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**Africa and the BRICS Partnership:
Enhancement Prospects for the
African Economic Development**

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Abstract

The birth of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in 2006 has given a new impetus and enthusiasm as to the stage to which economic development could be accelerated in underdeveloped Africa. Indeed, since its inception, China whose investment in Africa has gradually grown has continued to play a more influential role not only in the organization but also acting as a mobiliser for African countries. Accordingly, this raises some fundamental issues viz: Will Africa be able to leverage on its connection with China to maximize its potentials for economic development through its membership of the BRICS, since South Africa joined in 2010 and Egypt and Guinea attended as observers at the 9th conference of the Plenary Session of the BRICS summit in Xiamen, China, September 4th 2017. What will be the multilateral benefits to be derived by African countries especially with the formation of the bank for development and infrastructure in 2015? Also, will Africa benefit from the various cultural exchange programmes with members of the organization?

It is against the background of these pertinent issues that this study critically discusses Africa China, and BRICS in a global context. The study adopts the methodology of multidisciplinary approach. The findings of the study evidently showed that Africa could benefit from the organisation if she is able to harness her potentials with the cooperation of China. In conclusion, there is a brighter future for Africa with support of China that could assist African countries to mobilize her

resources for developmental purposes.

Introduction

A shared desire for peace, security, development, cooperation, respect for International Law and sovereignty continues to serve as the fundamental principles for BRICS members in pursuit of a more equitable and fair world. These principles hold particularly in dealings with African countries, the sovereignty of many of which has not been respected in the past, especially by colonial powers¹.

The epigram above is indicative of the rationale, objectives and dynamics of Africa, China and BRICS partnership in contemporary times. As vividly expressed and captured above, the nexus of regional and inter-continental partnership holds the potential for peace, security, cooperation, entrepreneurship, job creation and economic development. It is evident from the above epigram that the need to vigorously harness and take opportunities presented to the governments of member states of the BRICS has been the propelling and compelling factor behind the Africa, China and BRICS partnership from the very onset. Indeed, in viewing Africa as the new global growth centre, BRICS countries are emerging as the new largest investors and trade partners to the African continent with strong exponential growth potential for the future. The target has been the common aspirations of BRICS for cementing partnerships with one another and with emerging markets and developing countries including the African continent in order to strengthen progressive development trajectories, promote integration, and expedite industrialisation in developing countries.

With the emergence of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) as leading emerging economies and political powers at the regional and international level, the platform has continued to offer an historic opportunity to explore new models and approaches towards more equitable development and inclusive global growth by emphasizing complementarities and building on the respective economic strengths, particularly with Africa. From all indications, the partnership between Africa, China and the BRICS is engineering changes in the architecture of international development cooperation and economic growth in Africa, not only with regard to trade and financial flows but also as emerging donors.

Thus, this paper is calibrated into five segments or sections. The first section is the introductory part. The second segment attempts to re-trace the historical origin, evolution and phases of China, Africa and BRICS partnership. In this section, we examined the origin of the partnership in distinct phases underlining the concept of

¹ BRICS Academic Forum, 2013:10

change and continuity in the relationship between the BRICS particularly China and Africa. Key features and dynamics of China, Africa and BRICS partnership are scrutinised in this section. The third section x-rays the politico-economic and security interests, motivations and dynamics propelling and compelling China, African and BRICS Partnership in the last few years. The benefits and prospect of Africa, China and BRICS Partnership are rigorously analysed in subsequent paragraphs. The last section is the conclusion.

Background of Africa, China and BRICS Partnership

China's partnership and engagement with Africa is not a novelty as it has been a function of change and continuity. Historically, the continent of Africa and China share a common history with respect to colonialism and their politico-economic developments. China and Africa in historical context share similar experiences as both were victims of "colonization by the capitalists and imperialists" and faced the same task of national independence and liberation after World War II. Historical records point to the fact that China-Africa partnership is a product of decades of growing formal and informal cooperation since World War II. What this suggests is that the partnership and economic cooperation between China and Africa has evolved noticeably over the last six decades. This partnership and economic cooperation between the continent of Africa and China can be situated within three separate historical periods which can be distinguished within the timeframe.

The first historical phase in China-Africa interactions and cooperation began in 1950s up to late 1960s. Put differently, China's relationship and intermingling with Africa started to develop in the early 1950s. During the first historical phase of Sino-Africa interaction, relationships were established between China and African nation states as they gained independence in the 1950s. Before 1955, Africa was of no significant importance to China but from then onwards, China sought international recognition and political allies, hoping to strengthen international alliances against the capitalist West and the revisionist communist Soviet Union².

The Bandung Conference held in 1955 marked the beginning of China-Africa intermingling as the meeting of 29 Asian and African states was aimed at promoting economic and cultural relations between the two continents. The topics that were on the agenda included colonialism, imperialism and the hegemonic position of the

² J. Van de Looy, (2006), *Africa and China: A Strategic Partnership?* ASC Working Paper 67/2006 African Studies Centre Leiden, The Netherlands, p.35

Western powers. The underlying principles behind China's cooperation with Africa during this period as documented at the first Asian-African conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, was Beijing's respect for the sovereignty of other nations and pledged to avoid interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. Under these principles, during China's first official encounter with Africa at the 1955 Bandung Conference, Zhou Enlai actively engaged the leaders of six African countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya and Sudan), with special priority given to the courting of Egypt's Nasser given his regional prestige and influence.³

It should however be noted that most of the African countries during that year were not yet sovereign state although decolonisation had reached advanced stage. As such it was only Liberia, Ethiopia and Egypt that were fully represented by their leaders. Other African states sent their representatives. Sudan for instance sent a representative.

