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This brief summarizes the primary findings of the conference as interpreted by the project organizers. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this brief. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all of its recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

## Africa at Risk or Rising? The Role of Europe, North America, and China on the Continent

### Key Recommendations

- A renewed focus on good governance—which represents a potential area of agreement between China, the European Union (EU), and the United States—is crucial for promoting successful development in Africa. Reducing corruption and enhancing accountability among African regimes can decrease the risks of economic decline, state failure, and violent conflict. The international community can promote good governance by supporting the growth of independent political parties and the rule of law in African states.
- China, the EU, the United States, and the other foreign governments active in Africa should coordinate their policies around fostering peace and prosperity on the continent. Cooperation in the fields of public health, primary education, and peacekeeping may be a good starting point.
- Foreign actors in Africa should redouble their efforts to strengthen the continent's indigenous multilateral institutions. African organizations will play a crucial role in sustainable development and good governance. They can also counter traditional threats such as civil strife and new challenges such as climate change. International support should both increase the capacities of existing organizations and encourage more innovative ad hoc multilateral arrangements since both approaches can make essential contributions.
- The conflict of norms evident in many African issues necessitates a careful, case-by-case effort to balance priorities such as the peaceful resolution of conflict and the punishment of human rights violators. A clear evaluation of norms will be particularly critical in light of the growing involvement of foreign countries, such as China, with standards different from those of the Western powers formerly most active in Africa.
- Additional steps are required to stimulate African economic activity and increase the efficacy of foreign economic assistance. Appropriate measures could include consolidating Africa's regional trade agreements, increasing the employment of local workers by foreign firms, fostering greater competition within African countries, and increasing the transparency of the behavior of foreign actors.

- In both China and the West, the current pool of available knowledge regarding Africa remains inadequate given the many important policy issues at stake. By supporting study, dialogue, and international exchanges among experts on Africa, governments can ensure more effective policymaking and foster the development of innovative ideas to solve the continent's problems.
- The recent establishment by the US Defense Department of a dedicated African Command has the potential to further economic and social progress by enhancing regional security. US policymakers should ensure that the command cooperates with civilian agencies and invites African participation. Opportunities may arise to coordinate complementary US and Chinese military engagement in Africa.
- China's growing activity in Africa could prove a great asset to the continent given the need for large-scale efforts to address the continent's problems. China's policy toward Africa, however, could provide greater support for international standards in areas such as human rights, rule of law, environmental practices, and economic transparency. By increasing its commitment to implementing these norms, China can improve the prospects of long-term stability in Africa and underscore its status as a responsible global stakeholder.

### Executive Summary

Recent years have seen positive trends in Africa with respect to both internal developments and foreign involvement. Improved economic policies have contributed to sustained economic growth. Better governance has expanded the sway of democratic politics and human rights. More effective African multilateral institutions have reinforced both trends. For example, although there have been a few notable exceptions, sub-Saharan Africa has been at the center of a drastic decline in the global incidence of mass violence. On the international scene, growing Chinese and Indian involvement has contributed to Africa's economic development and sparked a renewal of global interest in Africa. European governments have enhanced coordination of their policies toward Africa under EU auspices. US economic and military assistance has expanded in many African regions.

Despite these positive developments, however, Africa still faces serious challenges. Widespread poverty persists in many African nations despite

favorable growth trends. Certain African governments continue suboptimal economic policies and undemocratic political practices. The capacity of African multilateral institutions remains insufficient to respond to large-scale violence, such as the ongoing genocide in Darfur, without foreign assistance. The clash of norms that has long complicated Western policies in Africa has been aggravated by the rise of China. Beijing's soft lending, arms deals, and relationships with objectionable African regimes weakens adherence to international standards intended to promote good governance and sustainable development.

Given this situation, the actors involved in Africa should enhance their policies toward the continent. First, these governments should increase the limited pool of available knowledge about Africa by supporting dialogue and exchanges among experts. In addition, a renewed focus on good governance would reassure donors that foreign aid works toward sustainable development. Strengthening the peacekeeping capabilities of African organizations would make them a bulwark against mass violence. Improved policy coordination could ensure that Chinese and Western efforts toward Africa serve complementary rather than competing purposes. The ongoing restructuring of US military command arrangements in Africa could improve security cooperation between African and foreign militaries. Finally, China can underscore its status as a responsible stakeholder by adopting policies to increase transparency, promote sustainable development, and counter mass violence.

### Introduction: Africa Rising?

The Stanley Foundation and the Aspen Atlantic Group convened a conference May 4-6, 2007, in Berlin entitled "Africa at Risk or Rising? The Role of Europe, North America, and China on the Continent." In an off-the-record roundtable format, participants explored issues such as energy as a new driver for engagement in Africa; transnational challenges like health and water, economic development, democracy and human rights; and questions surrounding the visions that Europe, North America, and China hold for Africa's future.

Despite the common media depiction of Africa as a failed continent, Africa offers far more than simply the so-called "four Ds of the African apocalypse": death, disease, disaster, and despair. Since the end of the Cold War, the region has seen some major

successes. Favorable developments include expanding the rising number of African political democracies, a widespread commitment to good governance among African leaders, solid economic growth in some countries, and the involvement of several strong multilateral institutions as well as important foreign countries in promoting continued progress on the continent.

### Improving Political, Economic, and Security Conditions

Across Africa, the sway of democracy has expanded. At present, 18 of the 54 African states are liberal democracies, 20-25 can be characterized as “hybrid regimes,” and only 5-6 are unreformed autocracies. From 1960 to 1990, only three African leaders voluntarily left office, but since 1990, 40 have peacefully relinquished power. Many countries have set formal or informal limits on the number of terms incumbents can remain in office. In recent years, African politics has offered greater opportunities for women despite the lingering legacy of traditional “big man” politics.

