



In a few days, I will pay an official visit to Ethiopia and the headquarters of the African Union, Nigeria, Angola and Kenya at their invitation. I am glad to talk to you about my visit.

Q: You are a leader with international vision. I know that you have visited many countries. What is your impression of Africa?

A: I visited Egypt in 2009, but I did not see the whole of Africa. I have read some books about Africa, and I learned that the entire Africa consists of the Arab region in the north and the Sub-Saharan Africa. It is a vast, fertile and fascinating continent. Africa has a time-honored and brilliant civilization. There are over 1,500 tribes and more than 2,000 languages in Africa, and it is known as the origin of human civilization. Africa is well known for the mighty Nile River, the majestic Mount Kilimanjaro, the stunning Great Rift Valley in East Africa and the world-renowned animal migration in Maasai Mara. The African people and tribal chiefs are hospitable and African music and dances are invigorating. Africa is a dynamic continent going through rapid development and I have been looking forward to this visit for a long time.

Since the beginning of this century, the African countries have given fresh vigor to pan-Africanism and made great strides in accelerating African integration. Over the past decade and more, Africa has been a global leader in pursuing fast economic growth and made impressive achievements in economic and social development. Today's Africa, full of vigor for development, is held in high regards by the world. It is fair to say that Africa has become a major force in moving the world towards multi-polarity, an important emerging market that helps promote global economic recovery and integration, and an outstanding representative of diverse civilizations in the world. I have great admiration for the spirit of unity and perseverance of the African people and have full confidence in the bright future of Africa's development.

Q: Despite great changes in the world in the past 50 years and more, China-Africa relationship has remained strong and grown in strength. What has made this possible?

A: China-Africa relationship has a long history and is full of vitality. Since the 1950s and 1960s, our common historical experiences have brought China and Africa together, and we have

forged deep friendship in our joint struggle during which we have supported each other in times of difficulty.

As a Chinese saying goes, it is easy to get a thousand pieces of gold but difficult to find a bosom friend. The Chinese people will never forget that it is our African brothers who carried us into the United Nations and we are always proud to have built the Tazara [it is a railway linking the Tanzanian port of Dar es Salaam with the town of Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia's Central Province]. Among all the international donations made to the people affected by the earthquake in Wenchuan, China in 2008, those from Africa were particularly appreciated; at the United Nations and other multilateral organizations, China has always voiced its strongest support in upholding the legitimate rights and interests of Africa and other developing countries. To us Chinese, the African people are always our good brother, good friend and good partner who are trustworthy and reliable. Having long overcome the barrier of geographical distance as well as cultural and social differences, China-Africa relationship has become a pacesetter of South-South cooperation featuring sincerity, mutual trust and harmony.

China-Africa cooperation has created vast space and strong driving force for our respective development endeavors. More importantly, it has contributed to elevating the overall status of developing countries and promoting human progress. China is ready to work with African countries to enhance strategic mutual trust, deepen cooperation in upholding peace and security, boost practical cooperation, strengthen cultural and people-to-people exchanges and make greater progress in building a new type of China-Africa strategic partnership.

Q: It is said that this is your first visit to Africa as China's Premier. What is the purpose of your visit? What message do you want to send to the African people?

A: This is the first time that I set foot on Africa as Premier of China's State Council and it is also my first foreign visit this year. I believe this visit will be one of cooperation and solidarity on the basis of past traditions. I will tread the path of friendship previously paved by the older generation of Chinese and African leaders, where I will feel the deep friendship based on solidarity and mutual assistance between the Chinese and African people, see for myself Africa's dynamic economic and social development, and listen to the African people's description of their expectation of good life in the future. I am more than ready to make concrete efforts to deepen China-Africa relations and advance our cooperation in various fields to the greater benefit of our peoples.

During my visit, I will pay a visit to the headquarters of the African Union and deliver a speech on China's approach to and position on advancing China-Africa relations and cooperation in the new era. I will have in-depth discussions with leaders of four African countries that I will visit on strengthening bilateral ties and extensively engage with local people from different sectors. I will address the World Economic Forum on Africa and exchange views with participating leaders of African countries on promoting bilateral relations and cooperation. And I will call on Chinese nationals and staff members of Chinese companies in Africa. I hope that my visit will further deepen the China-Africa traditional friendship, upgrade practical cooperation, enhance solidarity and mutual assistance and promote common development. I hope that through my visit, the 1 billion African people will strengthen their understanding that the 1.3 billion Chinese people are

always their sincere friends and reliable partners and that China is ready to pass on the relay baton of China-Africa friendship to future generations together with Africa.

As an African proverb goes, if you want to walk fast, walk alone; if you want to walk far, walk together. The ever fresh friendship and thriving comprehensive cooperation between China and Africa deserve to be valued and cherished by our people. China will treat the African people with sincerity, strengthen solidarity, promote common development through win-win cooperation and realize our glorious dreams of great renewal at an early date.

Q: People often say that China-Africa cooperation enjoys great opportunities ahead. Where do you see these opportunities? What specific measures does China take to promote future China-Africa cooperation?

A: China is the largest developing country and Africa is the continent with the largest number of developing countries. Both China and Africa face the urgent task of developing economy and realizing modernization. Since entering the new century, China and Africa have seized the historic opportunities presented by the deepening of globalization, worked together and helped each other achieve win-win outcome. The relations between the two sides have entered a “golden period”. Both China and Africa have benefited a lot from China-Africa cooperation. China is at the critical stage of comprehensively deepening reform and speeding up the transformation of the economic development model. Africa, on its part, has also started its new path of seeking strength through unity and promoting development for renewal. China-Africa cooperation is thus faced with new opportunities of making great strides forward. During my visit, I will work with leaders of the African states and the AU, and Chinese and African business representatives in an earnest, practical and enterprising spirit to review the past experience, identify room for improvement and discuss new areas, channels and formalities of China-Africa comprehensive cooperation so as to upgrade our cooperation.

