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BRIEF

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## AFRICA & CHINA

# COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

## - 40 ACTIONS THAT WILL MAKE THE DIFFERENCE -

Briefing note from WWF to competent authorities in  
African countries and China in the context of FOCAC

16 July 2012

# A COMMON GOAL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR AFRICA AND CHINA

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Investing in sustainable development is fundamental for both Africa and China's long-term prosperity, and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is a significant platform for catalysing such investment. Building economies that manage natural capital wisely is necessary as forecasts suggest that by 2050 the world's population will exceed 9 billion (WEF, 2011) and already now humanity uses 50% more than the earth can regenerate every year (WWF, 2012).

China's 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan approved in March 2011 states the goal of "green development" and the aim to strengthen the "Going Global Strategy" which encourages Chinese companies to invest overseas. Taken together, these otherwise separate priorities offer an **opportunity to work collaboratively towards the common goal of sustainable development** – a goal also stated in the 2009 FOCAC declaration.

Building on such opportunity, this Briefing Note puts forward proposals intended as a contribution to the preparations by the competent authorities in African countries and China for the 5<sup>th</sup> FOCAC Ministerial Conference. The aim is to help to upscale previous FOCAC commitments and ensure that environmental considerations underline the development opportunities carried by China-Africa cooperation.

The WWF proposals, complemented by 40 recommendations, cover the following areas:

## ❖ Extraction and use of natural resources

- Strengthening corporate social and environmental responsibility of Chinese companies operating overseas in mineral extraction, especially in oil and gas, and growing investments in renewables and low carbon industries.
- Collaborating to halt illegal and unsustainable extraction and trade of natural resources such as timber, fish, medicinal plants, wildlife species and their parts.
- Fostering a business framework where commodities are sourced and traded in a responsible way for both the environment and local communities.

## ❖ Investments and financial cooperation

- Implementing green lending standards for investment overseas.
- Contributing to Conservation Trust Funds for environmental protection and sustainable development.
- Promoting sustainable tourism.

## ❖ Clean energy

- Investing in Africa's enormous potential for renewable energy and in clean energy projects that can increase energy access and reduce energy poverty.

## EXTRACTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Africa is endowed with vast natural wealth which can deliver economic growth and benefits to local people across the continent. As Africa's largest trading partner, China has an important role to play in Africa's sustainable development. To ensure Africa's long-term development as well as China's return on investment, it is key that natural resources are managed within sound regulatory frameworks, as poor management can lead to depletion of stocks, reduced access to food and safe water, conflicts, costly pollution and adverse health impacts.

### ❖ **Corporate social and environmental responsibility**

In 2008, 82% of Africa's official exports to China were in mineral products – including oil and gas (Hurst, 2010). Mineral extraction is socially and environmentally sensitive: in 2008 at the global level, the environmental externalities of the mining sector alone, especially in terms of water pollution, were said to amount to over US\$200 billion, a cost usually borne the hardest by local populations (UNEP FI and PRI, 2011).

China has begun addressing the sustainability of its overseas investment. In 2009, for example, the Ministry of Commerce and the State Forestry Administration issued voluntary guidelines for Chinese companies operating abroad in the forestry sector, a first step towards international standards. **The development and dissemination of similar guidelines for other environmentally sensitive sectors, such as oil and gas, mining, infrastructure development (especially dams), agriculture and fisheries,** will enhance performance and reduce investment risk.

At the same time, WWF supports further steps towards investment in and development of low carbon and renewable alternatives to oil and gas.

**Encouraging Chinese investors to adopt strong social and environmental responsibility and the best international standards** would contribute to Africa's sustainable development aspirations and facilitate social and political acceptance of China's industries.<sup>1</sup> Compliance to national laws and international conventions such as those pertaining to protected areas are a given, but where national legislation is weak, Chinese companies should comply at least with Chinese domestic standards. It is also in China's interest to provide

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<sup>1</sup> Reference standards for environmental and social performance are those by the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). The EITI has been adopted by 6 African countries (EITI, 2011) and supported by China in UN General Assembly resolutions and in the G20 Pittsburgh Declaration. In another sector, the Kimberly Process ensures that diamonds are supplied responsibly and do not come from conflict zones.

assistance for strengthened durability of investment as well as to promote China as a responsible international actor.