It is pertinent to state that 'exporting revolutions' was the central focus of Chinese policy in Africa during the first phase of Sino-Africa relations in the 1950s and 1960s. China-Africa relations during this period was also propelled and compelled by political considerations. Yun Sun⁴ posits that political motivations propelled China's policy of contact and association with African nations in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, China sought cooperation with Africa in an attempt to 'neutralize' or compete politically the growing power of the western imperialists (the United States) and the revisionists (the Soviet Union). Indeed, China's engagement with Africa during this period was strongly ideological and geopolitical, primarily as an effort to export Maoism, counter American and Soviet influence, and increase China's international influence and reputation.⁵ This included doctrines of "third-world solidarity" as well as "moral and material" support to African liberation movements, with Beijing portraying the developing world (including Africa) as split between the forces of socialism and colonialism.⁶ Alongside the ideology and rhetoric of socialist solidarity, however, geopolitics and national interest shaped China's interaction with African states during this period. Maoist China could be pragmatic at the expense of its

³ Yun Sun, **Sun, Y. (2014)**, Africa in China's Foreign Policy, China: John L. Thornton China Center, p.3

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ D.J. Muekalia, (2004) "Africa and China's Strategic Partnership," *African Security Review*, vol. 13, No. 1, 2004, Thrall, China's Expanding African Relations

⁶ L. Thrall, (2015), China's Expanding African Relations Implications for U.S. National Security, Santa Monica, Calif. RAND Corporation,

ideals, as demonstrated by Beijing's rapprochement with the anti-communist Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) while simultaneously supporting Robert Mugabe's insurgency in Rhodesia.⁷

Yun Sun sums up the interest of China in Africa in the first phase of Sino-Africa relations as thus:

....as a member of the socialist camp, China perceived the neutral position of most African countries between capitalist and socialist blocs as conducive to China's interests because Africa would be against the invasion and war plans of the imperialists. In the 1960s, due to the enhanced efforts by the United States and the Soviet Union to engage Africa, as well as China's rising conflict with the Soviets, the competition for Africa was heightened in China's foreign policy agenda. Between 1963 and 1964, Zhou Enlai visited 10 African countries and issued the well-known Eight Principles of Foreign Economic and Technological Assistance. These aid principles were designed to compete simultaneously with the "imperialists" (the United States) and the "revisionists" (the Soviet Union) for Africa's approval and support, as China used its foreign aid to Africa as an instrument to advance China's political interests.⁸

To this end, a critical assessment of Sino-Africa intermingling in the 1960s points to China's overarching goal of diplomatic recognition from African nations and the establishment of official ties that could strengthen the political legitimacy of the communist regime. Indeed, throughout the 1960s, the period when China was "striking with both fists" (in two directions: toward the United States and the Soviet Union), its support for African countries greatly reduced the pressure on China brought about by the international isolation imposed by the two major powers. The emotional affinity of China toward Africa has since then been a constant factor in the relationship.⁹

It is, however, important to note that the relationship between China and Africa during this period has also taken some economic dimensions as evidence abound suggesting trading partnerships between the continent and China during this period. Of course, China-Africa economic interaction was limited to a very large extent during this period. Thrall¹⁰ posited that China-African annual trade in 1950 stood at \$12 million, rising to a still relatively small \$100 million by 1960. Thrall also suggested that China did provide some selected assistance to African development, most notably

⁷ Eisenman, 2012:9

⁸ Yun Sun, *Africa in China's Foreign Policy*

⁹ *Ibid.* p.4

¹⁰ Thrall, *China's Expanding African Relations*

by sending engineers and laborers to help construct the Tanzania-Zambia railroad, as well as sending doctors to African states since the early 1960s.

The beginning of 1970s marked the entry point of the second historical epoch in Africa and China partnership. China was given a permanent seat on the UN Security Council in 1971 and this marked a significant point in the relationship between China and African nations. This period marked a consolidation of existing cooperation and partnership between Africa and China. Citing Larkin, Van de Looy posited that the partnership between Africa and China in the 1970s was defined by five key characteristics and dynamics. He pontificates as follows:

First, the number of African countries with diplomatic ties gradually increased. In 1967, China had 13 diplomatic missions in Africa and by 1974 this number had increased to 30. Second, China joined the United Nations Security Council in 1971, taking over Taiwan's seat and many African states welcomed this decision since their political ties with China had increased over the years. Thirdly, the Tanzania-Zambia railway was the biggest aid project on the continent in the 1970s and China was in the process of committing itself to more prestigious projects all over Africa. Loyal states were offered federal buildings, stadiums, factories, infrastructure, medical teams and student exchange programmes. Fourthly, China continued to support the nationalist movements that were demanding independence and the end of imperialism. It provided military support for Africa on various occasions, as it saw the need for African nationalist movements to disentangle themselves from the hegemonic West. In fact, the Peking Review of 26 January 1973 legitimised armed opposition stating that 'the armed struggle is the only way through which colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination in Southern Africa and Guinea can be eliminated'. Finally, China stressed the existence of a dichotomy between the world's super powers and their weaker opponents, assisting the latter in their survival.¹¹

It suffices to state that the second historical phase in China-Africa partnership coincided with the period of Cultural Revolution in China. During this period, China experienced serious domestic economic difficulties. However, China's economic woes did not prevent her from providing large amounts of foreign aid to Africa states. This included the famous Tanzania-Zambia Railway: China supplied a zero-interest loan of 988 million yan (¥), and the railway remains one of the largest foreign aid projects to date that China provided to Africa.¹² China's foreign aid projects in support

¹¹ Van de Looy, *Africa and China*, p.4

¹² *The Study Times*, 2013

of Africa during this period contributed to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the continent and the PRC. Van de Looy¹³ noted that nineteen countries established diplomatic ties with China during the Cultural Revolution period. These according to him included: Equatorial Guinea (1970), Ethiopia (1970), Nigeria (1971), Cameroon (1971), Sierra Leone (1971), Rwanda (1971), Senegal (1971), Mauritius (1972), Togo (1972), Madagascar (1972), Chad (1972), Guinea-Bissau (1974), Gabon (1974), Niger (1974), Botswana (1975), Mozambique (1975), Comoros (1975), Cape Verde (1976) and Seychelles (1976). By the mid-1980s, Beijing's political and aid efforts had won it diplomatic ties with 44 African countries. Among the ¥256.29 billion cumulative foreign aid China had given by the end of 2009, 45.7 percent had been to Africa.¹⁴

The third and final phase of this partnership covers the post-Maoist period starting in 1978 spanning to contemporary times. This post-Maoist era was characterized by economic expansion, liberalization and subsequent growth of the Chinese economy. According to Wright, Starting in 1978, the post-Maoist era was characterized by new investments in the economic sector in order to modernize China. Indeed, the guiding principle that marked this era of China-Africa partnership is the increasing volume of trade and commercial interactions. Put differently, one constant or denominator that defines China-Africa partnership in the post-Maoist era has been trade and investments. Apparently, unlike the Maoist era Chinese economic interests have gradually subsumed the country's previous ideological and political interests as drivers of Chinese behaviour in Africa. Beginning with the fallout from the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, continuing with the closing of the Cold War, and accelerating alongside China's economic development, China's political interests in Africa have waned relative to growing economic ties.

