

WORLD: CHINA JOINS ARCTIC CIRCLE P.20 | CULTURE: INSPIRING VILLAGE PHOTOS P.42

BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.56 NO.21 MAY 23, 2013

北京周報 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM



AFRICA IN UNISON

AU plays growing role 50 years on



RMB6.00
USD1.70
AUD3.00
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CAD2.60
CHF2.60
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140



邮发代号2-922 · 国内统一刊号: CN11-1576/G2

CHINAFRICA

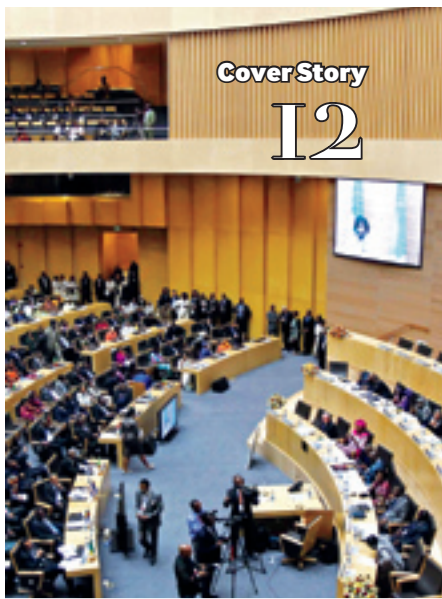
中国与非洲



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Amateur photography spotlights a Chinese village



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Beijing Review (ISSN 1000-9140) is published weekly for US\$64.00 per year by Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080, Periodical Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Beijing Review, Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080



A News Weekly Magazine
Published Since 1958

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Tel: 86-10-68310644
E-mail: circulation@bjreview.com.cn

Published every Thursday by
BEIJING REVIEW, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,
Beijing 100037, China.

Overseas Distributor: China International Book Trading
Corporation (Guojì Shudian), P. O. BOX 399,
Beijing 100044, China
Tel: 86-10-68413849, 1-416-497-8096 (Canada)
Fax: 86-10-68412166
E-mail: fp@mail.cibtc.com.cn
Website: <http://www.cibtc.com>

General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:
Peace Book Co. Ltd.
17/F, Paramount Bldg, 12 Ka Yip St, Chai Wan, HK
Tel: 852-28046687 **Fax:** 852-28046409

Beijing Review (ISSN 1000-9140 USPS 2812) is published weekly in the
United States for US\$64.00 per year by Cypress Books,
360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080
News Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*,
Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48,
South San Francisco, CA 94080

EDITOR

Unity Is Strength

Founded as the Organization of African Unity 50 years ago, at a time when African countries were struggling against colonial rule, the African Union (AU) today remains a champion of solidarity, peace and development. The 54-member organization looks poised to play a leading role in African affairs amid deepening integration on the continent.

Politically, the AU is committed to regional stability by advocating African solutions to African problems. Following coups d'état or armed rebellions in Mali, Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic in recent years, it intervened along with sub-regional organizations to help ease those conflicts. On the economic front, the AU has called for the launch of a continental free trade area by 2017 while spearheading transnational infrastructure development.

As they celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the AU's predecessor this year, African countries have underlined the growing relevance of the pan-African organization. To live up to higher expectations, it is crucial for the AU to further improve its ability to address crises without interference from the West and promote balanced development across the continent.

The organization's anniversary celebrations also provide an opportunity for China to reaffirm its long-term commitment to Africa. China has been Africa's largest trade partner since 2009. Trade volume between China and African countries approached \$200 billion in 2012, a sharp rise from \$10 billion in 2000. China's investment in Africa has reached a combined total of \$15 billion, with more than 2,000 Chinese companies engaged in sectors ranging from agriculture to telecommunications, energy and manufacturing.

Given its extensive economic interests in Africa, coupled with traditional friendship forged through mutual assistance dating back to the 1960s and the 1970s, China supports the AU's peacemaking efforts. It is China's belief that many hotspot issues in Africa are not purely security matters and therefore cannot be resolved by military means alone; instead, they require a holistic approach. That's partly why China expects the AU to take the lead in resolving the issues in an African way. ■

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TURKEY.....YTL5.00 HK.....HKD9.30 NEPAL.....RS40

北京周报 英文版 2013年 第21期 ISSN 1000-9140 广告许可证 0171号北京市期刊登记证第733号
邮发代号2-922·国内统一刊号: CN11-1576/G2 国内零售价: 人民币6.00元



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MOURNING QUAKE VICTIMS

Nearly 2,000 local people assembled at the ruins of a middle school in Yingxiu Town, Wenchuan County of southwest China's Sichuan Province, on May 12, to mourn victims of the 8.0-magnitude earthquake that struck there five years ago.

Lottery Sales Boom

A man checks his lottery ticket in Xinjiang County, Shanxi Province.

China's lottery ticket sales rose 21.1 percent year on year to 28.56 billion yuan (\$4.65 billion) in April, according to data released by the Ministry of

Finance on May 15.

The ministry attributed the jump to the release of new lottery games, the promotion of quiz-style games and more outlets for online lottery games.



Job-Hunting Support

The Central Government outlined measures to help college graduates in their job hunts on May 15 amid this year's grave employment situation.

According to a statement released after a meeting of the State Council, China's cabinet, about 6.99 million college students will graduate this year.

The State Council called for the implementation of existing policies favorable to graduates' employment, broadened ways and increased job vacancies, and for guiding graduates to seek jobs in small and medium-sized enterprises, private businesses and at the grassroots level.

