



# THE NEW SINOSPHERE

CHINA IN AFRICA

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# Introduction

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Africa was the subject of unprecedented international political attention in 2005 – indeed, UK politicians and journalists dubbed it ‘The Year of Africa’. Along with climate change, the UK Government made Africa a priority during its joint presidencies of the G8 and the EU. 2005 was also the year of the Make Poverty History campaign, with its white wristbands and Live8 concerts. Focused on the issues of aid, debt relief and trade, the campaign engaged millions of people worldwide around the demand for greater justice for the world’s poor, especially in Africa. But there was one issue – of critical importance to the development prospects of the continent – that was almost entirely missing from these international discussions and campaigns. That issue was China.

China is not a new player in Africa. But its economic and political presence on the continent and its impact on Africa have grown exponentially in the last few years. This has huge consequences for Africa, but it also has significant implications for western policy towards the continent.

China represents opportunities and risks for Africa. Managed well, China could bring real development benefits to Africans. For example, China could be a major new source of investment and development assistance, and contribute to higher levels of trade and growth. There are also important lessons that Africa might learn from China’s remarkable development success of recent years. In just over a decade, between 1990 and 2001, the numbers in China living below the internationally agreed US\$1-a-day poverty benchmark fell by 165 million. Over the same period, absolute poverty levels in Africa rose by 77 million.

Managed badly, however, China’s role in Africa may lead to worsening standards of governance, more corruption and less respect for human rights. As a one-party state, with a poor record on human rights at home, China’s foreign policy is not driven by a concern to promote human rights abroad, in Africa or elsewhere. Instead, China prides itself on respecting countries’ sovereignty, and refraining from questioning governments’ domestic policies. For example, China has opposed tougher action in the UN Security Council against the Khartoum government over Darfur, and it has been a strong supporter of Robert Mugabe’s authoritarian regime in Zimbabwe.

In thinking through how Africans and the wider international community should address the new challenges posed by China’s role on the continent, a critical starting point is to better understand the diverse impacts of China on Africa.

Like other parts of the world, Africa is being affected indirectly by the phe-

nominal growth of the Chinese economy. Over the last 25 years, China has averaged an annual growth rate of 9.5 per cent. To fuel this economic expansion, China has sought access to raw materials worldwide, pushing up global commodity prices and leading to higher revenues for commodity exporters, including many African countries. China's growth and its rapid expansion of manufactured exports have reduced the world price of manufactured goods, bringing benefits to many African consumers in the process. But at the same time, the rising global price of commodities, particularly oil, has disadvantaged those African countries that import these commodities.

In the last few years, China has also established a much more significant and visible presence in Africa itself. China is a major investor in Africa, particularly in the natural resource sector and in construction. China's trade with Africa has risen four-fold in the last four years, and China has overtaken the UK to become Africa's third most important trade partner, after the US and France. In December 2005, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announced that China's trade with Africa is set to increase to US\$100 billion within five years, which would represent a ten-fold increase in less than a decade.

This investment has been accompanied by a deepening of diplomatic and political relationships with various African countries. In the first six months of 2006, three top-ranking Chinese representatives visited Africa, including President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. And, between 2004 and 2005, China hosted 15 presidents, three vice presidents, six prime ministers, 10 parliamentary speakers and 14 foreign ministers from Africa.

These political ties have been cemented by soft loans, investment in infrastructure and through arms sales. For example, China has undertaken the construction of large prestige projects linked to institutional interests in states like Uganda, Mozambique, Gabon and Mali. This includes the building of football stadiums and even government departments or parliaments.

## Structure of the report

This ippr collection of essays addresses different aspects of China's relations with Africa, including the history and politics of the relationship, as well as China's impact on trade and investment, the management of natural resources, human rights and good governance, and peace and security.

