

CHINA-AFRICA

DIALOGUE SERIES

Statement from the China-Africa Wildlife Conservation Council

The China-Africa Wildlife Conservation Council is a group of civil society and business leaders convened by the African Wildlife Foundation and the Aspen Institute to serve as a people-to-people platform for supporting China-Africa cooperation on wildlife and wild lands conservation, sustainable economic development, and governance. This Council exists as a cultural and economic exchange to deepen cooperation and support the governments of China and the African states in the joint commitment to protecting African wildlife and expanding wild lands conservation as the foundation of a sustainable human economy in Africa.

The China-Africa Wildlife and Conservation Council strongly commends and supports the governments of China and the African states for their active commitment to conserve Africa's wildlife – reflected in the 2016-2018 Action Plan proposed by **6th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)** in Johannesburg. The group further commends the Chinese and African governments on their recognition of the need to tackle both local poaching and international organized crime.

The China-Africa Wildlife Conservation Council has convened a group of African and Chinese business and civil society leaders for the past two years regarding the opportunities for cooperation on conservation and development challenges, including the African ambassadors to China in Beijing.

WHEREAS this year's FOCAC specifically addresses the need for China to proactively and collaboratively work with African Governments to conserve the continent's unique wildlife, including strengthening actions already undertaken to stop habitat destruction, stop wildlife poaching and trafficking, and to stop the demand for African wildlife products in Asia and Africa;

WHEREAS intensifying wildlife protection will be a key topic on the agenda during FOCAC this week, where talks will address the protection of wildlife habitat and curbing the illegal wildlife trade;

WHEREAS Africa's human economy is based on its rich natural resource heritage, which includes its unique wildlife and large wild lands ecosystems that must be conserved with a firm commitment to protect habitat and improve the livelihoods of communities living in and adjacent to wildlife areas; and

WHEREAS President Xi Jinping announced in South Africa this week that China will put high emphasis on wildlife protection and proactively participate in international cooperation on wildlife conservation.

THEREFORE, the China-Africa Wildlife Conservation Council recommends that China extend its ongoing collaboration with African countries to conserve natural wild land habitats by strengthening and expanding the continent's protected area system for wildlife, ecosystem services, tourism, the benefit of surrounding communities and a sustainable, equitable future.

The China-Africa Wildlife Conservation Council recommends that the FOCAC Declaration and Action Plan should explicitly reference the need to set aside and protect large areas for terrestrial and marine conservation.

The China-Africa Wildlife Conservation Council sees strong opportunities to align Africa's sustainable development goals with China's commitment to help African industrialization and agricultural modernization. Agricultural production must be sustainably intensified and improved on existing lands to allow other lands to flourish naturally as large landscapes for conservation, wildlife and other economic development associated with wild lands and for future generations. Further, if conservation and sustainable development are going to succeed, jobs need to be created so that Africa's large youth population will not depend on exploiting natural resources to achieve a sustainable livelihood – particularly for local people living in and adjacent to parks and wildlife areas.

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