



An Oxfam-organized event to discuss the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Lusaka, Zambia. Photo: Oxfam

African Countries' Engagement with China and other Development Partners in Achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2063

Understanding how Africa can engage with global development partners to provide more effective support for implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 is crucial to realizing the continent's development aspirations. Oxfam commissioned research to provide a detailed assessment of the key development platforms – the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and FOCAC. The research examined how Africans can mobilize around a Common African Position on Implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 at the level of national governments, regional economic communities and the African Union. This briefing note makes recommendations for improving coordination and cooperation on best practice in development between emerging and traditional partners.

INTRODUCTION

The transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), when aligned with the aims set forth in the African Union's Agenda 2063, offers Africa a unique opportunity to build on the gains for the last decade-and-a-half to embed policies and practices into achieving long-term development. While the eight main pillars of the MDGs were primarily aimed at raising social standards in development, the SDGs integrate key features of the productive sector into the planning in the form of seventeen key goals. Although there is some variation with that put forward in the SDGs, the African Union's own Agenda 2063 shares much of the same focus in its own series of sequenced ten year plans for continental transformation.

While African states, sub-regional and regional organizations are all formally committed to achieving these admirable long-term development goals, the task of transforming ideas into reality is one which all parties recognize requires a collaborative effort by the international community. Traditional OECD-DAC partners like the European Union, the United States and Japan are themselves committed to orienting their development assistance programmes in line with the SDGs and – by default – Agenda 2063, therefore enhancing the possibilities of making substantive progress across Africa in the coming decade. 'Emerging partners' denotes a non-Western (usually OECD) developing country of the South, which may have had an historical relationship with Africa and are more recently engaged through South–South Development Cooperation (SSDC). The role of China, an emerging partner whose financial wherewithal, trade standing, institutional capabilities and development record set it apart from other emerging partners such as India and Brazil, is a country which deserves special attention in this process. Indeed, as the continent's largest trading partner since 2009,¹ a major financier and builder of infrastructure as well as an investor of growing importance, there are great expectations among Africans and the international community at large that Beijing will play a significant part in supporting policies and mobilizing the resources necessary to realize the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

The Oxfam-commissioned research study looked at how African countries can effectively engage China and other development partners and investors (traditional and emerging) in achieving SDGs and Agenda 2063. The conceptual framework for the study focused on the institutional dimensions of the engagement between Africa and emerging and traditional partners. In particular, the policy discourses, policy practices and institutional arrangements pursued by these global development partners towards Africa are critically examined and analysed in the research report pursuant to the following questions.

- How are emerging and traditional partners utilizing and proposing to use their economic cooperation and aid policies to assist Africa in addressing the SDGs and Agenda 2063?
- What does policy convergence between emerging and traditional partners and Africa on key development targets suggest about the content and trajectory of cooperation?
- What steps are African governments, regional economic communities and continental bodies taking to facilitate the implementation of cooperative arrangements with these global development partners aimed at meeting the SDGs and Agenda 2063?

1 SETTING THE STAGE: FROM MDGS TO SDGS AND AGENDA 2063

Launched at a UN Summit in September 2000, the MDGs were unprecedented in their scope and ambition for development. Fifteen years on, though rapid gains in China and India produced significant impact on a positive reading of the aggregated achievements of the MDGs, there was genuine to limited improvement in the conditions experienced by Africans in most of the eight target sectors.² According to the African Development Bank, by 2015 the continent was deemed to be 'on target' to achieve only three goals (Goal 2 – universal primary education; Goal 3 – gender equality; Goal 6 – combatting HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases).