In the second chapter, Lindsey Hilsum argues that western donors and NGOs have yet to wake up to the scale of China's presence in Africa. She stresses that the closer China/Africa relationship of recent years is not simply being driven by Beijing. Many Africans are pushing for closer ties to China, fed up, as they are, with intrusive western conditionality and costly procedures for development projects. Hilsum also suggests that there may be useful lessons that Africans can learn from Latin America about how to harness the benefits of Chinese investment and trade.

Raphael Kaplinsky considers the issue of trade between China and

Africa. He identifies real benefits for some Africans, but also economic and social costs for others. He suggests that there is considerable scope for African manufacturing firms to enhance their productivity, despite the competitive challenge that China represents. Kaplinsky raises important issues about the rules of the international trading system, and suggests these should be tilted in Africa's favour, 'as much against Asian developing countries (like China) as against the high income countries of the North'.

Abah Ofon assesses some recent trends in trade between China and Africa. He argues that, as China continues to generate high rates of economic growth, it will continue to increase its market share in Africa. While there are challenges and risks posed by China's growing investment role in Africa, Ofon highlights some of the important benefits that Africans could derive from this relationship. This includes increased investment in people (training and skills), and in the services sector.

John Rocha looks at the impact of China on the management of Africa's natural resources, especially oil. He notes that China currently derives a quarter of its oil imports from Africa, through its oil operations in Algeria, Angola, Chad and Sudan, and its increasing stakes in Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Nigeria. Rocha makes a strong case for a strengthened African response to Chinese investment in the continent's resources, and for a concerted effort, on the part of the wider global community, to engage China in international initiatives on resource management and corporate responsibility, for example the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

Mark Curtis and Claire Hickson address the impact of China on peace and security in Africa, with a particular focus on Chinese transfers of military equipment. While Chinese arms export policy is opaque, independent assessments suggest that China is a significant exporter of arms to Africa, albeit not the biggest exporter. Recipients of Chinese equipment include Sudan and Zimbabwe, as well as Algeria, Namibia, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Zambia. In the case of Sudan, some of this equipment has recently been used to attack civilians in Darfur. Curtis and Hickson argue that there needs to be sustained international pressure on China to curb military transfers that fuel conflict or lead to the abuse of human rights, in Africa or elsewhere.

Ndubisi Obiorah looks at the impact of China's growing presence in Africa on human rights and good governance. He notes a widespread interest across Africa in the 'Chinese model', and a common view on the continent that this model has been more effective economically than the prescriptions foisted on Africa by western donors and the international financial institutions. However, Obiorah expresses concern that Africa's authoritarian rulers will use the Chinese example, and their growing economic and political relations with Beijing, to fend off domestic and international pressure for democratisation.

He suggests that a central challenge for African civil society is to restate the legitimacy and value of democracy and human rights: to argue that

these things are not just important in themselves, but that they can also reinforce rather than undermine economic development on the continent.

Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong put China's policies in Africa in comparative context. They suggest that China and western governments have behaved in many similar ways in relation to Africa. But they also note some distinctive elements to Chinese policy that are attractive to many African governments, particularly their less interventionist stance in respect of African countries' domestic policies. China is prepared to work with African states regardless of their internal politics. As Sautman and Hairong note, while this appeals to Africa's elites, it may be bad for many ordinary Africans, including 'disadvantageous terms of trade, exploitative extraction of resources and oppressive labour regimes'.

In the concluding chapter, Leni Wild and David Mephram make some recommendations for engaging with China on Africa. We suggest four broad propositions for engagement.

First and foremost, it is for Africa's elected governments, the African Union, African regional organisations and African civil society to develop their own strategies for dealing with China. Secondly, there is a legitimate western interest in China's policies towards Africa, particularly in relation to undemocratic or repressive African states, or where Chinese policies contravene international human rights or humanitarian law. Thirdly, western governments should deepen their dialogue with China on African issues and explore opportunities for practical co-operation. Finally, to carry credibility with Africans and with the Chinese, the west should practise what it preaches on development, human rights and good governance in Africa.