The Central Government also

encouraged graduates to turn toward self-employment and start their own businesses, promising to provide training subsidies, petty loans, tax breaks and other incentives.

Employment services should also be improved, according to the statement, which added that graduates from low-income families will receive financial assistance.

'Left-behind' Children

Nearly 100 million rural Chinese children's parents work in cities, according to a special report released by the All-China Women's Federation on May 9.

The report, titled Research

Report on Rural Left-Behind Children and Migrant Children, said that the number of "left-behind" children cared for by elderly relatives in the countryside hit 61.02 million as of 2010, accounting for 37.7 percent of rural children and 21.88 percent of the country's child population. The figure was 2.42 million more than that in 2005.

The number of migrant children, which refers to children migrating with their parents to other places, neared 36 million in 2010, an increase of 41 percent compared with 2005, according to the report.

New Media

China has the world's largest new media market, highlighted by the country's growing Internet penetration and a vibrant range of new media applications, according to an industry report published by Xinhua News Agency on May 15.

China has made great strides in pushing development in sectors that are key to the emergence of new

media, such as mobile telecommunications and information technology, says the Report on China's Rising New Media.

Data from the China Internet Networks Information Center show that China's online population had reached 564 million as of the end of last year, with the number of mobile Internet users hitting 420 million.

The fast expansion of network coverage has fueled a surge in the variety of Internet applications, ranging from instant messaging and video-sharing to shopping and banking, as well as social networking.

The growing number of applications will help new media become China's most significant social and information platform, the report says.

Low-Rent Housing

The Chinese Government has allocated 8 billion yuan (\$1.3 billion) to support low-rent housing projects in 2013, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) announced on May 15.

The funds will provide subsidies for the rental, purchase or rebuilding of low-rent housing units.

Of the total, 4.33 billion yuan (\$704 million) and 3.41 billion yuan (\$554 million), respectively 54.2 and 42.7 percent of the total, went to the country's central and western regions. East China, the country's most developed region, received the remaining 253 million yuan (\$41 million), according to the MOF.



COLORFUL APPEAL

Children create paintings during a water conservation event in Yantai, east China's Shandong Province, on May 12



HANDY-CAPABLE

A member of the dance troupe of the Harbin Disabled Art Group trains in the northeastern city in Heilongjiang Province on May 14. The troupe is made up of 18 people with hearing and speech difficulties



WANG KAI

High-Up Experiment

Chinese scientists have launched a sounding rocket to conduct an experiment in Earth's upper atmosphere.

The National Space Science Center under the Chinese Academy of Sciences announced on May 14 that the rocket blasted off at 9 p.m. on May 13 from Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwest China's Sichuan Province.

The experiment was designed to investigate energetic particles and magnetic fields in the ionized upper atmosphere and near-Earth space.

According to a preliminary analysis by the center, the experiment has reached expected objectives, allowing scientists to obtain data on the atmospheric environment at extreme altitudes.

Mo's New Job

Nobel Prize winner Mo Yan was appointed director of the International Writing Center of his alma mater, Beijing Normal University.

At the International Writing Center's inauguration ceremony on May 13, Mo said he hoped to develop the facility into "a place for writing, a research institute and a platform for international academic exchanges."

World-famous writers, poets, translators, Sinologists and scholars will be invited as guest writers to engage in writing, research and academic exchanges at this university established a century ago.

The center will aim to be a literature education base and an incubator for Chinese writers. Postgraduates and doctoral students

will be enrolled to study creative writing, according to Mo.

Mo was granted a master's degree in literature and arts in 1991 after studying for a postgraduate program at Beijing Normal University.

Survey in Sansha

To advance the construction of China's newest city, an official delegation completed a field survey of the islands and waters within the jurisdiction of Sansha City on May 14, according to the provincial

authorities of Hainan.

Sources with the Hainan provincial government said the survey was conducted in preparation for the formulation of Sansha's regional development plans.

With its government office based on Yongxing Island in the South China Sea, Sansha was established last July to administer three island groups—Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha—and their surrounding waters.

To facilitate local resource development and environmental

protection efforts, the survey focused on the marine resources and environment of Sansha.

Organ Distribution System

China will cooperate with Italy and Spain to improve its human organ distribution system, ensuring safety of organ donors and receivers and enhancing professional training, according to agreements signed on May 11.

The Chinese Research Center for Organ Distribution and Sharing System signed cooperation agreements separately with an Italian organization and a Spanish one in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, in a bid to learn from their experience and practices.

There are annually 300,000 patients in China waiting for organs, said health authorities. China has 164 hospitals qualified to practice human organ transplantation.

China's national organ distribution and sharing system, which was put into use in April 2011 to ensure fair and transparent organ distribution, has helped 626 patients in need.

Baaah-reakthrough

Tianjiu, a sheep that survived 62 days with an artificial heart implant using cutting-edge aerospace technology, shows off at a press conference in north China's Tianjin on May 13.

The development of the heart was jointly conducted by scientists from the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology and Tianjin-based TEDA International

Cardiovascular Hospital.

Researchers used magnetic suspension and hydrodynamic bearings to design and produce a mechanical pump used to support heart function and blood flow in people with weakened hearts.

Once the device is marketed, it may help end suffering for the 16 million people in China with failing hearts.



ZHANG CHAOQUN

Financing Innovation

Two students from Tianjin University tested remote controlled planes in a lab on May 15.

On that day, four hi-tech companies inked an agreement with Tianjin University, pledging to help students start their own businesses. The four companies donated 760,000 yuan (\$123,576) toward programs to help foster innovation amongst college students.



