

## China's Policies towards Africa

1. Ancient Chinese travelers paved the way of direct contact with Africans in the 8<sup>th</sup> century when China was ruled by the Tang dynasty. Zheng He's navigations to Africa in early 15 century marked the peak of China-Africa relations in ancient time. The early direct contacts declined with the beginning of colonization by Europeans but contributed to the mutual trust between Chinese and African peoples.

2. The resurgence of China-Africa relations did not appear until the mid-20 century in the context of national liberalization movement. Africa was considered to be part of the "intermediate zone" where China could seek strategic cooperation. China supported the African national liberalization movements, built diplomatic ties with the newly independent African states and began to provide assistance. Significant diplomatic initiatives included participation to the Bandung Conference in 1955 and Premier Zhou Enlai's visits to Africa in early 1960s. Partially thanks to the support of African countries, China resumed its lawful seat in the United Nations in 1971. The strategic cooperation proved to be mutually beneficial.

3. The interest for strategic cooperation expanded rapidly since 1980s for both sides. To a large extent, this was due to the rapid development of China. Africa's importance to China's development has acquired new

dimensions as well. Therefore, while the principle of mutual benefits remains the same, additional approaches have been adopted for the strategic cooperation, such as direct investment, debt and import duty exemption, peace keeping, etc. The strategic cooperation is fueled by intensive exchange of high ranking visits and is gradually institutionalized in the framework of China-Africa Cooperation Forum since 2000.

In conclusion, China's policies towards Africa can be described as policies towards strategic partners. This strategic cooperation is based on the national interests of both sides and is of mutually beneficial nature. It is resulting in shared development.