

# **Building a China-Africa Community with a Shared Future and Jointly Realizing the Right to Development**

— *A Review of the First China-Africa Human Rights Seminar*

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**Abstract:** *On August 22, 2025, the first China-Africa Human Rights Seminar was held in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. With the theme of “Building a China-Africa Community with a Shared Future and Jointly Realizing the Right to Development,” the seminar emphasized that poverty eradication and development realization should always be placed at the core of the human rights agenda. More than 200 government officials, human rights scholars, think tank experts, business representatives, and media professionals from China and 44 African countries gathered for in-depth discussions on the theme of the seminar. Combining the practical experience of African countries and the exploration achievements of China in the field of development, especially the extensive experience of China-Africa cooperation, the participants discussed in depth the universal value and practical challenges of the right to development, and shared pathways and practices in poverty reduction, sustainable development, digital transformation, and global governance. Chinese and African participants agreed that the partnership, spirit of solidarity, and shared commitment underpinning the building of a China-Africa Community with a Shared Future are the core driving forces of human rights and development. In the future, China and Africa should continue to work hand in hand to translate the vision of “building a China-Africa Community with a Shared Future” into concrete actions, so as to achieve common development and progress.*

**Keywords:** China-Africa community with a shared future ♦ right to development ♦ human rights governance ♦ South-South cooperation ♦ Belt and Road Initiative

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The year 2025 is of profound historical significance: it marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War and the founding of the United Nations, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bandung Conference, and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). As an important cornerstone of the international human rights system, the eighty years of development of the United Nations have accumulated experience for global human rights

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governance and provided an institutional platform for developing countries, including those in China and Africa.

The First China-Africa Human Rights Seminar was held on August 22, 2025, in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. The seminar was jointly organized by the China Society for Human Rights Studies, the Ethiopian Policy Studies Institute, and Zhejiang Normal University. Focusing on the theme of “Building a China-Africa Community with a Shared Future and Jointly Realizing the Right to Development,” the seminar engaged in in-depth discussions on topics such as poverty reduction cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, sustainable development and human rights protection in the digital age, and international solidarity and the realization of the right to development. The seminar adopted the *Addis Ababa Consensus on the China-Africa Right to Development*, demonstrating that China and Africa are forming a human rights concept centered on development while taking into account national conditions, and are continuously enhancing their discourse power within the global human rights governance system. This consensus echoes the *Dar es Salaam Consensus on China-Africa Cooperation*, adopted at the 13<sup>th</sup> China-Africa Think Tank Forum in 2024. Article 1 of the *China-Africa Dar es Salaam Consensus* emphasizes “pursuing independent development, prioritizing development, and putting people first,” calls for the implementation of the Global Development Initiative, establishes the right to development as a universal human right, and advocates consistently adhering to development for the people, by the people, and with its benefits shared by the people. As the world’s largest developing country, China has consistently committed itself to achieving common development together with Africa and firmly supports African countries’ sovereignty and their right to independent development.<sup>1</sup>

The seminar emphasized that the right to development is the foundation for the realization of other human rights. Many participants pointed out that, for numerous developing countries still facing basic survival challenges, poverty remains the primary obstacle to the realization of human rights. China’s poverty alleviation practices are widely regarded as typical examples through which development promotes human rights, providing valuable reference for the Global South. Participants generally opposed the politicization and instrumentalization of human rights issues, arguing that countries should independently explore paths of human

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Heng and Liu Hongwu, *The Concept and Practice of China-Africa Co-Construction of Modernization in the Context of the Global South: An Interpretation of the China-Africa Dar es Salaam Consensus* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press (China), 2024).

rights development suited to their own national conditions. China-Africa cooperation follows the principles of mutual respect, equality, and mutual benefit; it is an important example of South-South cooperation and a significant model for promoting the realization of the right to development and building a new type of international relations.