Thanks in part to better government policies, many African economies have enjoyed notable economic successes in recent years. During the past decade, the overall annual growth rate in sub-Saharan Africa has averaged 5 percent, with some countries achieving a much higher rate of sustained growth. Through the New Partnership for Africa Development and other mechanisms, Africans and their foreign partners have demonstrated increased intolerance for undemocratic political practices, human rights violations, and officially sanctioned corruption.

Africa’s own multilateral institutions are also becoming stronger. The members of the African Union—which has a more activist mandate than its predecessor organization, the Organization of African States—and the continent’s other preeminent institutions have reaffirmed their commitment to promoting democracy, good governance, and effective economic policies. As these institutions have developed, African governments have become less insistent in asserting claims of national sovereignty to deflect foreign attention from their domestic policies. For example, the Peer Review Mechanism of the African Union (AU) demonstrates that African leaders now accept that they can legitimately comment on one another’s domestic economic and political policies, including on good governance issues.

In recent years, the number of conflicts and episodes of mass violence in the world has dropped, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Between 2002 and 2005, the number of ongoing state-based conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa declined by 60 percent, from 13 to 5; the number of nonstate conflicts fell from 24 to 14. In addition to the decline in the number of regional conflicts, the number of sub-Saharan African countries experiencing one or more conflicts on their soil shrank from 15 to 8. In 2003 Africa was home to 46 of 89 cases of armed conflict and one-sided violence in the world. In 2005 it was home to only 25 of 71. The drop in number of conflicts in this region has been the single most important factor in driving down the toll of global armed conflict since 2003.

### Renewed International Interest

The international community—comprised of nation-states, multinational institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—has reaffirmed its commitment to Africa’s continued social, political, and economic development. The expanding involvement of China and India in Africa reflects a shared perception that the continent offers important opportunities for advancing these countries’ strategic and economic interests. Their growing presence has also led Americans, Europeans, and other nationals to elevate Africa’s importance in their own assessments.

The United States has made a sustained effort to promote Africa’s economic development and security. In 2000 the US Congress passed the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, which allows the poorest African countries to export duty-free textiles to the United States. The Bush administration has pursued related measures, such as the Millennium Challenge and anti-AIDS efforts. The US armed forces have sought to enhance the capacity of African countries to conduct peacekeeping operations and to counter terrorist threats.

European countries with colonial legacies in Africa are more willing to seek multilateral rather than exclusively bilateral solutions to the continent’s complex problems. For example, in December 2005 the European Council adopted a new EU Strategy for Africa that defines a single comprehensive framework for European relations with Africa. A major goal is to increase the coherence between the official EU policies supporting Africa and the policies of the member states. European publics increasingly recognize that globalization has made

them more vulnerable to Africa's problems, including the movement of African migrants and diseases across the Mediterranean."

Following the adoption of the new strategy, the EU intensified its dialogue with African countries. The EU has also increased its financial support to the AU and launched an exchange program for officials and trainees in order to strengthen the ties. The EU has made it a priority to improve the AU's conflict prevention and conflict resolution capabilities. In 2006 the EU deployed its own military contingent, the European Operational Rapid Force, in the Democratic Republic of Congo to oversee the country's electoral process. In accordance with its objective of promoting better governance in Africa, another key aim, the EU monitored the recent elections in the Congo, Uganda, and Zambia. Furthermore, the EU officially calibrates its financial assistance to African partner countries according to their commitment to good governance.

Earlier this year, EU governments affirmed that Africa can play an important role in the EU's energy strategy. In the run-up to the June 2007 G-8, the German government discussed the issue with its G-8 partners and several African governments, and German policymakers also conducted a sustained dialogue with Chinese officials on African issues. German officials favor moving away from the use of quantitative metrics of African performance to determine policies toward Africa. Instead, they endorse more reliance on qualitative issues such as good governance. At the end of this year, Germany and other European governments intend to convene an EU-China summit on Africa.

### The China Contribution

For centuries, China has had commercial and cultural ties with Africa. Chinese leaders often visit Africa and vice versa. In recognition of Chinese support in favor of their independence, African countries helped China to gain a seat in the United Nations in 1971. It has only been in the last decade, however, that China's political, economic, and military presence on the continent has surged. While Africa's share in world trade had long been declining, trade between Africa and China rose 35 percent between 2004 and 2005 to US\$39.7 billion. At present, it probably exceeds \$50 billion annually. Chinese companies continue to invest heavily in African countries' infrastructures, including railway, ports, and other assets, in an effort to secure their integration into Africa's export networks.

According to Chinese representatives, China is seeking to promote local industry, create a more favorable investment climate, and support the African Development Bank in addition to other African institutions. To date, China has given more than \$5.5 billion in economic assistance to Africa and cancelled the debt of 31 African countries. The Chinese describe their approach toward Africa as part of a larger strategy aimed at strengthening relations with the key regions of the world to ensure a peaceful rise for China. The Chinese military has also provided major contributions to numerous UN peacekeeping operations in Africa.

In terms of the volume of trade and investment, the energy sector has become the most important dimension of economic intercourse between China and Africa. China's explosive economic growth has greatly decreased the country's need to import foreign energy. Nonetheless, the fact that the Middle East accounts for almost half of China's oil imports at present remains a concern in Beijing. To reduce its dependence on this volatile region and cushion itself against wide fluctuations in market prices, the Chinese government has been encouraging its firms to seek out alternative sources of energy.