Global Investment

Seventeen years from now, half the global stock of capital, totaling \$158 trillion (in 2010 dollars), will reside in the developing world, compared to less than one third today, with countries in East Asia and Latin America accounting for the largest shares of this stock, says the latest edition of the World Bank's Global Development Horizons (GDH) report, which explores patterns of investment, saving and capital flows as they are likely to evolve over the next two decades.

Developing countries' share in global investment is projected to triple by 2030 to three fifths, from one fifth in 2000, says the report,

titled *Capital for the Future: Saving and Investment in an Interdependent World*. With world population set to rise from 7 billion in 2010 to 8.5 billion 2030 and rapid aging in the advanced countries, demographic changes will profoundly influence these structural shifts.

"GDH is one of the finest efforts at peering into the distant future. It does this by marshaling an amazing amount of statistical information," said Kaushik Basu, the World Bank's Senior Vice President and Chief Economist. "We know from the experience of countries as diverse as South Korea, Indonesia, Brazil, Turkey and South Africa the pivotal role investment plays in driving long-term growth. In less than a

generation, global investment will be dominated by the developing countries. And among the developing countries, China and India are expected to be the largest investors, with the two countries together accounting for 38 percent of the global gross investment in 2030. All this will change the landscape of the global economy, and GDH analyzes how."

Shanghai Free Trade Zone

City planners in Shanghai have set aside 28 square km in Shanghai's Pudong District for a free trade zone, including the Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, Yangshan Free Trade Port Area and Pudong Airport Comprehensive Free Trade Zone.

The area is almost the same size as Macao, and its trade volume already topped \$100 billion last year, the highest on the mainland.

A new economic order will be established in the area with its



MARITIME FAIR

Visitors observe a China-made surfboard and motorboat during the 2013 China International Marine, Port and Shipbuilding Fair in Nanjing, capital of east China's Jiangsu Province, on May 15

own set of rules for commerce and finance. Authorities believe the tentatively named Shanghai Free Trade Zone will have even more of an impact than other such entities found in Shenzhen, southern Guangdong Province, and Tianjin.

The free trade zone is expected to begin its first phase of operations later this year.

Tencent's Outperformance

Tencent Holdings Ltd., China's largest Internet company by revenue, released strong first-quarter results on May 15 and posted high growth in app subscriber numbers.

Net income rose 37.1 percent to 4.04 billion yuan (\$657.9 million) at the end of March this year compared to the same period in 2012, while it showed a 16.8 percent increase from 3.46 billion yuan (\$562.9 million) at the end of last year, said the Shenzhen-based company.

Tencent is known for QQ, China's most popular instant messenger, and WeChat, a free instant messaging app for smartphones.

"We are integrating new services into Wechat to explore emerging business opportunities on the mobile Internet. In addition, we will continue investing in user acquisition activities for WeChat in international markets," the company said on May 15.

Record-High Bad Loans

Bad loans from Chinese banks reached their highest level in four years by the end of March, according to data released by the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC), the country's banking sector regulator, on May 15, while their total assets rose by 17 percent.

Outstanding non-performing loans, or NPLs, stood at 526.5 billion yuan (\$85.67 billion), up by 33.6 billion yuan (\$5.47 billion) from the end of 2012, while the ratio of bad loans to total lending rose by 0.01 percentage points to 0.96 percent,



POWER CONSUMPTION

A power transmission tower and wind turbines in Jiuquan, Gansu Province, on May 14. April's electricity consumption totaled 416.5 billion kw nationwide, surging 6.8 percent year on year



WAN ZHENGMING

during the first quarter of the year.

Bad loans have now increased for a sixth straight quarter—the longest deterioration streak in at least nine years.

Total assets of the banking sector stood at 141.3 trillion yuan (\$22.99 billion), meaning total banking assets have increased fivefold in the past decade.

Shang Fulin, CBRC Chairman, warned the bad loan levels are likely to continue rising.

The soured-loan increases were reported across all categories, including among state-owned lenders, joint stock banks and regional banks in cities and rural areas.

Major state-owned banks experienced the biggest jump, as their NPLs rose by 14.6 billion yuan (\$2.38 billion) during the quarter. Their ratio of such loans to total lending dropped by 0.01 percent to 0.98 percent.

Joint stock banks reported the biggest increase in their NPL ratio, by 0.05 percent to 0.77 percent, while the amount of their bad loans went up by 9.9 billion yuan (\$1.61 billion).

“The rise in non-performing loans is a natural result of an economic slowdown, with increasing defaults among companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises,” said Guo Tianyong, Director of the Research Center of the Chinese Banking Industry at the Central University of Finance and Economics.

However, he suggested the current increase in soured loans was still mild, and the amount may decrease in the following months, as the economy stabilizes.

Fiscal Revenue Drops

The Central Government fiscal revenue fell in April as business tax income dropped but booming home transactions lifted local government coffers, the Ministry of Finance said on May 13.

The Central Government's revenue fell 2.2 percent to 535.7 billion yuan (\$87.1 billion) from a year earlier, after slipping 0.2 percent in March. It is the first time that the Central Government has seen its revenue shrink for two consecutive months since September.

The ministry attributed the decline to a “very slow” increase in corporate tax and a decline in tariffs from imports.

The ministry cautioned that fiscal revenue will be under pressure this year due to a likely slower industrial output growth, worsening corporate profits and structural tax-cutting measures.

However, the local government revenue rose 14.7 percent to 607.4 billion yuan (\$98 billion), 1 percentage point faster than in March, as housing transactions rose and tax revenue boosted, according to the ministry.

