



Issue 9

# Bulletin for People- to-People Exchanges

## China and South Africa

Connecting People,  
Understanding the World







The year 2023 marks the 25th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between China and South Africa as well as South Africa's chairmanship of the BRICS mechanism. Over the past 25 years, China-South Africa relationship has achieved leapfrog development – from a partnership to a strategic partnership, and then to a comprehensive strategic partnership. Friendly relations between the two countries have continued to expand, which can be attributed to top-level design and strategic guidance, as well as people-to-people interaction and exchanges. Within the framework of multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as the UN, G20, BRICS and FOCAC, China and South Africa hold identical or similar views on development, security and international order, uphold true multilateralism, and seek close collaboration and cooperation. Under the framework of the China-South Africa High-level People-to-people Exchange Mechanism, bilateral people-to-people exchanges cover cooperation in a wide range of areas such as trade, the economy, education, culture, health, youth development, women's welfare and think tanks, entering an all-round, multitiered and institutionalized development stage. As an ancient Chinese adage goes, "With one heart and one mind, we can accomplish everything we aspire for." In the next 25 years, China-South Africa relations will surely usher in a new climax.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 中国经济网：《中国与南非建交 25 周年——中南互利合作 “一加一大于二” 》，2023 年 1 月 3 日，[http://intl.ce.cn/specials/zxgjzh/202301/03/t20230103\\_38321537.shtml](http://intl.ce.cn/specials/zxgjzh/202301/03/t20230103_38321537.shtml), 2023-08-19。

# 01 Historical Evolution

In December 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping made an address at the opening ceremony of the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and proposed to elevate China-Africa relations to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. During his speech, he emphasized that the two sides should “remain committed to mutually enriching cultural exchanges” and “implement the China-Africa cultural and people-to-people plan”.<sup>1</sup> During his visit to South Africa in 2015, President Xi Jinping reached an important agreement with South Africa’s then President Jacob Zuma on establishing the China-South Africa High-level People-to-people Exchange Mechanism. During the 2016 G20 Hangzhou Summit, the two heads of state of agreed to launch the mechanism as soon as possible.

On April 24, 2017, then Vice Premier of the State Council and Chairperson of the China-South Africa High-level People-to-people Exchange Mechanism Liu Yandong and Minister of Arts and Culture and Chairperson of the South African Council Nathi Mthethwa, launched the mechanism and co-chaired its first meeting in Pretoria, South Africa. The meeting was themed “practice the principles of sincerity, amity, good faith and real results, strengthen people-to-people ties”. Chairpersons of both sides witnessed the signing of three cooperation agreements and three memoranda of cooperation at the meeting. During the meeting, a range of activities were organized, including the Ministerial Forum on China-Africa Health Cooperation, the Seminar on China-South Africa Science Park Cooperation, the China-South Africa High-level Thought Dialogue, the Ceremony of Donation of Medical Equipment to Steve Biko Academic Hospital, the Variety Show of China and South Africa Join Hands – Celebrating the Launch of the China-South Africa High-level People-to-people Exchange Mechanism and the 23rd Anniversary of the Founding of South Africa, the Second China-South Africa Youth Gala, the Ceremony of Donation of Sewing Machines by the ALL-China Women’s Federation to the African National Congress Women’s League, and the Visit to the Confucius Institute at Durban University of Technology.

On December 03, 2018, then Vice Premier of the State Council and Chairperson of the China-South Africa High-level People-to-people Exchange Mechanism Sun Chunlan and Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture and Chairperson of the South African Council Nathi Mthethwa, co-chaired the second meeting of the mechanism in Beijing. Sun said that since the launch of the mechanism more than

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<sup>1</sup> 央广新闻：《开启中非合作共赢、共同发展的新时代》，2015年12月4日，[http://news.cnr.cn/native/gd/20151204/t20151204\\_520695125.shtml](http://news.cnr.cn/native/gd/20151204/t20151204_520695125.shtml), 2023-08-24。

a year ago, focusing on the celebration of the 20th anniversary of China-South Africa diplomatic relations, bilateral cooperation in various fields has achieved fruitful results and continued to inject new impetus into the development of bilateral relations. Mthethwa said that South Africa-China relations were consolidating and developing in recent years, going beyond the scope of bilateral relations, and that the two sides should give full play to the mechanism and deepen pragmatic cooperation in various fields so as to lay a solid social foundation for a stronger comprehensive strategic partnership. During the meeting, the chairpersons of both sides signed Minutes of Talks and held activities such as the Photo Exhibition of the Achievements of China-South Africa People-to-people Exchanges, and the Gala in Celebration of the Second Meeting of the China-South Africa High-level People-to-people Exchange Mechanism and the 20th Anniversary of China-South Africa Diplomatic Relations.

In March 2022, then State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor of South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation signed *The 10 Years Strategic Programme on Cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa (2020-2029)*. As an important policy document for the two countries to develop a future-oriented comprehensive strategic partnership with a global vision, it puts forward the guiding principles, specific plans and policy measures for bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, trade and cultural fields, and expounds on the two sides' consensus on major international and regional issues as well as important international cooperation mechanisms.

On February 16, 2023, the third meeting of the China-South Africa High-level People-to-people Exchange Mechanism was held in Cape Town, South Africa. It was co-chaired by Vice Premier of the State Council Sun Chunlan and Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture and Chairperson of the South African Council Nathi Mthethwa. The two sides had in-depth discussions on deepening people-to-people exchanges, signed minutes of talks, and jointly witnessed the signing of relevant agreements. Vice Premier Sun conveyed President Xi's cordial greetings and best wishes to President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa. She said that the two countries have a special friendship featuring comradeship and brotherhood and the two presidents maintain close interactions to guide the development of bilateral relations. The China-South Africa comprehensive strategic partnership has been growing with strong momentum. The two countries enjoy solid mutual political trust, fruitful practical cooperation, productive cultural exchanges, and regular interaction and collaboration on multilateral occasions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 新华网：《南非总统拉马福萨会见孙春兰》，2023年2月17日，[http://m.news.cn/2023-02/17/c\\_1129374739.htm](http://m.news.cn/2023-02/17/c_1129374739.htm)，2023-8-22。

## 02 Top-Level Design

On August 24, 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks with South Africa's President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa in Pretoria, South Africa. The two heads of state affirmed the traditional friendship between the two countries and reached important consensus on advancing the China-South Africa comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era. The two leaders agreed to strengthen high-level exchanges, deepen political mutual trust, align their development strategies, promote practical cooperation, and increase people-to-people exchanges, thus enabling the two peoples to enjoy more fruits of the bilateral cooperation.<sup>1</sup>

On September 2, 2018, President Xi held talks with President Ramaphosa at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China. Xi emphasized that the significance of the China-South Africa relationship has far exceeded the bilateral scope and is of global and strategic influence. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties 20 years ago, the two countries have been committed to mutual respect, trust and benefit, and have always understood and relied on each other. The two sides should advance towards the major direction and objectives that have been identified, actively implement important agreements that have been reached, and make strategic plans for the bilateral cooperation in the next 10 years. More efforts will be made to strengthen high-level exchanges, deepen political mutual trust, promote practical cooperation, and increase inter-party and people-to-people exchanges.<sup>2</sup>

On June 28, 2019, President Xi met with President Ramaphosa in Osaka, Japan. Xi emphasized that the Chinese side is willing to deepen political mutual trust and practical cooperation between China and South Africa. Both sides should continue to support each other on issues concerning each other's core interests and major concerns, strengthen the alignment of participation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the eight major initiatives of the FOCAC Beijing Summit with the South African government's action plan for the next five years, further cooperation in such fields as production capacity, infrastructure construction, development of human resources, the digital economy, and high and new technology.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 新华网：《习近平同南非总统拉马福萨举行会谈》，2018年7月24日，[http://big5.news.cn/gate/big5/www.xinhuanet.com/world/2018-07/24/c\\_1123171671.htm](http://big5.news.cn/gate/big5/www.xinhuanet.com/world/2018-07/24/c_1123171671.htm)，2023-8-22。

<sup>2</sup> 中国新闻网：《习近平同南非总统会谈 两国元首一致同意推动中南全面战略伙伴关系再上新台阶》，2018年9月2日，<https://www.chinanews.com/gn/2018/09-02/8617037.shtml>，2023-8-22。

<sup>3</sup> 中国政府网：《习近平会见南非总统拉马福萨》，2019年6月28日，[https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-06/28/content\\_5404176.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-06/28/content_5404176.htm)，2023-8-22。