## **I. Human Rights Development and Governance from the Perspective of the China-Africa Community with a Shared Future**

### **A. China-Africa cooperation on human rights is of great significance**

At present, China-Africa relations have entered a new stage of jointly building an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era. In September 2024, the *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2025-2027)* made forward-looking arrangements for China-Africa exchanges and cooperation on human rights, explicitly stating that “the development of human rights should be people-centered, and that all countries have the right to follow a path of human rights development that suits their own national conditions, so as to realize an Africa with good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.”<sup>2</sup> Both sides expressed their commitment to carrying out exchanges and cooperation on human rights on the basis of mutual respect and equality, jointly organizing human rights exchange and training programs, and holding a China-Africa Forum for Human Rights Cooperation. Meanwhile, they firmly oppose the politicization of human rights issues, oppose interference in other countries’ internal affairs under the pretext of human rights, and support enhancing the representation and voice of developing countries in multilateral human rights institutions.

Jiang Jianguo, member of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee, vice-chairperson of its Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee, and executive vice-president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, stated that, as a firm advocate, practitioner, and promoter of the right to development, China has always maintained that the right to development is an inalienable basic human right. China has remained committed to an independent path of development centered on the people, to upholding multilateralism, to breaking the deadlock in global development, and to helping the international community bridge the cooperation gap, thereby creating practical and feasible conditions for the universal enjoyment of the right to development by all countries. Chen Hai, Chinese ambassador to Ethiopia, also

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, *China-Africa Cooperation Forum — Beijing Action Plan (2025-2027)*. September 5, 2024, accessed August 31, 2025, [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ziliao\\_674904/1179\\_674909/202409/t20240905\\_11485697.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ziliao_674904/1179_674909/202409/t20240905_11485697.shtml)

pointed out that amid changes unseen in a century, China, as the world's largest developing country, has consistently upheld the common values of humanity — peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom — and actively participated in United Nations human rights affairs and international human rights cooperation. Africa, as the continent with the greatest concentration of developing countries, has long been committed to protecting the rights and interests of developing countries and enhancing the voice of the Global South on human rights issues. Precisely because China and Africa are highly aligned in their human rights concepts and share highly consistent development aspirations, the two sides enjoy enormous potential and broad prospects for cooperation in the field of human rights. Fekadu Tsega, director-general of the Policy Studies Institute of Ethiopia, said that the concept of a “community with a shared future for mankind” transcends national borders and differences in culture and systems, and that no country can address global challenges alone. Human rights are essential to lasting peace and sustainable development, and can be realized only through cooperation, dialogue, and mutual respect.

The holding of the First China-Africa Human Rights Seminar not only accords with the new stage of China-Africa cooperation's advance toward high-quality development, but also responds to the general expectation of the international community for a fairer, more just, and more inclusive system of human rights governance. It fully demonstrates the major practical significance and far-reaching strategic value of China-Africa human rights cooperation.

### **B. China-Africa cooperation in poverty reduction and infrastructure demonstrates the fundamental value of protecting the right to subsistence**

National prosperity and stability of sovereignty constitute the fundamental guarantee for people's pursuit of a better life. At present, the human rights situation in some developing countries remains a cause for concern, mainly due to frequent external interference, constrained economic development, and insufficient governance capacity. Liu Hongwu, director of the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University, pointed out that sovereignty and human rights are mutually reinforcing. Sovereignty entails the right of a state to independently choose its political system, economic model, and development path; only with full sovereignty and sound governance capacity can a state provide lasting guarantees for the subsistence and development of its people. For this reason, China and Africa, in their cooperation on poverty reduction and infrastructure, closely integrate the enhancement of independent development capacity with the improvement of people's livelihoods, thereby consolidating the foundation of the right to subsistence through pragmatic

cooperation. This shared understanding is grounded in a profound conception of development: Human rights are not inborn rights, but historical achievements forged through national development and the arduous struggles of the people.