The contributors have different perspectives, and there are some obvious areas of disagreement between them. However, what emerges clearly from every piece in this collection is the need to avoid sweeping generalisations about China's impact. The question is less *does* Africa gain or lose from China, but rather, *which* Africans might gain or lose, in which countries or sectors, and in which circumstances? Similarly, the contributors suggest that policy responses to the challenges posed by China in Africa need to take full account of these differentiated impacts, and to strengthen the capacity of ordinary Africans to make the relationship with China work to their advantage.

China's growing role in Africa also has large implications for the policies of western governments, companies and NGOs towards Africa. Whereas Africa's external relationships were previously focused on western governments, particularly those with former colonial ties, the rise of China on the continent creates a new triangular dynamic in which Africans may benefit from increased competition for trade, investment and even aid. The effect of western-imposed conditionality on African governments may also be weakened if Africans can now 'look east' for investment, trade, aid and other forms of assistance. Western policymakers need to adapt their development strategies to take account of this.

# Conclusions: engaging with China on Africa

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The essays in this *ipp*r collection have assessed the impact of China on Africa across a diverse range of issues. They have provided different perspectives, and there are some clear areas of disagreement between the contributors. However, they generally agree that China provides both opportunities and risks for Africa, and that Africa's relations with China need to be managed more strategically to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs.

In this brief concluding chapter, we suggest what this might mean for policy, and specifically for western policy. The chapter is structured around four broad propositions for engagement, and makes a number of concrete policy recommendations.

**Proposition 1: It is *first and foremost* for Africa's elected governments, the African Union, African regional organisations and African civil society and private sector to develop their own strategies for dealing with China.**

Within Africa, the debate about China is still evolving. Many African governments have developed good diplomatic relations with China in recent years, attracted by the potential benefits that may flow from Chinese investment, trade and tourism. Whereas Africa's external relationships were previously focused on western governments, particularly those with former colonial ties, the rise of China on the continent creates a new triangular dynamic, in which Africans may benefit from increased competition for trade, investment and even aid (Green 2006).

Some African governments approve of China's commitment to respect national sovereignty and not to interfere in the internal affairs of states. They see this as a welcome contrast to heavy-handed western conditionality. But, in many ways, Africa's own thinking on sovereignty and governance is more progressive than Chinese policy. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) have both made strong commitments to democracy, better governance and the observance of human rights. And the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) involves African countries subjecting themselves to the scrutiny of their peers in relation to their performance on a range of key governance indicators.

Moreover, the transition from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union involved an explicit rejection of the idea of unconditional sovereignty. In place of the OAU's notion of non-interference, the AU has substituted the idea of non-indifference: an unwillingness to stand

aside when gross human rights abuses are occurring on the continent.

Important elements of African civil society have also been critical of China's role on the continent. As Raphael Kaplinsky notes in his chapter, many African textile exporters have been disadvantaged by cheap Chinese clothing imports, and trade unions have voiced strong opposition to this. In places like the Niger Delta, Chinese investment in the oil sector has also been opposed by some local groups who are worried about the impact of China's investment on labour standards and the environment. And as Ndubisi Obiorah notes in his chapter, there is a general concern among African human rights organisations that some of Africa's more autocratic governments may use the Chinese example, and their growing economic and political relations with Beijing, to fend off domestic, regional and international pressure for democratisation.

There is a potential role for NEPAD and the AU in co-ordinating African responses to China. It is unlikely, and perhaps undesirable, that a single strategy for China will emerge. As this collection demonstrates, in different contexts and countries, differentiated responses are likely to be required. But some co-ordination of country level and regional strategies may be useful, and may help to ensure that ordinary Africans derive greater benefits from the continent's relationship with China.

There is clearly a vital debate still to be had within Africa about this relationship. The role of the west in this debate will be relatively marginal. But there may be a useful part that the west can play in supporting those areas of African civil society, including independent media, that are pressing for development, human rights, good governance and anti-corruption, and that will judge China's role in Africa against these criteria.

Western governments, companies and civil society can and should offer to help develop better governance in Africa and to strengthen African capacity to deal with a range of external actors, including China, on more beneficial terms.