The primacy of China's economic interests and considerations in her partnership with African countries in the post-Maoist era is grossly reflected in a stream of her economic events over the past three decades in the continent of Africa. The chains of economic events between China and Africa during this epoch which underscored China-Africa partnership during this period is explained as follows:

The ascendancy of China's economic interests is reflected in a stream of economic and political events over the past three decades: China becoming an oil importer in 1993; Chinese Communist Party (CCP) reorganization and packaging of aid, trade, and investment to Africa in the mid-1990s; admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001; and roughly an order of

¹³ Van de Looy, *Africa and China*, p.4

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.8

magnitude expansion of economic ties over the past ten years. In contrast to its earlier incarnations, current Chinese engagement with African states is non-ideological; Beijing engages readily with democratic, authoritarian, and theocratic regimes alike.¹⁵

In a fashion akin to Latin America, Africa has gradually become an attractive destination for Chinese investors. The search for new energy supplies is now the driving force of China's partnership with African states. As President Nicolas Sarkozy of France said, "China is transforming its insatiable quest for raw materials into a strategy of control, especially in Africa".¹⁶ Holslag¹⁷ affirms that China sees Africa as an important resource supplier and a modest consumer. Therefore, the Chinese government has been pursuing a pragmatic mercantilist policy that combines diplomatic and economic activities since the 1990s.¹⁸ Although the Sino-African trade only makes up a small proportion of China's overall foreign trade, its annual rate of growth is around 55% between 2001 and 2006, the fastest growing trade between China and any other continent.¹⁹ From 2001 to 2006, more than 10,000 African government officials and technical personnel have received training in China.²⁰ These returnees served as the agents of China's expansion into Africa. At the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing on November 5, 2006, China signed bilateral trade deals with African countries worth US\$1.9 billion and promised to provide US\$3 billion in preferential loans, US\$2 billion in export credits and US\$5 billion to encourage Chinese investment in Africa. These agreements are part of China's consistent efforts to consolidate its ties with Africa, to bid for oil deals and to seek new markets for its products. The examples of Angola and Sudan are illustrative of the increasing volume of trade between China and Africa in the third phase of partnership.

The post-Maoist phase of China-Africa partnership received a new boost and consolidation following the formation of the BRIC at the beginning of the 21st century. The acronym (BRIC) was originally coined in 2001 to highlight the exceptional role of important emerging economies and only included Brazil, Russia, India and China

¹⁵ Thrall, *China's Expanding African Relations*, p.6

¹⁶ E. Sciolino, (2007), Tehran risks attack over atomic push, Paris Warns, *The International Herald Tribune*

¹⁷ J. Holslag, (2006), "China's New Mercantilism in Central Africa," *African and Asian Studies* 5, no.2

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Tse-Hei Lee, J. (2008), "China's Third World Policy from the Maoist Era to the Present," *Global Asia Journal*, Paper 3

²⁰ G. Qiufu, (2006), Old Friends, New Partners: China and Africa Celebrate 50 Years of Diplomatic Relations, *Beijing Review*, June 1, 2006, 12-13.

(BRIC). It was pointed out that high growth rates, economic potential and demographic development were going to put BRIC further in a lead position and it was argued that their increased relevance should also be reflected in their incorporation to the G7.²¹ The four countries themselves started to meet as a group in 2006 and it was only in 2010 that South Africa was invited to join the group, which was then referred to as BRICS.²² Although South Africa was accepted to form part of the group, it does not meet all the characteristics the BRIC, as its economy is much smaller than that of the other four countries.²³ Its GDP is only a third of Brazil's or Russia's GDP and a much smaller fraction of China's or India's GDP.²⁴ Nonetheless, South Africa is Africa's leading economy and has become one of the most important political actors on the continent. It is one of the few African countries ranked as an upper-middle income country and is the only African nation with a G20 seat, hence the justification for its membership.²⁵ The country also enjoys relative political stability, having held four successful free elections since the end of apartheid. South Africa lobbied for several years to be allowed to join the BRIC group, before it was officially invited to join the hereafter designated BRICS.

Be that as it may, the entry of South Africa into the group redefined China, Africa and BRIC partnership. Due to their geographic and demographic dimensions, BRICS economies are severely influencing African development. They are promoting stability in trade and investment and cushioning global recession in the current financial crisis.²⁶ Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) are leading emerging economies and political powers not just in Africa but also at the regional and international levels.

Interests, Motivations and Dynamics in China, African and BRICS Partnership: The Case of China

As vividly captured above, at the centre of China, Africa and BRICS partnership has been change and continuity. This partnership has seen distinct changing phases and continuity at work between Africa, China, Brazil, Russia and India. The partnership between BRICS states and Africa has however been a product of some propelling

²¹ Jim O'NEILL, (2001): Building Better Global Economic BRICS. Goldman Sachs Global Economic Paper No. 66.

²² Morazán e tal (2012), The Role Of BRICS in the Developing World, Belgium; European Union

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ IMF 2011

and compelling interests and motivations. In other words, states in the BRICS have been propelled, compelled and motivated to establish partnership with Africa based on certain crucial interests and considerations. The explosive growth in China, African and BRICS partnership over the past decade has been propelled and motivated by a combination of political, security and economic considerations or factors. Across economic, political, and security domains, the growth of China, African and BRICS partnership has been swift and staggering.

On security ground, the security interests of states in the BRICS, particularly China, are largely driven by certain economic and political influence. Indeed, China's emerging security interests in Africa are driven by Beijing's larger interests in safeguarding economic development and increasing political influence. Cooper²⁷ has observed that China's conception of its security interests has continued to grow; this is best evidenced by the 2004 introduction of New Historic Missions for the PLA that highlight China's expanding global interests and role in safeguarding world peace and promoting common development. As a regional power with expanding global interests, China is in the process of defining its security interests in some of the world's most unstable areas.²⁸

The most crucial and pertinent emerging security interest of the BRICS, particularly China in Africa is basically the protection their growing number of citizens and assets from internal instability, popular backlash, terrorism, and kidnapping. There have series of threats and even attacks against Chinese citizens especially in the northern part of continental Africa. China's remaining security interests in Africa are to buoy its reputation as a global leader and increase the operational experience of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) that has little. To date, however, Beijing has taken remarkably little interest in directly exporting security and has continued its public commitment not to develop overseas bases. This likely stems from three factors: the PLA's current limitations in power projection, fear of international perceptions of a "China threat," and Beijing's diplomatic commitment not to intervene in the affairs of other states.²⁹ As noted in our analysis of the historical phases in the evolution of China, African and BRICS partnership above, the emergence of China as a permanent member of the United Nations security council meant that the country would shoulder additional security responsibilities in Africa; hence the justification of her partnership with Africa. In fact, the Chinese People's

²⁷ C.A. Cooper, (2009), *The PLA Navy's "New Historic Missions"—Expanding Capabilities for a Re-emergent Maritime Power*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation

²⁸ Thrall, China's Expanding Relations, p.6

²⁹ Ming, undated

Liberation Army (PLA) has participated massively in peace-keeping operations in Africa. As a matter of fact, among the permanent United Nations (U.N.) Security Council members, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the largest contributor to U.N. peacekeeping in Africa, deploying 20 times the number of peacekeepers it sent to Africa in 2000. To this end, Africa has been the location for some of the PLA's most prominent global operations and this development defines the intent, interest and motivations of the BRICS particularly China in her partnership with continental Africa. The participation of the PLA in the 2008 Gulf of Aden counter piracy deployment, the 2011 noncombatant evacuation from Libya, and the 2013 deployments of PLA infantry to U.N. missions to Mali and South Sudan are pointers to the military diplomatic partnership not just between China and Africa but also Russia as a member of the BRICS. Thrall agrees with this view when he inked that:

The largest area of Chinese military engagement with Africa has been PLA participation in U.N. peacekeeping operations. After a long period of eschewing and criticizing such participation as foreign interference, the PLA currently participates in seven of the eight U.N. missions in Africa. The PLA has also expanded bilateral military diplomacy, though it remains far behind Western militaries. Africa has been the location for some of the PLA's most prominent global operations: the ongoing 2008 Gulf of Aden counter piracy deployment, the 2011 noncombatant evacuation from Libya, and the 2013 deployments of PLA infantry to U.N. missions to Mali and South Sudan. These events represent notable firsts for the PLA, suggesting future growth in PLA roles and capabilities, albeit unlikely to be as robust as Western military involvement in Africa.³⁰

Apart from the security theory explaining China, African and BRICS Partnership, there is a political interpretation to it. Put differently, there are political motivations propelling and driving the partnership between the states of the BRICS and Africa. China offers a good case study of the political theory of China, African and BRICS Partnership. Over the past few decades, Chinese government has been busier than the government of some the United States in political engagement with African states. The China's political engagement with Africa has been analysed based on her pursuit of four principal political interests in Africa. These are the bolstering China's international image and influence, isolation of Taiwan, countering problematic international norms, and supporting the stability of economic partners.³¹ What this means is that at the base of her political engagement with Africa are four fundamental

³⁰ Thrall, *China's Expanding African Relations*, p. xv

³¹ Ratner, E. (2011), *The Emergent Security Threats Reshaping China's Rise*, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1.

factors, viz, enhancement of her international reputation and image, neutralizing the diplomatic moves of Taiwan or its isolation, ensuring that there is stability in Africa states so that her economic interests will continue to be guaranteed and finally countering problematic international norms.

Brautigam³² posited that beneath China, African and BRICS Partnership is the issue of 'political image boosting' on the part of members of the BRICS and that China in particular has gone to great lengths to emphasize a "peaceful development" of Chinese power. Outreach efforts in Africa can increase the credibility of this image, as well as reap tangible diplomatic benefits through African support.³³ Part of what has also defined China's interest in the partnership with Africa is the attempt of to alienate or isolate Taiwan in Africa. While diplomatic competition with Taiwan is relatively dormant, China has a continuing interest in isolating Taipei, now recognized by only three African states.³⁴ With Gambia's November 2013 severing of diplomatic ties with Taipei, Taiwan is recognized in Africa by only three states: Swaziland, Burkina Faso, and Sao Tome and Principe

With regard to international norms, African support can assist China in countering precedents that China views as potentially dangerous domestically.³⁵ From both a legal and diplomatic perspective, China likely perceives an interest in preventing international activism on issues of democratic governance and human rights intervention in Africa that could apply equally to domestic Chinese political order.³⁶ China's stance of not interfering in domestic governance and human rights issues is often appreciated and reciprocated by African governments, even among those with democratic traditions and solid human rights practices.

Still on the political theory, the BRICS particularly China have a growing interest in African stability commensurate with their growing economic interests and investment there and their desire to be seen as a responsible global powers. Corroborating this view, Ratner,³⁷ posited that African stability benefits the BRICS in several ways. For instance, China's growing human and economic investment in

³¹ Ratner, E. (2011), The Emergent Security Threats Reshaping China's Rise, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1.

³² Brautigam, D. (2013), Chinese Investment in Africa: How Much? *China in Africa: The Real Story*, blog post, September 28, 2013, Accessed on 2 September 2018

³³ Thrall, China's Expanding African Relations

³⁴ *Ibid.* p.6ff

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Ratner, E. (2011), The Emergent Security Threats Reshaping China's Rise, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1.

African states, and desire for African natural resource supply and diversification, incentivize a growing interest in African stability.³⁸ The most obvious targets for such attention at present are limited to China's direct trading and investment partners; consider, for example, China's recent role in mediating conflict between the two Sudans and between rival factions in South Sudan.³⁹ As Sino-African economic links grow, and particularly if African sources of raw materials become more critical to supply diversification, Beijing's interest in the stability of partner states can be expected to grow.⁴⁰

Indeed, one major political explanation that underlines China's rapour with African states has to do with the conviction that such rapprochement would advance and consolidate China's interest in the United Nations. Of course, African states have three seats on the United Nation's Security Council and constitute more than one-quarter of U.N. General Assembly votes. China believes that such votes can be diplomatically valuable; for example, African states were central to the PRC's accession to the U.N. Security Council in the early 1970s.⁴¹ Shinn⁴² noted that China frequently recounts this support in its relations with African states. Beijing would like similar African support on the U.N. Human Rights Council, which occasionally criticizes Chinese practices, as well as African support within the WTO.⁴³

From economic perspective, China, African and BRICS Partnership have been motivated by economic considerations. This notion is never exclusive about Africa-China partnership but also offers the strongest justification of the engagement of other members of the BRICS with Africa. In other words, one constant that gives strong explanation as to the desire of the members of the BRICS to partner with Africa is economic in nature. The governments and commercial actors of the BRICS especially China have three primary economic interests in Africa namely: a source for natural resource imports, a growing and relatively underutilized market for exports and investment, and an opportunity for Chinese firms to increase employment and gain global experience. Indeed, the five countries are forming a strategic alliance in order to increase their political weight at the international level and to enforce common political and economic interests.⁴⁴ The economic interests of the BRICS in Africa was echoed in Durban, South Africa when five heads of state met on March 2013 at the

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Fortin, 2014

⁴⁰ Thrall, China's Expanding African Relations

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² D,H Shinn, and Eisenman, J. (2012), *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement*, Philadelphia, Pa. University of Pennsylvania

⁴³ *Ibid*, p.9

⁴⁴ Keukeleire et al., 2011

International Convention Centre, to assure the rest of Africa that their countries' corporations are better investors in infrastructure, mining, oil and agriculture than the traditional European and US multinationals. The Brazil-Russia-India-China-SA (BRICS) summit also made space for 16 heads of state from Africa, including notorious tyrants. A new \$50 billion 'BRICS Bank' was promised to be launched by the BRICS to offer financial aids for African growing economies. The BRICS also talked to African leaders about monetary alternatives to the US dollar.