This conception of development carries profound significance in the African context. Many participating scholars noted that the root cause of numerous human rights issues in Africa lies in extreme poverty. Wang Heng, executive director of the think tank and deputy director of the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University, argued that addressing the food crisis is the foremost task in protecting the rights to subsistence and development in Africa. Africa is currently the region with the highest concentration of people suffering from hunger; the food crisis not only directly threatens health and life security, but also severely constrains sustainable economic development and may even trigger social unrest. Mohamed Osman Omar, state minister for Family and Human Rights of Somalia, stated that poverty is not merely a lack reflected in economic data, but also signifies the deprivation of a dignified life and the right to development, constituting a profound structural human rights issue. For Somalia, a country frequently affected by conflict and in urgent need of reconstruction, poverty eradication is not only an economic objective but also a fundamental defense of human dignity. Over the past four decades, China's poverty alleviation efforts have brought about profound transformations in its social structure and accumulated rich and practical experience in large-scale infrastructure development, agricultural modernization, and investment in human capital. These experiences provide valuable reference for African countries, including Somalia.

Infrastructure and energy cooperation have become important pillars for advancing the realization of the right to development. Crispin Kugiza Kaheru, a member of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, noted that the Belt and Road Initiative has facilitated the implementation of infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, and ports, not only creating development opportunities for African youth, but also making education and healthcare resources more accessible, thereby providing more solid protection for countless lives. Francis Kaboneka, a member of the Rwanda National Commission for Human Rights, observed that the Initiative not only provides African countries with support in infrastructure, markets, and capital, but more importantly, it redefines the meaning of development and growth, with development in essence being about "empowerment" and "capacity-building." Luo Liangcai, deputy director of the Economics and Technology Research Institute of China National Petroleum Corporation, pointed out that China-Africa energy cooperation has been a process of mutual benefit and win-win outcomes; through BRI

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projects, the benefits of energy cooperation have reached various regions, transforming underground resources into valuable assets that protect human rights and the right to development. Justus Tusiti Wanjiru, director of the Corporate Center at the Africa Policy Institute (Kenya), stated that the Belt and Road Initiative has built bridges of physical, digital, and cultural connectivity, enabling Africa and China to pursue development together as partners rather than through directives.

More importantly, the value of China-Africa cooperation has transcended the bilateral level and has become an important force for promoting global human rights protection and South-South cooperation. Nuhu J. Egya, chairman of Citizens' Liberties Committee of the Nigerian Bar Association, pointed out that close China-Africa cooperation has become an important component of South-South cooperation and a key measure for advancing human rights protection in Africa. Frederick Mutesa, secretary-general of the Zambia-China Friendship Association, noted that China and Africa share historical experiences and values, making them natural partners in building a China-Africa community with a shared future; such cooperation not only advances bilateral relations but also effectively promotes the right to development of the people. Wang Wen, dean of the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, argued that by 2050 China and Africa will lead South-South cooperation and transformations in global governance, advancing reform of the international system through the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits. Violet Nakanbamongo, a journalist from Zambia's *Daily Mail*, stated that the Belt and Road Initiative is not only about infrastructure construction, but more importantly about granting the "right to development" to tens of thousands of people in China and Africa; it is not a form of charity, but a platform and direction for joint efforts by both sides. This vision closely aligns with General Secretary Xi Jinping's discourses that "the Belt and Road Initiative follows the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits; it is not something decided by one party alone, but one in which all share responsibilities and outcomes."<sup>3</sup>

### **C. China and Africa share common understandings of the right to development**

In 1981, the Organization of African Unity adopted the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, which emphasizes that special attention must be given to the right to development.<sup>4</sup> Many African participants at the seminar echoed this

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<sup>3</sup> Xinhua News, "Full Text: Eight Actions Lay a Solid Foundation for the New Decade of Building the Belt and Road," October 15, 2024, accessed August 31, 2025, <https://www.news.cn/silk-road/20241015/b8beb0ce66c046ab9d4f4eeb4b59d8ce/c.html>.