#### ❖ **Collaboration to halt illegal and unsustainable extraction and trade of natural resources**

In 2009, illegal logging is said to have cost governments globally US\$7 billion in lost revenue (Haken, 2011) – the equivalent of Zimbabwe's GDP (World Bank, 2011). For Tanzania alone, the amount of lost tax due to illegal timber operations in 2004 was estimated at between US\$24 and 58 million (Mercer *et. al.*, 2011), not to mention the foregone income for communities and the damage to critical watershed services such as soil retention, water filtration and water provisioning for drinking, irrigation or hydropower. Fish is another crucial commodity for local livelihood, and the cost of illegal fisheries operations for governments in West Africa has been estimated at US\$107 million since the 1990s (Agnew *et. al.*, 2010).

FOCAC offers the platform to **enhance international cooperation to eliminate illegal and unsustainable harvesting, processing and trading of endangered species of flora and fauna, including their parts and products (e.g. elephant ivory)**. This could be achieved through joint increased support to law enforcement, good governance, and monitoring of key impact indicators. In addition, China could enhance its international commitments to wildlife protection by strengthening and enforcing regulatory controls for its consumer market, as well as encouraging its diplomatic branches to inform Chinese nationals of the risks associated with illegal wildlife trafficking. On-the-ground capacity building will increase awareness of national laws, international agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), implementation measures of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and of the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).

#### ❖ **Sustainable commodities**

Even when extraction is legal, over-exploitation of natural resources, food and medicinal products from forest, marine and freshwater ecosystems can cause insecurity of supply and adverse impacts. FOCAC has the opportunity to foster an environment in which **investors engaged in trade of food and fibre commodities (e.g. timber and cotton) from Africa to China are accountable** for ensuring that these are sourced and traded in an environmentally and socially responsible way. **Incentives to trade in sustainably sourced, certified commodities** meeting high social, economic and environmental standards can improve supply chain responsibility, contribute to developing markets for sustainable goods, and

ultimately benefit communities, producers and consumers. Examples of rigorous, multi-stakeholder certification schemes for commodities include:

- The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for sustainable timber and forest products
- The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) for wild-caught fisheries
- The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) for farmed fisheries
- The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)
- The Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels (RSB)
- The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI)
- The FairWild Standard, for medicinal and aromatic plants from the wild.

## INVESTMENTS AND FINANCIAL COOPERATION

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It is fundamental that consultation, coupled with environmental and social considerations underpin all stages of project development, as Africa's long-term development depends on efficient land use, water and food security as well as resilience to climate change.

### ❖ **Green lending**

At the 2009 FOCAC Ministerial Conference, China committed US\$10 billion in the form of preferential loans for developing much needed infrastructures in African countries (FOCAC, 2009). The financial sector is central in implementing these commitments, as this amount will be channelled through China's policy banks and will be added to other public and private investment in extraction and manufacturing projects. These are long-term investments that influence development opportunities for generations ahead.

**A commitment to implement the green lending guidelines issued by the China Banking Regulatory Commission in February 2012** for investment supported by China in Africa would significantly reduce financial risks by reducing associated environmental and social risks, while at the same time bring benefits to the environment and local economies. Based on such guidelines, banks will publicly commit to adopt international best practices or standards for overseas projects, effectively identify, assess, monitor, control and mitigate environmental and social risks, and disclose information as required by laws and regulations.

In addition, African countries and China could cooperate on **exchange of qualified professionals** to ensure that adequate environmental expertise is available to undertake

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) based on sound and transparent stakeholder consultation.

### ❖ **Conservation Trust Funds**

**China has the opportunity to make direct contributions to nature conservation and sustainable development in Africa through Conservation Trust Funds.** As the poorest local communities are the most dependent on natural resources, good stewardship of the environment has most direct impacts on their lives and investment in environmental protection can be a pillar of a strong poverty reduction strategy. Trust funds are financial mechanisms capitalized by bilateral debt swaps<sup>2</sup> and multilateral donations, as well as by grants from governments, foundations, non-profit organisations, individuals and revenue-generating activities.

Funds are used to establish new protected areas, build park management capacity, promote sustainable use of natural resources and involve local communities in their management. As of 2008, there were 22 Conservation Trust Funds in 16 countries in Africa (Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Republic of Congo, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda). By contributing to these, China would address basic poverty factors, help to deliver global conservation targets, increase its profile as a responsible international actor and open new opportunities for professional exchanges (e.g. through secondments) and capacity building for environmental conservation in both Africa and China.