The structure of the Post-2015 Development Agenda sought to build on the areas of development attainment to date and to expand the overall development remit. The aim was to produce a truly universal set of objectives that spoke not only to the eradication of poverty in developing countries, but the elimination of inequality in developed countries and climate change mitigation. Seventeen goals and 169 targets were identified and formally launched at a special UN Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015. These goals deliberately included productive sectors such as industrialization and agriculture which had not featured in the original MDGs, as well as a new commitment to addressing inequality on a global scale.³

This expansion of the Post-2015 Development Agenda beyond the traditional confines of Western donors and their established institutions and is a step towards realizing the commitment to universalize the new development aims and ultimately to recalibrating practices in line with the expanding participation of so-called non-traditional 'donors'. This trend has been reinforced through the launch of Chinese-led development banks, especially the BRICS New Bank in 2013 and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in 2014, both of which offer developing countries alternative sources of financing for development.

In the meantime, the AU Commission, working in conjunction with the NEPAD Secretariat and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, embarked on a long-term study of future scenarios for continental development. The outcome of the study, branded as 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want', contained 7 aspirations and 20 goals within which were embedded a further 34 priorities.⁴ Building on these overarching 20 goals, African officials met in early 2014 and established 12 key agenda 'flagship' programmes, including an integrated high speed train network; pan-African e-university; a continental free trade area by 2017; and silencing guns by 2020. These concrete programmes culminated in the promulgation of a 'Common African Position' on the post-2015 Development Agenda, which sought to integrate the key aspects of Agenda 2063 into this process and give voice to continental concerns.⁵

2 CHINA'S ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

China's engagement in African development is manifested through its burgeoning economic interests in the resource sector and to a lesser extent the African market, framed under the rubric of South-South Development Cooperation. China-Africa two way trade leapt from just over \$10bn in 2000 to \$215bn, while Chinese FDI stock grew from \$500m to \$32bn between 2003 to 2014.⁶ The phenomenal rise of emerging powers and the global financial crisis of 2008, both of which gave greater prominence to the role of China and other non-traditional partners, are behind this new attention.

At the same time, the specifics of Chinese engagement with African development are played out through the multilateral Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and directly through bilateral relations. The FOCAC process is the principal mechanism for articulating the strategic vision of

China–Africa relations and the setting for aggregating the interests and policies that guide two-way ties between China and the continent. Bilateral relations are the primary site of action and implementation for China, though Beijing’s support for regional and sub-regional programmes since 2012 is a relatively new dimension; for example, the AU in peace and security and the regional infrastructure development in the East African Community. The Chinese state, sub-national (provinces and municipalities), state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and private actors are ultimately the implementing agents for the China’s programmes and policies towards the continent.

China, the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Africa

The Chinese government has played an important and active role in shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda, recognizing that its own national aspirations are deeply intertwined with those of the global community. China’s commitment to extending support to other lesser developed countries in their efforts to reach the sustainable development goals features in a number of its own SDG targets, providing recognition of China’s capacity to serve as a source of development partnership for the Global South. Examples of this are China’s Assistance Fund for South–South Cooperation, its financial support (\$1bn over ten years) of the UN Fund for Peace and Development, its key status in backing the BRICS New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as well as the support given to the Silk Road Fund. There are provisions aimed at furthering education through the granting of 150,000 scholarships and 120,000 training for students from developing countries, including Africa. Moreover, African countries are singled out for special attention in China’s position paper on Agenda 2030.⁷

China’s recent policy towards Africa provides further evidence of this commitment. Premier Li Keqiang, on a state visit to the continent in May 2014 launched the ‘461 China-Africa Cooperation Framework’ and the ‘Three Networks and Industrialization Projects’. Events like the China–Africa Poverty Reduction and Development Conference, involving leading figures in Chinese development along with AU counterparts and held in Addis Ababa in November 2014, aimed to provide further insights into the industrialization experiences of China and its possible transfer to the continent.⁸ Justin Yifu Lin (former deputy head of the World Bank), produced work on ‘new structural economics’ which offered a theoretical reassessment of the development opportunities inherent in relationships like that between China and Africa.⁹

Three projects in particular, the Addis Ababa Light Rail System, the Addis Ababa to Djibouti standard gauge railway and the Mombasa to Nairobi standard gauge railway, were seen as emblematic of the ‘Three Networks and Industrialization Projects’. The first two projects have been successfully completed while the Mombasa to Nairobi railway is still undergoing construction.¹⁰ Moreover, they cohered closely with one of the key ‘flagship’ programmes, namely the ‘world class infrastructure criss-crossing Africa’ identified by AU officials as part of Agenda 2063’s first phase.