<sup>4</sup> *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, 1981, accessed August 31, 2025,

position. Justus Tusiti Wanjiru, director of the Corporate Center at the Africa Policy Institute (Kenya), pointed out that the right to development does not merely signify economic growth, but also lies in ensuring development opportunities for all countries and every citizen. Cllr. Jeddi Mowbray Armah, deputy minister for Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, stated that development and human rights are no longer parallel objectives, but are closely interconnected and mutually dependent. Francis Kaboneka, a member of the Rwanda National Commission for Human Rights, emphasized that the right to development is not an abstract concept, but a concrete manifestation of fundamental human rights; it means enabling everyone to participate equally in the development process and to share fairly in its outcomes, which is precisely the essence of a people-centered development philosophy.

Today, the Global South demonstrates distinctive characteristics in human rights discourse. Mohamed El Hacen Ould Lebatt, former minister of Foreign Affairs of Mauritania and international adviser on African peace mediation and investment affairs, noted that these differences are mainly reflected in three aspects. First, universality: the ultimate goal of human rights is to realize the common well-being of all humanity, encompassing a wide range of rights including subsistence, development, freedom, and social participation, but their content should not be unilaterally defined or imposed by a small number of countries. Second, particularity: due to differences in history, culture, levels of development, and values, different nations and states should have distinct pathways and priorities in realizing human rights. Third, relativity: societies at different stages of development have different focal points in human rights, with some emphasizing individual freedoms, while others place greater importance on the rights to subsistence and development. Zhao Yating, associate research fellow at the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (China-Africa Institute) and secretary-general of the Center for South African Studies, noted that there exist significant structural divergences between developed and developing countries regarding the prioritization of human rights. The former mainly emphasize first-generation human rights centered on political freedoms and individual rights, advocate the primacy of human rights over sovereignty, and tend to deny the fundamental status of the right to development; the latter, by contrast, uphold the priority of the rights to subsistence and development, maintaining that meeting basic needs such as food, healthcare, and housing is a prerequisite for human rights protection, and that the right to development, as a collective right, is not only related

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to economic autonomy and resource sovereignty, but also constitutes the material foundation for realizing other categories of human rights.

China's understanding of the right to development is highly consistent with that of Africa. Wang Jiang, deputy director of the Institute for Frontier Studies at Zhejiang Normal University, stated that China has always adhered to a people-centered approach, regards the rights to subsistence and development as the foremost human rights, and takes "a happy life for the people as the greatest human right" as both the starting point and the criterion for policymaking. This concept is fully reflected in China-Africa cooperation, where from medical assistance and vocational education to the promotion of agricultural technology, improving people's well-being remains the central objective. James Mouangue Kobila, chairperson of the Cameroon Human Rights Commission and vice-chairperson of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, observed that the people-centered human rights philosophy upheld by General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasizes grounding human rights in each country's specific national conditions and realities, reflecting the fundamental stance and purpose of China's human rights approach. He expressed high appreciation for General Secretary Xi Jinping's principle of taking the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people as the starting point and ultimate goal of all work, noting that this principle has been comprehensively implemented in China and has also resonated strongly across the African continent.

### **D. Opportunities and challenges for China-Africa human rights development in the digital age**

Digital development will become one of the most promising fields in the future. Justice Bernardin Renaud, chairperson of the Seychelles Human Rights Commission, noted that the advent of the digital age has created new opportunities for human rights protection by enhancing individual capacities, facilitating communication, and promoting transparency and accountability. Meanwhile, it has also brought complex legal, ethical, and institutional challenges. Digitalization and artificial intelligence do not change our rights; rather, they change the ways in which we safeguard them.