### ❖ **Sustainable tourism**

In 2009, FOCAC recognised that developing tourism is an effective way to promote economic growth and cultural exchanges. The South Africa tourism industry, based to a large extent on wildlife attraction, was estimated to be worth US\$8 billion in 2010 (Department of Tourism, Republic of South Africa, 2011) and the total economic output of activities associated with the Okavango Delta is estimated at more than US\$145 million, or some 2.6% of Botswana's GDP (SCBD, 2010). As China pledged to support investment in the tourism sector in Africa, it is crucial that these **investments focus on sustainability principles and ecotourism approaches** in order to promote development for local communities and protect Africa's long term natural capital and tourism industry.

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<sup>2</sup> A debt-for-nature swap is an arrangement by which an indebted developing country undertakes, in exchange for cancellation of a portion of its foreign debt, to establish local currency funds to be used to finance a conservation programme (OECD, 2011).

## CLEAN ENERGY

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To date, African economies are hampered by rolling blackouts due to poor energy infrastructure that limit their potential, and about 60% of Africans have little or no access to electricity (OFID, 2008). Access to clean, affordable and reliable energy services is essential for human and economic development, and this can be provided through clean energy (wind, solar, geothermal, marine power, small hydropower and sustainable forms of biomass). China can share its positive experience of providing renewable energy to rural communities and rapidly becoming a leader in manufacturing of renewable energy equipment.<sup>3</sup>

### ❖ Reduction of energy poverty through clean energy projects

Building upon the 4<sup>th</sup> FOCAC Ministerial Conference in 2009, when China committed to carry out 100 projects for water supply and clean energy in African countries (FOCAC, 2009), Africa and China have the opportunity to take the partnership to the next level. A commitment to **reduce energy poverty through affordable and clean off-grid facilities** will support economic growth and job creation, save millions of lives, while also contributing to protection of the natural forests and important watersheds in Africa.

Today, 65% of Africans rely upon traditional biomass from wood and animal residuals burning (OFID, 2008). Most traditional biomass is inefficient and highly polluting and 1.6 million lives are claimed every year worldwide due to its indoor pollution (more than double the victims of malaria; WHO, 2011; 2010). Use of traditional biomass is also a significant contributor to deforestation and degradation of forests, and black carbon particles released in the atmosphere contribute to air pollution and climate change.

The solution can be found in cooperation and increased investment for production and dissemination of highly efficient cookstoves, solar water heaters, community biogas digesters combined with multi-purpose agroforestry products. Inspired by China's development in the 1980-1990s, when foreign aid and investment was used to acquire know-how and technology, **joint ventures for renewable energy manufacturing facilities could be set up by Chinese companies in Africa** contributing both to energy access and job creation.

Today, the renewable sector employs 3.5 million people worldwide (UNEP, 2008), of which half a million are in China (UNEP, 2009), compared to a falling employment rate in fossil fuel industries (UNEP, 2008). China has been successful in providing renewable energy to many of its rural communities and today, as a world leader in manufacturing renewable energy components,

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<sup>3</sup>The WWF Energy Report advocates the aspiration of reaching 100% renewable energy by 2050 globally.

it could share technological and industrial knowledge to achieve a low-carbon development and climate resilient future in Africa.

## 40 ACTIONS THAT WILL MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

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WWF recommends the following commitments for the FOCAC Ministerial Conference 2012:

### ❖ **Green economy**

1. Chinese investments in African countries aim to develop green economies, promote clean technologies and ensure the provision of safe water, food and clean energy for all.
2. China offers African countries technical support on macro-economic planning to develop green economies and create sustainable markets. China and African countries will cooperate to integrate ecosystem service valuation into planning, i.e. using green economy indicators.
3. African countries and China will share experience on ecosystem and natural capital management as these are the basis for a sustainable development agenda.
4. China and African countries agree to promote knowledge exchange on green economy by creating a centre for expertise in development and the environment. The centre will analyse best practices and technological innovations and share them at an annual event involving the international community.

### ❖ **Sustainable investments**

5. Chinese banks (especially Ex-Im Bank) will apply the *Green Credit Guidelines* issued by the China Banking Regulatory Commission in February 2012 to reduce risks and maximise benefits of funding agreements. China will organise training on the *Green Credit Guidelines* for all branches of Chinese banks operating in Africa.
6. China and African countries encourage strategic partnerships of financial institutions to promote green lending policies and knowledge exchange on green finance.
7. China offers to establish micro-credit tools of up to 300 million CNY for small African enterprises in environmental services, clean energy and for farming projects that integrate environment and development.