As a result, Africa has become a growing source of China's imported energy. Today sub-Saharan Africa supplies about 30 percent of China's oil. Angola recently replaced Saudi Arabia as the largest national exporter of oil to China. Sudan and Nigeria are also important African energy suppliers to China. Half of the Sudanese oil production goes to China, which represents about 5 percent of total Chinese oil imports. China owns 40 percent of the largest oil-producing company in Sudan. Chinese companies are also involved in the processing and transportation of Africa's oil and natural gas.

Although much of the attention in the West regarding China's role in Africa focuses on human rights issues, Chinese involvement in Africa may have certain beneficial effects on the global scene. By increasing energy production in Africa, China generates additional revenue for African governments and increases the aggregate supply of oil and gas available on world markets. Africa suffered in the past when the international community lost interest in its affairs and abdicated responsibility for assisting Africans in managing their challenges. China's increasing engagement in Africa has helped revive interest in African issues elsewhere in the world.

In the diplomatic realm, 2006 and 2007 were years of intense Chinese activity in Africa. In February 2007, Chinese President Hu Jintao conducted a twelve-day, eight-nation tour of the continent. This official tour followed the 2006 “Year of Africa” and the release of China’s first Africa Policy White Paper. In November 2006, Beijing hosted the third Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which represented the largest meeting of African and Chinese leaders in almost half a century. The attendees included Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao, as well as 48 African heads of state. At the summit, Chinese government leaders pledged to adopt a number of measures—increasing financial assistance, encouraging further investment, forgiving loans, etc.—to strengthen China’s economic ties with Africa.

The Chinese government is also deepening Chinese cultural and social ties with Africa. Beijing continues to increase the number of African countries approved for tourism. According to the “Beijing Action Plan” (2007-2009), adopted at the 2007 China-Africa Forum on Cooperation, the number of Chinese-African student and institutional exchanges will also increase in the coming years. Under this plan, Beijing will send additional teachers to Africa to offer instruction in the Chinese language, agriculture, and health. The Chinese government has declared its intention to fund additional public health research and facilities in Africa and to help develop vocational education and distance learning programs.

China’s growing presence in Africa has received encouragement from the continent’s leaders. Chinese leaders have made clear that they see Africa as having the potential for a major growth takeoff, a more flattering perspective than that adopted by Western leaders and analysts. In addition, many Africans believe that, having proven successful in a developing country, the Chinese model of state-centric growth holds more important lessons for Africa than do the economic policies recommended by the already industrialized powers. Chinese companies often employ a longer investment time frame, seeking positive returns in decades rather than years. In addition, African governments often find it easier to cooperate with China on economic issues since Chinese aid typically comes with fewer strings attached (i.e., less conditionality).

From Beijing’s perspective, the thwarted effort by the Chinese oil company CNOOC to buy its US

counterpart UNOCAL has been widely seen as evidence that Western markets remain closed to many Chinese firms. In contrast, they perceive far fewer barriers to entry on the African continent, especially in countries shunned by Western governments and investors.

### India’s Growing Presence

India, too, has made a major effort to raise its political and economic visibility in Africa. The Indian government has been opening new embassies on the continent and has restructured its foreign ministry to address African issues more effectively. Although lagging far behind their Chinese counterparts according to most indicators, Indian companies are also rapidly expanding their commercial activities in Africa.

Indian firms have already agreed to invest billions of dollars in Africa over the next few years. Many economists consider India’s economic development model, with its emphasis on labor-intensive agriculture and small businesses, more suitable for African conditions than China’s state-capitalist form of development. Indian firms make a greater effort to be seen as African rather than foreign firms. They also want to be known as practitioners of socially responsible policies. These good practices can include hiring African nationals as managers. Indian firms are also generally more integrated into African source markets than their Chinese counterparts. The latter tend to be more vertically integrated and source many of their purchases from China. In contrast, Indian companies regularly buy manufacturing inputs from local sources rather than from India.

### The Asian Impact on Africa

As a result of this increased involvement of companies from India and China in Africa, South-South trade and investment is surging, particularly within Africa, and now exceeds 11 percent of world totals. Current projections are for this share to continue rising—more African firms will partner with Asian companies as they jointly ascend the export value chain. African-Asian joint ventures, such as major construction projects, have become more prominent in commercial activities within African home markets. This development suggests that effective economic policies regarding Africa could help reverse the long-term decline in Africa’s share of world trade and investment.

The growing appetite for African commodities in China and India has helped spur African development.

Chinese and Indian investment in African export industries could help reverse their secular decline and bring African countries into more high-value markets. Chinese and Indian firms are increasingly involved in commercial activities outside the energy sector (e.g., telecommunications, food processing, horticulture).

Chinese and Indian firms tend to be more regionally integrated than African firms, thus promoting trans-African commercial ties even in the absence of formal inter-African agreements. Such horizontal integration is useful given that many African countries are landlocked and depend heavily on opportunities to export through neighboring countries. In addition, their superior sophistication facilitates their ability to transfer useful skills to African businesses and promote de facto regional integration even in the absence of formal free trade agreements.

### Africa at Risk?

Nevertheless, these successes should not obscure the numerous difficulties still plaguing the continent. Many African countries remain underdeveloped, torn by civil strife, burdened by weak domestic and multilateral institutions, uncomfortable with norms implying a loss of state sovereignty, and vulnerable to the predatory policies of foreign governments.