Bilateral Trade is considered to be "the backbone of Africa-BRIC partnerships".⁴⁵ Low Income Country's export (Africa with a larger percentage of the figure) to BRIC grew from USD 15 billion in 2000 to USD 61 billion in 2009, pushing back the EU and the USA to receive far less than that. Among all BRICS, China and India are the main consumers of Africa's exports, followed by Brazil. In 2010, China and India account for more than 90 % of Low Income Country's exports (Africa with a larger share of the percentage) of agricultural raw materials and for almost 85 % of fuels exports to BRICS. 52 % of exports of manufactured goods went to China, followed by Brazil (14 %), Russia, India and South Africa (10 % each).⁴⁶ Crops, minerals and other raw materials, especially fuels and metals, are the main component of LIC export to BRIC. One reason for the increase in LIC-BRIC trade figures are complementary trade structures providing overlap between BRIC demand and LIC supply.⁴⁷ Thrall sums this when he resorted:

Natural resource imports are China's largest economic interest in Africa, and these resources constitute about 90 percent of African exports to industrialized states. China, however, has imported far less African oil than the United States or European Union over the last ten years, with far more balanced trade than either. Cumulative Chinese oil-firm investment in Africa remains less than 10 percent of such Western firm investment, typically on the fringes of Africa's oil landscape. China's hydrocarbon investment in Africa does not threaten U.S. or global energy security but instead brings new oil to market while functionally reducing Chinese demand. Similarly, the potential for Sino-American conflict over African resources is extremely remote. Sino-African economic relations vary greatly, based primarily on whether the African state has natural resources and a market for Chinese goods. While no state is in a position to monopolize

⁴⁵ IMF, 2011

⁴⁶ UNCTADStat. 2013. "International Merchandise Trade Statistics." Accessed 12 August 2018, <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/UnctadStatMetadata/Documentation/UNCTADstatContent.html>

⁴⁷ IMF, 2011

Africa's trade, China has become the largest trade partner for Africa as a whole (though second to an aggregated European Union). China remains the largest exporter of small arms and light weapons to African states. Sino-African economic relations are generally of greater importance to African states than to China; Sino-African trade accounts for 15 percent of African states' total, but just 5 percent of China's total trade. With respect to finance, despite persistent problems with data availability and reliability, China has emerged as a major source of financial capital. The vast majority of Chinese investment and loan activity is profit-driven and succeeds on its own commercial merits, rather than as a state-directed foreign policy tool. South Africa remains China's most important economic relationship in Africa, constituting more than one-third of Sino-African trade and the leading destination on the continent for Chinese foreign direct investment.⁴⁸

Africa, China and BRICS Partnership: Benefits for Economic Development of the Continent

The relationship of China and other BRICS Partners with African can be understood ostensibly from demographical paradox point of view. Although China and India have been adjudged as the primary sources of disruptive change, they are not alone and their growing presence opens the space for other new economic and political actors in Africa. The report therefore also considers the role played by other stronger economies in Africa; these are Brazil, and Russian Federation. These economies have been chosen partly because of their size, but also because each in its own way represents a particular type of disruptive force. Brazil is large and has economic parameters similar to many African economies. The Indian was once a low-income economy similar to those in Africa currently (in the 1960s, it had a lower per capita income than Ghana), but has become a dynamic knowledge-intensive participant on the global stage; The Russian Federation is not just very large, but also rich in resources, as are many African economies.⁴⁹

However, these aforementioned countries cooperatively, have been able to join forces in other to extend development to Africa. One of the aspects of this developmental program was the establishment of The New Development Bank. The unification of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa in form of BRICS was formally established in 2009. The New Development Bank (NDB) of the BRICS grouping which can be also highlighted as the 'BRICS Bank' remains a noteworthy

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- Thrall, (2015), *China's Expanding African Relations* p.xii
 - BRICS Mechanism Development Strategy Report (2017) Center For China in the World Economy, BRICS Economic Think Tank, p.55

contribution of the grouping. The NDB has generated a total contribution of US \$100 million. The NDB's main focus is on initiating hard infrastructure projects in the BRICS countries and to provide financial assistance to projects dealing with renewable energy.

The NDB has produced a total contribution of US \$100 million from the BRICS countries along with the establishment of the Contingency Reserve Arrangements (CRA) which is based on the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI). It has also set up an additional funding of US \$50 billion to fund to each region of the BRICS for a year to address the developmental projects and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals try to tackle the basic of human needs and guarantee equal opportunities and healthy living to all. This phenomenon is an extension of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were enshrined by the United Nations Organization (UNO) to bring a comprehensive development and better living for the people of the world, especially in Africa.⁵⁰

The connection between China and BRICS Partnership and Economic Development in Africa, The NDB has also opened a regional office at Johannesburg in South Africa in 2017. This can be seen as a major step to enhance deeper engagement in the African continent. The region of Africa is one of the most poverty affected and it comprises highest number of countries listed in the LDCs. The region is affected with mass unemployment, needs support in addressing the issues such as health, education and poor housing facilities. The region also lacks proper infrastructural capacities that further affects in the manufacturing facilities. There are also serious needs for addressing the issues of malnutrition, and food security. The bank can assist the region with infrastructural developments which will benefit in lowering the dependence on commodity exports that the region is highly dependent upon.⁵¹

Another point of relationship between China, BRICS vis a vis Development in Africa is with South-South trade expected to account for a growing share of global trade, South Africa's new status within the BRICS group could provide new trade and

⁵⁰ Shraddha Naik, (2017) "The Prospects and Challenges for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals under the BRICS-New Development Bank (NDB)," *International Research Journal of Interdisciplinary & Multidisciplinary Studies (IRJIMS)* vol.III, issue-V, pp. 143-148

⁵¹ K.V Kamath, (2016), "Speech by NDB President K. V. Kamath at the Global Poverty Reduction and Development Forum", 16 October 2015, New Development Bank, URL: http://www.ndb.int/president_desk/2015-global-poverty-reduction-development-forum/ Assessed on 27th August 2018, p.3

investment opportunities, not only for South Africa but also for other African nations. Brazil, Russia, India and China have increased capacity to bring expertise and technologies to Africa that can aid infrastructural development. The original BRIC nations account for more than 50 per cent of overall emerging-market IT spending, and therefore could provide opportunities for technology transfer.⁵²

From, another spectrum, the primary vectors of interaction between China Africa and the economies in the BRICS partnership are aid, trade and foreign direct investment (FDI). In recent decades, western economies have increasingly separated out interactions in these three vectors. For instance, aid has been untied, and clearly distinguished from investment, and aid and investment have only loosely been associated with trade. The analysis of the links between Africa and Brazil, China, India, Russia, in the present report suggests a different evolving experience. More often, there has been close strategic integration between these three vectors in the operations of these BRICS economies in Africa, most especially China.