At the last FOCAC summit held in Johannesburg on 4–5 December 2015, President Xi Jinping announced the content of the jointly agreed framework for cooperation as ‘10+5+1’:

- Ten cooperative plans focused on industrialization, agricultural modernization, infrastructure finance, green development, trade and investment, poverty reduction, public health, cultural people-to-people exchanges and, lastly, peace and security.
- Five pillars highlighting the nature of the relationship, namely, political equality and mutual trust, win–win economic cooperation, mutual learning between Chinese and African civilization, mutual assistance in security, and solidarity and coordination in international affairs.
- One being the comprehensive and strategic cooperative partnership between China and Africa at the core of the relationship.¹¹

Moreover, in a headline-grabbing statement, the Chinese president declared that China would make

available \$60bn in financial resources to realize these ambitions over the next few years.¹² This followed the pattern of doubling financial commitments (\$5bn FOCAC III in 2006, \$10bn FOCAC IV in 2009, \$12bn FOCAC V in 2012) made by Beijing to support African development. The FOCAC Action Plan, unveiled a week later, reiterated the '10+5+1' formulation as the basis for cooperation over the coming three years, while providing much more specific detail on how China and Africa would strengthen the institutional basis and planning process of cooperation, discussions of implementation and some insights into the commitments.¹³

3 EMERGING AND TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS IN AFRICA: HOW THESE PARTNERS SUPPORT AFRICA TO ADDRESS THE SDGS AND AGENDA 2063

Beyond China, there are numerous emerging and traditional partnerships engaged with African development. Their approach towards Africa and how they have sought to use their resources to promote the SDGs and Agenda 2063 is instructive.

3.1 Japan

Japan's development aid – officially designated as ODA¹⁴ – to Africa peaked in the late 1980s, when it was the largest single provider to the continent.¹⁵ Today, it continues to play an important role with direct aid disbursements of \$22,526m in 2013.¹⁶ Japanese two-way trade with the continent in 2014 stood at \$24bn and its investment profile that same year rose to \$10.5bn.¹⁷

Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japanese Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund are key components of the country's aid programme. The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), launched in 1993, forms part of the backbone of Japanese development cooperation with Africa.¹⁸ Its membership of the G8 allowed it to play a role in mobilizing that grouping of leading industrialized economies to focus on African development, first seen at the G8 summit in Okinawa in 2000 and subsequently at the G8 summit in Hokkaido in 2008.¹⁹

At the most recent TICAD VI held in Nairobi in August 2016, the Japanese Prime Minister reiterated the country's commitment to the pursuing the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Japanese ODA.²⁰ He announced a \$30bn package for African infrastructure, healthcare and security, as well as a programme aimed at training 10 million Africans over three years, including 30,000 engineers. The inclusion of a large contingent of Japanese businesses was indicative of the belief that there were greater economic opportunities in Africa than might have been the case in the past, while the launch of the Japan–Africa Public and Private Economic Forum was designed to foster greater public–private sector development cooperation.