8. China and African countries agree that Strategic Environmental Assessments are a basis for all decisions on infrastructure and other large scale investments. Infrastructure development will be driven by “clusters” to enable African regions to grow sustainably. This will involve comprehensive planning (e.g. not only building a bridge, but also the roads leading to it), as well as social and environmental assessments with special attention to local livelihoods, vulnerable species and habitats.
9. When supporting hydropower projects, China will apply the Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol by the International Hydropower Association to assess their social and environmental sustainability. New hydropower projects with high-load factors will be complemented by renewable energy projects nearby (e.g. wind and solar), as these will benefit from the grid-connectivity of hydropower stations.
10. Special Economic Zones set up in African countries will be used to pilot best environmental technologies and standards, ensuring consultation of local populations.

#### ❖ **Responsible extraction of natural resources**

11. China and African countries will promote dialogue to develop solid and comprehensive regulatory frameworks that govern extractive industries, with special attention to environmental protection, social conditions and development of local communities.
12. China encourages Chinese forestry companies operating in Africa to adopt the *Guide on Sustainable Overseas Forests Management and Utilization by Chinese Enterprises* issued by the Ministry of Commerce and State Forestry Administration in 2009; China will also issue new guidance for companies operating in environmentally-sensitive industries such as extractives (oil, gas, mining), infrastructure, agriculture and fisheries.
13. China will encourage quality Strategic Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Assessments of extraction activities providing technical skills and training in 100 pilot projects at the request of African governments.
14. China and African countries recognise the high conservation and social value of natural areas and agree to refrain from extractive investment in national parks, World Heritage Sites, protected areas and other important wildlife corridors on the African territory.
15. African countries offer to help Chinese forestry and mining companies improve wildlife management in and around concessions or worksites.
16. African countries and China agree to promote joint strategic partnerships for value addition of natural resources to benefit the countries of origin, as a way to create jobs, markets, economic opportunities and good living conditions in Africa.

17. China and African countries agree on a zero-tolerance policy on illegal timber and commit to implementing strict measures to halt such practices. China offers to support 20 pilot projects on timber trade transparency and sustainable forest management. China will establish a traceability scheme for all timber entering its territory, with a robust verification system regarding legality and sustainable sourcing.
18. China and African countries agree to grant preferential treatment to products and commodities that are certified under rigorous, multi-stakeholder procedures. China and African countries agree to organise an annual conference for companies that intend to apply high sustainability standards and achieve environmental certification, in order to share experience among practitioners, companies and communities. China offers to contribute to the strengthening of sustainability certification schemes by setting up and financing 20 pilot projects of sustainable forestry and 10 of sustainable palm oil matching the quality of international standards, for example the FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) and the RSPO (Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil) respectively.

#### ❖ **Clean energy**

19. For each million CNY of investment by China in Africa, China will co-invest with African countries 4 kilowatts (kW) of renewable electricity supply equipment (e.g. wind and solar). As economic development in Africa will lead to an increasing demand for power services, it is important to invest in clean energy with a target of 40 gigawatt (GW) of new renewable electricity production capacity by 2018. Clean energy investment in Africa will further the Chinese position as a supplier of clean energy systems and will make industrial development of Africa less dependent on fossil fuels. China will also contribute to local employment and development of technical skills by training 1,000 local operators and establishing manufacturing of clean energy systems in Africa.
20. China offers to support 100 communities to develop carbon financing projects, such as energy-saving stoves and biogas generators certified as Gold Standard or an equivalent scheme. Gold Standard is recognised internationally as the benchmark for quality in renewable energy and energy efficiency carbon offset projects; it ensures that projects demonstrate permanent greenhouse gas reductions and that sustainable development benefits to local communities are measured, reported and verified.
21. China offers to support African countries in a transition to clean rural energy solutions. In particular, China offers to help African countries gain access to clean energy, improve health and reduce deforestation related to charcoal use through a pan-African “clean cookstoves and solar lighting programme”. China and African countries aim to roll out 50 million clean cookstoves and 50 million solar-based lighting systems by 2018 (this will include solar cooking equipment, small-scale biogas plants and solar water heaters).

