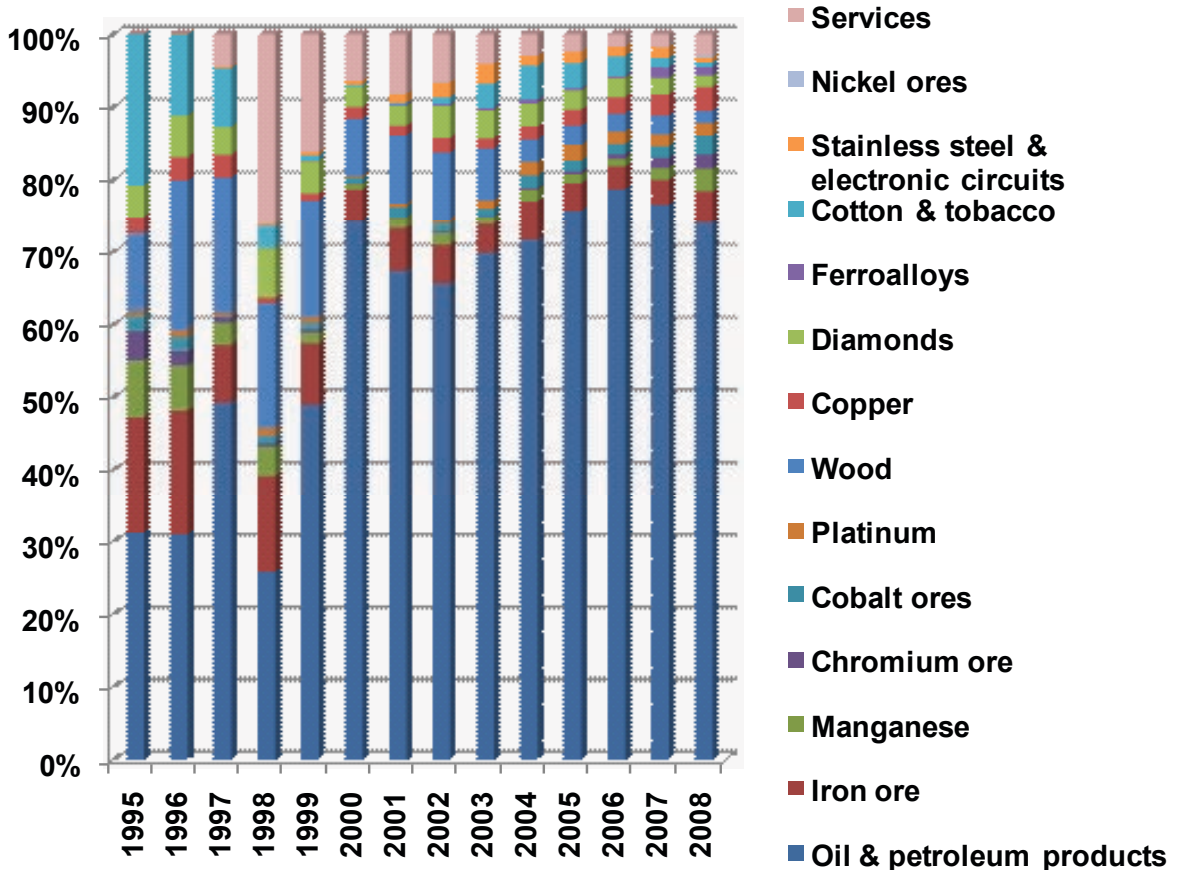
Figure 2: Composition of Africa's top-20 imports from China (HS4 level) 1995-2008



Source: World Trade Atlas data, CCS analysis.k<sup>16</sup>

China is largely importing raw materials from Africa; oil, ores, wood, tobacco and cotton. Oil and petroleum products have come to increasingly dominate the trade profile, particularly since 2000.

