



An Integrated, Prosperous
and Peaceful Africa

Permanent Mission of the AU to China

Africa's Security, Africa's Responsibility: Deepening China-Africa Partnership for Peace, Stability and Shared Prosperity

By

H.E. Ambassador Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, PhD
Permanent Representative of the AU to the People's Republic of China

Beijing, China. 17 September 2026

Your Excellency Admiral Dong Jun, Minister of National Defence of the People's Republic of China

Your Excellency Ambassador Liu Xianfa, Special Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs.

Distinguished Ministers, Generals and Representatives of AU Member States here present

Distinguished Members of the Government of the People's Republic of China,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

I have the profound honour to address the *4th China-Africa Peace and Security Forum*, at an exceptional time for Africa and China, two partners committed to peace, stability, and shared progress.

Let me from the outset on behalf of H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the AU Commission commend H.E. President Xi Jinping for his strong and clear leadership that continues to deepen China-Africa relations. As we meet here this morning, China under the able leadership of President Xi is celebrating its two miracles of **rapid economic growth** and **long-term social stability**.

We also commend President Xi for advancing multilateralism and cooperation through the Four Global Initiatives on Development, Security, Civilization and Governance. The African Union welcomes these four Initiatives as they align with Africa's transformative agenda, and reinforce multilateralism by expanding the voice of the Global South in international decision-making.

Excellencies

This is a significant year as it marks the 70th anniversary diplomatic ties between Africa and China, and the year of people-to-people exchanges. We meet at a time when the Africa-China partnership is becoming one of the most consequential partnerships of the twenty-first century. The partnership is anchored on solidarity, guided by mutual respect and inspired by a common belief that our futures are best secured through cooperation, dignity and shared responsibility.

The African Union's central message today is clear and unwavering: Africa welcomes partnerships that respect African leadership, reinforce African institutions, and advance Africa's aspirations of peace, prosperity, integration, and dignity as clearly articulated in Agenda 2063, the continental blueprint for the **Africa We Want**.

The African Union stands firmly by the principle that **Africa's security is Africa's responsibility**. Yet responsibility must never be mistaken for isolation. It is the confident

exercise of ownership and collaboration with partners who respect African sovereignty and our aspiration to build a more just and secure world.

In this spirit, China stands out as a valued and strategic partner of Africa. The relations between Africa and China have reached a level of breadth, depth, and political significance that reflects both the maturity of our cooperation and the confidence of our shared vision.

Under the leadership of **President Xi Jinping**, China has consistently advanced principles that align deeply with Africa. We commend President Xi for advancing the *Ten Partnership Actions for Modernization in Africa* under the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and the zero-tariff policy which came into force on 1 May this year. The Sino-African partnership is anchored on the principles of solidarity among developing nations, respect for sovereignty, peaceful coexistence, mutual benefit, and common development.

These same principles align with the AU's Agenda 2063, which clearly advances a vision of an Africa that is peaceful, prosperous, integrated, people-centred, and respected as an international actor.

The principles also remind us that the pursuit of peace and security is not merely an African imperative, it is a contribution to global stability and to the responsibility Africa shares as a respected member of the international community.

Over the past decades, Africa and China have transformed cooperation beyond the traditional boundaries of development assistance. Our partnership, both within and outside the FOCAC framework, now embraces infrastructure, industrialization, trade, digital transformation, education, public health, climate action, peace, security and strategic political dialogue.

And let me reiterate here that our partnership is sustained by political trust, strategic foresight, and the conviction that developing nations can help shape an international order that is more equitable, more representative, and more responsive to the needs of humanity.

As we examine the security dimension of Africa-China cooperation, we must do so in the context of a rapidly changing global order and a continent in transformation.

Excellencies,

Like China, Africa enters this new era with confidence and ambition. We do so, not to antagonize anyone, but to lead with purpose, to lift Africa's people, and shape our future on Africa's terms.

Today, on the continent, the African Continental Free Trade Area is creating the largest free trade area in the world by number of participating countries. This will lead to continental integration and economic transformation. Democratic governance also continues to evolve at our own pace across many parts of the continent. We see innovation expand rapidly, and being led by young Africans, whose potential remains extraordinary and full of human capital and creativity to transform the continent.

Nonetheless, Africa must speak with clarity and resolve about the challenges that confront the continent. Terrorism, violent extremism and other forms of conflict still affect parts of the

Sahelo-Saharan region, the Lake Chad Basin, the Great Lakes, part of Mozambique, the Horn of Africa, and other regions.

Transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking, maritime insecurity, cyber threats, and the impact of climate change continues to test Africa's resilience.

These are not merely security challenges alone, they are obstacles to development, governance, dignity, and the future of Africa. And above all, they weaken institutions, disrupt livelihoods, and hold back Africa's transformation. For this reason, the African Union is responding by addressing the roots causes of these challenges. We are deeply grateful that China stands with the AU as a reliable partner that the continent can count on.

