

**REGIONAL AWARENESS AND CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP
TOWARDS
FOCAC 2018**

June 19-20, 2018

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is the highest platform for Sino-African dialogue. Established in 2000, it includes China and African countries that have diplomatic relations with Beijing.

Every three years, the FOCAC dialogue culminates in a Ministerial Conference, held alternatively in China and in Africa. At the end of each Ministerial Conference, a Declaration and Action Plan are announced. These include, respectively, principles inspiring the cooperation and commitments for projects in the political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental and aid sectors. Since its establishment, FOCAC had six Ministerial Conferences with two of these (2006 and 2015) doubling up as Heads of State Summits as well. The last Ministerial Conference was held in 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa and the next will be in 2018 in Beijing, China.

China became Africa's No. 1 trade partner in 2009. Africa-China trade increased from \$ 13 billion in 2001 to \$ 188 billion in 2015 – an average growth rate of 21%. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has grown even faster, from \$ 1 billion in 2004 to \$ 35 billion in 2015, according to official figures. FDI grew at an average annual growth rate of 40%!

TRAFFIC and WWF see the FOCAC Ministerial Conference as an important opportunity to discuss the impact of Chinese investment in Africa and to ensure that illegal wildlife trade is eliminated through mutual cooperation and support between Africa and China. Discussions during FOCAC and the outcome 'Action Plans' are informed by **'China's Africa Policy'**¹- a key document that has gone through two updates. The FOCAC process does not result in decisions on all investments of China in Africa and FOCAC agreements need to be complemented by national laws, regulations, joint initiatives and projects, capacity, resources and willingness to ensure correct implementation. However, WWF and TRAFFIC believe that setting the right principles in this forum can have an impact on the overall state-driven investment portfolio of China in Africa in order that investments supports sustainable development with low adverse environmental impact and that extraction and trade in natural resources is legal, sustainable and deploys best international standards and practices of the sector.

The Johannesburg Action Plan 2015 strengthened environmental considerations compared to the outcomes of the 2012 meeting. In particular, sections 3.1.8, 3.4.2, 3.5.2 and 4.1.2 make specific reference to the effective management of forestry, fisheries, wildlife as well as the protection of ecosystems and the enhancement of law enforcement.

The FOCAC Ministerial Conference 2015 also tripled credit lines for environmentally sensitive sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing and agriculture (from 10 billion USD in 2009 to 60 billion in 2015). These are needed investments in Africa and will bring real benefits only if strong environmental considerations and best international standards are applied. While it is unclear how much will be allocated to each country, Chinese

¹ <http://www.focac.org/eng/zt/zgdfzccwj/t230479.htm>

investments in these sectors continue to grow and according to recent projections, by 2025 China will provide Africa with US\$1 trillion financing, mostly for infrastructure projects.

In preparation for FOCAC 2015, WWF and other partners hosted a pre FOCAC event in Nairobi and a high-level WWF conference ahead of the 6th FOCAC meeting which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in December 2015 with a focus on engaging delegates on wildlife trade, forests, infrastructural development and mining, and renewable energy. The two meetings provided an opportunity for African and Chinese stakeholders from academic think tanks, the diplomatic corps, the private sector and civil society to explore the role of FOCAC and Chinese investments in driving sustainable development in Africa, particularly in the light of the UN's recently announced Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The FOCAC 2018 Ministerial Conference and Head of States and Governments Summit in Beijing, China will be special because the One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative that was launched in 2013 is expected to feature highly. OBOR is expected to have two main components - the land-based "Silk Road Economic Belt" (SREB) and the ocean-going "Maritime Silk Road" (MSR). The concept of the overland and maritime trade routes of OBOR are expected to be critical areas of discussion and potential investment for which best approaches of sustainability should also be discussed and agreed at the outset.

Another important consideration will be the critical importance of harmonizing the trade and investment discussions with the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The fourth session of the Africa Regional Forum on SDGs that met during Many 2-4, 2018 emphasized the importance of strengthening delivery on the SDGs in order to drive 'transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies' across Africa.

As part of the FOCAC 2018 Ministerial Conference preparatory process, WWF and TRAFFIC as well as other interested partners agreed to put together their resources, expertise and experience and organize a sensitization/review workshop that brings together key government leaders from across Africa that are linked to the preparatory process for FOCAC 2018 as well as civil society and other stakeholders and jointly review what progress has been made in the implementation of the 2015 Johannesburg Action Plan and based on 'lesson learning' from this exercise, suggest key input that should go into the 2018 meeting agenda.

It is important to appreciate that this planned workshop is just the first phase of the engagement with the FOCAC process. Post-workshop, there will be need to follow up on the workshop outcomes and recommendations and create a strong and productive momentum towards the FOCAC Summit in September 2018. After the summit, there will be need to closely and continuously follow up on the uptake of the Summit Declaration as well as the effective implementation of the Action Plan.

Objectives of the workshop:

- Provide a platform to review the implementation of FOCAC 2015 Action Plan, its Implementation to date and implications of the BRI
- Provide a platform for dialogue, exchange and sharing of good practices and lessons learned amongst key government officials, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders to inform their preparation for a strategic engagement in FOCAC 2018;
- Deepen Government Officials, Civil Society Organisations and opinion writers' knowledge and understanding of the importance of FOCAC as the premier platform for the discussion of trade and investment between China and Africa including the process involved and the key players and support mechanisms.
- Enhance environmental and social sustainability within the FOCAC process and enrich Africa countries engagement with China constructively;
- Develop recommendations that feed into the FOCAC 2018 process in order that trade and investment is guided by the principles of sustainability and best international practices and that illegality and unsustainable trade in the natural resources is effectively and collaboratively eliminated.
- Increase capacity among civil society organisations (CSOs) to participate in the FOCAC processes and support the effective implementation of the FOCAC Action plan.
- Develop recommendations to FOCAC for increased environmental and social sustainability and the improvement of the process to include a monitoring plan which is publicly available so that countries can monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Action Plan.

Outputs

As per the objectives set for the workshop the following outputs are expected:

- Degree of implementation of the 2015 Action Plan reviewed
- Common understanding of the importance of FOCAC and its process
- Key recommendations for FOCAC 2018

Date and venue

The workshop will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, 19th and 20th, June 2018.