The experience of Latin America suggests that an effective state can strike more favourable deals with external investors and ensure greater developmental benefits. As Lindsey Hilsun notes in her chapter, Brazil has a trade surplus with China, and the two countries are pursuing joint manufacturing ventures, unlike most African countries, which have large trade deficits with China. 'It should be standard practice for African states to insist that foreign investors put together a package of 'tie-in' projects that meet local development goals', including technology transfer and skills development (Alden 2006). Strengthening this kind of institutional capacity could be a useful focus of western support for better governance in Africa.

## **Proposition 2: There is a legitimate western interest in China's policies toward Africa**

While it is *first and foremost* for Africans to determine their own relationship with China, there is a clear and legitimate interest in this issue on the part of western governments, companies and civil society, particularly in relation to undemocratic or repressive African states, and/or where China's actions are seriously damaging to the lives of ordinary Africans.

In the case of Darfur, for example, there is a pressing international responsibility on the part of outsiders to address this crisis and seek more effective protection for civilians living there. This includes exposing the negative role played by China in shielding the Khartoum government from stronger international action. In their chapter, Mark Curtis and Claire Hickson show that China has supplied Sudan with F7 and Shenyang fighter aircraft, as well as gunships, transport helicopters and military trucks, and that some of this equipment has been used in attacks on civilians in Darfur.

Similarly, in the case of Zimbabwe, China has become the main supporter of Mugabe's authoritarian regime, supplying Zimbabwe with combat/trainer aircraft, fighter jets and military vehicles. In addition, China reportedly provided a radio-jamming device for a military base outside Harare that prevented independent stations from broadcasting during last year's election campaign.

In these cases and others, it is wholly appropriate for western governments, civil society and other parts of the international community to raise concerns with the Chinese about the implications of their policies in Africa – though these arguments will often be better made by Africans. In terms of concrete policy recommendations, it is important that international pressure should be put on China to tighten controls over arms exports and military transfers, particularly where these would be used to abuse human rights, strengthen repressive regimes or exacerbate conflict. It is particularly important to hold the Chinese government to the commitments it has already made, including its declarations on tackling the illegal trafficking of small arms (FMPRC 2006).

Although China is not the biggest exporter of arms to Africa – and while western governments need to do much more to clean up their own act – there does need to be greater international pressure on China over this issue. Some European governments, such as France, have been pushing for a lifting of the EU's arms embargo on China. The operation of this embargo already has some flaws, with European governments offering different interpretations. Some have continued to allow the sale of a range of military and dual-use equipment to China (Amnesty International 2006). But rather than abandoning this embargo, its application should be strengthened until China makes real progress in improving its own human rights record and in tightening its controls over arms exports to other parts of the world,



including Africa.

On Darfur, the Chinese should be pressed to use their influence with the Khartoum government to help bring about a peaceful settlement there. Sudan is the largest source of foreign oil production for China's national oil companies, and it was China's seventh largest supplier of crude oil in 2005 (Downs 2006). Given the size of China's economic interests in Sudan, it could have real leverage over the Khartoum government if it could be persuaded or pressured to use it.

As major supporters of development in Africa, it is also legitimate for western governments to think through more broadly what China's growing role on the continent means for western development policy. There is scope for complementary actions and initiatives (something addressed later in this chapter). But there are other instances in which China's actions are undermining the efforts of reformist Africans and progressive western donors to promote beneficial change in African societies.

Angola provides a clear example of this. In 2004 and 2005, the IMF and other international donors were pressing the Angolan government to improve the transparency of its oil sector and to make other reforms as a prelude to a planned donors' conference. However, by the end of June 2005, Angola was seen as making insufficient reforms, and the donor conference was postponed. China's offer to Angola of a US\$2 billion soft loan (part of a longer-term aid package) is generally seen as a critical reason why the Angolans were less inclined to comply with international donor conditions.

