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(GO GLOBAL)

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In 2011, trade between China and Africa reached US\$ 160 billion and investments totalled more than US\$ 13 billion. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which aims to solidify economic, political and diplomatic ties between China's central government and Africa, recently outlined recommendations supporting its policy:

- Africa needs to take control of its economic development path. As enshrined in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), transparency, corruption and governance issues need to be addressed to ensure public service delivery to people. This should also be the key agenda for FOCAC. From Africa's side, the cooperation and partnership with China should benefit people who mostly remain disadvantaged in their livelihoods; increased transparency will help ensure the reaching of targeted groups.
- In Sino-African economic co-operation (trade, investments and aid), the lack of transparency, corruption and doubtful governance performance has been denounced by civil society. China should strongly consider these issues in its engagement with African countries.
- For balanced trade, policies should be developed on both sides. With the rising purchasing power among Chinese and a shift towards consumer-driven growth in China, opportunities are presented to move towards a more balanced trade between China and Africa. The establishment of (temporary and targeted) protectionist measures to regulate China-Africa trade can also contribute to "fair trade". This, however, requires a strategic trade policy on the African side.
- To face these challenges, Africa needs to emphasise pragmatism in its partnership with China. Country, as well as regional level policies should be developed to set priorities to achieve through FOCAC V. The African Union Commission – a member of FOCAC in its own right – should also undertake studies and analysis of African countries' needs to better engage the debate with Chinese officials.



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