The largest increase in FDI to Africa in recent years has come from the BRICS (until 2002 their FDI inflows were dwarfed by those from western sources). FDI flows to Africa from India, China and Brazil have risen from 18 per cent of the total in 1995–1999 to 21 per cent in 2000–2008.⁵³

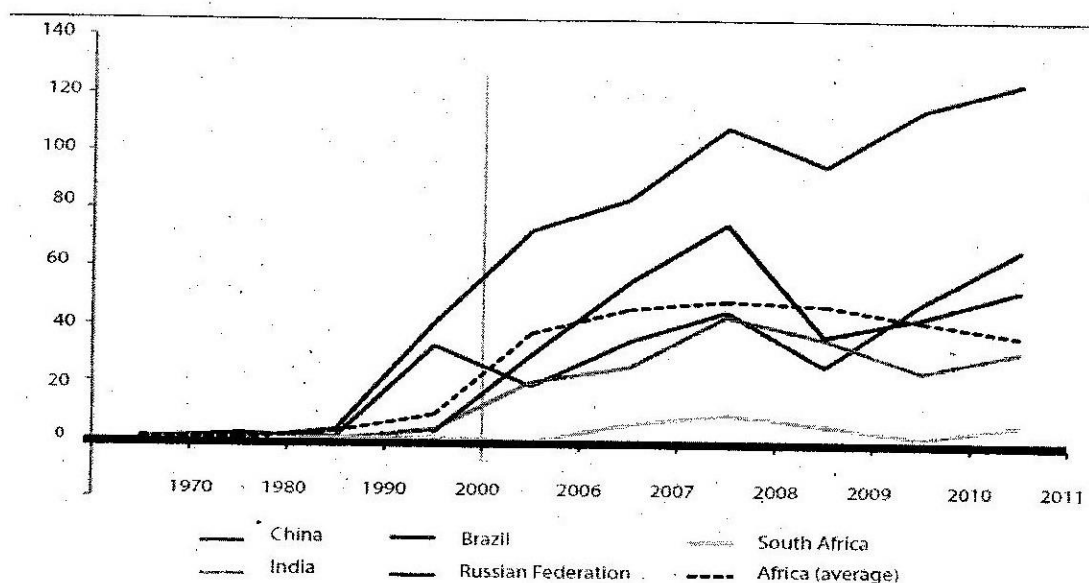
FDI is a major catalyst in growth and development, yet if Africa is to benefit fully it needs to ensure that BRICS' investors meet certain conditions, including local labour and content requirements, while recipient countries need to have adequate human capital, infrastructure, economic stability and liberalised markets. Technical cooperation from the BRICS enhances the benefits of their FDI.

It is no gainsaying that there is a trend of significant FDI inflows from China to some African countries and similarly from India (in 2005). An estimated \$4.3 billion of FDI came from China to 23 African least-developed countries, while India made \$73 million in FDI to selected African countries.⁵⁴ Chinese FDI is seen in virtually all African countries, although only a few account for the bulk of it.

⁵² Reynolds, J. and Andersen, J., (2011). BRICS and the IT factor: The \$1 trillion story, available at <http://www.hillandknowlton.com/content/bricsand-it-factor-1-trillion-story>, accessed on 2nd September 2018

⁵³ Africa-BRICS Cooperation: Implications for Growth, Employment and Structural Transformation in Africa, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2013, p.12

⁵⁴ UNCTAD, 2011



Source: UNCTAD Stat, 2013.

In the aspect of trade The successful experience of the BRICS and other emerging economies (Chile; Hong Kong, China; Malaysia; Singapore; the Republic of Korea; Taiwan, China; and Thailand) over the past half century has amply demonstrated that trade can be an important stimulus to growth. Africa's trade response has been strong: trade with the BRICS has grown faster than with any other region in the world, doubling since 2007 to \$340 billion in 2012, and projected to reach \$500 billion by 2015.

Beneficial impacts of aid on an economy are not guaranteed, and the development literature reveals sharp debate on whether it may even harm recipients. Yet many observers agree that the mode and type of aid, as well as the receiving country's socio-economic and political environments, enhance aid's growth impact, which policymakers will want to bear in mind in pursuing a framework to optimize the growth and job benefits of its emerging partners' aid.⁵⁵ The contribution of the BRICS to aid has increased over the last decade with China ahead, although data are scarce. The BRICS support Africa's development through project aid (mainly to improve infrastructure, complimenting aid from countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), concessionary loans and credits, , as well as

⁵⁵ Chenery, Hollis B. and Alan M. Strout. (1966), "Foreign Assistance and Economic Development," *American Economic Review* 56 (September): 679-733.

grants.⁵⁶ Again in the effort to boost economic development in Africa, Chinese President XI Jinping announced at the recent Forum on China –Africa Cooperation, Beijing Action Plan (FOCAC) two-day conference in Beijing that China will boost development in Africa with \$60 billion aid.⁵⁷

Africa-BRICS Cultural Exchange Programmes

Before delving into the cultural nexus between African nations and BRICS, it is important to x-ray the cultural exchange between the five countries that formed BRICS. Culture is a particularly opportune area because most BRICS countries have historical or even ancient ties with one another. For example, the Chinese scholar Xuanzang journeyed through India for 17 years between 600 and 700 AD. The famous Wild Goose Pagoda in Xian, which was built to honor Xuanzang, is where Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi started his China visit in May.⁵⁸ In the light of the above, it become imperative to make recourse to the agreement between Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa in 2012, in the BRICS fourth summit, where they agreed upon international acculturation between member states.

These countries being aware of the importance of broadening and deepening the cooperation in the field of culture, also, being convinced that cultural dialogue contributes to the progress of nations and better mutual understanding of cultures, facilitating rapprochement of peoples, being firmly committed to the BRICS values in the spirit of openness, inclusiveness, equality, respect for cultural diversity, and mutual respect and learning, they agreed to 21 articulated agreements.

