

**Ambassadors' Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held at
National Defense University, in Beijing.**



The Ambassadors' Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was held in College of Defense Studies at National Defense University of Chinese People's Liberation Army in Beijing on December 21, 2016. The Forum aimed at creating understanding on "China's Policy towards Africa and China-Africa Cooperation" on the subject of "China-Africa Cooperation-An African Perspective". The Forum was able to attract more than 100 high level military officers from 53 countries of which 18 are from Africa, including Ethiopia.

The Forum was co-chaired by H.E Senior Colonel Xu Hui, Commandant of the College of Defense Studies of China and high level speakers in attendance were H.E. Seyoum Mesfin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the People's Republic of China and H.E Ambassador Liu Guijin, China's Former Special Envoy for African Affairs. It is believed that the Forum has created a good understanding about China's policy towards Africa and the importance of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) which was forged for win-win partnership between China and Africa.

H.E. Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin in his presentation emphatically underlined the importance of FOCAC Summit that was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 4-5 December 2016, expounding and commending the commitment and the pledge made by H.E President Xi Jinping at the Summit that China would offer USD 60 billion package, a combination of grants, interest free loans, concessional lines of credit, debt relief and skills training of hundreds of thousands of Africa's young professionals along a three-year 10-point plans anchored in a five-pillar themes.

He also stressed that the unparalleled commitment of the Chinese leadership to this new type of partnership and strategic friendship with African countries as a historic opportunity in pursuing Africa's dream for growth and prosperity, and for transforming and integrating Africa's economy into the rest of the world to ensures a safer world for all to live in. Furthermore, he stated that the cooperation between China and Africa had been anchored in the principles of equality, mutual respect, common interest, shared goals and values.

Ethiopia's rapid economic growth rates of GDP averaging 10.9 per cent per annum for more than a decade have made the country to be considered model for South- South cooperation. During the conference, Ethiopia's attachment of being has ranked among the top performing economies in the world with remarkable reduction in poverty was a case in point to concretize Ethiopia's march towards the middle income economy by 2025. On the other hand, the construction of mega projects such as eco-friendly Addis Ababa- Djibouti Electrified Railway, Addis Ababa Light Rail Transit (LRT), Addis Ababa – Adama Expressway, Adama Wind Power, the Expansion of telecommunication infrastructure were cited as showcases for the win-win partnership and cooperation between Ethiopia and China anchored within the framework of FOCAC.

In his statement, Ambassador Seyoum exceptionally valued and recognized the indispensable role that China has been playing as one of the trusted development partners of Ethiopia. Adding, China is the biggest investor, largest trading and development partner of Ethiopia. In addition, a short video was run to display the economic development of Ethiopia in the area of infrastructure, health, education, industrialization as demonstration effect for the real partnership between Ethiopia and China.

He has also underlined the necessity for African countries to move faster and submit feasible project proposals to utilize the multibillion dollar fund announced by the Government of China to support Africa in the areas of industrialization and development of industrial parks, agriculture modernization, infrastructure, public health, education and human resources development, culture and tourism and military and security cooperation.

Regarding connectivity on the basis of “One Belt One Road” Initiative, Ambassador Seyoum went on mentioning the contribution of the Ethiopian Airlines; one of the longest serving flag carriers in Africa has been providing consistent and seamless services for the last 70 years for the movement of people, ideas, cultures and business into and out of the African continent including China since 1973. Ethiopian Airlines, with the youngest and latest aircraft fleet of state of the art, is flying from its hub in Addis Ababa to 93 international cities in four continents. Loyal to its motto “THE NEW SPIRIT OF AFRICA”, the Airlines offers best connectivity from 48 African cities to four gateways in China (Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shanghai). He further highlighted the indispensable role of Airlines is playing in promoting investment, trade, tourism and culture between Africa and China by operating 31 flights weekly.



On the issues of peace and security, Ambassador Seyoum emphasized the commitment of Africa and China towards discharging their international responsibilities to contribute common endeavor of peace and stability of our planet. In this connection, he urged China to strengthen its support to the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and other African sub-regional institutions to play a leading role in coordinating and solving issues of peace and security in Africa in a bid to support Africa's peaceful and stable development and integration. On the other hand, the Ambassador pointed out the importance of collaboration and cooperation among all countries in the world to bring peace and stability on the planet

adding that one country, though, strong and superpower it is, it cannot bring peace alone. In addition, he spoke out strongly that Africa should not be a fighting ground for China and countries in the west recalling what had happened during the Cold War. He emphasized that Africa should be a place of cooperation, investment and one of the growth pole highlighting tripartite cooperation between China, Africa and developed countries in the West.

He had also comprehensively responded to various questions and concerns raised by the participants on issues pertaining to China's engagement for the peace and stability of Africa, challenges surrounding the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Actions, Ethiopia's role in regional stabilization and the state of good governance in African continent. H.E. Ambassador Liu Guijin, China's Former Special Envoy for African Affairs, on his behalf deliberated on the recent development in the implementation of Johannesburg Action Plan. Firstly, he mentioned that the use of multidimensional approaches such as official development assistance, soft loans, concessional and commercial loans are mostly channeled to private investment that enhances manufacturing and export earnings. Secondly, he emphasized that China's partnership with Africa has focused on bottlenecks such as infrastructure deficit, financing limitation and capacity deficiencies. He further indicated that there has been a shift from contractual projects towards joint venture, investment and the industrial park development. In the final terms of his analysis, he also mentioned that the ten cooperation plans of FOCAC focus on industrial capacity cooperation, poverty reduction and increasing agriculture production.

Moreover, H.E Ambassador Liu Guijin has elaborated on the necessity of building industrial parks and special economic zones in Africa to enhance

the flow of foreign direct investment in the area of labor intensive and export oriented light manufacturing industries, by taking Eastern Industry Zone (EIZ), constructed by a Chinese enterprise in Ethiopia as an encouraging showcase. He also discussed about the impact of world economic slowdown and the reduction of oil prices and precious minerals on some African countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Sudan and South Africa by pointing out some economic indicators.