#### Persistent Economic, Political, and Security Problems

African economies diverge greatly in economic performance; only about a third of African countries have achieved sustained growth rates of approximately 5 percent during the past decade. It is especially noteworthy that many of these African “success stories” occur in countries that lack substantial energy resources. Many oil-exporting African nations suffer from a “resource curse” created by their governments’ economic mismanagement. Foreign direct investment in Africa only represents some 3 percent of the world’s total. In addition, ten African countries—primarily those with major deposits of oil, gas, and other natural resources—accounted for more than 85 percent of the regional FDI total.

Some African economies are experiencing protracted crises and much of Africa is still at risk. Zimbabwe has the world’s fastest-shrinking peacetime economy, resulting in a deteriorating humanitarian situation and the risk of total state

failure. The income of approximately half of Africa’s population remains under \$1 per day. In the face of widespread hunger, food production continues to decline. Diseases like AIDS run rampant. Educational opportunities are woefully inadequate for millions of young Africans.

In most economic sectors, traditional trade barriers (e.g., tariffs) affecting African commerce have been largely liberalized, but problems with “behind the border” and “between the border” impediments persist. These impediments pertain to infrastructure (e.g., undeveloped transportation and communications networks), market structure (e.g., monopolies and oligopolies that restrict competitive pressures), and “governance” (e.g., corruption and other nonmarket transaction costs). Africans and foreigners alike have become dissatisfied with traditional economic policies and the classic charity paradigm and hope to pursue more innovative policies that promote African industrialization and private sector development.

African institutions at all levels—multinational, regional, national, and subnational—suffer from severe capacity deficits. For example, the international community has failed to provide the financial and logistical support to the African Union that would enable it to enhance its operational effectiveness. The AU remains incapable of conducting major peacekeeping operations in non-permissive environments such as Darfur. The organization would find it nearly impossible to manage simultaneous peace operations without supplementary capacity.

Domestically, many African countries still experience a lack of good governance. Many African leaders continue authoritarian policies under the cover of professed democratic regimes. The principle of prioritizing “African solutions to African problems” will only work if African countries and institutions have the resources to apply their preferred solutions to continental challenges.

Despite progress, crises in Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Darfur as well as violence in Rwanda, Nigeria, Uganda, and elsewhere persist. The situation in Darfur has been deteriorating. Desertification is spreading and rebel leaders and movements have become increasingly fragmented. A culture of violence and radicalization is growing in the refugee camps, which are now estimated to hold two million people. Among Arab tribes, increasing banditry

and fighting over the camps remains. The Janjaweed are no longer under government control.

### Clashing Norms

The “responsibility to protect” (RTP)—the responsibility of the international community to protect people from genocide, ethnic cleansing, and other crimes against humanity when a people’s own government fails in its duties to protect—has gained widespread international support as a normative principle defining state duties. Yet the problems the international community has encountered in managing the cases of Darfur, Somalia, and Zimbabwe highlight the difficulty of applying RTP despite its endorsement by the United Nations in 2005. In particular, Africans as well as other members of the international community have been inconsistent in their application of the principle. In addition, older norms—such as the reluctance of African countries to criticize one another, traditional notions of sovereignty, and the tolerance of Africans for authoritarian “big men”—still too often trump the newer principles.

Governments find it very difficult to move beyond general principles and agree on what precise actions should be taken by which parties and at what times. In part, this problem reflects the contrasting national perspectives and principles at work. The core policy statements and other official documents relating to Africa adopted by the world’s most important countries demonstrate sharp contrasts in terms of preferred approaches, values, and understandings. In many cases, the special relationships that foreign countries have developed with particular African countries have led them to overlook multilateral principles in favor of these bilateral bonds. Furthermore, policymakers often perceive a need—which may not always prove true in practice—to choose among competing objectives, such as democracy and counterterrorism, or promoting economic growth and equity. Normative dissonance also stems from the fact that many African problems result from a confluence of variables. For example, most African conflicts have multiple root causes including sectarian tensions, disputed resources, historical legacies, ecological challenges, and personal ambitions.

### The China Challenge

The FOCAC, and the fact that President Hu has visited Africa four times in the last three years, and twice in less than one year, underscore the newfound importance of continent in the eyes of

Beijing. Yet we should not exaggerate the economic significance of Africa for China. Only 3 percent of China’s foreign trade involves Africa, a lower percentage than that of South America. Domestic fuel sources, especially coal, still provide most of China’s energy. At present, China’s economic interests in Africa lie primarily in a few resource-rich countries like Angola, Chad, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Sudan.

In addition, China’s growing presence in Africa has not been without controversy. The 2006 riots in Zambia against a Chinese-owned mining company and the recent deaths of Chinese workers in Ethiopia at the hands of antigovernment insurgents suggest the end of China’s African honeymoon, at least in some countries. In Zambia, Chinese-operated copper mines gained the reputation of exploiting local workers by paying low wages and ignoring local environmental laws. In 2006 a major presidential candidate made criticisms of Chinese economic practices a major theme of his campaign. Chinese representatives openly denounced him after he implied he might recognize Taiwan if elected.

Critics argue that Chinese representatives have remained silent when African governments violate their citizens’ rights and hold fraudulent elections. They also complain that China’s delegation to the UN Security Council has helped block economic sanctions and other measures designed to pressure African governments into improving their human rights practices, promoting peace processes in internal conflicts, and enacting other desirable policies. For their part, Chinese analysts used to intimate that they saw Western demands for greater respect for human rights and mutually economic advantage in China’s dealing with Africa as hypocritical stratagems designed to place Chinese entities at a competitive disadvantage with their Western counterparts.