On November 14, 2019, President Xi met with President Ramaphosa in Brasilia, Brazil. Xi observed that China and South Africa, as two major developing countries and emerging economies, need to boost economic growth and improve people's wellbeing domestically while upholding multilateralism and opposing unilateralism and bullying internationally. China is willing to stay in close coordination with South Africa to firmly maintain and develop the comprehensive strategic partnership. The two sides will maintain strategic communication, strengthen inter-party exchanges, share experience in state governance, increase mutual understanding and support on issues of each other's core interests and major concerns, and consolidate the special friendship and high-level mutual trust of "comradeship plus brotherhood".<sup>1</sup>

On April 9, 2020, President Xi had a phone conversation with President Ramaphosa. Xi pointed out that the South African government and all sectors of its society expressed empathy and support to China in various forms after the Covid-19 outbreak in 2019. Comradeship and brotherhood are the symbol of the special friendly relationship between the two parties and countries. China firmly supports South Africa in combating the pandemic and will continue to provide assistance within its capacity, share containment experience, and strengthen healthcare cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

On March 18, 2022, President Xi noted that China and South Africa share special friendly ties featuring comradeship and brotherhood. Consolidating and developing China-South Africa relations is of great significance to guiding China-Africa relations as well as solidarity and cooperation among developing countries. China stands ready to work with South Africa to drive bilateral ties to a deeper level with higher quality and broader scope. The two countries should continue to firmly support each other on issues concerning each other's core interests and major concerns, step up efforts to implement the nine programs of the FOCAC and *The 10-year Strategic Program on Cooperation Between China and South Africa (2020-2029)*, and strive for new achievements in bilateral cooperation in various areas.<sup>3</sup>

On November 15, 2022, President Xi met with President Ramaphosa in Bali, Indonesia. Xi asserted that China and South Africa share a special friendship featuring comradeship and brotherhood. Both being major developing economies, the two countries firmly uphold international equity and justice and the common interests of developing countries. China has all along viewed its relations with South Africa from a strategic height, and stands ready to reinforce political mutual trust and further the comprehensive strategic partnership. Ramaphosa stated that South Africa hopes to draw on China's experience in green development and energy transition, and as an active participant in the BRI, will open its door and welcome Chinese companies for investment and cooperation. South Africa also hopes to strengthen coordination and cooperation with China under the BRICS and other multilateral frameworks.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 中国政府网：《习近平会见南非总统拉马福萨》，2019年11月15日，[https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-11/15/content\\_5452190.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-11/15/content_5452190.htm)，2023-8-22。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《习近平同南非总统通话》，2020年4月9日，[http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrbhwb/html/2020-04/09/content\\_1980758.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrbhwb/html/2020-04/09/content_1980758.htm)，2023-8-22。

<sup>3</sup> 中国政府网：《习近平同南非总统拉马福萨通电话》，2022年3月18日，[https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-03/18/content\\_5679754.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-03/18/content_5679754.htm)，2023-8-22。

<sup>4</sup> 人民网：《习近平会见南非总统拉马福萨》，2022年11月16日，<http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2022/11/16/c64094-32567051.html>，2023-8-22。



On June 9, 2023, President Xi had a phone conversation with President Ramaphosa at the latter's request. Xi noted that China and South Africa are both important developing countries, and the two countries enjoy a unique brotherly friendship. China-South Africa relations are of strategic significance for safeguarding the common interests of the vast number of developing economies and guiding China-Africa solidarity and cooperation. This year marks the BRICS Year in South Africa; the bilateral relationship is presented with important development opportunities. China is ready to work with South Africa to elevate bilateral relations, build a high-level China-South Africa community of shared future, practice true multilateralism, safeguard the common interests of the vast number of developing countries, and build an international order that are fairer and more equitable. China supports South Africa, as the rotating chair, in successfully hosting various BRICS cooperation activities this year. Ramaphosa affirmed that South Africa highly values and takes great pride in the strong and high-level strategic partnership with China. The cooperation between the two countries benefits Africa. South Africa is committed to working with China to promote sustained development of bilateral relations. South Africa will improve communication and coordination with China and other BRICS member countries to strengthen cooperation.<sup>1</sup>

On August 21, 2023, a signed article by President Xi titled "Sailing the Giant Ship of China-South Africa Friendship and Cooperation Toward Greater Success" was published on Monday on South African media, including *The Star*, *Cape Times*, *The Mercury* and Independent Online, as he was going to attend the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg and pay a state visit to South Africa. Xi asserted that the vibrant people-to-people exchanges increase the empathy between the two peoples and enable the friendship to be passed down from generation to generation. China and South Africa should be inheritors of China-Africa friendship. The two countries will leverage the all-round, multitiered and institutionalized mechanisms for people-to-people exchanges, and continue to advance exchanges and cooperation in culture, tourism, education, sports and the media, and between universities, sub-national governments and the youth. The two countries must keep the spirit of China-Africa friendship and cooperation as alive and strong as ever across the vast lands of China and Africa.<sup>2</sup>

On August 22, 2023, China and South Africa issued a joint statement, highly appreciating their people-to-people exchanges and mutual learning. The two countries acknowledged the role of the High-level People-to-people Exchange Mechanism and expressed satisfaction with the mechanism's meeting in Cape Town, South Africa in February this year. The two sides reaffirmed the need to further strengthen exchanges and cooperation in poverty alleviation strategies, culture, women's welfare, youth development, education, sports, health care, the media, tourism and local governance, aiming at deeper mutual understanding and friendship and a firmer social foundation of bilateral relations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 新华网：《习近平同南非总统拉马福萨通电话》，2023年6月9日，[http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/2023-06/09/c\\_1129683180.htm](http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/2023-06/09/c_1129683180.htm)，2023-8-22。

<sup>2</sup> 新华网：《习近平在南非媒体发表署名文章》，2023年8月21日，[http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/2023-08/21/c\\_1129813967.htm](http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/2023-08/21/c_1129813967.htm)，2023-8-22。

<sup>3</sup> 人民日报客户端：《中华人民共和国和南非共和国联合声明》，2023年8月22日，<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/GXQVKzepfOGQh5QE97iNPw>，2023-8-22。



On August 23, 2023, the 15th BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. President Xi delivered an inspiring speech entitled “Seeking Development Through Solidarity and Cooperation and Shouldering Our Responsibility for Peace”. He pointed out that countries should increase people-to-people exchanges and promote mutual learning between civilizations. There are many civilizations and development paths in the world, and this is how the world should be. China would like to propose that BRICS countries expand cooperation on education, leverage the role of the BRICS TVET Cooperation Alliance, and explore a cooperation mechanism on digital education. In addition, BRICS members also need to strengthen exchanges on traditional cultures and carry forward the best of them. China is ready to work with BRICS partners to pursue the vision of a global community of shared future, strengthen the strategic partnership, and deepen cooperation across the board. BRICS members should meet their common challenges with a shared sense of mission, shape a brighter future with a common purpose, and march together on the journey towards modernization.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 新华网：《习近平在金砖国家领导人第十五次会晤上的讲话（全文）》，2023年8月24日，[http://www.xinhuanet.com/2023-08/23/c\\_1129819257.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/2023-08/23/c_1129819257.htm)，2023-08-24。

## 03 Relevant Institutions

Prosperous people-to-people exchanges between China and South Africa are jointly promoted by governmental institutions and nongovernmental organizations. Major Chinese governmental institutions include the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Health and Family Planning Commission, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of South Africa, and the China Media Group; major South African governmental institutions include the Department of Science and Innovation, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, the National Department of Health, the Department of Tourism, the Embassy of South Africa in the People's Republic of China, and the African Union of Broadcasting. Major Chinese nongovernmental organizations include the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, China Public Diplomacy Association, China NGO Network for International Exchanges, the Chinese Association for International Understanding, and the Center for Language Education and Cooperation; major South African nongovernmental organizations include the Chinese Culture and International Education Exchanges Center, the Sino-SA Sports and Culture Liaison Association, the South Africa-China Economy and Trade Association, and the SA-China People's Friendship Association.