Numbers

1.84 mln units

China's auto sales in April, a rise of 13.38 percent year on year

\$8.44 bln

Foreign Direct Investment to China in April, up 0.4 percent year on year

1.76 tln yuan

China's April retail sales, increasing 12.8 percent year on year

2.8%

Hong Kong's year-on-year economic growth in the first quarter

Ripe and Ready

Workers from the Fuyuan Cooperative in Ninghe County, Tianjin, load fresh peaches in a greenhouse.

The Fuyuan Cooperative uses organic fertilizer to grow peaches that are better tasting and healthier to eat.



YU HUIHUI

THIS WEEK WORLD



PANAMA

Andres Gardin, 64, drags two cars with his teeth during a public exhibition in Rio Alejandro, 85 km north of Panama City, on May 10



THE UNITED STATES

An X-47B unmanned drone flies over the *USS George H.W. Bush* off the coast of Virginia on May 15. It is the first time an aircraft carrier has successfully catapulted such an aircraft from its flight deck



IRAQ

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) fighters greet their comrades arriving in the northern Iraqi city of Dohuk on May 14. The PKK, an anti-Turkish Government force for more than 20 years, is withdrawing its fighters from Turkey to push for peace





RUSSIA

An honor guard marches at the Red Square in Moscow on May 9 during the Victory Day parade, held every year on the anniversary of Russia's defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II



AUSTRALIA

The *Skywhale*, a 34-meter-long, 23-meter-high hot-air balloon, on a test flight near Mount Arapiles in Victoria on May 10. The hot-air balloon was commissioned to celebrate the centennial of Canberra, capital of Australia



PAKISTAN

Supporters of Nawaz Sharif, former Prime Minister and head of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, carry portraits of the leader as they celebrate their party's parliamentary election victory in Lahore on May 12

“Male nurses are expected to be very popular in the future job market considering their small number and huge market demand.”

Cheng Gen, a member of the Chinese Nursing Association in charge of male nursing related work, on May 12, International Nurses' Day



“Each government department should continuously disclose information that the public can question instead of ignoring concerns and hiding vital details. The more information authorities disclose, the fewer misunderstandings and rumors there will be.”

Cheng Manli, a professor at Peking University, calling for better government information disclosure, on May 12



“I cannot separate myself from Taobao (a major consumer-to-consumer portal in China) now. It is becoming a lifestyle, or it is life itself.”

Mei Xiao, a civil servant in Wuhan, Hubei Province, discussing online shopping on May 9



“In the past, nearly 90 percent of graduates could find a job six months after graduation, but I'm afraid the figure may only be 86 percent or so if the economy does not rebound in the latter half of the year.”

Zhang Yi, an expert in labor economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, on May 14. As of April 19, only 28 percent of college graduates in Beijing had signed employment deals



CEO RESIGNS



Ma Yun, also known as Jack Ma, officially stepped down as CEO of e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., on May 10. He will stay on as the company's chairman.

May 10 is the 10th birthday of Alibaba's consumer-to-consumer business website Taobao. The company also operates two additional e-commerce sites—Alibaba.com and the business-to-consumer platform Tmall. Before Ma's departure, Alibaba delivered a rosy financial report, overtaking Tencent Holdings Ltd. to become the most profitable Internet company in China during the fourth quarter of last year.



OFFICIAL UNDER INVESTIGATION



Liu Tienan, Vice Minister of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) is under investigation by the Party's disciplinary commission, the Ministry of Supervision revealed on its website on May 12.

Liu was head of the National Energy Administration from December 2010 to March. He has served as a vice minister of the NDRC since 2008. The NDRC is a super ministry that sets broad economic policies and approves major investments.

Liu has become the second ministerial level official to be investigated since the Party's new leadership took power last November.



4G Is Coming *Caixin* May 6

Minister of Industry and Information Technology Miao Wei said the country might issue fourth generation (4G) mobile network licenses to domestic telecom operators by the end of 2013.

In the cold winter of the telecom industry, developing 4G is believed to bring great benefits to telecom operators.

At present, among China's three telecom providers, only China Mobile offers 4G services. It has already set up 4G networks for trial use in 15 cities.

The other two major telecom operators, China Unicom and China Telecom, are not

eager to develop 4G technologies because they have reaped great benefit from third generation (3G) networks. However, China Mobile has put all its hope on 4G because of the unsatisfying performance of TD-SCDMA in 3G. In the 3G market, China Mobile's market share shrank from 72 percent in 2009 to 63.41 percent in March 2013, pushing the company to develop 4G to regain market share.

According to a 4G blueprint revealed by Xi Guohua, President of China Mobile, the company will build 200,000 4G stations in over 100 cities, covering 500 million people.

Safety Education Urgently Needed

Legal Daily
May 13

On May 11, five second-year students from a middle school in Luoyang Town of south China's Guangdong Province drowned in a river while barbecuing on its banks. When one accidentally fell into the river, the other four students linked hands in an attempt to rescue their friend, but subsequently fell in too and succumbed.

Experts have since stated that linking hands is not conducive to lifesaving, due to the possibility of rescuers being dragged into trouble by an extremely fearful victim. In recent years, there have been a number of such failed rescue attempts across the country, with most incidents involving students.

While it took a huge amount of courage for the students to try and help their friend, the disaster reveals a gap in lifesaving education, with most pupils unaware of its complicated nature as well as procedures related to first aid. For this reason, the public is calling for the enhancement of safety education at schools.

