



## PRESS RELEASE N°242/2016

**3<sup>rd</sup> Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation: Deputy Chairperson, Erastus Mwencha underscores the importance of Media in shaping the narrative and promoting the rich socio-cultural diversity and economic growth of Africa and China**



**Beijing, China, 21 June 2016** – H.E Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), led an AU delegation to attend the Third Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation on 21 - 22 June 2016, in Beijing, People's Republic of China. Holding under the theme: "Win-win cooperation, common development", the forum which brought together close to 350 high level media professionals and Government Members in Charge of Communication from some 45 African countries, was aimed to deepen cooperation in the media sector and boost the development of Africa- China ties. Participants also exchanged views on expanding new areas of media cooperation, promoting bilateral friendship and common development among others. According to the organisers, the China-Africa Media Cooperation forum is the implementation of one of the outcomes reached during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Media Forum was held under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, supported by the China Radio and TV Co. for International Techno-Economic Cooperation, the Star Times Group and Hixua Film Distribution and Co. It was co-hosted by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of China (SAPPRFT) and the African Union of Broadcasting (AUB).



Addressing participants at the opening ceremony, Mr. Mwencha highlighted three areas of focus which he said was of critical importance for the media to play its rightful role in bridging the gaps between the people of Africa and China. They are: building the capacity of the media through training programs, infrastructure development and institution building; enhance industrialization through transfer technology; and cooperation in cyber

security and digitalization. He stressed that in other “to tell our stories and in fostering the development agenda in our continents, there is need to strengthen the skills and capacity of the media through media networking and media development”, among others. He invited the media representatives as well as the Ministers of Information and Communication to fully contribute in the implementation of the Africa Agenda 2063 and its Ten Year Implementation Plan.



With regards to digitalization of broadcasting and new media development, Mr. Mwencha explained that “we need to strategize on how we can use different multimedia channels including the social media to customize the information for our different categories of audience”. He noted that “Information and Communication Technologies have transformed the way we relay information by diversifying the communication landscape and media is critical in reinforcing the relationship

between Africa and China “as there is so much potential between our two peoples.”

Deputy Chairperson Mwencha expressed appreciation to the Government of China for organizing such a forum which he said comes at a right time when the African continent is highly attracting international investment and its rapidly increasing population constitutes a large market for the world economic growth. Therefore the media has an important role to play in publicizing and promoting the investment opportunities in both China and Africa.

“We need to build the understanding and confidence among our people and to see the opportunities and capacity of all the stakeholders and actors- that is, the government, the private sector and the citizenry to develop our continents” stressed the AUC Deputy Chairperson. (See complete speech of H.E Mwencha on the AU website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) )

On his part, H.E Cai Fuchao, Minister of China SAPPRT said "China will hold firm and adhere to the "genuine, frank, close, and sincere" principle so as to develop media cooperation with Africa in an all-round way. He indicated that the Chinese media will work with their African counterparts to consolidate the basis for their cooperation, expand space for cooperation, and broaden areas of cooperation to promote China-Africa media ties to a new level and make new contributions to the development of the comprehensive China-Africa strategic partnership. The Minister noted that China and African countries have showed the willingness to further enhance exchanges in radio, film and television.

The following thematic issues were discussed during the panel sessions with the Communication Ministers and broadcasters: Policies exchanges on broadcasting and film between China and Africa; Media cooperation and capacity building; Digitalization and development of new media, among other.

**Media Contact:**

**Esther Azaa Tankou, Ag. Director of Information and Communication, African Union Commission (AUC)/ Tel: +251(0) 911361185 / E-mail: [yamboue@africa-union.org](mailto:yamboue@africa-union.org)**

**For further information:**

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: [DIC@african-union.org](mailto:DIC@african-union.org)  
| Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

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