# 04 Status Quo of People-to-People Exchanges in Various Fields

## 1. Economy and trade

Under the strategic guidance and personal care of the two heads of state, China and South Africa have achieved fruitful outcomes in economic and trade cooperation in recent years. China has remained South Africa's largest trading partner for 14 years in a row, and South Africa has been China's largest trading partner in Africa for 13 years in a row. In 2022, the bilateral trade volume reached US\$56.74 billion, up by 5% year-on-year and an all-time high in 8 years. In the first half of 2023, the two-way trade grew even faster by 11.7%.<sup>1</sup> Driven by the booming trade exchanges, more and more Chinese companies invest in South Africa, and more and more Chinese goods are produced in South Africa. Through production capacity cooperation, the two countries have realized complementary and win-win development.<sup>2</sup>

On June 21, 2019, the signing ceremony of the China-South Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation Project was held in Cape Town, South Africa. More than 70 entrepreneurs from more than 40 major Chinese companies reached 93 agreements with 60 South African companies, totaling US\$2 billion. The agreements cover investment in the automobile industry and trade of commodities such as alfalfa, beef, wool, aquatic products, fruits, pulp, copper, and nickel. The two sides agreed to form greater synergy between China's Belt and Road Initiative and South Africa's National Development Plan under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state. Taking the implementation of the eight major initiatives unveiled during the 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit as an opportunity, the two sides will further increase the bilateral trade volume, improve trade structure, scale up mutual investment, and explore new areas of cooperation to consolidate and deepen China-South Africa economic and trade relations.<sup>3</sup>

On April 14, 2022, the Job Fair 2022 was successfully held by the South Africa-China Economy and Trade Association in Johannesburg, South Africa. Chen Xiaodong, China's ambassador to South

<sup>1</sup> 人民网：《商务部：上半年中国和南非双边贸易额同比增长 11.7%》，2023 年 8 月 17 日，<http://finance.people.com.cn/n1/2023/0817/c1004-40058685.html>，2023-08-21。

<sup>2</sup> 中国经济网：《中国与南非建交 25 周年——中南互利合作 “一加一大于二”》，2023 年 1 月 3 日，[http://intl.ce.cn/specials/zxgjzh/202301/03/t20230103\\_38321537.shtml](http://intl.ce.cn/specials/zxgjzh/202301/03/t20230103_38321537.shtml)，2023-08-21。

<sup>3</sup> 中华人民共和国商务部：《中国 - 南非经贸合作项目签约仪式在开普敦举行》，2019 年 6 月 26 日，<http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/i/jyjl/k/201906/20190602876291.shtml>，2023-08-19。

Africa, said that China is ready to work with South Africa to connect development strategies and give full play to each other's advantages, seeking mutual benefit and working for greater quality, broader fields and higher levels in their cooperation. The two countries will deepen cooperation in trade and investment, major projects, emerging sectors, employment training, and people-to-people exchanges. Chen Longjian, the executive vice president of the South Africa-China Economy and Trade Association, said that Chinese enterprises have invested in South Africa in a wide range of industries. The job fair is also characterized by diverse positions with highly technological content that involve highly specialized fields, which lays a good foundation for South Africa to cultivate and reserve all kinds of talent.<sup>1</sup>

On July 25, 2023, the first session of the South African Promotion Conference of the China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE) and Enterprise Exchanges Conference was successfully held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in a hybrid form of online and offline events. The participating South African and Chinese enterprises actively exchanged in such fields as energy, steel, health and agriculture. Yusuf Timol, the minister counsellor of the South African Embassy in China, reviewed the deepening bilateral relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations and the current close and rapidly developing business exchanges. He believed that CISCE would further strengthen the bilateral relations on this basis. He hoped that South African companies could actively participate in CISCE held in China to achieve win-win cooperation in supply chains and economic development. He also welcomed Chinese enterprises to develop and invest in South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

On August 10, 2023, the China-South Africa Business Meeting & Signing Ceremony was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Chinese and South African enterprises signed a number of import agreements during the event. China's Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao noted that 2023 marks the 25th anniversary of China-South Africa diplomatic relations as well as South Africa's chairmanship of the BRICS mechanism. China has taken concrete actions to implement the leaders' consensus by organizing a trade promotion mission to South Africa for procurement. He expressed hopes that the campaign can unlock the potential and expand the space of cooperation between the two countries. South Africa's Minister of Trade and Industry Ebrahim Patel expressed the support of the South African government for stronger cooperation between South African and Chinese enterprises, and its commitment to opening the door to Chinese enterprises for trade and investment.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Education

On May 21, 2019, the Chinese Embassy in South Africa held a symposium for early childhood education workers from China and South Africa. Lin Songtian, China's former ambassador to South Africa, attended the event and delivered a speech. He stated that education is a priority area of China-South Africa cooperation. Providing children with a better and more equitable education will benefit the future of

<sup>1</sup> 央视网：《携手中国与南非双边合作 中资企业立 flag 定下为南非增加 2 万岗位“小目标”》，2022 年 4 月 18 日，<https://news.cctv.com/2022/04/18/ARTI5x7P8p7pK7gKuU48TxnK220418.shtml>, 2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《首届链博会南非宣传推介会暨企业交流会成功举办》，2023 年 7 月 27 日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2023/0727/c1002-40045157.html>, 2023-08-19。

<sup>3</sup> 新华网：《中国 - 南非企业贸易对接会助力两国经贸合作》，2023 年 8 月 11 日，[http://www.news.cn/world/2023-08/11/c\\_1129799399.htm](http://www.news.cn/world/2023-08/11/c_1129799399.htm), 2023-08-19。

families, countries, and the world. This year, China will organize a delegation of principals and student leaders from South African middle schools and universities to visit China, to deepen dialogue and exchanges in the education field and to create new highlights in educational cooperation.<sup>1</sup>

On September 17, 2021, the South African Chinese Day celebration, also the South African Chinese Language Teaching Achievement Exhibition, was held in video format. Chen Xiaodong, China's ambassador to South Africa, encouraged Chinese language teachers to teach well while telling China's stories and spreading Chinese culture in an engaging way. He also encouraged South African students to master Chinese as soon as possible by making constant progress, and become the envoys for China-South Africa friendship and the builders of China-South Africa and China-Africa communities of shared future. Angie Motshekga, South Africa's minister of the Department of Basic Education, expressed the hope that more South African people would learn the Chinese language and fulfill their dreams through it.<sup>2</sup>

On January 26, 2022, the China-South Africa TVET Cooperation Seminar of the BRICS TVET series activities was held. Themed "China-South Africa TVET cooperation under the framework of BRICS cooperation", the event focused on such issues as the cultivation of international technical talent, cross-border industry-education integration and scientific research cooperation, and cross-border flows of students. Yu Yougen, the deputy secretary-general of China Education Association for International Exchanges (CEAIE), pointed out that cooperation in education continues to expand under the China-South Africa High-level People-to-people Exchange Mechanism. TVET is an important part of China-South Africa education cooperation. It is hoped that the two countries will continue to promote TVET cooperation, maintain close cooperation in multilateral mechanisms, and jointly build the BRICS TVET Cooperation Alliance.<sup>3</sup>

On June 8, 2023, the reconstruction project of primary school buildings in South Africa's impoverished areas, jointly financed by the Johannesburg Branch of Bank of China (BOC) and the African Bank, was launched at Motshegofadiwa Primary School in the north of Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa. Li Zhigang, the minister of the Chinese Embassy in South Africa, expressed that the joint donation demonstrates the determination of the two countries to strengthen cooperation in education and brings new opportunities to deepen friendship and cooperation between the two peoples. Chen Longjian, the president of the Johannesburg Branch of BOC, remarked that China had announced nine programs on China-Africa practical cooperation at the Eighth FOCAC Ministerial Conference, including the building or upgrading of schools in Africa. This activity has contributed to the implementation of the nine programs.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 中华人民共和国驻南非共和国大使馆：《中国愿同南非打造教育合作新亮点——驻南非大使林松添出席中南幼教工作者座谈会》，2019年5月22日，[http://za.china-embassy.gov.cn/dshdxwfb/2019/201905/t20190522\\_10406457.htm](http://za.china-embassy.gov.cn/dshdxwfb/2019/201905/t20190522_10406457.htm)，2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《致知力行 继往开来——“南非中文日”庆典暨南非汉语教学成果展演成功在线举行》，2021年9月17日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2021/0917/c1002-32230494.html>，2023-08-19。

<sup>3</sup> 南非中国文化和国际教育交流中心：《中国—南非职业教育合作研讨会成功举办》，2022年2月7日，<http://ccieec.com/?m=home&c=View&a=index&aid=234>，2023-08-19。

<sup>4</sup> 人民网：《中企参与捐资的南非贫困小学校舍重建项目启动》，2023年6月9日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2023/0609/c1002-40010300.html>，2023-08-19。

In August 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping replied to a letter from the faculty and students of the Confucius Institute at the Durban University of Technology in South Africa. President Xi noted that he witnessed the establishment of the Confucius Institute at the Durban University of Technology 10 years ago, and was pleased to see that through the joint efforts of both sides, the educational and cultural exchanges between the two countries have yielded fruitful results, and a large number of South African youths have gained better understanding of China's history and culture, had more career options, and realized their dreams thanks to learning the Chinese language. Xi added that the teachers and students are welcome to visit and see more of China to have a deeper understanding of the country while learning the language well. He encouraged them to help more friends see a real, multidimensional and all-round China by sharing with them what they have learned and thought about China as well as their personal experiences in the country. He also encouraged them to carry forward the friendship between the two countries, and contribute their part to promoting China-Africa friendship and cooperation and building a global community of shared future.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Science and technology