3.2 Brazil

Brazilian approaches to development abroad are predicated, like that of China, on South–South Development Cooperation which Brazilian officials characterize as being founded on the principles of 'horizontality', 'demand driven' and 'dialogue'.²¹ At the same time, a distinctive feature of Brazil's outlook towards African development is the belief that its own domestic development success in agricultural is especially relevant to the continent. Over the last decade, Brazil has invested \$10bn in Africa (2009) while its two-way trade has jumped from \$4.3bn in 2000 to \$26.5bn in 2012 (these figures subsequently falling with the economic downturn in Brazil).²²

The structure of Brazilian cooperation is built around three pillars: the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) and the Brazilian Import–Export Bank. Though the Brazilian rhetoric of autonomy through SSDC has often been combative, in fact trilateral cooperation forms an important part of its approach to development. The degree to which the expansion of Brazilian development cooperation was tied to the vision of its president, Lula da Silva, became clear with the sharp reduction in ABC’s budget under his successor, Dilma Rousseff, from \$65m in 2010 to \$36m two years later in 2012.²³

The iconic Brazilian development project, ProSavana, for the African continent is the largest trilateral cooperation programme of its kind pursued by Brazil and one that has become its most controversial.²⁴ It aligns directly with SDG 8 and 9 and indirectly with SDG 1. ABC, partnering with JICA and the Mozambican Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG), as well as working with Embrapa (the Brazilian agricultural research corporation), sought to transfer the experience of introducing commercial agriculture in Brazil’s northeast (a joint project with the Japanese) to Mozambique’s Nacala Corridor.

Unfortunately, the Strategic Plan launched in March 2013 was formulated with ‘very limited input not only from local communities and organized civil society but also from the Mozambican government’.²⁵ The result was predictably that these actors became incensed as plans became known to remove communities estimated at upwards of four million people without consultation, and working in conjunction with civil society organizations in Japan and Brazil, conducted a campaign of protest. Brazil’s economic downturn and corruption scandals have caused the government to drastically reduce its role in the project.

3.3 India

India’s development cooperation with Africa stretches back to the early 1970s, when the bulk of the programmes were focused on technical assistance and exchanges: classic South–South Development Cooperation. The Indian business community ignited interests in Africa, investing \$400m from 2005 to 2007 and supporting the creation of the Confederation of Indian Industries’ annual Conclave on Africa Project Partnerships.²⁶ The first Indian–African Summit was held in New Delhi in 2008 with fourteen African governments participating under the auspices of the AU, a second summit was convened in Addis Ababa in 2011 and another in New Delhi in October 2015.

India’s two-way trade with Africa rocketed from US\$5.3bn in 2001 to US\$72bn in 2015.²⁷ Nearly 90 percent of African exports to India are heavily concentrated in energy resources and other commodities, while 98 percent of Indian exports to African markets are value-added products.²⁸ India’s Export–Import Bank plays an important role in supporting commercial activities and accessing resources and markets in Africa. Lacking a centralized aid agency, and decidedly opposed to aligning its policies to the OECD-DAC, the Indian government has disbursed grants and other forms of assistance that fall outside of the commercially minded exchanges mostly through the Ministry of External Affairs until 2012, when it created the Development Partnerships Administration.²⁹ Indian investments to the continent are not well covered, so figures vary from US\$14.1bn in 2011 to suggestions that it was over US\$35bn.³⁰

The integration and implementation of the SDGs/Agenda 2063 into the Indian approach to development cooperation is reflected in a number of different ways, but perhaps most readily through its work in strengthening human development and capacity building on the continent. India joined the African Capacity Building Foundation back in 2005, providing \$1m to support education and training programmes in that year and carrying out that educational work up to the present.³¹ This support includes India-Africa Institute for Foreign Trade (Burundi); India-Africa Institute of Information Technology (Botswana); and Tata Motors partnership with the Engineering Department, University of Pretoria (South Africa).³²

3.4 Comparing Africa's engagement with China, Japan, Brazil and India – strength in diversity or diversifying dependency?

The possibility of conducting a comparison of the differing approaches adopted by emerging and traditional partners based on the short surveys above is limited by a number of factors. This includes an absence of data, the lack of any shared indicators or methodologies outside of the loose adherence to the ideals of SSDC, and their project-based approach eschews a commitment to assess impact in favour of outcomes.

