

**Symposium “Strengthening Community Resilience under the FOCAC
Framework”**

By

H.E. Ambassador Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, PhD
Permanent Representative of the AU to the People's Republic of China

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Madam Olga Dzhumaeva, Head of East Asia Regional Delegation of IFRC

Excellencies African Ambassadors and diplomats here present

Mr. Zhou Hong, Chairperson of the Academic Committee of the International Cooperation Center, Member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Distinguished representatives from Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies of AU Member States

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I wish to thank IFRC, for initiating this symposium, and for inviting the AU Permanent Mission to be part of it.

I am delighted to see representatives from Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies of more than 20 African countries here in Beijing, participating in this important initiative. As you are aware, this year marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Africa and China, and has also been designated the Year of Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges. Under the visionary leadership of His Excellency President Xi Jinping and His Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, China and Africa have continued to elevate the Sino-African partnership. Your presence here is a vivid testament of the strategic and comprehensive nature of the China-Africa partnership.

Over the past two hours, we have come together with diverse perspectives and mandates. Yet, what has emerged from our conversations is a shared recognition that community resilience lies at the heart of the future we aspire for both China and Africa. Whether we spoke

of disaster preparedness, health security, or food systems, the message has been consistent: resilience begins with people, with communities, and with local actors who are often the first to respond and the last to leave.

As you are aware, the African Union has established the AU Humanitarian Agency, headquartered in Kampala, Uganda. The agency is mandated to ensure effective humanitarian action that is fit for purpose and address future challenges. The Agency is anchored on the spirit and vision underpinning Agenda 2063, which envisions an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa — driven by its people. The seven core aspirations of Agenda 2063 ranging from inclusive growth to people-centered development, reflect the Africa we want, which resonates with our discussions today.

The AU continues to provide various forms of humanitarian assistance to communities in Central Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, the Great Lakes, the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa. In the Lake Chad Basin, the AU in partnership with the Lake Chad Basin Commission developed and implemented the *Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram Affected Areas* with a view of balancing kinetic and non-kinetic interventions in the area. The targeted interventions contributed significantly to enhancing community resilience.

You will agree with me that the humanitarian dimension has become an increasingly important pillar in China-Africa cooperation, including through the dedicated article in the FOCAC Beijing Action Plan on Red Cross and Red Crescent cooperation—a first of its kind. This reflects a recognition that humanitarian actors are indispensable partners in building lasting resilience. What matters now is not what we have said, but what we will do. The ideas shared today must not end in this room. Whether it

is through solid programme cooperation, or through new platforms for dialogue such as today's symposium, we should ensure that our commitments lead to concrete improvements on the ground.

At today's symposium, we have witnessed the tangible impacts of the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, which directly contribute to strengthening resilience at the sub-national, national and regional levels. I am also impressed by IFRC's strong local presence and network, and I encourage it to forge stronger partnerships with the AU Humanitarian Agency as well as the AU's Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development to optimize their collective engagements in providing effective response to humanitarian challenges on the continent within the context of Agenda 2063 and FOCAC.

As we conclude, I call on all of us to turn today's insights into tomorrow's actions. The China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges is not merely a symbolic milestone—it is an invitation to deepen our cooperation and scale up our impact. Let us ensure that the resilience we have spoken of becomes a reality for those who need it most.

I would like to thank each and everyone of you individually and collectively for your participation and invaluable inputs.

To those who will be traveling to different destinations, I wish you journey mercies.

Thank you all for your kind attention and have a good evening.

Xie Xie.