One reason why some of Africa’s remaining authoritarian leaders prefer to deal with China rather than with Western nations is that their Chinese interlocutors historically have not hectored them about human rights, political democracy, or other uncomfortable topics. Faced with a choice between investing in Africa, where their presence was widely welcomed, and fighting for commercial opportunities in the more restrictive markets of Europe and North America, many Chinese business leaders found the former option alluring.

China also derives some influence from its role as the second largest weapons supplier to sub-Saharan Africa. As the Chinese People's Liberation Army has upgraded the technological sophistication of its own weapons, Chinese firms have come to see the less developed militaries of African nations as suitable clients. China's major role in supplying arms to the governments of Sudan and Zimbabwe has aroused great controversy since these regimes regularly employ military force against their domestic opponents. Some have criticized Beijing for exchanging arms for access to African mineral resources. China also sends military advisors to some African countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, and Nigeria.

Analysts concerned about the long-term health of African economies worry about China's willingness to provide liberal loans, with opaque terms, and other financial assistance in return for access to African natural resources and other concessions. These loans have vitiated international efforts to pressure African governments into pursuing more appropriate macroeconomic policies. China's soft lending has already led international financial institutions to relax their own criteria for loans. This development could lead to renewed problems with African debt. We must avoid a "race to the bottom" with foreign investors and governments relaxing conditionality standards to strengthen their competitive positions in Africa.

In addition, some observers complain that the close relationship between the Chinese government and China's major companies is facilitating Chinese efforts to establish firm control over Africa's natural resources. Some believe that China's transportation-related infrastructure investment in Africa, which is heavily subsidized by the Chinese government, has been geared toward securing these vital minerals and energy products for export to China rather than other markets. African countries that are not selling oil and gas to China suffer from large trade deficits that cancel out the trade surplus that African energy producers enjoy in their trade with China.

Some observers suspect that Chinese investment in Africa may do little to boost local employment because Chinese firms rely heavily on Chinese nationals. Others complain about poor Chinese environmental practices in Africa. For example, they charge that China has illegally imported large amounts of timber from western Africa. A more

recent fear is that cheap imports from Asian countries, especially China, are undermining Africa's textile production and other indigenous industries by selling lower priced goods that often benefit from Chinese government subsidies and the undervalued Chinese currency. Some Africans complain that Chinese textile producers are counterfeiting traditional African textile patterns and selling them on international markets. Some accuse Chinese manufacturers of selling counterfeit (and unsafe) medical products to African nations. In response, African textile producers and labor unions have pushed for protectionist measures against Chinese imports.

The fact that most Chinese business activities in Africa involve state enterprises presents other problems. Not only are Chinese enterprises less transparent than most public corporations, but they tend not to follow global standards for private businesses. Beijing encourages private Chinese companies to export and invest abroad by offering tax incentives, cheap loans, and the like. Government officials have even more tools at their disposal to influence the state-run enterprises.

Nevertheless, a Chinese workshop participant cautioned that the Beijing government—because of a complex bureaucratic structure involving central ministries, embassies, and state-owned companies—often found it hard to keep track of the activities of the growing number of small Chinese businesses that engage in commercial activities in Africa. Some of these smaller firms, with their shorter time horizons and lower accountability to Chinese authorities, engage in questionable commercial practices that harm the reputation of all Chinese firms in Africa. Even if the Chinese government's capacity to detect and punish commercial abuses by Chinese firms in developing markets improved, participants remained uncertain how committed Chinese government officials were to cracking down on corruption involving Chinese firms in developing markets like Africa.

China's rising demand for African commodities has also had a worldwide inflationary impact. In addition, spikes in the prices for commodities often leave exporting countries worse off by encouraging bad policies. For example, countries might be forced to rely excessively on the sale of their natural assets rather than pursue broader economic development strategies that promote local manufacturing and agriculture. Commodity export booms also can provide more resources for African

dictators, worsen national debt burdens, and reinforce collusion between local and foreign elites that does little to benefit most Africans.

Some of these complaints reflect an inevitable clash of interests and values among the major actors in Africa. The criticisms also, however, result from the growing perception that the world should expect better behavior from China insofar as Beijing professes to be a responsible stakeholder in the international community. A recent report issued by the Council on Foreign Relations task force concluded that China's activities in Africa directly challenged US efforts to promote regional prosperity and stability. The study group concluded that African ties with China had already impeded US policies aimed at reducing corruption, promoting democracy, and protecting the continent's unique natural environment. Beijing's most vocal critics have called for boycotting the Beijing Olympics to pressure China to change its policies regarding Darfur, Zimbabwe, and on other African issues.

### Western Neglect

Weaknesses in the policies of other countries with established interests in Africa have facilitated China's growing influence in the continent. For example, workshop participants saw a disconnect between rhetoric and reality in the case of those powers traditionally involved in African affairs. A German representative characterized the 1990s as a period in which the West—owing to the end of Cold War competition, the promise of new markets in Eastern Europe, and the overwhelming troubles of Africa—lost interest in the continent.

Although Africa's former colonial powers insist on their commitment to compensating for the negative effects of their imperial legacy, they have nonetheless curtailed their diplomatic representation and assistance programs across Africa. Recent G-8 summits have drawn attention to African issues, but the pledges of additional aid and other assistance to Africa remain at best only partly realized. In addition, Western governments too often become preoccupied with humanitarian issues when crafting their African strategies. African policies shaped by imperial history and humanitarian romanticism will prove incapable of dealing with the wide range of issues now affecting the continent. European governments, likewise concerned about some Chinese policies in Africa, have also broadened their engagement efforts with Chinese representatives to address

African issues. However, China's policies in Africa remain only a minor element of the overall dialogue between Beijing and many Western governments. The departure of Robert Zoellick from the US government, for instance, has derailed plans to intensify the Sino-American dialogue on African issues.