This case and others like it raise serious questions about international donor efforts to promote greater revenue transparency in the natural resource sector, something that is vital if Africa's abundant resource wealth is to be used for the benefit of Africa's people. In policy terms, it suggests that China should be encouraged to engage with existing international initiatives relating to the equitable management of natural resources, for example the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). It is highly unlikely, in the short term, that China will implement the EITI – indeed, China is not a target country for the initiative, as it is not classified as 'resource rich' by the IMF. Instead, international pressure should focus on persuading China to become a 'supporter' country.

China could be encouraged to make public declarations of support to EITI and Chinese companies could be urged (by African and other governments, civil society and the private sector) to engage with EITI in the African countries in which they operate. Western multinational companies could also play a role, by engaging in dialogue or even joint projects with their Chinese counterparts, with a strong emphasis on corporate social responsibility principles.

**Proposition 3: Western governments should deepen their dialogue with China on African issues, and explore opportunities for practical co-operation**

At present, there are very few discussions between Africans, western governments and the Chinese government about African issues. For example, although Chinese Premier Hu Jintao was invited to the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, where Africa was high on the agenda, G8 leaders singularly failed to raise African issues with him. In most other recent meetings between the leaders of western governments and the Chinese leadership, Africa is lucky to be included on the list of agenda items.

Western donors and China instead have separate forums for discussing various issues with their African partners. The African Partnership Forum is a grouping of key African governments, western development donors and African and international organisations. It was established in 2003 at the Evian G8 Summit. Meanwhile, the China-Africa Co-operation Forum brings together China with African governments and business representatives. It has met twice previously: in South Africa in 2000, and in Addis Ababa in 2003. The third meeting of the Forum will take place in Beijing, in November this year.

One quick initiative for encouraging more dialogue between China and western governments on Africa would be to invite China to become a member of the African Partnership Forum, and to press for western and civil society involvement in the forthcoming China/Africa Co-operation Forum in Beijing.

But there are other opportunities for dialogue that should be pursued. One such opportunity is through the EU's relations with China. EU policy towards China is based on a Commission policy paper, *A Mutual Partnership: Shared Interests and Challenges in EU-China Relations*, which was endorsed by the European Council in October 2003. Relations with China have been pursued under three broad headings: political dialogue, including a specific dialogue on human rights; economic and trade relations; and the EU/China Co-operation Programme. While the EU has rightly attached considerable importance to the issue of human rights within China, this dialogue has not focused, to date, on the impact of China's external policy on human rights, including in Africa. It could usefully do so in future.

Another opportunity for dialogue arises from China's membership of the World Trade Organisation. Although the WTO is an organisation focused on trade issues, membership of such a body creates pressures and incentives on China to change some of its internal and external policies in areas such as the rule of law. According to some, 'China's entry also marks a milestone in its global behaviour – from one based mainly on power and ideology to one based largely on commonly accepted rules' (Chan 2003). This judgement is almost certainly premature, but there are some grounds

for thinking that, over time, WTO membership may have wider knock-on effects on China's foreign policy, including on human rights.

In all of these forums, it is important to be clear about the nature of the dialogue envisaged and its likely impact. For the reasons already highlighted in this chapter and elsewhere in the volume, there are real criticisms that can and should be made of Chinese policy, particularly on human rights issues. A principled dialogue requires that these concerns should be raised with the Chinese political leadership and officials on a regular basis. But, at the same time, the style of western dialogue and engagement with China is also important. Demonising or denouncing China in strident terms is most unlikely to yield results. Firm and sustained pressure is more likely to do so.

While it is often asserted that the authorities in Beijing are impervious to external influence, there is some evidence to the contrary. For example, in October 1998, in part as a result of international pressure, China signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and it ratified the UN Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights in 2001.

The Beijing authorities have also been affected, to a certain extent, by sustained international criticism of their policy towards Sudan, leading China to support a peacekeeping operation in southern Sudan, against its strong anti-interventionist instincts (Alden 2005). Moreover, under international criticism, the Chinese did not prevent the UN Security Council from granting the International Criminal Court jurisdiction over gross human rights abuses committed in Darfur (Roth 2006).

