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AFRICA CHINA RELATIONS GAIN MOMEMNTUM WITH HIGH LEVEL VISIT BY CHINESE VICE PREMIER TO THE AFRICAN UNION



Addis Ababa, 25 November 2013- African Union Commission Chairperson Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma has commended the relationship between China and Africa and expressed the desire for it to be enriched further in future.

“You have been with us over the past fifty years, you were with us during our 50th anniversary celebrations of the OAU/AU in May this year and no doubt, you will be with us for the next fifty years”, Dr Dlamini Zuma told Ms Liu Yandong, the Vice Premier of the Chinese government when the two met at the AU Commission today.

Dr Dlamini Zuma was very appreciative of the fact that Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China made his first foreign visit to Africa and that he made time to meet with a group of African Heads of State during the visit. She also reiterated the AU's gratitude for the construction of the Union's headquarters in Addis Ababa.

The relations between African Union and China cover a broad range of socio economic and cultural fields. While appreciating the activities currently being implemented under the existing partnership agreement, the Chairperson said there was need to upscale the cooperation. She highlighted in particular, the fact that Africa needs skilled human resources at this stage of its development, in fields as diverse as agriculture, infrastructure development, health, education and many others. “We need a skills revolution on the continent”, she added by way of emphasis.

The AU is currently engaged in the drafting of Agenda 2063, a framework that will spell out Africa's growth trajectory over the next fifty years, While explaining the agenda to Ms Yandong, the Chairperson expressed her hope that the remaining conflicts would not be a permanent feature, and that the continent needs to get on

with the business of overcoming its developing challenges. In this respect she thanked China for the support it has lent to the African Mission in Somalia, while pointing out that the AU remains seized with resolving issues in Sudan, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Mali. She also highlighted that women in the Sahel region, who have expressed a desire to play their full role in the development and reconstruction of their countries, should be assisted to do so.

Ms Yandong welcomed the comments made by the Chairperson and underscored that her government would continue to work closely with the AU on peace and security and to build cooperation on economic development. “There is a lot we can do to improve people’s livelihoods”, she said, adding that a lot of work is already being done in terms of training as China is hosting a number of African students.

She pointed to four critical areas that the China AU relationship can focus on:
Bilateral relations - wherein there would be increased contacts between Chinese and AU officials, especially in light of the strategic dialogues that regularly take place between the two sides.

Deepening cooperation on development - this would cover such areas as agriculture, manufacturing, women’s development, science, technology transfer and other fields.

Enhancing cooperation on peace and security - One of the serious issues to be discussed under this theme would be the Africa China partnership on peace in Africa. Ms Yandong also took the opportunity to announce that China would be extending further assistance to the tune of \$50 million RMB to AMISOM which she said is now “at a critical stage”.

International Affairs - Ms Yandong said more cooperation between Africa and China would result in an international system that is more equitable and fair, and which would better serve the interests of developing countries. She added that China supports the call to increase representation of developing countries in the United Nations Security Council.

Ms Yandong was accompanied by the Chinese ministers of health and education as well as the Deputy Foreign Affairs minister.

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