On September 14, 2018, the China-South Africa Joint Research Center for the Development and Utilization of Mineral Resources, the first joint research center between the two countries, was unveiled at MINTEK in Johannesburg, South Africa. Xu Nanping, China's former vice minister of science and technology, commented that the establishment of the center is a significant move for implementing the guidelines of President Xi's speech at the opening ceremony of the South Africa-China Scientists' High-level Dialogue, the Belt and Road Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation Action Plan, and the policy measures to advance Africa's development through the BRI, which stands as a shining example for further deepening China-South Africa cooperation in science and technology innovation. Zane Dangor, the former director-general of the Department of Asia and Australia of South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation, sincerely congratulated the establishment of the joint research center and hoped that both parties would take this opportunity to further improve their scientific and technological innovation capabilities and achieve new outcomes in practical cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

On November 5, 2018, the CRRC-South Africa Rail Transit Technology Joint R&D Center was unveiled in Johannesburg, South Africa. CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive Co., Ltd. signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the University of the Witwatersrand, which not only improves South Africa's comprehensive capabilities in rail transit products, technology, capital, management and services, but also helps the country establish a "complete vehicle + core components" industry chain and a manufacturing base for advanced rail transit equipment to boost local employment and economic growth.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 央广网：《习近平复信南非德班理工大学孔子学院师生》，2023年8月19日，[https://china.cnr.cn/news/sz/20230819/t20230819\\_526385687.shtml](https://china.cnr.cn/news/sz/20230819/t20230819_526385687.shtml)，2023-08-21。

<sup>2</sup> 中华人民共和国驻南非共和国大使馆：《中南矿产资源开发利用联合研究中心在约翰内斯堡揭牌》，2018年9月14日，[http://za.china-embassy.gov.cn/dshdxwfb/2018/201809/t20180916\\_10406651.htm](http://za.china-embassy.gov.cn/dshdxwfb/2018/201809/t20180916_10406651.htm)，2023-08-19。

<sup>3</sup> 人民网：《中国中车在南非成立联合研发中心》，2018年11月6日，<http://ccnews.people.com.cn/n1/2018/1106/c141677-30385348.html>，2023-08-19。

On April 7, 2021, China's Ministry of Science and Technology and South Africa's Department of Science and Innovation organized the Virtual Exchange Conference on the Construction and Operation Experience of the China-South Africa Joint Research Center, coordinated by the Science & Technology Section of the Chinese Embassy in South Africa. Representatives from seven intergovernmental or inter-agency joint research centers, including the China-South Africa Joint Research Center for the Development and Utilization of Mineral Resources, the China-South Africa Joint Research Center on Forestry, the China-South Africa Joint Research Center on Astronomy and Astrophysics, and the South Africa-China Joint Research Center on Chemical & Environmental Engineering, shared their experiences from cooperation history, joint achievements, major experience, existing difficulties and future plans. They also posed problems that they hope to be solved, which was actively responded to by the representatives of China's Ministry of Science and Technology and South Africa's Department of Science and Innovation.<sup>1</sup>

From November 7 to 11, 2022, the Africa Tech Festival was held in the coastal city of Cape Town, South Africa. The theme of this year's festival is "uniting business and technology to create a better and more inclusive digital world". During the event, China Mobile International Limited (CMI) and Mestre Technology Co., Ltd., a South African technology company, signed a memorandum of cooperation on the 8th.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. Culture

On March 15, 2015, the Year of China in South Africa was officially launched. Under the framework of this event, a series of cultural activities involving performing arts, visual arts, cultural heritage, publishing, film and television, public culture, and cultural industries have been carried out. In addition to traditional performances and art exhibitions, seminars, themed dialogues, art festivals, and public square activities have been organized, attracting more than 100 cultural institutions from China and South Africa. Apart from the opening and closing ceremonies, a total of 44 cultural exchanges projects were initiated throughout the year. Four or five projects were implemented in South Africa every month on average, with direct audiences of nearly 50,000. The Year of China in South Africa has further deepened and broadened cultural exchanges between the two countries.<sup>3</sup>

On October 29, 2021, a Chinese language and culture training course specifically for South African employees of Chinese enterprises in South Africa was launched. The training course, jointly organized by the South Africa-China Economy and Trade Association and the Confucius Institute at the University of Johannesburg, helped South African employees gain an in-depth understanding of Chinese culture, improve their professionalism, and quickly adapt to the work environment. Saurabh Sinha, deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Johannesburg, said that the university has been

<sup>1</sup> 中华人民共和国驻南非共和国大使馆：《驻南非使馆科技处组织召开“中南联合研究中心建设运行经验线上交流会”》，2021年4月8日，[http://za.china-embassy.gov.cn/dshdxwfb/202104/t20210408\\_9076910.htm](http://za.china-embassy.gov.cn/dshdxwfb/202104/t20210408_9076910.htm), 2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《中国与南非企业签署合作备忘录助推非洲数字化升级》，2022年11月11日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2022/1111/c1002-32563905.html>, 2023-08-19。

<sup>3</sup> 中华人民共和国国务院新闻办公室：《2015南非“中国年”：文化是最活跃元素》，2015年12月28日，<http://www.scio.gov.cn/ztk/dtzt/2015/33995/34002/34020/Document/1464654/1464654.htm>, 2023-08-19。



committed to developing the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, and that its cooperation with the South Africa-China Economy and Trade Association will bring opportunities to internationalize the entrepreneurial ecosystem and promote cooperation between the two countries in innovation and entrepreneurship.<sup>1</sup>

On July 24, 2023, the opening ceremony of the 2023 Chinese Language Training Course for South African Officials of National Departments, jointly organized by the Confucius Classroom at the Chinese Culture and International Education Exchange Center (CCIEEC), South Africa and the Language Center of Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), South Africa, was held online. The training course has accelerated the promotion of the Chinese language in South Africa, improved the influence of the Confucius Classroom, and generated an upsurge of enthusiasm for learning the Chinese language and culture in the national departments of South Africa, opening up a new channel for the future development of the Confucius Classroom. Over the years, the professional training of the Confucius Classroom at the CCIEEC has won appreciation and trust from the Language Center of DIRCO. The two sides have established profound friendship, and their cooperation have produced fruitful outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

On July 27, 2023, to mark the 25th anniversary of China-South Africa diplomatic relations and to send good wishes for the forthcoming BRICS Summit in South Africa, the 2023 China-South Africa Friendship Night was held jointly by the South African Embassy in China and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC). Lin Songtian, the president of the CPAFFC, expressed in his speech that such beliefs as "harmony without uniformity", "harmonious coexistence" and "harmony among nations" are very much cherished in Chinese culture, which have much in common with the concepts of "harmonious society, friendliness, inclusiveness, unity, cooperation, and common development" championed by the peoples of South Africa and other African countries. Siyabonga Cyprian Cwele, South Africa's ambassador to China, said in his speech that people-to-people friendship in such fields as culture, art, education and sports is an effective means to promote mutual recognition and understanding, and civil exchanges between the two countries have been a valuable asset for deeper bilateral relations. During the event, the unique cultures of the two countries and the ardent expectations of the two peoples to work together for a brighter future are presented through dancing.<sup>3</sup>

## 5. Health

On July 27, 2016, China and South Africa signed a medical and health cooperation agreement in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) of South Africa decided to further expand and strengthen cooperation in public health. The two sides will focus on exchanges in areas

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<sup>1</sup> 人民网：《南非汉语和中国文化培训班顺利开班》，2021年11月1日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2021/1101/c1002-32270749.html>, 2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《南非国家部委官员 2023 年度中文培训开班》，2023 年 7 月 27 日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2023/0727/c1002-40045159.html>, 2023-08-19。

<sup>3</sup> 网易：《“2023 中国 - 南非友好之夜”在京举办》，2023 年 7 月 29 日，<https://www.163.com/dy/article/IAQGJLS051497H3.html>, 2023-08-19。

such as the monitoring, prevention and control of infectious diseases, emerging infectious cases, and emergency preparedness, promote exchange visits of experts, and pilot joint research projects. Liu Qian, a member of the Chinese delegation and the former deputy director of China's National Health and Family Planning Commission, noted that China-South Africa cooperation in the field of infectious diseases will not only better protect the health of the two peoples but also improve the response to major international public health challenges.<sup>1</sup>

