

Making the Best of Ethiopia's Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

Strategic partnership among states requires a strong will and commitment on the part of constituent members and this is witnessed in the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, thus ensuring fruitful cooperation.

The China-Africa Cooperation Forum has been and continues to be exemplary in its achievement of the enhancement of cooperation and consolidation of partnership among its members. Since the establishment of the Forum six years ago, it has seen a commendable change in attaining its goals.

It was in this background that the China Africa Cooperation Forum was held from 4 - 5 November 2006, in Beijing, China.

African leaders, including Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, were present at the Summit to confer with their Chinese counterpart on issues pertaining to the strengthening of strategic partnership existing between the two sides in the areas of trade, investment, tourism, developmental aid as well as political cooperation.

During the summit, the Chinese Government pledged to double its support for Africa with a view to encouraging Africa's endeavors in the coming three years. In this regard, China-Africa development fund shall be established at a cost of five billion dollars to encourage and assist Chinese companies to invest in Africa. The Chinese Government also expressed its intention to offer loan to and cancel the debts of African countries with which it enjoys diplomatic relationship. China, as part of its commitment, will further open-up its market to Africa.

President Hu Jintao, addressing the Forum, expressed the need to more strengthened partnership to ensure speedy development. Prime Minister Meles on his part, said that the Forum is a partnership that backs the efforts of the African continent in the struggle against the challenges of ensuring peace, security and good governance. He also indicated that the China-Africa partnership should focus on economic development so as to effectively address the problems of the continent.

News Feature

Ethiopia has co-chaired the two days summit that yielded positive outcomes to both Africa and China. Ethiopia has for the past five years played a major role to the success of the Forum.

At the conclusion of the Forum two major documents were adopted: the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Plan of Action, the former dealing with political cooperation and the latter, economic cooperation.

Regarding the basis of China-Africa partnership, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin stated during the 3rd Ministerial Meeting that it is based on common trust. He added that this fact drives the Forum forward to achieve more and more results.

Prime Minister Meles, during his stay in Beijing discussed with President Jintao the existing bilateral relations of the two countries. The two leaders deliberated on how to further improve relationship between their countries. Accordingly, President Jintao pledged to significantly assist the telecommunication sector in Ethiopia. Likewise, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao pledged half a billion USD to support various projects in the country.

The bilateral relationship between Ethiopia and China has been consistently strengthened. Their trade ties have seen remarkable growth. This is expressed in the level of their trade exchange, cooperation in the investment sector, and in international forums, as well as in technical and development assistance.

In the area of trade exchange, a considerable growth has been registered. The trade volume has increased in recent years to reach over 300 million dollars, out of which Ethiopia's share stands at above 80 million dollars. Even though the balance favors China, the share of Ethiopia has significantly risen.

With regards to cooperation in international forums, the two countries enjoy mutual support and understanding. At the regional level, China appreciates Ethiopia's contribution for peace and stability in the Horn.

News Feature

Various Chinese companies are licensed in Ethiopia to invest in manufacturing, pharmaceutical, road construction and other sectors, with the majority of them already entering the operational phase.

In the area of technical assistance, a number of Chinese volunteers are engaged in giving professional training in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Government is working closely with the government of China thus making the best out of its bilateral relationship as well as exploiting opportunities that the China-Africa partnership Forum presents.

Ethiopia had hosted the 5th China-Africa partnership Forum, and its role in the promotion of the principles of the Forum is well recognized. It will continue to stand for the objectives of the Forum and to search for a better and more strengthened partnership. It will also continue to work for the enhancement of its bilateral relations with China.