Beijing's concern for its global image, particularly in the developing world, may also create opportunities to influence Chinese policy. Obiorah argues in this collection that if Chinese companies wish to establish themselves as global brands, they will need to improve their own corporate governance and their own international image by adopting the same kind of commitments as western companies. In this sense, 'reputational risk' may lead to changes in China's external policy.

In 2000, for example, the Chinese oil company CNPC was considering listing itself on the US Stock Exchange. But negative publicity generated by human rights activists over its involvement in Sudan led CNPC to create a new subsidiary, PetroChina, which was listed on the Stock Exchange, but received far less funding than expected (Alden 2005). In practical policy terms, this suggests the need for further encouragement and pressure on the Chinese to co-operate with international initiatives for promoting high corporate standards. Transnational human rights NGOs could play a useful role here.

It should be stressed that western policymakers, in their dealings with China over Africa, should not be seeking to impose 'western values' on China. On the contrary, they can and should support the efforts of Africa's own reformers to hold China to account for their commitments to the con-

minent. China's new policy statement on Africa, published in January 2006, talks of a 'mutually beneficial' relationship between China and Africa, and greater respect for human rights (FMPRC 2006). However, the wider international community can also legitimately hold China to account for its international legal undertakings, for example its adherence to key international human rights treaties or the UN Convention against Corruption (it ratified this in January 2006).

At the same time, it will be important to appeal to China's self-interest. This means demonstrating that long-term stability, for Chinese energy security and investments overseas, can best be guaranteed through supporting initiatives that promote good governance and sustainable development. Corruption, maladministration or a lack of effective state infrastructure in resource-rich countries will have adverse effects on Chinese investments, as well as on the peoples within them. Chinese development assistance is already rumoured to be experiencing difficulties due to weak administrative capacity or deliberate disruption (Alden 2005).

Lindsey Hilsum's chapter also raises questions as to how viable investment in Zimbabwe is for China in the long term. To be effective, policy-makers and civil society in Africa and around the world will need to appeal to Chinese interests, as well as to values.

Alongside this focus on deeper dialogue, western governments, companies and civil society should look for opportunities to co-operate with China on development or peacebuilding projects in Africa, in support of Africa's own development strategies.

Again, the EU may be a good forum for developing a more co-operative relationship. The Chinese have already expressed an interest in working with the Europeans on health policy, including the development of a malaria vaccine. And China has suggested joint EU/China training schemes in Africa and joint projects on infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, building on China's extensive support for healthcare across the continent.

These ideas for co-operation should be explored further. The new EU-Africa Partnership for Infrastructure, for instance, might usefully engage with the Chinese. A total of €5.6 billion from the 10th European Development Fund (EDF 2008-2013) will support regional development in four priority areas: transport, energy, water, and information technology and telecommunication networks (European Commission 2006). Chinese expertise might make a useful contribution to these new initiatives (Lagana 2006).

This co-operation opens up opportunities to identify common interests and to co-ordinate responses to common problems, as well as ways of dealing with conflicts of interest. This is likely to be more successful than simple attempts to limit Chinese influence.

Individual development donors could strengthen their engagement with China in Africa, too. The UK's Department for International Development is considering the possibility of co-financing development activities in Ghana

and Tanzania. In this context, it would be useful to press China, as an emerging donor in Africa, to agree to the Rome Declaration on Principles for Donor Co-ordination. Western co-operation with China on joint initiatives in Africa could help in getting Chinese state companies to adhere to emerging international norms on corporate responsibility, fiscal probity and transparency. The issue of co-operation with the Chinese in Africa should also be a focus for western NGOs: there is real scope for them to expand co-operation with Chinese civil society.