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019, China and South Africa have stepped up vaccine cooperation. In July 2021, the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) approved the emergency use of the Sinovac Covid-19 vaccine. In February 2022, a Covid-19 vaccine from China's Sinopharm was approved for official use in South Africa. In March 2023, the BRICS Vaccine R&D Center was launched in virtual format to deepen exchanges and cooperation in joint vaccine R&D and testing, construction of factories, authorized production, and mutual recognition of standards, marking another solid step of the BRICS countries towards closer cooperation in public health and vaccine R&D. China-South Africa vaccine cooperation will not only bring health dividends to the people of Africa, but also help the continent create jobs, grow its economy, and ultimately turn "African vaccines made in Africa" a reality.<sup>2</sup>

On April 3, 2020, the Chinese Embassy in South Africa organized a video conference with Covid-19 experts from the two countries to share China's experience and thoughts with South Africa's health officials and professionals in combating the pandemic. Professor Yuan Zhenghong, a member of the Shanghai Covid-19 Expert Team, and other participants introduced China's experience and practices from nine aspects including virus detection, prevention and control strategies, clinical diagnosis and treatment, and answered the questions of their South African counterparts. The South African participants believed that China has taken strong and effective measures against the pandemic, which won a valuable "window period" for the world and provided a "classic example" for other countries, and expressed the will to follow the "Chinese prescription".<sup>3</sup>

On October 26, 2022, the World Life Science Project Fair and Beijing International Life and Health Industry Expo was held in Zhongguancun South Africa Science Park in Johannesburg. More than 30 medical institutions including South Africa's National Bioproducts Institute, and 100-plus companies such as China's Jiangsu Hengrui Pharmaceuticals Co. Ltd., and BGI attended the event. The participants shared the development trends and investment opportunities of medical industry around medical devices, biomedicine, health and epidemic prevention, traditional Chinese medicine, and digital health. In light of the actual developments, the participating companies reported on the structures and measures of China-South Africa cooperation projects. All parties involved gave comprehensive presentations of and conducted in-depth exchanges on the cooperation in medical

<sup>1</sup> 中华人民共和国中央人民政府：《中南加强传染病防治合作 落实中非公共卫生合作计划》，2016年7月28日，[https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2016-07/28/content\\_5095547.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2016-07/28/content_5095547.htm)，2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《专访：金砖框架下中国南非疫苗合作将造福非洲——访科兴公司南非合作伙伴卢莫乐仕集团首席执行官克莱因》，2022年6月20日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2022/0620/c1002-32451243.html>，2023-08-21。

<sup>3</sup> 中华人民共和国中央人民政府：《中国专家与南非同行分享抗疫经验》，2020年4月5日，[https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-04/05/content\\_5499309.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-04/05/content_5499309.htm)，2023-08-19。

and health industries, hoping to achieve win-win cooperation and common development to benefit the people of both countries.<sup>1</sup>

## 6. Media

On June 15, 2020, the Online Seminar on China-Africa People-to-People Exchanges and Media Cooperation Amid Covid-19 was organized jointly by Independent Media, South Africa's leading multi-platform content company, the Global Max Media Group (GMMG), the South Africa-China Economy and Trade Association, the China Public Diplomacy Association, and the Communication University of China. The speakers agreed that China and African countries have stood together and offered each other support in the face of Covid-19, which shows that the two sides with a shared future are interdependent and the friendship between them is unbreakable. Meanwhile, due to the differences in language, culture, and media concepts, insufficient communication and exchanges, and the hegemony of European and American international discourse, the two sides should further mutual understanding, deepen political trust, increase people-to-people exchanges, and expand media cooperation and interaction, particularly between China and South Africa. The favorable political relations should be transformed into a greater influence on the people. The non-governmental sectors, including media think tanks, enterprises and NGOs, should strengthen exchanges and dialogues and promote national narratives in documenting the fight against the pandemic. They should introduce each other from a more comprehensive, balanced and objective perspective, strengthen the people-to-people bond, and deepen China-Africa friendship.<sup>2</sup>

On August 14, 2023, Our African Partners CMG Media Cooperation Forum 2023, co-sponsored by China Media Group (CMG) and the African Union of Broadcasting (AUB), was held in Nairobi, Kenya. More than 100 heads of media organizations, experts and scholars, and representatives of Chinese and African enterprises, from 27 African countries including Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria, participated in the forum in an online-plus-offline format. Hu Heping, the deputy minister of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee and the minister of culture and tourism, expressed that the forum promotes exchanges under the theme of "deepening communication between Chinese and African civilizations and promoting a China-Africa community with a shared future in a new era". It is of great significance for promoting all parties to think and plan China-Africa friendly cooperation from a broader perspective and building a China-Africa community of shared future in the new era. It is hoped that Chinese and African media will work together to build a bridge of people-to-people exchanges, broaden consensus on China-Africa friendship, foster an international public opinion atmosphere that focuses on development and seeks cooperation, and promote the sustainable development of China and Africa. As an important outcome of the forum, the *Joint Declaration of Our African Partners CMG Media Cooperation Forum* was released during the event. Jointly launched by CMG and AUB, it advocates for deepening media cooperation to tell the stories of China and Africa well, strengthening solidarity and cooperation to maintain justice and

<sup>1</sup> 中华人民共和国商务部：《世界生命科学大会中国南非生命健康产业洽谈会双线开幕》，2022年10月28日，<http://za.mofcom.gov.cn/article/h/202210/20221003363136.shtml>，2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《中非民间外交及媒体合作：促进民心相通 深化中非友好》，2020年6月16日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0616/c1002-31748196.html>，2023-08-19。

fairness, and staying committed to innovation towards technological empowerment.<sup>1</sup> China-South Africa media exchanges and the broader China-Africa media exchanges are mutually reinforcing. They jointly promote deeper understandings and broader cooperation between the two countries in the media field.

On August 20, 2023, CMG and mainstream African media organizations, including the AUB and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), signed cooperation agreements in Johannesburg, South Africa. Shen Haixiong, the vice minister of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee and the president of CMG, delivered a speech. He noted that CMG is willing to be a recorder of the China-Africa friendship, invite more African media outlets to join the African Video Media Alliance, and hold innovative activities like *The Bond 2*, an exhibition of Chinese film and TV programs, to support the friendship and cooperation between the peoples of China and Africa for common development. CMG will further the exchanges between the two sides and strengthen cooperation with African media in content sharing, technical exchanges, and personnel training. CMG also signed cooperation memorandums and exchanged related agreements with the SABC, e. TV, and TV BRICS, based on which regular cooperation will be stepped up in news and program exchanges, personnel visits, technical collaboration, brand promotion, and media communication.<sup>2</sup>

## 7. Sports

In 2016, with the support of the International Chinese Eight-ball Association (ICEA), the Chinese 8-ball Masters Series was held in South Africa as the first stop for its overseas promotion. Qiao Bing, the president of Joy Billiards, proposed that the term “Chinese billiards” will be used to define Chinese Eight-ball in the future to better align it with international standards and popularize the sports originated in China. The Chinese billiards competition not only shines with the cultural glory of Chinese sports but also brings satisfactory incomes to local players for the high prize. Today, South Africa has developed the most mature overseas promotion model of Chinese Eight-ball by Joy Billiards, and the Chinese Eight-ball South African Super League has become the largest billiards event in South Africa.<sup>3</sup>

On June 19, 2017, athletes from China, South Africa, Brazil, Russia, and India participated in martial arts exchange activities at Ersha Sports Training Center in Guangdong, China after the martial arts competition of the BRICS Games. Hukan Coopsamy, the head coach of the South African women’s volleyball team for the BRICS Games, noted that volleyball is the strength of China, Russia and Brazil, and the South African women’s volleyball team had never faced such strong opponents. The BRICS Games is a good opportunity for the players of South Africa to exchange with the top ones.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 央视网：《共谋文明互鉴 携手开创未来！2023 “非洲伙伴”媒体合作论坛在内罗毕举行》，2023年8月15日，<https://www.cctv.com/2023/08/15/ARTINcC06Kj9O1XHn791l2gd230815.shtml>，2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 央视网：《携手同行！中央广播电视总台与非洲媒体共话新合作》，2023年8月21日，<https://www.cctv.com/2023/08/21/ARTIXCyQ12hvJG5ANns67iVj230821.shtml>，2023-08-21。

<sup>3</sup> 新浪体育：《中式台球南非闯出新天地 体育文化输出硕果累累》，2018年10月23日，<http://sports.sina.com.cn/others/snooker/2018-10-23/doc-ifxeuwws7412602.shtml>，2023-08-21。

<sup>4</sup> 人民政协网：《金砖国家体育交流进入2.0时代》，2017年6月20日，<https://www.rmzxb.com.cn/c/2017-06-20/1604077.shtml>，2023-08-19。