Figure 3: Composition of Africa's top-20 exports to China (HS4 level) 1995-2008



Source: World Trade Atlas data, CCS analysis.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Forum for China-Africa Cooperation website (2009). "The creation of FOCAC". Accessed on 25.05.2009 from [www.focac.org](http://www.focac.org)
- <sup>2</sup>Forum for China-Africa Cooperation website (2009). *Op. cit.*
- <sup>3</sup>Forum for China-Africa Cooperation website (2009). "The First Ministerial Conference of FOCAC". Accessed 26.05.2009 from <http://www.focac.org/eng/gylt/dyjbzhy/t157577.htm>
- <sup>4</sup>The Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development is available on <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zflt/eng/zyzl/hywj/t157834.htm>
- <sup>5</sup>The Beijing declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation is available on <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zflt/eng/wjih/hywj/t157833.htm>
- <sup>6</sup>Forum for China-Africa Cooperation website (2009). "Chinese Follow-up Committee". Accessed on 26.05.2009 from <http://www.focac.org/eng/hxxd/hxwyh/t157590.htm>
- <sup>7</sup>The Addis Ababa Action Plan is available on <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/focac/185197.htm>
- <sup>8</sup>Shelton, Garth and Paruk, Farhana (2008). *The Forum on China–Africa cooperation. A strategic opportunity*. Monograph 156, December: Institute for Security Studies. Page 1.
- <sup>9</sup>The Beijing Action Plan is available on <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zflt/eng/zyzl/hywj/t280369.htm>
- <sup>10</sup>The FOCAC Ambassador of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Field confirmed in an interview with the CCS on the 24th April 2009 that the list has been extended and currently comprises 466 items
- <sup>11</sup>Xinhua (2006). "China grants tourist destination status to 26 African countries: Action Plan". Published 06.11.2006, accessed 26.05.2009 from [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200611/06/eng20061106\\_318577.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200611/06/eng20061106_318577.html)
- <sup>12</sup>Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of South Africa (2006). "Professor Mucavele, CEO of the NEPAD Secretariat paid a visit to China". Published 21.07.2006, accessed 26.05.2009 from <http://www.chinese-embassy.org.za/eng/zfgx/zfhzlt/t264368.htm>
- <sup>13</sup>See further for example in Centre for Chinese Studies & the Development Bank of Southern Africa (2008). "China as a driver of regional integration in Africa: Prospects for the future". Conference Report, available on <http://www.ccs.org.za/downloads/DBSA%20Conference%20Report.pdf>
- <sup>14</sup>China's African Policy is available on <http://www.focac.org/eng/zgdfztc/t463748.htm>
- <sup>15</sup>The final report from the CCS' research will be released late 2009 on [www.ccs.org.za](http://www.ccs.org.za)
- <sup>16</sup>The raw data, indicated in HS4 code, has in the analysis been grouped into categories according to product chapters and broader categories.

## Profile of the Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch

The Centre for Chinese Studies (CCS) is the first academic institution devoted to the study of China in Africa. The Centre promotes the exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences between China and Africa.

As Africa's interaction with China increases, the need for greater analysis and understanding between our two regions and peoples grows. This involves evaluating China's developmental role in Africa that is felt in various capacities ranging from trade and investment to humanitarian assistance. The Centre conducts analysis of China-related research to stakeholders in Government, business, academia and NGO communities.

The Centre presents courses to academic and business audiences at Stellenbosch University and other local universities and plays host to visiting academics within the China Forum that provides a platform for discussion and debate on China-Africa related subjects. The CCS thus serves as the foremost knowledge bridge between China and the African continent.

## Researcher Profile

**Johanna Jansson** is a Senior Analyst at the Centre for Chinese Studies where she has been active in a number of projects researching Sino-African relations. In her capacity at the CCS, Johanna has carried out field research in Cameroon, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon and Uganda. Johanna completed an academic exchange program in November 2008 as a Visiting Scholar at the Institute for West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS) within the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in Beijing. Johanna holds a Master's Degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from Umeå University, Sweden, an Honours degree (cum laude) in Political Science from Stellenbosch University and a Bachelor Degree in Political Science from Lund University, Sweden. Prior to joining the Centre in 2007, Johanna worked for the Swedish Migration Board, the Swedish Correctional Services and for the Swedish Union of Civil Servants (ST). Johanna is a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society for Academic Excellence, is fluent in French, English and Swedish and conversant in IsiXhosa. [jjansson@sun.ac.za](mailto:jjansson@sun.ac.za)

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