A major factor causing accidents is the poor condition of public facilities, especially in rural areas. Drowning, for example, is a major killer among juveniles, accounting for 41.73 percent of all fatalities. Society must urgently spread a safety net to guard kids against accidents.

Large Shortage of Nurses

Workers Daily
May 13

International Nurses Day fell on May 12. While hospital workers are widely praised for their contribution to public health, staff shortage has become a major concern in hospitals across China.

According to the Chinese Nursing Association based in Beijing, the country needs at least 1 million nurses to meet medical service demands at present.

Several days ago, Beijing announced that it would take measures to make available 12,000 nursing jobs in the next two years and make the number of staff members per thousand persons reach over four. Even so, the proportion of doctors and nurses would barely reach 1 to 1.4, while the international standard is 1 to 2.

The massive lack in nurses has promoted the market for care workers, with patients having to rely on family members or employ unprofessional carers to look after them in hospital, which not only affects recovery, but also aggravates expenditure. In particular, the employment of care workers is likely to produce legal dispute.

Although nurses are urgently needed, many hospitals are unwilling to fill vacancies. Unlike doctors,

nursing staff create no revenue and mostly serve as a financial burden, perhaps due to public hospitals being insufficiently funded. In order to balance revenues, health services are often cut, with staff members forced to work part-time.

Furthermore, the salaries and social status of nurses are far from satisfactory. Health staff members often work overtime with little career development aspects, resulting in a lack of experienced nurses.

With shortages bound to affect public health, the government should aim to resolve the problem as soon as possible, by for instance, improving incomes, establishing labor security systems and offering more jobs. A pivotal aspect relates to allocating more funds to hospitals to return the focus to public welfare instead of profit.

Improving Cultural Service

Outlook Weekly
May 13

The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China held in November last year set up the target of establishing a public cultural service system and making the cultural industry a pillar of the national economy.

Recently, the Chinese Academy of Governance held a forum to discuss how to build such a system. Representatives from the culture industry across the country reached a consensus that the government and social organizations should be actively involved in the construction of the future cultural service system.

At present, China has built a public cultural service network covering both urban and rural areas. How to further improve the public cultural service level has become a topic of concern for those present at the forum.

Currently, the functions of government, society and market haven't been well coordinated. The government has a stronger presence, but the market and society are weaker. How to solve this problem is the priority of strengthening public cultural service.





AFRICA ASSEMBLES: Participants attend the opening ceremony of the 20th AU Summit on January 27 at the new AU Conference Center, a gift from the Chinese Government, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

FROM THE EDITOR

China will join African countries in late May in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity, the predecessor of the African Union. In collaboration with China's Foreign Ministry, the African Group of Ambassadors in Beijing will hold commemorative events featuring high-level representation of Chinese leaders. An academic seminar on pan-Africanism and the African renaissance—themes that feature prominently in Golden Jubilee

celebrations in Africa and beyond—as well as China-Africa relations will provide an opportunity for shared analysis.

Beijing Review has prepared special reports consisting of articles written by Chinese and African experts alongside interviews with African ambassadors to China.

This series is intended to give readers an in-depth and balanced insight into the evolution of the organization and China's support through its history.

UNIFYING AFRICA

AU-led African renaissance makes headway amid tough challenges By He Wenping

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which would later become the African Union (AU). On May 25, 1963, leaders of independent African states signed a charter declaring the OAU's establishment. The day was also designated as African Liberation Day, or Africa Day—an important memorial holiday.

During the past 50 years, African countries and people have undergone a long journey that began with struggles for freedom and independence and later turned to working on development and unity. They have earned great achievements, but they also face mighty challenges.

Initial goals

When the OAU came into being, over one third of African land was colonized, and native people of South Africa were battling white racism for equality. In the meantime, even independent African countries were being threatened by imperialism and former colonial economic control or separatist activities. Fighting against imperialism and colonialism and realizing the full liberation of the whole continent were Africa's primary missions during the second half of the 20th century.

The OAU found great success in moving toward Africa's complete liberation by organizing a Liberation Committee, chaired by Tanzania's founding President Julius Nyerere, to assist African struggles for independence. In April 1994, South Africa elected Nelson Mandela as president of the new democratic government, marking the continent's complete libera-

tion and decolonization. The OAU Liberation Committee was dismissed in August that year, having fulfilled its historic mission.

The OAU strongly promoted Africa's unity and economic integration. In 1964, 21 OAU states agreed to establish the Commission on Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration to address internal disputes and safeguard African unity. With the OAU's support, many sub-regional economic integration organizations were born from the 1960s onward. In June 1991, the OAU's 27th Summit passed the Abuja Treaty, which drew a blueprint for the ultimate goal of building an African economic community.

As a regional government organization, the OAU's functions were inevitably limited by its own capability and resources, willingness of its member states and the international situation. For example, proxy wars took place in Africa during the Cold War, when the United States and the Soviet Union fought for hegemony. Plus, structural problems in the African economy barred the development of economic integra-

The new ideal

In July 2002, the AU formally replaced the OAU as a brand new political and economic alliance that covered the whole of Africa. Unlike the OAU's focus on political goals, the AU aims to guide the whole continent in facing the challenge of economic globalization and realizing the economic and social renaissance of Africa. The AU's ambitions are more diversified involving many aspects including politics, diplomacy, development and security.