On May 28, 2023, the men's and women's singles of the 2023 ITTF World Table Tennis Championships Finals in Durban, South Africa rounded off. Yusuf Carrim, the president of the South Africa Table Tennis Board (SATTB), remarked that the Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA) sent coaches Liu Zhiqiang and Li Dacheng to provide short-term guidance for players of the South African table tennis team during their preparation for the 2023 ITTF World Table Tennis Championships Finals at the invitation of SATTB this year. China is strong in table tennis, and the Chinese table tennis team, ahead of African countries like South Africa in terms of both strength and experience, is worth learning from. SATTB has decided to regularly send athletes to China for exchanges and study in the future, and invite Chinese coaches to South Africa to provide guidance and assistance and help South African athletes improve their skills within a short time frame.<sup>1</sup>

## 8. Tourism

From June 25 to 29, 2018, South African Tourism held press conferences of the South African Tourism Trade Workshops in Beijing, Chongqing and Shenzhen, China. According to Derek Hanekom, South Africa's former minister of tourism, "South Africa is open for business and remains an appealing destination for Chinese travelers, offering abundant, diverse, world-class, accredited attractions supported by transport, service and communications infrastructure that competes with the best in the world." As part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of China-South Africa diplomatic relations, the SA Specialist program for the Chinese travel trade was also launched, along with the signature tourism experiences honoring the Father of the Nation, Nelson Mandela. The tourism promotion event demonstrated the charm of South Africa as a high-quality tourism destination, and boosted the confidence of Chinese outbound tourism operators and travel agencies in promoting South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

On August 18, 2022, more than one hundred guests from South Africa's Department of Tourism, provincial tourism bureaus, and tourism promotion agencies gathered at the Aha Kopanong Hotel and Conference Center in Gauteng to witness the graduation ceremony of the sixth "Chinese + South African Tourist Guide" training program. The training program was hosted by the Department of Tourism of South Africa and organized by the Confucius Classroom at the Chinese Culture and International Education Exchange Center (CCIEEC), South Africa. So far, six programs have been organized. Covering Chinese language teaching, Chinese culture display, and tour guide skills, the training program has been well-received by South African tourist guides and become a well-known brand of China-South Africa cultural exchanges. Fish Mahlalela, South Africa's deputy minister of tourism, explained that South Africa needs more tour guides who are proficient in Chinese to improve the services, and the training program will create more opportunities for the recovery of the tourism industry of South Africa.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 搜狐:《东西问 | 优素福·卡里姆:我为何看好南中乒乓球交流合作前景?》, 2023年6月30日, [https://www.sohu.com/a/692938703\\_121687424](https://www.sohu.com/a/692938703_121687424), 2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> South African Tourism:《SA Tourism travel trade workshops in Beijing, Chongqing and Shenzhen》(南非旅游局:南非旅游局于北京、重庆、深圳举办旅游推介会), 2018年6月26日, <https://www.southafrica.net/gl/en/corporate/press/sa-tourism-travel-trade-workshops-in-beijing-chongqing-and-shenzhen>, 2023-08-24。

<sup>3</sup> 人民网:《第六期“中文+南非导游”培训举行结业典礼》, 2022年8月19日, <http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2022/0819/c1002-32507004.html>, 2023-08-19。

On February 9, 2023, the promotion event of Reunite with South Africa and Welcome the "New Life", hosted by South African Tourism, was launched at the Beijing African Cultural Travel Center, China. This was the first offline tourism event of South African Tourism in 2023, marking its first-time meeting with tourism partners and friends from media outlets after the pilot resumption of Chinese outbound group tours to 20 countries on February 6. Mansoor Mohamed, the head of Asia Pacific, South African Tourism, stated in his speech, "Earlier this year, South African Tourism launched the Travel Assistant smart content portal platform in response to the tourism industry's preference for digital tools, aiming to help the Chinese tourism industry gain access to valuable destination resources, provide convenience for travelers who are considering or planning trips to South Africa, and better plan wonderful their itineraries in South Africa. In addition, Air China's newly announced Beijing-Johannesburg-Chengdu direct flight will open the first direct route between Johannesburg, the gateway to South Africa, and Chengdu as 'the capital of pandas', the gateway to southwest China. It is believed that the flight will serve as an important bridge of economic, trade, tourism and cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and South Africa."<sup>1</sup>

On March 29, 2023, Air China flight CA867 landed at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, South Africa. The first group of Chinese tourists to South Africa on the plane, after China resumed outbound group tourism, were warmly welcomed by South Africa. After the welcome ceremony, South African Tourism held a media briefing at the airport. Nomasonto Ndlovu, the chief operations officer of South Africa Tourism, asserted that China is one of the major sources of international tourists to South Africa. South Africa had received about 100,000 Chinese tourists every year before the Covid-19 pandemic. Chinese tourists, with promising consumption potential, are crucial to the development of South Africa's tourism industry. The resumption of Chinese tourist visits is a milestone. It will create more jobs in South Africa and have a sustainable positive impact on the economy.<sup>2</sup>

## 9. Youth development

On April 30, 2019, the first group of seven young South African scientists for joint research in China attended a farewell ceremony co-organized by the Chinese Embassy in South Africa and South Africa's Department of Science and Technology in Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa. Lin Songtian, former China's ambassador to South Africa, stated that such important cooperation documents as the South Africa-China Young Scientists Exchange Program have drawn a new blueprint and injected new impetus into the cooperation of the two countries in science and technology. The seven young South African scientists will soon go to China to conduct joint research, which is a new outcome of China-South Africa cooperation in scientific and technological innovation. He encouraged the South African scientists to cherish the opportunity to go to China, learn from each other with their

<sup>1</sup> 南非旅游局：《“重逢南非 共迎‘新生’” 南非旅游局 2023 年首场旅业线下活动举行》，2023 年 2 月 10 日，[http://www.southafricantourism.cn/%E5%8A%A8%E6%80%81/%E6%96%B0%E9%97%BB/%E9%87%8D%E9%80%A2%E5%8D%97%E9%9D%9E%E5%85%B1%E8%BF%8E%E6%96%B0%E7%94%9F\\_%E5%8D%97%E9%9D%9E%E6%97%85%E6%B8%B8%E5%B1%802023%E5%B9%B4%E9%A6%96%E5%9C%BA%E6%97%85%E4%B8%9A%E7%BA%BF%E4%B8%8B%E6%B4%BB%E5%8A%A8%E4%B8%BE%E8%A1%8C](http://www.southafricantourism.cn/%E5%8A%A8%E6%80%81/%E6%96%B0%E9%97%BB/%E9%87%8D%E9%80%A2%E5%8D%97%E9%9D%9E%E5%85%B1%E8%BF%8E%E6%96%B0%E7%94%9F_%E5%8D%97%E9%9D%9E%E6%97%85%E6%B8%B8%E5%B1%802023%E5%B9%B4%E9%A6%96%E5%9C%BA%E6%97%85%E4%B8%9A%E7%BA%BF%E4%B8%8B%E6%B4%BB%E5%8A%A8%E4%B8%BE%E8%A1%8C), 2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 中国经济网：《南非热情欢迎中国游客》，2023 年 4 月 4 日，[http://www.ce.cn/culture/gd/202304/04/t20230404\\_38479428.shtml](http://www.ce.cn/culture/gd/202304/04/t20230404_38479428.shtml), 2023-08-19。



Chinese counterparts, actively promote scientific and technological innovation in their fields, have a better understanding of the Chinese people, history and culture, tell the China's story well after returning to South Africa, and become the envoys for China-South Africa friendship.<sup>1</sup>

On May 31, 2022, the Dialogue with Generation Z of China and South Africa was held online. Lai Chaoran, the director of the Youth Reading Club of the Consulate-General of China in Johannesburg, iFani, the famous South African musician and host, and more than 30 representatives from a number of organizations in South Africa attended the event. These organizations included the Confucius Classroom at the Chinese Culture and International Education Exchange Center, South Africa, Bank of China Johannesburg Branch, Aberdare Cables, People's Daily Online South Africa, and the Confucius Institute of the University of Johannesburg.<sup>2</sup>

On June 15, 2023, the Consulate General of China in Johannesburg and the Wits School of Governance, Wits University jointly organized the Lapa Forum: China-South Africa Youth Dialogue in Johannesburg, South Africa. Youth representatives from the two countries had panel discussions on such topics as China-South Africa relations, understanding the just transition, and the future of digital transformation. Tang Zhonghong, China's consul general in Johannesburg, stated that fruitful achievements had been made by the two countries in high-level exchange visits, political mutual trust, economic and trade cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges over the past 25 years, and young people had played an important role in the process. Mzukisi Qobo, the head of Wits School of Governance, said in his speech that the young people of both countries should be future-oriented, be brave in assuming responsibility, take the initiative to innovate, and work together to contribute to national development and global governance.<sup>3</sup>

