



An Integrated, Prosperous
and Peaceful Africa

Permanent Mission of the AU to China

Opening Remarks at the 7th China-Africa Media Forum Cooperation

By

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Beijing -- 20 August 2026

HER Excellency Cao Shumin, Minister of the National Radio and Television Administration of China

Excellencies Honourable Ministers of Information and Communication and Heads of Delegations of AU Member States here present

Excellencies Ambassadors of AU Member States accredited to the People's Republic of China

His Excellency Sima Hong, Vice Mayor of Beijing Municipal People's Government

Representatives of African and Chinese Media Houses

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning

It is both a distinct pleasure and a profound honour for me to address this distinguished gathering on behalf of **His Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the African Union Commission**, whose warm greetings and highest regards I have the honour to convey to the Government and People of the People's Republic of China, and to all AU Member States attending this important Forum.

Allow me, at the outset, to express the deep appreciation of the African Union Commission for the steadfast commitment of the Government of China to the advancement of Africa-China relations. Under the visionary leadership of **His Excellency President Xi Jinping**, China and Africa have continued to elevate their partnership to unprecedented heights, transforming a relationship forged in solidarity and mutual support into one of the most consequential strategic partnerships of the twenty-first century.

We commend President Xi for advancing multilateral cooperation through his Four Global Initiatives on Development, Security, Civilization and Governance. The African Union welcomes these Four Initiatives as they align with Africa's transformative agenda, and reinforce multilateralism by expanding the voice of the Global South in international decision-making.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Africa stands today at a defining moment in its history. Across our continent, a profound transformation is underway. Guided by **Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want**, African nations are advancing a collective vision of peace, prosperity, innovation,

industrialisation and continental integration. We are implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area, investing in digital transformation, strengthening democratic governance and unlocking the immense potential of the youngest population in the world. As Africa rises, so too, is its determination to shape global narratives, contribute to international solutions and occupy its rightful place as an influential actor in the twenty-first century.

This gathering takes place at a particularly significant moment. This year marks the **70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Africa and China** and the **Year of Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges**. These milestones remind us that the relationship between Africa and China transcends commerce and diplomacy. It is a relationship that is rooted in solidarity, strengthened through mutual respect and sustained by a shared commitment to development, multilateralism and South-South cooperation.

You will agree with me that in this rapidly evolving global environment, the media has become much more than a channel of communication. It is now a strategic instrument of development, a guardian of cultural identity, a catalyst for economic opportunity and a powerful force in shaping international perceptions. The stories that nations tell about themselves influence investment decisions, strengthen social cohesion, inspire innovation and determine how people understand one another. It is therefore imperative that Africa becomes not simply a consumer of information, but a producer, curator and exporter of knowledge, ideas and paradigms.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme of this Forum, **"Share Development Opportunities, Shape the Audio-Visual Future"** is therefore both timely and visionary. It recognises that the future of media will be determined not simply by technology, but by partnerships, creativity, innovation and the ability of societies to harness communication as a force for inclusive development and human progress.

In light of this, I would like to share three critical observations.

First, we must elevate audio-visual industries from cultural assets to strategic engines of economic transformation, development and people-to-people connectivity.

Throughout history, stories have shaped civilisations. Today, audio-visual industries possess the power to connect cultures, create jobs, stimulate innovation and expand economic opportunities. Across Africa, the creative economy is emerging as one of the most dynamic sectors, driven by the energy, imagination and entrepreneurial spirit of our youth.

The future of Africa-China cooperation in this sector must therefore move beyond traditional content exchange towards the creation of integrated value chains that support film production, broadcasting, animation, gaming, digital content creation and cultural entrepreneurship. We must build partnerships that generate employment, attract investment and unlock new sources of growth across our economies.

Equally important, we must ensure that Africa's story is told in all its richness, diversity and complexity. For too long, Africa has often been viewed through lenses that do not reflect the aspirations, achievements and realities of its people. We seek a future in which African voices speak with confidence, authenticity and authority. We seek a future in which Africa is not defined by external narratives but by its own creativity, innovation and resilience. Through greater cooperation between African and Chinese media institutions, we can tell stories that promote mutual understanding, foster trust and highlight the immense opportunities that exist across our two regions.

Second, we must harness the transformative power of digital technologies and artificial intelligence while ensuring that innovation remains inclusive, ethical and people-centred.

We are witnessing a technological revolution of unprecedented scale. Artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, immersive media and next-generation communication platforms are reshaping how information is created, distributed and consumed. These technologies have the potential to democratize knowledge, amplify voices and accelerate development.

For Africa, digital transformation represents not merely a technological transition but a development imperative. It offers opportunities to leapfrog traditional barriers, expand educational access, enhance public service delivery, strengthen governance and connect millions of citizens to new economic opportunities.

Yet technology must remain a tool that serves humanity rather than the other way around. As we embrace artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, we must ensure they are guided by the principles of inclusivity, fairness, transparency and accountability. We must bridge rather than widen digital divides. We must empower rather than marginalise. We must create technological ecosystems that respect national priorities, promote digital sovereignty and advance the public good.

China and Africa possess a historic opportunity to collaborate in building digital partnerships that expand technological capacity, strengthen innovation ecosystems and equip future generations with the skills necessary to thrive in the digital age. Together, we can ensure that technological progress contributes to sustainable development and shared prosperity for all our peoples.

Third, we must invest boldly in human capital, professional excellence and institutional capacity as the foundation for the future of media cooperation.

Technology alone cannot drive transformation. Infrastructure alone cannot guarantee success. The greatest resource possessed by any nation is its people.

Africa's demographic dividend is one of its greatest strategic advantages. Our continent's youth are creative, ambitious, technologically savvy and eager to contribute to global progress. The future of journalism, broadcasting, digital innovation and creative industries will depend on our ability to nurture this extraordinary talent.

We must therefore strengthen exchanges between media professionals, expand scholarship opportunities, deepen cooperation among universities and research institutions, and establish long-term mechanisms for knowledge transfer and skills development. We must invest in leadership, innovation and creativity. We must build institutions capable of sustaining excellence and adapting to the rapidly changing media environment.

At the African Union, we firmly believe that empowering our youth is not merely a policy choice; it is a strategic necessity. Every investment in human capital is an investment in peace, prosperity and sustainable development. Every opportunity provided to a young journalist, filmmaker, producer or digital innovator strengthens the foundations of Africa's future.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Africa is no longer viewed solely through the prism of potential. Africa is increasingly becoming a continent of performance, innovation and opportunity. Our agency in global affairs continues to grow, our voice continues to strengthen, and our partnerships continue to expand. We seek international cooperation founded on equality, mutual respect, shared benefit and a common commitment to building a better future for humanity.

The partnership between Africa and China stands as an important example of what can be achieved when nations engage on the basis of solidarity, mutual respect and common aspirations. Let us therefore seize the momentum generated by this Forum to deepen cooperation in content creation, digital innovation, technological development, institutional partnerships and talent cultivation.

Let us work together to ensure that the voices of Africa are heard more clearly, that the stories of Africa are seen more widely, and that the people of Africa and China continue to learn from one another in a spirit of friendship and cooperation.

Excellencies, as I conclude let us ensure that the media becomes not merely a reflection of our partnership, but a transformative force that advances development,

promotes understanding, strengthens peace and helps build the shared future that our peoples deserve.

Long live the Africa-China Friendship.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Xie Xie!