One could say, however, that the diversity of approaches utilized by emerging partners corresponds to an expansion of the choices available for African development. Certainly, analysis has emphasized the constructive impact that the opening up of alternative approaches to development emanating from the successful experiences of other developing countries has had on Africa.³³ At the same time, the disquiet with various problems tied to emerging partners' economic engagement and aid policies persists in some African quarters. Indeed, noted scholar Ian Taylor has provocatively suggested that Africa may merely be 'diversification of dependency' through its engagement with emerging partners, a position which needs to be seriously considered in light of the issues raised above.³⁴

3.5 Reflections on Global Partnerships for Development

The centrality of SDG 17's call for reviving and enhancing Global Partnerships is arguably the linchpin of the entire SDGs process and although weight is necessarily given to domestic sources of agency and ownership, is understood to be crucial to the success of Agenda 2063.

Working collaboratively is the only possible way to make the kind of major gains called for by the SDGs and Agenda 2063. TICAD and the Africa-India Summit both share aspects of FOCAC but offer unique features oriented towards addressing particular development dilemmas in Africa. These include, in the case of TICAD, a far-reaching consultative process that engages with African participants at government, business and civil society levels.³⁵ India's engagement with the continent, driven by the commercial concerns of the private sector and running in parallel technical assistance and training programmes focused on human resource development, increasingly focuses on public-private partnerships to deliver development. Another possibility is found in enhancing the collaborative relationship with the OECD-DAC's Africa Global Partnership Platform, or giving consideration to new initiatives by old cooperation partners like Germany, which recently launched its 'Marshall Plan for Africa'.³⁶

All of this activism by emerging and traditional partners is strongly suggestive of the fact that the conditions for collaborating between them and Africa to realize the SDGs and Agenda 2063 are more auspicious than ever before. As noted above, approaches like Trilateral cooperation – which bring together the resources, skills and experiences of global development partners in a complementary fashion – offer further possibilities for leveraging resources in the service of the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

Moving beyond the statist approach, civil society, private foundations and international development NGOs offer insights and alternative avenues of cooperation that could be usefully engaged as well. Global development partnerships that include private foundations – the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation being a prominent example – are making inroads into tackling HIV/Aids by working with the Botswana government.³⁷ The response to the Ebola crisis in 2015–16 led by China highlighted how emerging and traditional partners, coordinating with local African governments and local civil society, international NGOs and multi-lateral institutions, can effectively mobilize their resources to address a growing pandemic.³⁸

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The FOCAC Action Plan's orientation touches on many of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 directly, with a few exceptions, through a detailed set of projects and commitments. The project-led approach adopted by the emerging partners means that there is a wide spread of initiatives involved. Perhaps where there is a concern is around the means to be employed to realize these aims: preliminary assessments suggest that the \$60bn financial package is weighted towards trade first and foremost, with infrastructure-financed loans occupying a significant second place, and smaller provisions reserved for other aspects of the development agenda linked to manufacturing and employment creation. The degree to which this occurs will be determined by the utilization of the resources on offer by China, how Africans leverage these resources in pursuit of these aims and their successful implementation.

Africans own this global process to an unprecedented degree, both in terms of their involvement in developing it and in terms of the revived material conditions on the continent. Part and parcel of the enhanced African economic performance is the intertwining of African relations with that of more 'established' emerging countries like China. Realizing the common objectives contained within the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and embraced by development partners will require leadership, finance, institutional resilience and a truly global effort of historic proportions. The following specific recommendations to the African governments, AU and RECs, African civil society organizations, the Peoples Republic of China, and other emerging powers and other partners are also pertinent.