### Some Policy Recommendations

The international community could take advantage of the current situation to consider new policies for Africa. Africans and their foreign partners are in a self-critical mood about their relationship and how best to pursue mutual goals. The evolving opportunities and problems described above led workshop participants to offer the following recommendations.

**Rebuild Intellectual Capital.** Workshop participants stressed the need to deepen our comprehension of the new and complex challenges that increasingly confront the African continent. For example, since climate change will affect Africa first and hardest, the international community can assist both Africa and the rest of the world by improving our understanding of this phenomenon, whose effects will prove unprecedented in modern history.

Despite its increased cultural exchanges and commercial ties with the continent, China has surprisingly few experts on Africa. Similarly, very few Africans know much about China while the majority of the African elite is still Western-educated—a situation that helps explain why so many African countries are uncertain how to respond to China's growing presence on their continent. Western expertise on many African issues also has decreased in recent years.

Given these limits, it behooves countries to pool their expertise through expanded opportunities for exchanges and dialogue. These activities could include providing financial support for students pursuing master's and doctoral degrees and inviting China's African experts to meet with their American and European colleagues. Additional Track II initiatives such as this Stanley-Aspen workshop are essential to bring together the world's Africa experts for extensive discussions. By involving past, present, and potential future government officials, these initiatives can also generate innovative policy ideas for consideration in more formal government deliberations. Over the long term, governments, universities, foundations,

and other institutions need to undertake a sustained investment campaign to increase the collective intellectual capital available for the study of African issues.

**Prioritize Good Governance.** In the past, copious Western aid aimed at promoting democratization in Africa has too often merely strengthened existing regimes. It has now become clear that the broader issue of good governance lies at the heart of Africa's numerous problems. Ensuring good governance is directly related to reducing poverty, ensuring peace and stability, and promoting sustainable economic development. The lack of good governments discourages foreign investment, contributes to state failure and interstate conflict, and, by facilitating corrupt and ineffective practices, vitiates progress in many other areas of African life. In this latter respect, participants stressed that corruption was inherently a two-sided problem since for everyone who takes, there is someone who gives. Given the magnitude of the problem, China, the EU, and the United States should cooperate to promote good governance practices and respect for human rights in Africa.

Participants also saw a need to promote stronger political parties in Africa since such organizations are essential to democratization. Africa's existing political parties are often simply the tools of a single leader. Although good governance requires a sustained dialogue with local elites, involving Africa's nongovernmental organizations and individual Africans in deliberations about the continent's future is also essential for maintaining effective and responsible political systems in Africa. Local political leaders need to appreciate that they are primarily accountable to their own people. Promoting the rule of law, including freedom of the press, also helps encourage responsible government.

**Boost Institutional Capacity.** The international community needs to redouble its efforts to boost the capacity of Africa's multinational institutions. Participants generally agreed on the need to strengthen the ability of the AU, the Economic Community of West African States, and other African organizations to respond to both longstanding challenges, such as peacekeeping, and new problems, such as climate change. Given the complex problems on the continent, however, the international community needs to be more willing to experiment with ad hoc multilateral approaches. In some cases, specially tailored institutional arrange-

ments—including those involving a diverse range of local, national, and foreign actors—can mobilize resources and develop policies more effectively than enduring institutions can.

Fortunately, such policies are not mutually exclusive—established institutions can reinforce and perhaps encompass less formal arrangements that arise to meet the urgent needs created by complex emergencies. The EU provides such an example of successful institution-building. The EU's institutional architecture began with ad hoc initiatives intended to deal with discrete technical issues and, with time, evolved into a complex network of interlocking and mutually supportive robust multilateral structures, many of whose activities address issues concerning both Africa and Europe.

**Improve Multilateral Coordination.** More immediately, China and the other foreign governments most active in Africa need to improve the coordination of their policies toward the continent. The EU, the United States, and China share many important interests, not the least of which is the establishment of peace and prosperity in Africa. Sincere dialogue between China and the EU on this issue is desirable, and Africa also presents the best opportunity for US-China cooperation as no vital national interests of the two powers conflict in the region. Areas where mutually profitable collaboration could occur range from integrating foreign assistance programs in order to exploit potential synergies to using states' ties with different parties to African conflicts to induce them to negotiate peace settlements. In the area of foreign assistance, enhanced donor coordination within assistance programs, perhaps with the establishment of informal donor community dialogues in African countries, could be a positive step toward better integration. More generally, participants identified public health, primary education, and peacekeeping as relatively uncontroversial sectors where China and Western countries could most easily cooperate.

Many current institutional structures—such as the G-8, the EU-Africa meetings, and other arrangements—are suboptimal in that they do not involve all the main players. Although the Germans have indicated they plan to deepen the ties of the G-8 and the EU with Africa and some believe the G-8 might be an effective vehicle for aid coordination, new, more comprehensive institutions may provide superior arrangements in certain cases. Furthermore, although Track II dialogues involving representatives

from the United States, the EU, China, and perhaps India could assist with this process, such talks also need to encompass fairly senior government representatives if they are to have an immediate public policy impact. Conversely, many specific problems will only be resolved at the country level, which will require intense cooperation among local embassy personnel.

Participants caution, however, that international collaboration is neither a goal in itself nor invariably a benign development. For example, some participants complained that cooperation between the US and Chinese governments in the area of global climate change had thus far encouraged irresponsible international behavior. In addition, several attendees made reference to the earlier gathering of foreign representatives in the 1885 Congress of Berlin that, by dividing Africa into colonial holdings, had a harmful devastating effect on the African people who fell victim to the “scramble for Africa.” What is needed is genuine engagement in the pursuit of principled multilateralism *with* Africa.