The Parties agreed to develop and promote cooperation and exchanges in the field of culture, including the art of music and dancing, choreography, theatre, circus, archives, publishing and libraries, museums, cultural heritage, fine, decorative and applied arts, audio-visual works, and in other creative activities.⁵⁹ Also, they agreed

⁵⁶ Elling Tjonneland, N. (2013). "Providing Development Aid to Africa: Comparing South Africa with China, India and Brazil." SAFPI Policy Brief 25, South African Foreign Policy Initiative, Cape Town.

⁵⁷ *UNCTADStat. 2013. "International Merchandise Trade Statistics."* Accessed 12 August 2018, <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/UnctadStatMetadata/Documentation/UNCTADstatContent.html> CCTV News, 5th September, 2018

⁵⁸ *Rajrishi Singhal (2017) Culture and Education Can Bind BRICS* fuirohserver.com/region/europe/culture-and-education-can-bind-brics-64078/

⁵⁹ *BRICS Fourth Summit (2012), "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity", New Delhi, 29 March 2012, Online: web/ Accessed on 10 January 2012 URL: <http://www.bricsindia.in/> Article 1, 2012*

that parties shall facilitate exchanges of scientific and research workers, academics, experts and students in the framework of programmes of interest, and develop joint programmes between institutions of culture, art and training of relevant specialists in the Parties' states.⁶⁰

The Parties in article 6 agreed to assist in developing and facilitating widest possible cooperation in the field of popular and traditional expressions of culture, including organization of exhibitions, festivals, national culture days, traditional festivities and performances of traditional cultural groups within the framework of activities held in their respective States. In the article 8 and 9 of the agreement, the Parties shall encourage exchanges of young creative teams and young performers for participation in international youth programmes, creative meetings, open-air and youth festivals of arts. Moreover For the purposes of facilitating mutual understanding and intercultural cooperation, the Parties shall encourage the exchange of copies of documents and materials related to the culture, history, social and political development of their States.

In practice, other BRICS members boast of traditional and historical links. For instance, India, China and Russia were all connected by the ancient Silk Route, which was a corridor not only for trade, but also for religions and philosophies. Brazil and India were linked 500 years ago by Portuguese marine expansion. More recently, BRICS countries have participated in cultural exchange programs through reciprocal visits by performing artists or exchanges of art works. Often, however, these exchanges are burdened by an “exotica” tag and tend to target only the cognoscenti. At times, they also get lost in the procession of routine exchanges with non-BRICS members. In other words, there is no special focus or flavor to cultural exchanges specifically between BRICS countries.

Prospect and Challenges of Africa, China and BRICS Partnership

Although the alliance of the BRICS countries have formed systematic mechanisms to address the concerns of achieving the targets of Sustainable Development, these developing countries with growing economic figures have the challenge of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are outlined by the United Nations (UN). These are big states with huge population, large territorial span and economic

⁶⁰ *BRICS Fourth Summit (2012)*, “BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity”, New Delhi, 29 March 2012, Online: web] Accessed on 10 January 2012 URL: <http://www.bricsindia.in/> Article 2, 2012:6

growth, however, these countries also face massive gap.⁶¹

However, one of the positive tones of this narrative is the establishment of New Development Bank, which is regarded as one of the primary step to address the above concerns. This new institutional architecture is designed to fund and assist in developmental and infrastructural projects of the member countries. This also have opened a window of positivity in the Chinese-African relationship and in effect BRICS, which is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which was adopted in 2015, that drew a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. It comprises of total seventeen goals, each goal having a target to achieve over the next fifteen years. It emphasises on reducing poverty, zero hunger, gender equality, quality education, peace, justice and strong institutions and so on, especially in less develop nation of the world, which Africa is a mainstream part of it.⁶²

The size of the BRICS economies, their economic potential and their demand for stronger political voice on international platforms make them particularly relevant to Africa's development. The BRICS have already become a major force in the global economic arena and, with the balance of economic power shifting dramatically over the next decades, China is set to become the world's largest economy, as it—and later, India—overhauls the United States. Africa-BRICS partnerships will thus become even more important for continental Africa.

Another prospect is that given current patterns of economic growth, the BRICS forum could become a global political force and influence international policymaking which will directly or indirectly impact African nations positively, but only if the members are able to generate consensus on key global issues.⁶³

⁶¹ New Development Bank (NDB 2016), "Board of Directors approves Loans for Two Projects in China and India during 7th Meeting in Shanghai, 22 November 2016, URL:

http://www.ndb.int/press_release/ndb-board-directors-approves-loans-two-projectschina-india-7th-meeting-shanghai/

Office of the Special Adviser on Africa Africa's Cooperation with New and Emerging Development Partners: Options for Africa's Development Aid, United, New York, 2010.

⁶² UNCTADStat. 2013. "International Merchandise Trade Statistics," accessed 12 August 2018,

<http://unctadstat.unctad.org/UnctadStatMetadata/Documentation/UNCTADstatContent.html>.

⁶³ Hany Besada, Evren Tok and Kristen Winters (2013), "South Africa in the BRICS Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects," *Africa Insight* vol. 42(4) p.11.

Moreover, in x-raying the prospects of African China and BRICS relation, commentators argue that the BRICS group could become an alternative force that could help shape global security and governance architectures, and present an alternative to NATO. Peace and security matters, particularly in developing countries as in Africa, could better be addressed in forums such as the BRICS.

Negatively, some analysts contend that the forum is a political rather than an economic one, and is not expected to significantly impact African countries in the short- to medium-term. It is clear, however, that BRICS is not a formal alliance of a bloc of like-minded countries but that the members are in fact rivals in international markets, attempting to meet their own national interests. They do, however, have the similar objective of economic growth and a desire to reform international institutions to better represent emerging economies.⁶⁴

The distinctive features of each of BRICS economy actors in Africa are described to have had direct and indirect impacts on, and challenges for, a range of African stakeholders are outlined. It is clear from this that while China and other members of BRICS has a strategy for Africa, Africa does not have a strategy towards China or other member states of BRICS. In the interests of promoting China's strategy, and in ensuring the optimal outcome of deepening links between China and African countries, a number of policy issues are outlined.⁶⁵

However, in the aspect of trade is in primary commodities with few linkages to the rest of the economy and with most export earnings going to foreigners, and so Africa's development and employment receive few gains. Also, the growth of the BRICS suggests it will become harder for African exporters to break into new (non-commodity) sectors—and their home country producers (as in footwear or clothing) may be hurt by the BRICS' low-cost output.