To African governments

- Make sure that efforts are conducted and sustained over time to integrate the provisions of SDGs and Agenda 2063 more thoroughly into National Development Planning. One of the findings of the review of the MDGs was that its shortcomings were tied to the failure to integrate the MDGs into national development planning by African governments; doing so with the SDGs and Agenda 2063 would mark an important step towards implementation.
- Foster the conditions for domestic resource mobilization through support for revenue generation. A key provision of Agenda 2063 is aimed at enhancing the role of domestic resource mobilization and tax revenue collection and compliance. The African Capacity Report 2015 outlines how limited the engagement with key initiatives such as the African Tax Administrative Forum and the Collaborative African Budget Reform are to date which provides workable strategies for realizing an improvement in domestic resource mobilization.
- Reflect on your commitment to promote women and gender equality and make more effort to include SDG 5 in development assistance provisions of FOCAC VI.

To the AU and RECs

- Consider leading a process towards developing a 'Common African Position on Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs'. Make sure that efforts are conducted and sustained over time to integrate the provisions of SDGs and Agenda 2063 more thoroughly into National Development Planning. Concurrently, the Common African Position on Implementation could also promote the use of programmatic evaluations of project impact as a qualitative measure of achievement in FOCAC-based projects. This would help facilitate better outcomes and more efficient use of development assistance.
- Encourage China and other development partners to engage in trilateral cooperation to work with China and African governments on development assistance to leverage knowledge and pool resources in pursuit of SDGs and Agenda 2030.

To African civil society organizations

- Encourage China and other emerging partners to provide greater clarity on the criteria to be used for the South-South Aid Fund and the South-South Cooperation Fund on Climate Change to assist planning by policy makers for African development. In particular, encourage more transparency on aid data, financial disbursements and the harmonization of a standard set of indicators by African governments, China and other emerging powers. This would encourage cooperation and knowledge transfer between all of these entities to improve development outcomes.
- Reach out to international NGOs, especially those in emerging partnership countries, to develop coordinated positions and strategies that foster accountable and inclusive development in Africa.

To the Peoples Republic of China

- Consider producing more transparent data on development cooperation, including financial data that would allow for stronger analysis of aid efficiency and impact. Adhering to a standardized set of indicators that reflect prevailing and recognized standards used by the African Union and within the UN system would further this ambition.
- Consider introducing programmatic evaluations of project impact to FOCAC-based projects as a qualitative measure of achievement. This would help facilitate better outcomes and more efficient use of development assistance. The responsibility for monitoring and evaluation should be shared by China and African governments, while the AU and RECs through the Common African Position on Implementation could set the overall agenda with China and other global development partners.
- Provide greater clarity on the criteria to be used for the South-South Aid Fund and the South-South Cooperation Fund on Climate Change to assist planning by policy makers involved in the FOCAC process.
- Extend your commitment to trilateral cooperation on development assistance to leverage knowledge and pool resources in pursuit of SDGs and Agenda 2030.

To other emerging powers and other partners

- Actively engage in trilateral cooperation to work with China and African governments on development assistance to leverage knowledge and pool resources in pursuit of SDGs and Agenda 2030.
- Consider aligning your development assistance more closely, if it isn't already, towards the promotion of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Africa. Seek to coordinate policy approaches with other emerging powers and traditional partners through established multilateral forums in conjunction with African continental, regional and national policy communities.

NOTES

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- 5 African Union, 'Common African Position (CAP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda', 10 March 2014, pp. 19–20. ECDPM Briefing Note N°74 "How Does Africa Speak with One Voice?" by Ramsamy, Knoll, Knaepen, and van Wyk, November 2014.
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- 12 President Xi Jinping speech at FOCAC Summit, 4 December 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOrKjUwHUxA; also see President Xi Jinping, 'Working together to write a new chapter in China-Africa cooperation', FOCAC VI Summit, Johannesburg, 5 December 2015, www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dwjbzjjhys_1/zjyh/
- 13 FOCAC Action Plan, 15 December 2015, www.focac.org/eng/zxxx/t954620.htm
- 14 See OECD, 'Definition of ODA', www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistedefinitionandcoverage.htm.
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This paper was written by Professor Chris Alden. It is part of a series of papers written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email advocacy@oxfaminternational.org

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The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International under ISBN 978-1-78748-026-1 in July 2017.
Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

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