**Reduce Normative Dissonance.** The lack of consensus on which norms should take priority regarding African issues results in part from the fact that most public policy questions invariably have unique features that make the blanket application of inflexible universal principles suboptimal. Participants acknowledged that China’s policies of noninterference and acknowledgment of sovereignty in Africa have remained relatively consistent while the West has been criticized for its selective use of norms. For example, the West has excoriated Zimbabwe for its lack of democracy while remaining relatively silent on the similar political situation in Chad.

In light of the complex confluence of factors involved in most issues, it behooves the international community to deepen its understanding of African affairs and reinvigorate the human capital and other tools available for analyzing the continent. Even a solid understanding of all the variables at play, however, would not always obviate the need for governments to make tough choices between competing values. For example, there is no easy answer as to whether peace or justice should take priority when assessing whether to allow violent dictators an opportunity to escape prosecution for their crimes in return for surrendering office without violence. Participants recognized that each case should be analyzed individually to decide where to balance competing values, even though the appear-

ance of applying norms inconsistently can induce cynicism among Africans and other observers.

The ongoing global power transition has had mixed effects on Africa. The growing economic, political, and military influence of China and, to a lesser extent, India has given Africans additional resources and, on the global level, widened the range of assets available for providing public goods like humanitarian assistance. Yet this transition has made it harder to achieve a consensus on international norms when, as is often the case, the preferences of India and China differ from those of the established Western powers that have dominated the multilateral institutions most influential in Africa in the past.

**Restructure Economic Assistance.** Workshop participants called for the removal of formal and informal protectionist barriers to Africa’s growth. Yet they observed that much progress had already been achieved in this area. At present, few additional reductions of barriers to trade in Africa could be made in the absence of further global progress in this area, including consummation of the current Doha round.

Attendees also downplayed the benefits of pursuing further regional trade agreements or regional economic communities. African countries already had overlapping membership in many of these groups, creating a “spaghetti like” mixture that distracted attention from the need to realize progress on other issues. Africans need to harmonize relations better among African institutions, especially by consolidating the hodge-podge of African regional trade agreements. At present, they have much less impact on African trade flows than the *de facto* horizontal integration resulting from Chinese and Indian commercial activities in the region.

The economists at the workshop believed that the international community should devote more attention to making African countries more attractive to foreign investors through “behind the border” reforms. In addition, they stressed the need to develop mechanisms that would ensure that the foreign business activities of African countries benefit their populations as a whole rather than just their elites. For example, they called on foreign firms to build local capacity by hiring local employees, training African nationals, and promoting technology transfers.

In the assessment of these economists, fostering greater competition within African countries is important since companies that are most competitive in home markets tend to be the most successful in selling their products internationally. African countries also need to promote liberalization in their factor markets (e.g., for labor and service providers) to become more flexible international competitors as well as introduce other “behind the border” reforms.

In many instances, it is difficult to comprehend the true relationship between donors and recipients. On the donor side, it remains difficult to distinguish among state, NGO, and individual aid. On the recipient end, the final destination of assistance funds is often uncertain. One participant reminded the group that opacity on this point can be established intentionally in order to promote a state’s national interests. Intentional or not, the lack of transparency regarding the exchange of economic assistance creates a further obstacle to optimal aid coordination.

In the view of European participants, the World Bank and other institutions need to give more visibility to European contributions since European governments and peoples increasingly prefer to channel their assistance through EU institutions. Yet the EU must solve some residual coordination problems of its own. Each of its 27 member countries still have independent policies toward Africa, while the EU Commission as well as other EU bodies have their own preferences. Like the assistance efforts of the EU and China, US aid would also be improved by enhanced internal coordination. Though the State Department has begun to reorganize the manner in which it provides aid, the incoherence generated by many government agencies’ involvement in economic assistance remains.

**Integrate Military Power.** The US Defense Department is establishing a new African Command (AFRICOM). The Pentagon has until now divided responsibility for African affairs among three of its five geographic combatant commands: European Command (EUCOM), Central Command, and—for the islands off East Africa—Pacific Command. This odd patchwork evolved during the Cold War, when African security issues were subordinated to those of other regions—especially western Europe, whose governments at the end of World War II still ruled much of Africa as colonies.

Initially, AFRICOM will be a subcomponent command of EUCOM, co-located in Stuttgart, but at some point it will establish a more substantial headquarters component on the continent. The US military will also transition current US military operations in Africa from EUCOM to AFRICOM command.

According to American military representatives, the main driver behind AFRICOM’s establishment is the United States’ desire to help create a benign security environment on a continent that has forcefully reemerged on the US security agenda. US military representatives see promoting economic and social progress in Africa as an essential component of their strategy of denying terrorists access to “ungoverned spaces” and potential recruits. Helping to strengthen the capacity of African governments and give African people a “horizon of hope” through civic assistance programs would reduce the potential for terrorism and other transnational threats to develop on the continent through a range of “non-kinetic activities.” US policymakers plan to implement a strategy of “active security” that would rely on flexible forces and preventive measures to enhance African security. AFRICOM would also build on existing bilateral security partnerships and multilateral initiatives to establish a network of cooperative relationships on the continent that would involve Americans, their European allies, and their African partners.