Accepting the system of multi-party democracy after the Cold War, many African countries have formed and cemented their own democratic systems. But military coups and unconstitutional power transfers have occurred in Africa from time to time. Many countries encounter political instability during elections. By promoting the African Peer Review Mechanism

and opposing power grabs by unconstitutional methods, the AU has pushed forward Africa's democratic development. Moreover, the AU has insisted on projecting a shared voice on international issues for the past decade. It values independent and diversified diplomacy, actively participates in international cooperation and dialogue, and intends to maximize Africa's interests in international cooperation through active involvement.

Shortly before the AU was established, African countries designed a new plan for development and security, the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The plan blueprints Africa's mid- and long-term development in the 21st century, with the aim of ensuring a bigger role in globalization and promoting sustainable growth and development. During the past 10 years, Africa's annual average economic growth rate has been maintained at about 5 percent. It is now widely regarded as a continent with the greatest development potential.

However, Africa's development and renaissance have been challenged by instability caused by armed conflicts and the spread of terrorism. The AU has made unremitting efforts to cope with these challenges. But because of Western intervention and limited capability and resources in Africa, the AU has run into setbacks while confronting problems in its own way. Now there even appears to be a dangerous tendency of the AU being marginalized.

Finding a balance between independent peacekeeping and foreign intervention, enhancing the AU's capability of solving Africa's crises, and protecting peace and stability on the continent have become a priority. Besides, Africa must solve deeper economic problems such as poverty, inequality, a weak economic foundation, a narrow economic structure and a widening income gap. ■



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COVER STORY

COOPERATION IN THE FAST LANE

China and the AU speed up partnership By Zhang Zhongxiang



The author is deputy director of the African Studies Center at the Shanghai Normal University

Since its establishment in 2002, the influence of the African Union (AU) has continued to grow. It is now becoming the banner leading the unity and joint development of African countries. In the meantime, the China-AU relationship is further deepening based on traditional cooperation and friendship between China and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the AU's predecessor.

Cooperation between China and the AU made significant progress in 2012. In January 2012, the AU Conference Center and Office Complex in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia—constructed with the aid of China—officially went into service just before the 18th AU Summit. Jia Qinglin, then Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, who attended the inauguration of the new AU headquarters, hailed it as a gift from the Chinese Government and people, as well as a symbol of the growing China-Africa relationship. The project started in November 2008 and was completed at the end of 2011, with a total cost of about 800 million yuan (\$127 million). During Jia's January 2012 visit to Africa, China also announced it would provide a total of 600 million yuan (\$96 million) in aid to the AU in the following three years. Prior to that, China donated \$1 million to the AU every year.

In July 2012, the AU attended the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing for the first time as an official member, fulfilling the long-held wishes of the AU for participating in the FOCAC.

One of the highlights of the Fifth FOCAC Ministerial Conference was to strengthen cooperation on African peace and security between China and the AU. The action plan adopted at the conference put forth that China will launch the Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security, provide financial support for AU peacekeeping missions in Africa and the development of the African Standby Force, in addition to training more officials in peace and security affairs and peacekeepers for the AU.

Cooperation between China and the OAU began very early. In the 1970s, China started to provide the OAU with assistance such as funding, training, goods and projects, and also conducted cooperation with it in the fields of medical treatment, agriculture and the military. Since the establishment of the AU, China has sent delegations to participate in its summits. In March 2005, China became one of the first countries outside Africa to appoint a representative to the AU. In November 2008, the first China-AU strategic dialogue was held at the AU headquarters, and strategic dialogues have been held every year since.

The AU has been playing an increasingly prominent role in promoting African economic development and integration. With the further deepening of economic globalization, the biggest task for African countries is to develop the economy and improve people's livelihood. In the past 10 years, Africa's average annual economic growth was 5 percent, ranking second in the world after Asia. This has provided a sharp contrast to the pessimistic view held by many countries toward the continent's development potential shortly after the end of the Cold War. The renaissance of Africa driven by the AU has become a consensus of the international community.

The AU has attained notable achievements in promoting African security. It has changed

the traditional principle of non-interference by introducing mandatory intervention in member countries facing major crises. When member countries encounter war crimes, genocide or large-scale humanitarian crises, the AU reserves the right to intervene in accordance with AU Assembly resolutions.

AU leadership has been widely recognized by African countries and the international community. There are missions from around 60 non-African countries and international organizations residing permanently at the AU headquarters. The declarations and resolutions of the AU on many hotspot issues in Africa often become reference points for outside parties to take action.

The AU has a strong interest in cooperating with China. Over the past 30 years, China has seen unprecedented development on its way to becoming the second largest economy in the world. Against this backdrop, some African countries have adopted a "look east" strategy in recent years. In her report to the AU Summit on January 27 this year, AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma expressed hope that African countries can learn from China to speed up their development.

In October 2010, AU leaders proposed the Trans-Africa Highway plan, which includes nine cross-country roads with a total length of 56,683 km. The AU hopes China could play a bigger role in its infrastructure development to promote the continent's integration. China is rich in international cooperation experience in infrastructure construction as well as related technologies. Its huge foreign exchange reserves also serve as an advantage for China to cooperate with the AU in this regard. ■

COVER STORY

AFRICA'S REGIONAL FOCUS

The AU has adopted a socioeconomic-based approach to its integration process

By David Kakaya

The African Union (AU) this year will mark its 50th anniversary since the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), a precursor to the current organization, on May 25, 1963. It was the first demonstration of the continent's desire for integration, displaying a collective spirit that brought together 32 governments to sign the OAU Charter in Addis Ababa, a membership that has since increased to 54.