In recent years, China has become more engaged in supporting peace-keeping efforts on the continent. As Curtis and Hickson note in their chapter, China is now a bigger troop contributor to African peacekeeping than France, the US and the UK, and it has made financial contributions to the Africa Union's Peace Fund. These are developments that should be strongly encouraged. Working through the UN, there may be scope for increasing China's contribution to peacekeeping and peace building in Africa, particularly if the argument can be made that this promotes greater stability in Africa, something that is clearly relevant to China's longer-term economic interests.

Lastly, there might be important lessons that can be learnt from China's remarkable development experience. In just over a decade, between 1990 and 2001, the numbers living below the international agreed poverty benchmark (US\$1 a day) fell by 165 million in China. In contrast, absolute poverty levels rose in Africa by 77 million. Again, it is primarily for African policymakers and civil society to identify useful lessons from these contrasting experiences. But western governments and donors can play a role too, supporting exchanges, bringing together governments, the private sector, think-tanks, research centres, NGOs and trade unions to share ideas and insights.

**Proposition 4: The west should practise what it preaches on development, human rights and good governance**

Too often in 'western' discussions about China's role in Africa, there is an underlying assumption that western policy is essentially progressive and Chinese policy essentially negative and damaging. But this is a serious oversimplification. As the contributors to this collection have argued, it is wrong to demonise Chinese policy: China's growing role on the continent is bringing substantial benefits, and could bring many more. Sautman and Yan argue in their chapter that there are also some similarities between western and Chinese approaches towards Africa.

The US Administration has called on China to become a 'responsible stakeholder' in the international system (Zoellick 2005). To some extent, the recommendations made in this chapter echo this sentiment. But China is not the only country that should act 'responsibly'. The policies of certain

western governments and companies – both currently and in the recent past – leave much to be desired. The ending of those policies that currently disadvantage the continent would set the best example for China to follow. Three areas of particular concern are trade, corruption, and arms transfers.

While international trade could potentially bring huge dividends to Africa, global trade rules and the existing policies of some western countries are severely damaging Africa's development prospects and worsening the living conditions and life chances of many of its people. Agriculture provides two thirds of Africa's employment, half of its exports and over one third of its Gross National Income. But in spite of their free market rhetoric, most western countries provide very substantial subsidies for their agricultural sectors. These subsidies increase the volatility of agriculture prices and disadvantage African producers in their own and third country markets. Africa also suffers from tariff escalation, where western countries impose higher tariffs on processed imports than on unprocessed raw materials. For example, Ghana faces much higher EU tariffs on processed chocolate than on unprocessed cocoa butter or cocoa powder.

African exporters are further hampered by western imposed 'rules of origin'. These specify when a product can be said to have been produced in a certain country. The rules are intended to ensure that the goods imported under a particular trade agreement were genuinely produced in the country in question. However, when rules of origin are applied too restrictively they can damage Africa's trading opportunities (Mephram and Lorge 2005).

On corruption, western governments have taken some steps to reduce the contribution of their companies to this problem in Africa; but this action is still insufficient. The OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials contains serious loopholes. For example, it does not address the bribery of private officials, including officials of political parties, and companies are not held responsible for the actions of agents or subsidiaries acting on their behalf.

The UN Convention against Corruption – an important international initiative to address the problem – has yet to be ratified by many western governments. Moreover, a large part of the problem lies with the low priority that western governments have generally given to this issue and, in particular, to bringing prosecutions.

In respect of arms exports to Africa, countries such as the US, France and the UK have exported more equipment to Africa in recent years than China. While some of this equipment is defensible, allowing legitimate governments to meet their legitimate security needs, other more questionable transfers have been approved. These would appear to breach the commitments made by many western governments to enforce tight controls over weapons exports to conflict zones or to regimes or groups that abuse human rights. And western governments have done far too little to address the problem of arms brokering and trafficking in Africa, in which western

individuals are often involved.

In these areas and others, western governments should practise what they preach on development, human rights and governance, and change those of their policies that damage and disadvantage Africa. This will enhance their credibility with Africans and with the Chinese, and allow them to make a more useful contribution to the debate about China's role on the continent and the enormous challenges and opportunities that it represents.

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