China and Africa will expand exchanges and cooperation in poverty reduction for common development. Over 100 million people in China still live below the poverty line. Africa is also faced with many difficulties and challenges on the road towards the Millennium Development Goals. China and Africa are committed to developing economy and improving people’s livelihood, which makes poverty reduction one of the highlights of China-Africa cooperation. China is ready to share with Africa its experience on poverty reduction and agricultural development, enhance agricultural cooperation with Africa and help Africa train technical and managerial personnel on agriculture. We hope poverty reduction will help Africa achieve sustainable development and bring the African people a more dignified life.

China and Africa will strengthen industrial and commercial cooperation and promote Africa’s industrialization and manufacturing sector. Africa has entered the fast track of growth and its modernization process is gaining momentum. China is ready to bring into full play its advantages and take an active part in Africa’s infrastructure development so as to promote connectivity on the African continent. Through infrastructure building, we will promote industrial cooperation and help Africa to focus on developing labor-intensive manufacturing, which will create jobs and boost consumption. China will also create new ways of investment and financing cooperation to help Africa address the funding shortfalls. During the visit, the two

sides will sign cooperation agreements in such areas as road, railway, aviation and electric power.

China and Africa will enhance cooperation in human resources and eco-environment so as to sustain the momentum of Africa's long-term development. Africa has the biggest potential in human resources. China is ready to train more professionals of multiple types for African countries, and provide more vocational education tailored for African young people, so as to help Africa fully and durably unleash the population dividends. As one saying goes, the key to people-to-people exchanges lies in heart-to-heart communication. China will roll out a series of projects on people-to-people exchanges and cooperation to enrich exchanges between the two peoples and promote mutual understanding and friendship. Green has always been the true color of Africa. China will have closer cooperation with Africa in this field and provide funding to promote Africa's efforts to protect its wild animal resources and address the challenges of climate change, so that a beautiful China and a beautiful Africa will go hand in hand as we assist each other in development.

Q: In recent years, there have been some media reports about imbalance in China-Africa trade, substandard Chinese exports to Africa, and violation of local labor regulations by Chinese companies. How do you view such problems in China-Africa cooperation?

A: As China-Africa relations grow rapidly in all areas, companies of the two sides have encountered "growing pains" and some new problems in their cooperation that call for proper settlement. The Chinese government takes these issues very seriously. Instead of dodging or covering them up, China is willing to sit down with African countries and resolve these issues through earnest consultation in the spirit of mutual respect, pragmatism and efficiency. Here, let me reiterate that China will continue to carry out cooperation with Africa under the principle of sincerity, equality and mutual benefit, and urge Chinese companies to strictly abide by local laws and regulations, hold themselves accountable to the quality of the contracted projects and goods and to consumers and shoulder due responsibility to local communities and the environment. At the same time, I call on relevant African countries to strengthen market regulation and public security measures and protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese companies in Africa and the safety of their employees.

Problems, after all, are isolated cases in the whole picture of China-Africa cooperation. In recent years, the deepening of cooperation has been the mainstream and general trend. In 2013, China-Africa trade reached US\$210 billion, 2,000 times that of 1960. China has been Africa's biggest trading partner for five years running. More than 2,500 Chinese companies are operating in Africa, creating over 100,000 jobs for the local communities. Last year, the over 1.4 million visits by Chinese travelers generated huge amount of exchange revenue for Africa. According to an IMF report, China-Africa cooperation has contributed to more than 20% of Africa's development. The "China factor" has been more and more evident in Africa's development. China-Africa cooperation has brought real benefits to peoples of both sides and holds broad prospects.

Q: China is accused of pursuing "neo-colonialism" in Africa by some media. What is your comment?

A: China and African countries are tested brothers and partners committed to common development. In the cooperation with Africa, China has always upheld the principles of equality, mutual benefit, real results, efficiency, sincerity and credibility and never attached any political strings to its assistance to Africa. This has been China's decades-long practice without any deviation. China-Africa cooperation has contributed to Africa's development with a keen focus on social development and people's wellbeing. The aim is to improve Africa's investment environment and its people's lives. Numerous infrastructure projects built with Chinese assistance, including schools, hospitals, stadiums and urban water and power supply systems, have improved the living and working conditions of African people. To lessen Africa's burden, China had altogether canceled RMB20 billion worth of debts owed by African countries by the end of 2013. To enhance African countries' own development capacity, China has worked actively to help African countries develop their own modern and well-equipped manufacturing sector and agricultural system through industrial and financial cooperation to strengthen the foundation of China-Africa cooperation. For China and Africa, cooperation means opportunities; cooperation is win-win.

Like many African countries, China once suffered foreign invasion and fell under colonial and semi-colonial rule. "Do not do to others what you do not want done to you" is a millennia-old idea important in Chinese civilization. The so-called "China's neo-colonialism in Africa" is a false accusation inconsistent with Chinese tradition and culture, and does not reflect the reality of friendly, equal-footed and mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Africa. A number of African leaders have stated in public that Africa, with a history of colonialism, knows well what colonialism means and will not be misled by such accusation. I wish to assure our African friends in all seriousness that China will never pursue a colonialist path like some countries did or allow colonialism, which belonged to the past, to reappear in Africa. China will forever be a reliable friend and true partner of the African people and contribute to Africa's endeavor in developing its beautiful home continent.

[This interview was originally conducted in Chinese and translated to English]