

Defeating COVID-19 with Solidarity and Cooperation

Keynote Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping

President of the People's Republic of China

At the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit

On Solidarity Against COVID-19

Beijing, 17 June 2020

Your Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa,

Your Excellency President Macky Sall,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

Your Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Your Excellency Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization,

At such a critical moment in the global fight against COVID-19, we are gathered together in this Extraordinary China-Africa Summit. Friends old and new are connected via video link to discuss our joint response to COVID-19 and to renew the fraternity between China and Africa. I thank President Ramaphosa and President Sall for joining me in initiating the Summit, and I appreciate the participation of all colleagues present. I also want to send my regards to other African leaders who are not able to be with us today.

The sudden onslaught of COVID-19 has taken a heavy toll on countries around the world, with the loss of several hundred thousand precious lives.

Here, I suggest that we observe a moment of silence for those who have tragically passed away due to COVID-19 and express our condolences to their families.

— In the face of COVID-19, China and Africa have withstood the test of a severe challenge. The Chinese people have put up a fierce fight and made enormous sacrifice to bring the situation in China under control. Still, we remain mindful of the risk of a resurgence. In the same spirit, governments and peoples in Africa have put up a united front and, under the effective coordination by the African Union, have taken strong measures to effectively slow the spread of the virus. These are indeed hard-won results.

— In the face of COVID-19, China and Africa have offered mutual support and fought shoulder to shoulder with each other. China shall always remember the invaluable support Africa gave us at the height of our battle with the coronavirus. In return, when Africa was struck by the virus, China was the first to rush in with assistance and has since stood firm with the African people.

— In the face of COVID-19, China and Africa have enhanced solidarity and strengthened friendship and mutual trust. Let me reaffirm China's commitment to its longstanding friendship with Africa. No matter how the international landscape may evolve, China shall never waver in its determination to pursue greater solidarity and cooperation with Africa.

Colleagues,

COVID-19 is still affecting many parts of the world. Both China and Africa face the formidable task of combating the virus while stabilizing the economy and protecting people's livelihoods. We must always put our people and their lives front and center. We must mobilize necessary resources, stick together in collaboration, and do whatever it takes to protect people's lives and health and minimize the fallout of COVID-19.

First, we must stay committed to fighting COVID-19 together. China will continue to do whatever it can to support Africa's response to COVID-19. China will lose no time in following through on the measures I announced at the opening of the World Health Assembly, and continue to help African countries by providing supplies, sending expert teams, and facilitating Africa's procurement of medical supplies in China. China will start ahead of schedule the construction of the Africa CDC headquarters this year. China will work with Africa to fully deliver the health care initiative adopted at the FOCAC Beijing Summit, and speed up the construction of China-Africa Friendship Hospitals and the cooperation between paired-up Chinese and

African hospitals. Together, we will build a China-Africa community of health for all. We pledge that once the development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccine is completed in China, African countries will be among the first to benefit.

Second, we must stay committed to enhancing China-Africa cooperation. To cushion the impact of COVID-19, it is important to strengthen Belt and Road cooperation and accelerate the follow-ups to the FOCAC Beijing Summit. Greater priority needs to be given to cooperation on public health, economic reopening, and people's livelihood.

Within the FOCAC framework, China will cancel the debt of relevant African countries in the form of interest-free government loans that are due to mature by the end of 2020. For those African countries that are hardest hit by the coronavirus and are under heavy financial stress, China will work with the global community to give them greater support, by such means as further extending the period of debt suspension, to help them tide over the current difficulty. We encourage Chinese financial institutions to respond to the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and to hold friendly consultations with African countries according to market principles to work out arrangements for commercial loans with sovereign guarantees. China will work with other members of the G20 to implement the DSSI and, on that basis, urge the G20 to extend debt service suspension still further for countries concerned, including those in Africa.

China hopes that the international community, especially developed countries and multilateral financial institutions, will act more forcefully on debt relief and suspension for Africa. China will work with the UN, WHO and other partners to assist Africa's response to COVID-19, and do it in a way that respects the will of Africa.

To help Africa achieve sustainable development is what matters in the long run. China supports Africa in its effort to develop the African Continental Free Trade Area and to enhance connectivity and strengthen industrial and supply chains. China will explore broader cooperation with Africa in such new business forms as digital economy, smart city, clean energy, and 5G to boost Africa's development and revitalization.

Third, we must stay committed to upholding multilateralism. In the face of COVID-19, solidarity and cooperation is our most powerful weapon. China will work with Africa to uphold the UN-centered global governance system and support WHO in making greater contribution to the global COVID-19 response. We oppose politicization and stigmatization of COVID-19, and

we oppose racial discrimination and ideological bias. We stand firm for equity and justice in the world.

Fourth, we must stay committed to taking China-Africa friendship forward. The world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century. Given the new opportunities and challenges we face, closer cooperation between China and Africa is needed, more than ever. On my part, I will stay in close touch with all of you, my colleagues, to consolidate our friendship and mutual trust, support each other on issues involving our respective core interests, and advance the fundamental interests of China and Africa and, for that matter, of all developing countries. This way, we will be able to take the China-Africa comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership to a greater height.

Colleagues,

At the FOCAC Beijing Summit, we agreed to work together to build an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future. Today's Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19 is our concrete step to deliver the commitment we made at the Beijing Summit and to do our part in the international cooperation against COVID-19. I am convinced that humanity will ultimately defeat the virus, and that the Chinese and African people are poised to embrace better days ahead.

Thank you.