Excellencies

The AU remains firmly committed to the principle of **African solutions to African problems**. It is a principle often misunderstood but one that is not of isolation but a purposeful declaration of African agency. In simple terms, it means that African institutions, African governments, and African people must remain at the centre of decisions that shape the future of Africa.

As China recognizes, the highest purpose of any partnership can never be substitution, but empowerment. A strong partnership is not to speak for Africa, but to strengthen Africa's voice. A reliable partnership is not to act in Africa's place, but to enable Africa to act with greater confidence, greater capacity, and greater strategic coherence.

In this context, the African Union places great importance on its cooperation with China. China's engagement in capacity-building, infrastructure development, skills transfer and institutional cooperation directly supports Africa's resilience, sovereignty, and sustainable development.

China has also affirmed support for Africa's development priorities including through the recently adopted zero-tariff policy, for a stronger African voice in global governance, and for African-led approaches to peace and security. These commitments have deepened strategic trust and given practical expression to a relationship built on respect, equality, and shared purpose.

Excellencies,

The African Union's flagship initiative, **Silencing the Guns**, is one of our continent's most important commitments. Rooted in Agenda 2063, it calls on us to prevent conflict, strengthen governance, consolidate peace, and protect the dignity and security of our peoples.

Silencing the Guns is more than a security programme; it is a continental promise. It reflects our determination to build an Africa where instability gives way to opportunity, where institutions are strong, and where young people can look to the future with confidence.

The African Union welcomes partnerships that help turn this promise into reality. We appreciate China's support for African peace and security, including cooperation in peacekeeping, capacity-building, logistics, and strategic dialogue, especially where such support strengthens African ownership and African-led solutions.

A practical example is China's support to the AU Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, a critical enabler of the African Standby Force. As we continue to build our peace and security architecture, we are deeply grateful to China for its significant material support to the Continental Logistics Base and look forward to enhancing cooperation that is purposeful, practical, and equal to the challenges before us on key security matters.

Excellencies,

One of the most important lessons of recent decades is that security cannot be separated from development. A community without economic opportunity may become vulnerable to recruitment by violent groups. A region lacking infrastructure can become isolated from national institutions. A young person without hope may become susceptible to criminal networks or extremist ideologies.

Conversely, investment creates opportunity. Trade generates jobs. Education expands possibilities. Infrastructure strengthens state presence and economic integration. Technology creates pathways for innovation and growth. For these reasons, development itself represents a powerful investment in security.

More encouraging for Africa has been the example of China's two miracles **of rapid economic growth** and **long-term social stability**. China's unprecedented achievements in poverty reduction, infrastructure development, industrialization, and modernization are now offering important lessons for many developing countries.

In Africa, we welcome the continued cooperation in infrastructure, energy, manufacturing, digital connectivity, artificial intelligence, green development, agricultural modernization, and human capital development. These areas belong at the heart of any serious peace and security agenda, because sustainable peace is built not only by ending violence, but by expanding hope.

Looking ahead, the next chapter of China-Africa security cooperation should be defined by greater ambition, deeper trust, and more tangible impact. The African Union believes we should strengthen peace support capabilities, professional military education, counter-terrorism cooperation, maritime security collaboration, border management systems, logistics, technology, innovation, and institutional resilience. Above all, we should continue to support continental mechanisms that advance African ownership and operational effectiveness.

Most importantly, our cooperation must help reinforce African institutions capable not only of responding to conflict, but of preventing it; not only of managing insecurity, but of transforming the conditions that give rise to it. This is the true measure of strategic partnership. These principles must remain the compass of our common efforts.

Excellencies,

The story of Africa-China relations is a testament to how strategic partnerships, mutual respect, and shared aspirations must work in an uncertain world. The African Union deeply values the longstanding support that China has extended to Africa's development and peace efforts over many years.

We further commend the commitment demonstrated under the leadership of **President Xi Jinping**. His vision for international cooperation has helped elevate China-Africa relations and strengthen the bonds of solidarity between our peoples.

The African Union particularly appreciates China's support for African peace and security priorities, including cooperation that strengthens African institutions, enhances the operational effectiveness of the Continental Logistics Base, and advances the African Union's solemn objective of Silencing the Guns.

We commend and count on China for its continued support for reform of the UN Security Council in line with the African Common Position articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration that calls for Africa's representation in the permanent category of the UN Security Council with all the privileges including the veto.

I would like to conclude by stating that Africa's security remains Africa's legitimate responsibility, but this does not mean standing alone. It means engaging trusted partners, like China, with confidence and dignity—partners who respect Africa's sovereignty, and share its ambition for a peaceful, secure, prosperous, integrated, and resilient continent. The African Union looks forward to deepening this partnership with the People's Republic of China in the years ahead.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you fruitful deliberations.

Xie Xie