## 10. Women's welfare

On November 29, 2015, the South Africa-China Women's Cultural Exchanges Event was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Experts on women's issues from China and South Africa discussed such topics as women's empowerment, poverty reduction and entrepreneurship, and achieved many agreements and outcomes, opening a new chapter for women's exchanges and adding a bright color to friendly cooperation between the two countries. The Photo Exhibition on Achievements in Chinese Women's Development was also held on the same day, fully displaying the changes and development of the lives, work and dreams of Chinese women. As a part of the series of activities under the framework of the Year of China in South Africa, the event not only introduced the development achievements of Chinese women, but also increased the exchanges and communication of women from the two countries and promoted gender equality and women's development.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 中华人民共和国中央人民政府：《首批南非青年科学家将赴华开展联合研究》，2019年5月1日，[https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-05/01/content\\_5388128.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-05/01/content_5388128.htm)，2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《“对话中南Z世代”线上活动成功举行》，2022年6月2日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2022/0602/c1002-32437065.html>，2023-08-19。

<sup>3</sup> 新华网：《中国和南非青年对话会在南非约翰内斯堡举行》，2023年6月16日，[http://www.news.cn/world/2023-06/16/c\\_1129701056.htm](http://www.news.cn/world/2023-06/16/c_1129701056.htm)，2023-08-19。

<sup>4</sup> 人民网：《中国—南非妇女文化交流活动在南非举行》，2015年11月29日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n/2015/1130/c1002-27869259.html>，2023-08-19。



On March 8, 2020, South Africa's International Women's Day celebration and the unveiling and equipment donation ceremony of the Albertina Sisulu School of Women Leadership were held in Tweeling, South Africa. To support the development of women's causes in South Africa, the All-China Women's Federation donated 300 sewing machines to the African National Congress Women's League. In addition, the Chinese Embassy in South Africa donated 30 computers, five printers, tables and chairs, as well as cloth to the Albertina Sisulu School of Women Leadership to support its e-commerce and sewing skills training and women's capacity building. Lin Songtian, China's former ambassador to South Africa, remarked that China firmly supports the development of women's causes in South Africa, and that women's exchanges are an important part of the friendly relations between the two countries.<sup>1</sup>

On August 5, 2023, the Consulate-General of China in Cape Town and the Cape Town Chinese Women's Association jointly held an event to celebrate South African Women's Day on August 9 in advance. Tang Chang'an, the deputy consul general of China in Cape Town, attended the event and delivered a speech. He stated that 2023 marks the 25th anniversary of China-South Africa diplomatic relations. The two countries have a profound friendship. China supports the unremitting efforts of South Africa to fight for the equal rights of women and promote all aspects of economic and social development. The Consulate-General will continue to provide support to Chinese women in South Africa and make positive contributions to building a harmonious overseas Chinese community.<sup>2</sup>

## 11. Think Tanks

According to the 2020 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report released by the University of Pennsylvania in the United States, China has 1,413 think tanks, ranking second in the world; South Africa has 102 think tanks, ranking 15th. Both countries are rich in think tanks. Under the BRICS framework, China and South Africa have shared experience in issues of great theoretical and policy significance to emerging economies and developing countries, covering sustainable development, macroeconomy, financial cooperation, the digital economy, climate change, talent training, people-to-people exchanges, and laws and policies, making unique contributions to the improvement of the BRICS cooperation mechanism. For example, the BRICS Think Tank Council (BTTC) was established in 2013. As members of BTTC, China Center for Contemporary World Studies and South Africa's Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) have cooperated in policy analysis and forward-looking research to provide policy advice to leaders. In 2019, the CyberBRICS project was jointly launched by China's Fudan University and Hong Kong University, South Africa's University of Cape Town, and other institutions, aiming to provide policy suggestions to BRICS countries in cybersecurity, legislation on personal data protection, internet access policy, and digitalization strategies.<sup>3</sup>

From June 3 to June 11, 2016, an academic delegation from the Institute of Sociology, the Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> 人民网:《“中国坚定支持南非妇女事业发展”——中国向南非当地学校捐赠妇女职业培训设备》, 2020年3月10日, <http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0310/c1002-31625130.html>, 2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网:《南非开普敦华人庆祝南非妇女节》, 2023年8月5日, <http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2023/0806/c1002-40051300.html>, 2023-08-19。

<sup>3</sup> 中国社会科学网:《金砖国家智库合作的实践与创新》, 2023年1月5日, [https://cssn.cn/zkzg/202301/t20230111\\_5579304.shtml](https://cssn.cn/zkzg/202301/t20230111_5579304.shtml), 2023-08-21。

Academy of Social Sciences conducted a nine-day academic visit to Austria and South Africa. During the visit, the delegation participated in the South Africa-China Social Governance Seminar, jointly organized by South Africa's National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences and the South African BRICS Think Tank. The participating scholars discussed economic development, social management and governance, the eco-environment, and sustainable development. Concerning economic development, they reached an agreement that South Africa needs to improve the investment environment as soon as possible to facilitate China-South Africa cooperation. Concerning social management, they held in-depth discussions about the achievements, lessons and challenges of social welfare policies in South Africa, and made evaluations and suggestions. Concerning governance, the eco-environment and sustainable development, they explored the joint governance model of informal actors (such as waste pickers) in the waste recycling systems of Brazil, South Africa and other countries.<sup>1</sup>

On June 6, 2020, China's Houde Institute signed a strategic cooperation agreement with South Africa's Inclusive Society Institute, aiming to conduct joint research through institutionalized exchanges of scholars to synergize development strategies of China and South Africa, implement the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and promote inclusive development in both countries. The cooperation will help promote exchanges between Chinese and South African think tanks and increase mutual understanding and academic cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

On December 13, 2022, China Energy Investment Corporation Longyuan South Africa held a press conference and think tank seminar in Johannesburg, South Africa. During the event, Longyuan South Africa released its 2021 Social Responsibility Report and held discussions on its 2022 South African Press Strategy Report drafted by a local think tank. Aiming to study the relationship and strategies that could be built between enterprises, the media and stakeholders, the report makes detailed research recommendations on how to build the public image of enterprises through the media.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 中国社会科学院社会学研究所：《社会学研究所奥地利和南非访问团的出访报告》，《中国社会科学院社会学研究所出访报告》2016年第6期，2023-08-19。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《厚德国际智库与南非社会发展研究院签署战略合作协议》，2020年6月9日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0609/c1002-31739862.html>，2023-08-19。

<sup>3</sup> 人民网：《国家能源集团龙源电力南非公司发布社会责任报告并举办智库研讨会》，2022年12月21日，<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2022/1221/c1002-32591272.html>，2023-08-19。

# 05 Characteristics and Prospects

In recent years, China and South Africa have continued to deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the basis of the comprehensive strategic partnership. On the night of June 9, 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping had a phone conversation with South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa at the latter's request. Xi pointed out that China and South Africa are both important developing countries, and the two countries enjoy a unique brotherly friendship. China-South Africa relations are of strategic significance in safeguarding the common interests of the vast number of developing countries and guiding China-Africa solidarity and cooperation.<sup>1</sup> To be sure, China and South Africa have achieved fruitful outcomes in people-to-people exchanges, yet it should be noted that there are still challenges that hinder further development of people-to-people exchanges between the two sides, such as imbalanced structure of exchanges, lack of diversity in participants, and insufficient talent. In this regard, China and South Africa should seize the strategic development opportunities while respecting the cultural diversity of each other, encourage the participation of diverse entities, and make the exchanges more accessible and effective.