Although workshop participants saw benefits from the proposed AFRICOM, they expressed some concern that it could signify an overbalancing of US policies in Africa at the cost of diplomatic leadership. The US military representatives present acknowledged this risk, stressing that AFRICOM would have a unique interagency structure and would include substantial representation from the departments of State and Commerce and other US civilian agencies, on the logic that the only way to create long-term stability in Africa is through such a comprehensive, integrated, interdisciplinary approach combining military and civilian institutions. AFRICOM would not take over civilian projects, but instead would simply try to better coordinate its own activities on the continent with other institutions. The US military representatives at the workshop also indicated that AFRICOM would be open to African participation and engagement since such transparency would lessen African concerns about US military activities on their continent.

The US military representatives saw merit in a suggestion that AFRICOM engage the Chinese in a military-to-military dialogue on African issues since the People's Liberation Army has extensive experience with state-building, peacekeeping, and other activities of interest to US military engagement efforts. In addition, since the Chinese armed forces have yet to determine how they could conduct non-combatant evacuation operations from Africa, and currently lack the capability to do so, military representatives from China, the United States, and other countries might profitably address these issues now, in advance of a crisis, through dialogue and contingency planning.

**Work With China to Help China Be a Better Stakeholder.** Workshop participants believed China's growing presence in Africa could be a potentially positive development. Given the immensity of Africa's needs, China's growing interest in African affairs could represent a great windfall for the African people and those who care about their welfare. China possesses enormous financial and human capital resources. Since China and Africa have faced parallel challenges in the areas of disease, poverty, and water shortage, there is great potential for Chinese experience to benefit Africa. Some hope that China's efforts at improving African health, education, professional training, and poverty reduction may be expanded. One analyst suggested that China should apply its domestic anticorruption campaign to African countries.

The Chinese participants at the workshop, moreover, underscored their country's openness to criticism about Chinese policies in Africa, describing China's behavior as a continuous process of learning and adaptation. Other observers concurred that China appeared to be going through a learning curve in Africa in response to external reactions. For example, Chinese rhetoric appears to have grown more critical of government policies in Sudan and Zimbabwe, perhaps in recognition that it was in China's interest to resist genocide in Africa since Chinese international prestige can be hurt by ties to murderous regimes. Such an adjustment would replicate the changes in other areas of Chinese foreign policy—such as attitudes toward nonproliferation issues and multilateral institutions—and reflect a genuine Chinese desire to be seen as a responsible member of the international community. Western governments, companies, and donors have also been

learning over the past 30 years how to improve their own behavior in Africa.

In some respects, however, many participants believed China still needs to transition from being a consumer of public goods to being a provider, with a more comprehensive commitment to the core principles of “sustainable development”—political accountability, good governance, economic transparency, and human rights. To this end, they urged Beijing to consider joining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which has been endorsed by the World Bank. The initiative encourages transparency in contracts and calls for environmental impact studies.

Workshop attendees also suggested that China take other measures to make its economic policies in Africa less opaque to outside observers. The Chinese practice of using “package deals,” with vague provisions and financing, is confusing to Western companies and governments because they do not use such arrangements. It was suggested that China improve its relations with NGOs and possibly establish a singular aid institution, which would allow for better coordination with the international community.

Although the non-Chinese participants did not consider it reasonable to ask China to promote liberal democratic and other political principles in Africa that Chinese officials resist applying within China itself, they argued that China could join in international efforts to encourage transparency, promote the “responsibility to protect” norm, and counter potential genocides as well as other major abuses of human rights. China would also benefit from promoting the rule of law and more effective judicial systems in Africa.

China already applies conditionality in requiring African countries to adhere to the one-China position with respect to cross-strait relations. Although workshop participants recognized that China would invariably use its ties with African governments to compete for influence with Taiwan, they worried that such competition hurt African interests when, for example, it extended to denying Taiwan an opportunity to enter the World Health Organization or other international organizations. All governments agree on the need to protect and advance Africans' rights to education, economic development, and public health. A broad consensus exists on the need to

alleviate poverty in Africa and enable people to meet their basic human needs.

China's economic activities in Africa are already having a considerable effect on world markets, primarily by raising the global prices for energy and other commodities. More positively, the case of South Africa, whose government has negotiated vigorously with China, shows that China and African countries can achieve mutually profitable bilateral relationships. On a broader level, since China benefits immensely from the current open world economy, it needs to take a more active role in helping to sustain it. Through increased commitment to relatively uncontroversial economic and legal norms in Africa, China could demonstrate its readiness to work with the international community in addressing the myriad of challenges that confront Africa.

## Participant List

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### Keynote Speakers

**Peter Ammon**, Director General, Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development, German Federal Foreign Office

**Christoph Heusgen**, Foreign Policy Advisor, Office of the Chancellor of Germany

**William E. Ward**, Deputy Commander, US European Command

### Rapporteur

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**Lloyd Axworthy**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada; President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Winnipeg

**Nina Brink**, President, Renaissance Ventures

**Harry Broadman**, Economic Adviser in the Africa Region, The World Bank

**Kurt M. Campbell**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Center for a New American Security

**Erik Derycke**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgium; Judge, Constitutional Court of Belgium

**Lamberto Dini**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy; Vice President and Senator, Italian Senate

**Richard Dowden**, Executive Director, The Royal African Society, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

**Karl Eikenberry**, Deputy Chairman, NATO Military Committee

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## The Aspen Atlantic Group

Founded in the spring of 2003, the Aspen Atlantic Group consists of former Foreign Ministers primarily from North America and Europe. The group, in conjunction with the many guest experts who join its meetings, aims to generate constructive recommendations to help North America and Europe bring the transatlantic relationship into the 21st century through dialogue and action. The Aspen Atlantic Group convenes under the auspices of the Aspen Strategy Group, a policy program of the Washington, DC, nongovernmental organization, the Aspen Institute.

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