Africa has made commendable strides in economic and political spheres in spite of a conspiracy of formidable problems. This has largely been possible thanks to integration at both regional and continental levels, which facilitated the upgrading of economies of scale by implementing cross-border development programs. Indeed, it was the recognition of these problems that inspired yester-year Pan-Africanists in founding the OAU.

Underscored prior to the formation of the OAU was that integration was a process and not an event.

The process that saw the founding of the OAU as an integrationist body had its inspiration beyond the continent. One such source emanated from the Bandung Conference in April 1955, with the gathering of 29 governments of African, Middle Eastern and Asian countries. Pan-Africanists at this conference brought to Africa lessons of integration already learned.

China and India are credited with having mooted the concept of integration in 1954. Significantly, the integration concept was captured in a resolution which sought "to build solidarity among recently independent nations."

Africa's foremost Pan-Africanist, Ghana's first President Kwame Nkrumah, best summed up the continent's future: "Here is a challenge which destiny has thrown out to the leaders of Africa. It is for us to grasp that golden opportunity to prove that the genius of African people can surmount the separatist tendencies in sovereign nationhood by coming together speedily, for the sake of Africa's greater glory

and infinite well-being, into a Union of African States."

There are fundamental differences in the focus of the OAU and the AU, which received its new name on July 9, 2002, in Durban, South Africa. While the OAU's focus was on political integration, the AU seeks to address social and economic issues and also tackle challenges brought about by globalization.

The OAU's first challenge was to unify two groups. These were Casablanca and Monrovia groups. The former, regarded as Communist and led by Ghana's Nkrumah, advocated a federation of African states. The group included Algeria, Morocco, Egypt and Libya.

The Monrovia Group, led by Seder Senghor, Senegal's first President, wanted gradual unity achieved through economic cooperation. It did not support a political federation. The camp included Nigeria, Liberia and Ethiopia.

The AU has adopted a regional approach in its integration, instituting strategies that moved away from politics toward socioeconomic issues. At the policy level, member states have established the Pan-African Parliament, led at the implementation level by former South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who chairs the AU Commission.

This regional integration consists of several groupings. In West Africa, there is the Economic Community of West African States, with a conflict interventionist force, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group. The Horn of Africa is integrated through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

The East African Community has expanded from the three countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to include Rwanda and Burundi. South Sudan has applied with Somalia next in line. In Central African countries, integration centers around Francophone. These include the Central African Republic and Gabon. Most of the North African countries congregate around the Maghreb Union as well as the predominantly

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Middle Eastern Arab League.

Further south, the Southern African Development Community member countries were enjoined in a customs union for the promotion of trade. Integration has been enhanced by membership in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation. Its primary purpose is to protect and preserve the utilization of the Indian Ocean resources sustainably.

The challenges that now face Africa's integration going forward can be grouped into natural and man-made. Natural challenges include drought, floods and diseases, like HIV/AIDS and malaria. Man-made challenges cross over political, social and economic lines. Political challenges include democratization, human rights, violation of the rule of law, conflicts and impunity. Social challenges are made up of brain drain, illiteracy, poverty and corruption, while economic challenges revolve around heavy debt burdens, marginalization, insufficient foreign investment, trade inequalities and a high population growth rate.

Despite these obstacles, African integration can help the continent secure a place and voice on the global stage, initiating African development in education, information and communications technology, culture, research and traditional knowledge. And in the words of Ghanaian Kingsley Amoako, former UN Under Secretary General, "Unity will not make us rich, but it can make it difficult for Africa and the African peoples to be disregarded and humiliated." ■

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COVER STORY

LEADING AFRICA FORWARD



Bheki Langa

As African countries gear up to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the predecessor of the African Union (AU), *Beijing Review* spoke with several African ambassadors to China to solicit their opinions on the AU's role and future development. Excerpts follow:

Beijing Review: In your view, what role has the AU played in strengthening African unity over the past half century?

South African Ambassador Bheki Langa: The 50th anniversary comes at a moment when Africa is on the rise, as reflected by the fact that Africa is home to six of the 10 fastest-growing economies in the world. This was achieved because of the deep economic and political reforms that have taken place on the continent, spearheaded by the transformed AU.

As the coordinating body for the continent's political and economic programs, the OAU was instrumental in fostering cohesion, unity and common purpose in otherwise disparate countries with different but common challenges related to underdevelopment, poverty and lack of economic infrastructure.

The OAU's transformation into the AU in 2002 has provided the needed impetus toward institutionalizing the necessary reforms to move the continent from what *The Economist* called the "Dark Continent" on one of its covers, to what it today recognizes as a "Rising Continent."

The common continental objective is to define a trajectory for Africa to extricate itself from the status of development laggard. Indeed, the start of the new millennium has seen the reawakening of discourse and action on African development and renewal.

Cameroonian Ambassador Martin Mpana: The role played then by the OAU and now by the AU has been instrumental in harmonizing African policies in various fields. The AU was strengthened through various decisions and actions: total liberation of Africa from colonialism and all forms of discrimination, including apartheid; promoting unity and solidarity amongst African states; coordinating and intensifying cooperation and efforts

to ensure better living conditions for the peoples of Africa; and defending the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of African states.

It's worth mentioning that the OAU/AU is the only African institution that brings together the continent's heads of state, so they can discuss common African issues and make decisions on Africa at the top level. Therefore, the AU plays a crucial role in terms of coordination.

Pan-Africanism and the African renaissance are the themes of the AU Golden Jubilee celebrations. Why are these two themes so important?

