

**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION**



**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC PLANNING
AND DIRECTOR – GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION,**

HON. OBETH MBUIPAHA KANDJOZE,

**AT THE OCCASION OF CHINA-NAMIBIA THINK TANKS
AND MEDIA DIALOGUE MEETING,**

ON 29 JULY 2019.

Director of Ceremony

Your Excellency, Mr. Zhang Yiming, Ambassador of the Peoples' Republic of China to the Republic of Namibia

Distinguished Guests of the Chinese delegation

Distinguished Invited Guests

Senior Government Officials

Representatives of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone present at this China-Namibia Think Tanks and Media Dialogue Meeting. It gives me great pleasure to meet with you, Ambassador, and your delegation to take forward our friendship and long standing bilateral relations.
2. Namibia would like to acknowledge with gratitude the assistance rendered to date by the Chinese Government to the people of Namibia. We are committed and endeavour to ensure that such assistance is put to good use in an effort to make a positive dent in poverty reduction, education and other challenges faced by our country.

3. Namibia and China share a long-standing tradition of friendship and a common history to which our two countries are closely bound. 29 years ago, just a day after Namibia's Independence, Namibia and China officially established diplomatic relations and since then, we have enjoyed an extremely intense and fruitful partnership, which has been underpinned by very successful development cooperation.

4. In the 21st century, maintaining peace, seeking stability and promoting development have become a shared aspiration of people across the globe. In order to further strengthen the friendly cooperation between China and Africa to jointly meet the challenges of economic globalization and to promote common development, the Chinese Government made the proposal of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 at the Ministerial Conference in Beijing which was supported by the majority of African countries. The Forum serves as a cooperation mechanism to pursue collective consultation and dialogue between China and Africa.

5. Since inception in 2000, the FOCAC has gradually become an important platform for collective dialogue and an effective mechanism for enhancing practical cooperation between China and African countries and has provided the political umbrella in which bilateral relations are fostered.

6. Namibia has been a beneficiary of FOCAC since its initial stage and the following projects are under-way:
 - the construction of the Airport Road (Phase 2B) into a dual carriage road,
 - the construction of the National Youth Service (NYS) Training Centre (Phase 2),
 - the Space Tracking, Telemetry and Command Station/Satellite Data Receiving Ground Station and
 - the construction of the four rural schools

7. On the basis of the successful conclusion of the ten major China-Africa cooperation plans adopted at the 2015 FOCAC Johannesburg Summit, the FOCAC Beijing Summit in 2018 was even better and more effective. It presents the Eight Major Initiatives based on people-centered cooperation concept, meeting development needs of various African countries and the general aspiration of the African people and laying more emphasis on the relevance and effectiveness of cooperation measures. All in all, the Eight Major Initiatives correspond quite well with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, AU Agenda 2063 and the development strategies of individual African countries.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentleman,

8. In 2013, the Chinese President H.E. Xi Jinping put forward the initiative of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which is commonly known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As we may be aware, the purpose of BRI is to revive the spirit of the ancient Silk Road, focusing on enhancing connectivity and practical cooperation.

9. In September 2018, China and Namibia signed a Memorandum of Understanding on BRI Cooperation during the FOCAC Beijing summit. The aim of the MoU is to promote exchanges of goods, technology, capital and personnel through mutual connectivity and mutual learning with countries that share such willingness to jointly building the Belt and Road through promoting coordinated development and common progress in economy, society and environment.

10. Our national development planning frameworks such as Vision 2030, the Harambee Prosperity Plan, Fifth National Development Plan and the Namibia Logistics Hub Master Plan have much in common with the BRI. Consequently, BRI is aimed at bringing construction funds, high-quality production capacity and advanced technologies to Namibia, promote China's investment and create more jobs for Namibia.

11. Upholding the neighbourhood diplomacy of friendship, sincerity, mutual benefits and inclusiveness, China sticks to the timeless spirit of “win-win cooperation, openness and inclusiveness”, and actively develops neighbourly friendliness and partnership with Belt and Road countries. Based on complementary advantages, mutual benefits and common development, China maintains good momentum for growth in relations with Belt and Road countries and lays more solid foundation for cooperation.

12. The Belt and Road Initiative advocates peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit. It promotes policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds as its major goals; advances practical cooperation in all fields, and works to build a community of shared interests, responsibility and destiny featuring mutual political trust, economic integration and cultural inclusiveness.

13. Ladies and Gentlemen, at this juncture it is worth noting that, some existing projects in Namibia such as Husab mine, Walvis Bay container terminal and several roads construction projects are implemented under the spirit and framework of BRI, meaning that Namibia has already begun to benefit from BRI.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. The Belt and Road Initiative is, thus, a just-in-time initiative. The dream of worldwide unity is becoming universal and popular, resulting from the fact that the world is now at a crossroads, and has to select one of two alternatives. The first is to continue doing business as usual, facing an extensive risk of existence. The second is to make a fundamental change in the world especially to the rules, based on global governance, leading to an improved form of globalization and a desired worldwide harmony.

15. Southern Africa has a well-developed infrastructure network and good economic development, with favourable conditions for participating in the “Belt and Road” cooperation. It is particularly noteworthy that Namibia possesses a superior geographical location, stable political and social environment, good infrastructure and a free investment environment. Namibia is the gateway to southern Africa and is becoming a logistics hub for the southern African region through infrastructure such as ports and roads, which enjoys exceptional advantages in the context of BRI cooperation.

16. Your Excellency, I want to conclude by expressing Namibia’s sincere and fraternal appreciation for the significant support from the Government of the Peoples’ Republic of China, in addressing the country’s development challenges, but even more importantly for the solid relations and cooperation that exists between our two countries.

17. I thank you.