22. China and African countries agree that best available clean technology will be furthered in products and processes brought to Africa, as best-in-class technology will help Africa leapfrog to a clean and efficient energy system.
23. African countries and China agree on the establishment of a strategic Research and Development (R&D) partnership between African and Chinese scientists and experts in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to understand and fully utilize the potential of clean energy, as well as to support capacity building and knowledge sharing between Chinese and African scientists and African development institutions.
24. China and African countries will cooperate on developing near-zero energy buildings (buildings that are almost self-sufficient in terms of energy production) to be the standard by 2025. Cooperation will include Research & Development, demonstration projects, labelling schemes and building codes.
25. China and African countries will cooperate to develop local manufacturing capacity in order for African countries to have electric 2-wheelers dominating the market from 2015 and have a significant share of electric cars by 2020. China is building a position in electric vehicles and the transition to electric transport for Africa is critical in moving to clean energy and transport systems.
26. China and African countries agree to cooperate for the development of an insurance system for clean energy investment in Africa.

#### ❖ **Sustainable agriculture and fisheries**

27. China and African countries will cooperate to promote a sustainable and self-reliant agriculture sector for Africa, ensuring food supply to local populations in the first place.
28. China and African countries agree to cooperate for the development of sustainable agriculture by setting up 100 sustainable agriculture projects in Africa, encouraging technical exchanges between experts and setting up a rigorous, transparent, multi-stakeholder certification scheme for sustainable agriculture.
29. China and African countries agree on a zero-tolerance policy on illegal fisheries. In order to protect fish stocks and ensure long-term profitability of the sector, China offers to support African countries to protect their marine environment, reduce loss of biodiversity and protect endangered species such as sharks. In particular, China offers to support 30 projects in stock assessments, monitoring and control, in addition to implementation of sustainable fishing practices. China will encourage Chinese companies to join international certification schemes like the MSC (Marine Stewardship Council).

30. China offers to establish 100 projects in Africa to support sustainable livelihood to people dependent on forestry, agriculture and fisheries, e.g. agro-forestry, Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) marketing applying the FairWild Standard and community-based ecotourism.

#### ❖ **Biodiversity conservation**

31. China offers to contribute 200 million CNY by 2015 to Conservation Trust Funds in Africa to enhance conservation of critical natural resources and ecosystem services that are the basis for the development of green economies.
32. China offers to provide technical expertise to African countries in ecosystems monitoring and in land use planning that incorporates ecosystem services considerations.
33. China and African countries agree on a zero-tolerance policy on illegal wildlife trade and on a joint initiative to dramatically improve law enforcement and efforts to crack down on illegal wildlife trade. China will strive to reduce demand of products which pose a threat to wildlife. In their cooperation to protect flagship species such as rhinos, elephants and sharks, China and African countries will improve the specificity of Custom codes to enable more precise species-tracking. China and African countries will cooperate to raise awareness of ivory trade regulations and enforcement, providing joint training to Customs and market control officers. China offers to support 20 projects for detection of illegal wildlife species and their parts (including ivory) at Customs checkpoints in 20 African range countries.
34. While promoting sustainable tourism, China will conduct outreach to citizens visiting Africa on the value of the environment and African flagship species through websites, tourism associations, transport companies, airlines and travel agencies, including warnings against participating in the illegal wildlife trade.
35. China and African countries will sponsor an environmental exchange programme in conservation projects and 100 internships for university students in biology and environmental subjects.

#### ❖ **Enhanced cooperation**

36. China and African countries will cooperate to improve health and sanitation in Africa using natural systems and providing access to clean water.
37. China and African countries agree to develop a common methodology to measure the social and environmental impacts of the investments included in this agreement based on international standards.

38. China and African countries agree to establish more regular dialogue and improve communications to address emerging issues and maximise benefits of their cooperation.
39. Mutual understanding will be expanded by sharing knowledge of local cultures and traditions of nature appreciation through Confucius Institutes in African countries, as well as through the creation of an African Institute in China under the aegis of the African Union.
40. African countries and China agree to improve access to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) for civil society and academic organisations.

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# WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature)

## 2015

Our goal: by 2015 China's trade, aid investment policies integrate solid environmental principles.

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WWF has been working in China since 1980. WWF China is headquartered in Beijing and has 9 field offices across the country.

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WWF was founded in 1961.

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WWF is in over 100 countries, on 5 continents. 16 offices are in Africa.



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#### Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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