Ethiopian Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin: They are so important because the ideology of pan-Africanism is still a burning desire and the roots of this movement go beyond the days of the establishment of the OAU. It actually started in the movement of the African diaspora across the Atlantic in North America and the Caribbean islands. There were major movements for the political and human rights of the African diaspora led by leaders like Marcus Garvey, an African Jamaican.

When this was adopted by the founders and forefathers of the OAU in the 1960s, this pan-African ideology was meant to liberate black people from colonialism, slavery and injustice, and we see this pan-African ideology and spirit as more relevant today than ever because Africa is still not liberated from backwardness, and millions of Africans are still living in underdeveloped conditions.

Africa is a continent rich in culture. It may be backward in terms of development, but Africa is the cradle of humanity and also inspired many ancient and Middle Eastern civilizations that the Africans helped advance in trade, shipbuilding and many other areas.

The renaissance of Africa is not only a dream about what Africa was in the past, but also looking to the opportunities that Africa can find in international economic, political, diplomatic and security arenas.

Cameroonian Ambassador Martin Mpana: Pan-Africanism and the African renaissance reflect the historical and contemporary roots of the continent.

Pan-Africanism refers to the vision of the founding fathers of the OAU/AU, who aimed at fighting against colonialism, apartheid and all kinds of oppression and discrimination.

The African renaissance refers to the strong political will and the consensus reached at the 1999 OAU Summit in Sirte, Libya, on the need for Africa to embark on transformations toward stronger unity by reinforcing the role of regional economic communities. This coincided with the birth of the AU in a changing global order.

In what ways can the AU foster pan-Africanism and the African renaissance?

Ethiopian Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin: Truly, the AU is the major leader, and probably the only major leader that can move all other mechanisms toward the creation and building of genuine unity among Africans and African countries.

To unite Africa into one prosperous and peaceful continent cannot be achieved in one go, or in a short period of time. This unity will definitely have to be built brick by brick, stone by stone with a solid foundation, and will require a comprehensive approach.

The AU is truly the vehicle for this unity. What the AU can do is what the member countries of the AU are prepared to do—they have to prepare to seek their sovereign interests stage by stage, to empower the AU, to address issues in the interest of our collective will and desire. And there is no substitute for the AU in leading the continent toward unity.

Algerian Ambassador Hassane Rabehi: Since its creation in 1963, the OAU made every effort to promote greater African



Martin Mpana



Seyoum Mesfin



Hassane Rabehi



Nolana Ta Ama



Julio Morais

economic, social, cultural and political integration. The AU has embarked on a struggle for a united Africa, economic independence and development that would change the lives of Africans for the better.

Among the contributions to the African renaissance by the AU, I would like to mention: adoption and implementation of the Language Plan of Action; establishment of the African Academy of Languages in 2006 in Bamako; strengthening the work of the Center for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition, based in Niamey; the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, adopted in Khartoum; the Pan-African Cultural Festival held in Algiers, Algeria in 1965 and 2009; and the African Renaissance Monument in Dakar.

What are the challenges facing the AU today? How can these challenges be met?

Ethiopian Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin: Africa is a continent endowed with huge natural resources of paramount importance to the development of the continent and the global community. But in spite of this potential, Africa is still one of the least developed continents today. Africa's human resources have to be transformed into human capital. We have to advance in education, science and technology. We have to transform our natural resources into real capital.

The AU has fought harder than any other organization to make the collective African voice heard. Africa is one of the continents affected by the impact of climate change not of its own making. Africa can collectively negotiate for mitigation and adaptation of the negative impact of climate change and ensure that this global threat is averted through collective action. We need to interact with the global community to do this, so the AU in particular is our collective voice to safeguard the interests of Africa.

Algerian Ambassador Hassane Rabehi: Education, self-sufficient food production, unemployment, illegal immigration, refugees, agriculture, climate change, and

a lack of financial means are some of the challenges for the AU. Health poses a great challenge, and is being dealt with by accelerating reduction of maternal mortality in Africa and by fighting the scourges of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria.

The AU is aware of the challenges that lie ahead of us, and will do everything in its power to achieve the goals of the continental agenda, including stability, security and development.

How do you see the future of China-Africa relations?

Togolese Ambassador Nolana Ta Ama: I would say the partner that has been most actively on Africa's side is China, which has, especially since 1949 [when the People's

Republic of China was founded], developed diplomatic relations based on mutual cooperation aimed at dealing with all challenges facing the continent.

Cape Verde's Ambassador Julio Morais: China has been, and continues to be, the AU's strong and faithful ally, a commitment that is fully illustrated by the new AU headquarters building, which was donated by the Chinese Government. China, since the 1960s, has helped Africa face its difficulties and also supported its development endeavors, either bilaterally or multilaterally. ■

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AWAY WITH WORDS: Shao Dan, a teacher from China, teaches Chinese at a high school near Pretoria on February 25

High-Level China-Africa Investment Forum

One of the three high-level forums to be held during the Second China (Beijing) International Fair for Trade in Services from May 28-June 1, 2013

Date: May 30, 2013

Venue: China National Convention Center

Hosts: China Society for World Trade Organization Studies
Beijing Review

Sponsor: China Africa Industrial Forum

A business forum focusing on the themes:

- Prospects and Risks for Chinese Businesses Investing in Africa
- China's Policies and Environment for African Enterprises Doing Business in China

Objectives:

- » To further partnerships at both business and government levels in the area of trade in services;
- » To promote mutual investment opportunities;
- » To provide insight into challenges facing Chinese and African businesses making overseas investments; and
- » To establish a platform for interaction between Chinese and African business people, discussing bilateral investment trends in trade in services and offering suggestions for improving investment environments