## 1. Challenges and difficulties in people-to-people exchanges between China and South Africa

First, the structure of exchanges is not balanced enough. One is the absence of "hardware" for people-to-people exchanges. In recent years, South Africa has encountered difficulties such as slow economic recovery, employment shock of Covid-19, and difficult digital transformation, which has affected the process of its people-to-people exchanges with foreign countries to a certain extent. Besides, the internet infrastructure of South Africa is to be improved. In 2018, the proportion of households with internet access was only 10.4 percent. During the Covid-19 pandemic, people-to-people exchanges posed higher requirements for digital infrastructure, like the internet. The gap in digital infrastructure between the two countries affects the foundation of cultural cooperation and limits the breadth, depth, and implementation of people-to-people exchanges.<sup>2</sup> The other is the shortages in "software" for people-to-people exchanges. In the diverse activities of China-Africa cooperation and exchanges, China often takes the lead in development benefiting from its reform and opening up and is willing to share its valuable experience with African countries, while African

<sup>1</sup> 新华网：《习近平同南非总统拉马福萨通电话》，2023-6-9，[http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/2023-06/09/c\\_1129683180.htm](http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/2023-06/09/c_1129683180.htm)，2023-08-21。

<sup>2</sup> 王维伟、薛锦：《金砖国家人文交流：进展、挑战与未来选择》，《河南社会科学》2023年第3期，第29页。

countries are also “pivot to the East”. This would cause China to ignore the huge potential of Africa to explore its development path and would marginalize the need to identify and learn from the strengths of each other.<sup>1</sup>

Second, the participants in exchanges are not diverse enough. After China proposed the China-Africa community of shared future and the Belt and Road Initiative, the South African government has attached great importance to them and actively participated in related bilateral and multilateral cooperation. However, the mainstream media in South Africa are most concerned about the concepts of the Belt and Road, the Chinese Dream, and socialism with Chinese characteristics. Among them, such issues as trade, capital and infrastructure along the Belt and Road have received particular attention, while the topics related to people-to-people bonds, like people-to-people exchanges, have not.<sup>2</sup> As a result, non-governmental organizations in South Africa have paid insufficient attention to people-to-people exchanges with China. In addition, due to the long geological distance between the two countries, the weak foundation for inbound and outbound tourism and cultural communication has resulted in insufficient non-governmental exchanges. Moreover, the government-dominated exchanges have overemphasized the traditional Chinese culture yet neglect the latest developments in China, thus bringing questions on the objectivity and comprehensiveness of China-South Africa exchanges.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Western developed countries have stigmatized China's exchanges and cooperation in Africa by spreading the so-called “the Chinese debt trap” and “neocolonialism” narrative. Some Western scholars even bluntly said that China aims to unilaterally represent developing countries, but it ignores the local cultural foundation of African countries.<sup>4</sup> Under the influence of Western media, many people in Africa still have partial perception of China, and there may be even biases, instead of a deeper understanding of and heartfelt empathy and amity towards the Chinese people.<sup>5</sup>

Third, there is a lack of talent for exchanges. In the past, China-South Africa exchanges were primarily conducted at the national and sub-national levels with professional diplomats playing a central role. Limited personnel, time and funding, and a lack of specialization in specific fields have, to some extent, hindered deeper people-to-people exchanges. In addition, the deepening of people-to-people exchanges requires high language proficiency. South Africa has implemented a multi-official language system since 1994. Currently, there are 11 official languages in South Africa, including English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Venda, Sepedi, Sotho, Tswana, Xitsonga, and Ndebele. The

<sup>1</sup> 杨薇、翟风杰，郭红。苏烟：《非洲孔子学院的语育文化传报效果研究》，《西亚非洲》2018年第3期，第154页。

<sup>2</sup> 王维伟、薛锦：《金砖国家人文交流：进展、挑战与未来选择》，第30页。

<sup>3</sup> 武卉：《行者知其心，共话中非情——新时期中南非和中非人文交流战略研讨会会议综述》，《非洲研究》2017年第2卷（总第2卷），第264-265页。

<sup>4</sup> 对中国是在单方面代表非洲等发展中国家的文献可参见 Ilaria Carrozza and Lina Benabdallah, “South-South Knowledge Production and Hegemony: Searching for Africa in Chinese Theories of IR,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2022; 有学者认为，尽管中国的外交政策话语包含平等和友谊，但中国在非洲的企业派遣的管理人员却对当地的习俗、语言、宗教和文化了解甚少，这导致在实践交往中存在认知与实践的误差，可参见 Shih, Chih-yu, and Jiwu Yin, “Between Core National Interest and a Harmonious World: Reconciling Self-Role Conceptions in Chinese Foreign Policy”, *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 6, No.1, 2013

<sup>5</sup> 刘天南、蔡景峰：《中非人文交流：机制、局限与对策》，《中国非洲研究评论》2017年北京论坛专辑（总第7辑），第161页。

development and emphasis on local languages have not only exacerbated communication difficulties during people-to-people exchanges but also diversified the indigenous knowledge resources behind each language, posing high requirements for the professionalism of cultural exchanges. Meanwhile, the carriers of cultural exchanges are not static. While the cream of China's fine traditional culture should undoubtedly be promoted, the content, forms and strategies for overseas cultural dissemination should also be upgraded in the context of rapidly evolving global cultural exchanges and developments.<sup>1</sup> This requires specialists to keep up with the latest developments in people-to-people exchanges between the two countries and conduct timely reflections on the current status.

## 2. Prospects of China-South Africa people-to-people exchanges

In the second decade of the 21st century, the world has faced greater uncertainty, with intensified competition among major powers and frequent outbreaks of regional flashpoints. Despite some challenges in people-to-people exchanges between China and South Africa, there is still vast room for development. As important emerging players in the field of international relations, China and South Africa, both being developing countries and members of BRICS, are bound to inject new vitality into a new international order that is more equitable. The year 2023 marks South Africa's chairmanship of the BRICS mechanism, which brings greater opportunities for China-South Africa cooperation. Efforts should be made to create a mode of people-to-people exchanges in line with the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era for more development opportunities of China-South Africa friendship and BRICS cooperation.

On one hand, greater emphasis should be laid on the cultivation of talent to train a group of interdisciplinary professionals for people-to-people exchanges who understand culture, language and diplomacy. Concerning culture, China and South Africa have common visions on security, development, world and the eco-environment, so efforts should be made to explore these intrinsic intellectual resources and identify the historical and contemporary foundations of the China-South Africa community of shared future.<sup>2</sup> Concerning language, while nurturing English proficiency, both countries should focus on cultivating talent in widely spoken African languages such as Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa to facilitate the people-to-people exchanges. Concerning diplomacy, such professional institutions as the Center for African Studies at Peking University and the Center for African Studies at Yunnan University in China, and the Center for Chinese Studies at Stellenbosch University in South Africa could be relied on to provide intellectual support for diplomatic endeavors. China could select and support research and academic institutions in South Africa that have strong research capabilities and a friendly attitude towards China to establish more centers for Chinese studies and create better opportunities and environments for exchanges and joint research among researchers.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, more attention should be allocated to the construction of communication

<sup>1</sup> 周海金：《中华文化在南非传播的意义、内容及路径》，《鲁东大学学报（哲学社会科学版）》，2022年第2期，第20页。

<sup>2</sup> 朱翊民、吴萱：《中非命运共同体：历时根基与现实进路》，《江南社会学院学报》2023年第1期，第67-72页。

<sup>3</sup> 周海金：《中华文化在南非传播的意义、内容及路径》，第21页。

platforms and the role of diverse participants, platforms and topics in people-to-people exchanges. Firstly, both countries should better leverage and rely on the role of diverse participants, giving full play to overseas Chinese organizations and individuals, Chinese students, volunteers, Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms, reporter stations of Chinese news agencies, media centers, Chinese-funded enterprises, non-governmental arts organizations, and chambers of commerce in South Africa, and encouraging them to spread Chinese culture and showcase its charm in various ways across multiple platforms. Secondly, both countries should make full use of the FOCAC, the BRICS cooperation mechanism, and the South-South cooperation platform, which are inclusive solutions to global governance proposed by China to propel the economic growth of developing countries.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, in the process of Chinese enterprises and personnel going global, relevant departments should strengthen the management, education and training of dispatched personnel, covering language and culture, national conditions and policy, etiquette and customs, laws and regulations, and safety precautions.<sup>2</sup>

Since the beginning of 2023, the presidents of China and South Africa have kept close contact under the BRICS mechanism to promote friendship, cooperation and development, ushering in new opportunities for the development of bilateral relations. The in-depth exchanges between the two presidents have set the course for the bilateral relations towards a China-South Africa community of shared future and inclusive multilateralism. From August 21 to 24, 2023, President Xi Jinping attended the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg and paid a state visit to South Africa upon invitation. The summit not only promoted closer bilateral relations between China and South Africa, but also witnessed the vigorous development of the BRICS mechanism. In the future, the two countries will deepen Belt and Road cooperation through multilateral and bilateral mechanisms, continue to advance exchanges in culture, tourism, education, sports and media, and between sub-national governments and the youth, and further strengthen people-to-people bonds. This will provide a solid popular and social basis for the steady and sustained development of China-South Africa relations, deepen China-Africa friendship and cooperation through people-to-people exchanges under the guidance of the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, and make greater contributions to building a community of shared future.

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<sup>1</sup> 刘诗琪、贺文萍：《“一带一路”倡议下南非与中国合作的思考》，《外语学界》2020年第6期，第39页

<sup>2</sup> 赵磊：《中非人文交流的认识误区及对策》，载孙晓萌主编《亚非论丛（第一辑）》，社会科学文献出版社2016年版，第187页。

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