Conclusion

As seen in the analysis above, partnership of BRICS with the developing economies of Africa has intensified over the last decade through various forms of cooperation and supports. From all indications, this liaison has helped the developing economies of Africa to make progress in economic and general terms. The BRICS are

⁶⁴ L. White, 2011, *SA is the Stepping Stone into Africa*, available at [http://www.gibs.co.za/default.aspx?oid=81&stepid=2843&pid=63&ctl00_ContentPlaceHolder1_ctrlMainPortletContainer=itemid*389339\\$stepid*2842\\$iddet*920\\$ldlangver*919\\$ldlayout*919\\$ldmode*2747\\$languageid*1\\$previousitemid*389339\\$ignoreloadedcontrols*True](http://www.gibs.co.za/default.aspx?oid=81&stepid=2843&pid=63&ctl00_ContentPlaceHolder1_ctrlMainPortletContainer=itemid*389339$stepid*2842$iddet*920$ldlangver*919$ldlayout*919$ldmode*2747$languageid*1$previousitemid*389339$ignoreloadedcontrols*True)

⁶⁵ D. Bräutigam, 1998, *Chinese Aid and African Development: Exporting Green Revolution*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd. p.33

causing changes in the architecture of continental development cooperation, not only with regard to trade and financial flows but also as emerging donors in Africa. This has considerable impact on the aid-architecture and needs of continental Africa. As explained above, development financing from most BRICS, and particularly from China and India, very often comes within a larger package, where grants, concessional and non-concessional loans are a complement to trade and investment arrangements in the continent.

However, the ominous state of African poor strategy in milking the benefits and nurturing the prospects of African, China and BRICS partnership has attracted recommendations from different policy directions a typical example is the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa's Cooperation with recommendations for key development actors. Some of these recommendations are:

- African Governments should Monitor trade, aid and FDI interactions with emerging countries;
- African Governments should analyse strategic objectives of emerging economies, and opportunities and threats arising from their entry;
- African Governments should develop strategic focus to maximize benefits—in the words of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, to exercise “ownership” over these growing interactions;
- African Governments should interact with other African Governments, the African Union, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and regional groupings to maximize bargaining power and avoid wars of incentives. Within their specific mandates, the African Union, AfDB, NEPAD and African regional organizations such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) should:
- African Governments should provide support for individual African Governments in the monitoring of trade, aid and foreign direct investment (FDI) interactions with emerging countries;
- African Governments should coordinate strategic analysis where action is appropriate at the continental or regional level;
- African Governments should facilitate coordinated bargaining where this is appropriate to include the interests not just of commodity exporting economies, but also non exporting economies.
- African Governments should provide assistance with the compilation of relevant statistics and through its flagship publication, the Economic Report on

Africa, monitor the trajectory of aid, trade and FDI relations between Africa and the emerging country partners.

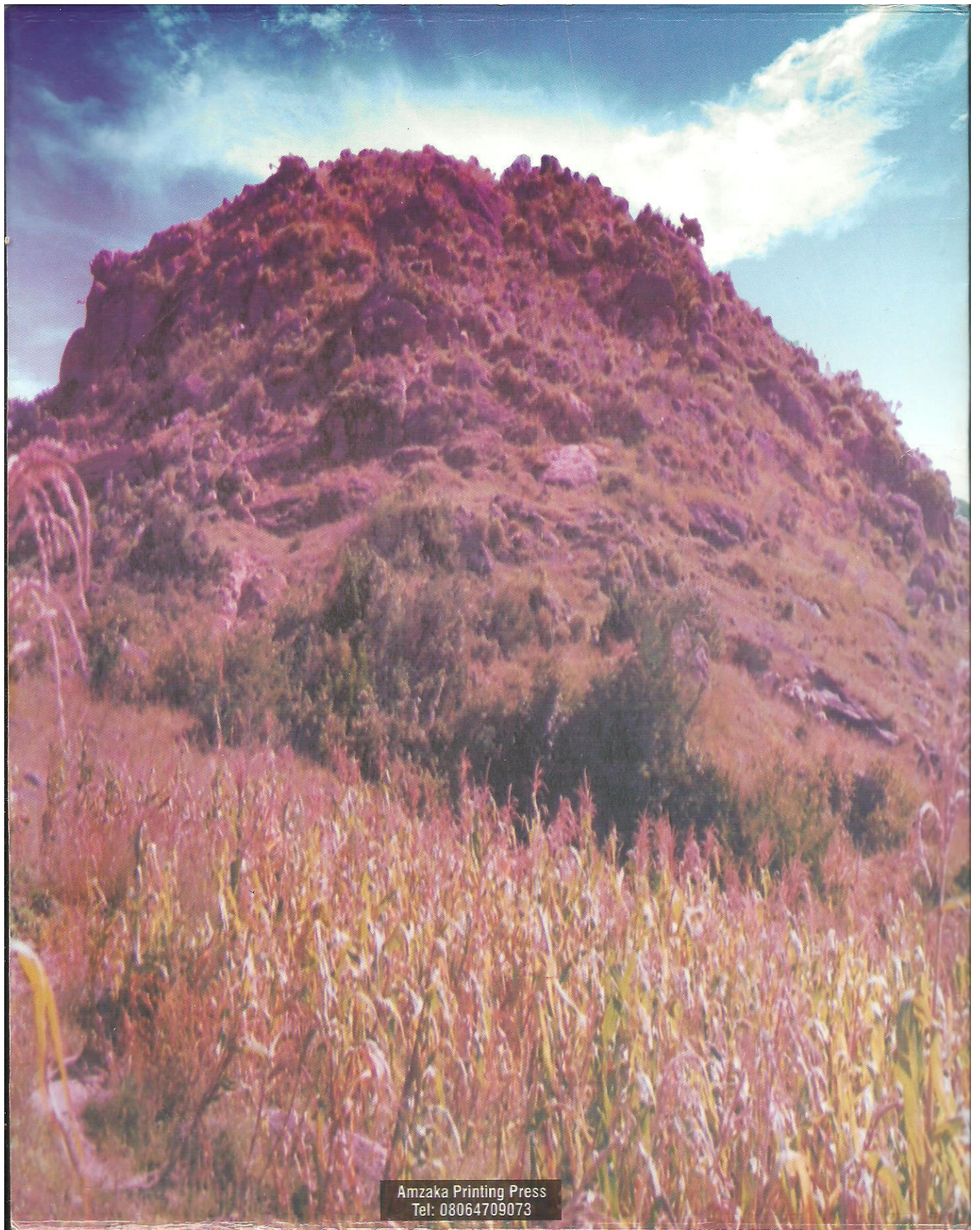
Though the study has concentrated on the future prospects of economic development in Africa, it is undeniable that the large scope markets in the continents for China and BRICS manufactured goods have equally benefitted and promoted the internal economic development of these countries.

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