

STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE FORUM FOR CHINA - AFRICA COOPERATION

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His Excellency Xi Jinping,
Excellencies African Heads of State,
Chairman of the African Union Commission,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am here in two capacities – as President of Uganda but also as the current Chairman of the EAC comprising of the countries of Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Uganda has a population of 40 million people but the EAC countries have a population of 170 million people, with a GDP (by the PPP method) of US\$440bn. By 2050, the population of Uganda will be 102 million and that of East Africa will be 878 million. The population of Uganda, like the population of much of the wider EAC, is comprised of two linguistic groups: the Bantu speakers who are part of the wider Niger-Congo group of languages and the Nilo-Saharan group of languages comprised of the Cushitic, Nilotic and Nilo-Hamitic languages. Uganda and East Africa are, actually, the confluence point of these great African groups – one emerging from the forests of Central Africa, starting in the Cameroon and the other coming from Ancient Egypt, Nubia and the Ethiopian Highlands. Therefore, the population of the EAC and Uganda has a lot of similarities within each cluster but also has a lot of linkages between the two clusters.

Uganda and EAC are lucky because we also have the neutral dialect of Swahili which is used in the whole of East Africa, Eastern Congo, Northern Mozambique, Northern Zambia, Northern Malawi and the Comoro Islands.

Uganda and East Africa have huge natural resources in addition to the human resource mentioned above. If you take Uganda alone, she is rich in: fresh water resources (Lakes like Nalubaale-Victoria, Mwitanzigye-Albert, etc and huge rivers like the Nile, the Katoonga, Kafu, the Kagyera, etc); forest resources; agricultural resources; mineral resources such as petroleum and gas, phosphates, iron-ore, vermiculite, copper, cobalt, nickel, tin, tungsten, gold, aluminium clays, lithium and niobium, uranium, etc.

All these could not have been industrially exploited if we had not developed the necessary infrastructure elements (electricity, roads, piped water, ICT backbone, telecommunications, etc). Fortunately, mainly working with our Chinese friends, we are about to add 600mgws and 183mgws to the electricity we already had from the Jinja and Bujagaali dams and scores of other smaller hydro-power houses (Buseruka, Ishasha, Mpanga, Bugoye, Kikagati, etc).

We have worked on many roads and water-supply projects. We are working on modernizing our railway and reviving our Airline.

All this, therefore, offers good investment opportunities. Chinese companies have, indeed, already worked with us on both the elements of infrastructure and the production of industrial goods. Chinese companies have been busy with the roads, the hydro-power stations as well as with factories for ceramics, phosphates, iron-ore, etc. Some of the Chinese companies are active in oil and gas.

Currently, the rate of return on investment in East Africa is 11% However, with the improved supply of electricity and lower transport costs, the rate of return on the investment will go to 15%

As far as people interested in business are concerned, it is good to know that the automobiles on the East African roads are 607,593 and motor-bikes are 842,834. The East Africans consume 991,117,380 million linear metres of textiles, etc., etc. Uganda and East Africa in general are, therefore, good destinations for investments and good markets for finished products and services. When you invest in Uganda or any of the East African countries, you will sell your product or

service to the consumers in Uganda, in the EAC, in COMESA, in the CFTA, back to China or to third Party markets such as the USA, EU, India, Japan, etc.

Finally, coming to the Sino-African, Sino-Ugandan relationship, we go back to 1949 when a new China was born under the Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tse Tung. Since that time, China stood with Africa in its anti-colonial struggle. We also stood with China in asserting its rights in the UN.

Even when China was still underdeveloped, she helped East Africa with the Tazara Railway to defeat the blockade of the newly independent Zambia by the Colonial and racist regimes that controlled Southern Africa at that time.

Now that China is the second biggest economy in the World, we are co-operating even more. China has helped us to build the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway line and negotiations are about to be concluded to extend it to Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda and DRC by, first, implementing the Tororo-Kampala portion. The Chinese parastatals and private sector companies are busy doing infrastructure projects and industrial projects.

The railway company China Road and Bridge Construction is the one that did the Mombasa - Nairobi line. A private company, Chinese Company

Guanzhou DongSong Energy Group, is about to complete the industrial facilities of producing steel and phosphate fertilizers at Tororo. A number of Chinese Companies are developing Industrial Parks such as the ones at Kapeeka and Mbale. China does all this without attempts at interfering in the Internal Affairs of African countries which is a bad habit of some other players.

Therefore, the Chinese leaders and people since 1949, have been with us on an equal basis. We all realize the importance of supporting the prosperity of each other. I always say that when I buy a service or a good from somebody, then I am supporting the prosperity of that actor. I am helping him to get money, helping him to create jobs in his country and to expand his tax base. Similarly, when he buys a service or a good from my country, he is supporting our prosperity. He is helping us to get money, to create jobs in our country and to expand our tax-base.

The big population groups of Africa, China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, working together through their leaders and institutions, can do a lot to enhance the prosperity of their citizens through trading together and through cross border investments. This would give a new meaning to the concepts of South-South co-operation. With the addition of the huge Russian Federation, a land area of 5.3 million Square miles

and a population of 150 million people, through the BRICS organization, this South-South grouping, would create a new and fairer global dispensation. It would no longer be merely South-South Co-operation. It would be South-South-North Co-operation on equal basis. This would be a new phenomenon in the much tormented Globe of the last 500 years, when Imperialism, taking advantage of the internal weaknesses of the different respective areas, became the new tormentor of the World.

The patriotic forces in Africa cannot forget the most welcome phenomenon of the October Revolution of 1917 and how it contributed to the anti-colonial struggle.

We would, then, of course, more easily work with our friends in the EU and the USA on the basis of win-win arrangements, not the win-lose arrangements of the last 500 years. This should not be a problem, with deeper thought; after all 12% of the USA population is African. Moreover, many African countries and the former colonizers can put to good use the historical relations with the British Commonwealth or the French Community. What was previously negative could become much more positive than it has been hitherto.

I thank you.