Digital technologies are increasingly becoming important enabling tools for advancing human rights. Assouman Bamba, director of Cabinet to the President of the National Human Rights Council (CNDH) of Côte d'Ivoire, shared practical experience, pointing out that digital tools have become powerful means for citizens to monitor public affairs, enhance governance transparency, participate in anti-corruption efforts, document human rights violations, and track hate speech, thereby providing strong support for human rights monitoring. Hu Ming, dean of

Guanghua Law School at Zhejiang University, stated that China's exploration in the field of digital justice has greatly facilitated judicial procedures and provided a useful model for the world. Lydie Solange Yahoumbi, a senior official of the Ministry of Humanitarian Action, National Solidarity and Reconciliation of the Central African Republic, noted that online platforms can boost civic participation, create space for inclusive governance, and enhance access to justice. Frederick Ibrahim Kamara, deputy executive secretary of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, noted that digital case management and information dissemination systems can significantly enhance efficiency and better fulfill the mandate of protecting and promoting human rights.

However, the risks and challenges arising in the process of digitalization should not be overlooked. Li Yujie, associate research fellow at the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (China-Africa Institute), pointed out that significant disparities persist within Africa in terms of urban-rural, gender, and generational divides, while at the global level the "digital divide" between the Global North and the Global South is even more pronounced. Hu Yajuan, director of the News Release Research Center at the Institute of Contemporary China and World Studies, noted that these disparities have resulted in the marginalization of vulnerable groups — such as those with lower levels of education, the elderly, and persons with disabilities — in the process of digitalization, making it difficult for them to share in the benefits of the digital economy. Qi Yanping, director of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Beijing Institute of Technology and Director of the Center for Science, Technology and Human Rights Studies, further emphasized that the widening "digital divide" among countries has become a major obstacle preventing developing countries from sharing in information dividends and effectively participating in international cooperation. Cllr. Jeddi Mowbray Armah, deputy minister for Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, noted that although mobile phone usage is widespread, only about one-third of Liberia's population is able to effectively access the internet. These disparities are not merely statistical differences; they reveal deeper social, economic, and human rights issues underlying the digital divide — poverty is not only manifested as material deprivation, but also as a structural deprivation of opportunities.

In addition to the digital divide, personal privacy and data security are also facing new threats, which have become important issues that China and Africa must jointly address in human rights development and governance in the digital age. Justice

Bernardin Renaud, chairperson of the Seychelles Human Rights Commission, pointed out that improper management of technology may not only infringe upon the right to privacy, but may also exacerbate social divisions. He emphasized that the right to privacy has become a prominent challenge in the digital age, as digitalization has expanded both the scope of personal data collection and the channels of access, thereby increasing the risk of data misuse. Li Yujie of the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (China-Africa Institute) further noted that, according to the Global Threat Index released in January 2025, eight of the 20 countries most severely affected by cyberattacks worldwide are located in Africa — including Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, and Mozambique<sup>5</sup> — and that AI-enabled fraud is becoming increasingly rampant across the continent.

## **II. Practical Pathways and Coordinated Measures for Advancing Human Rights Development between China and Africa**

Participants explored, from multiple perspectives, the practical experiences and feasible pathways for China and Africa in promoting human rights development. These discussions not only reflected the tangible achievements of China-Africa cooperation, but also integrated reflections and explorations at the levels of ideas, institutions, and social practices across different countries. Specifically, participants put forward suggestions on how to further consolidate conceptual consensus, deepen cooperation in key areas, and effectively protect the human rights of key groups such as youth, women, and children.

### **A. Focusing on conceptual consensus to build synergy for the development of China-Africa human rights**

The key outcome of this seminar, the *Addis Ababa Consensus on the China-Africa Right to Development*, represents a concentrated expression of the high degree of alignment between China and Africa in their human rights concepts. It systematically elaborates the important role of the right to development in protecting human rights and proposes both conceptual approaches and concrete pathways for China-Africa cooperation in advancing human rights development.<sup>6</sup>

The *Consensus* was jointly developed by think tank experts and scholars from China and Africa through multiple rounds of discussion, repeated deliberation, and continuous refinement, and was officially released in Chinese, English, and French. It

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<sup>5</sup> “Eight African Countries Rank Among Top 20 Most Cyber-Attacked Nations Globally,” February 17, 2025, accessed August 31, 2025, <https://techpoint.africa/news/african-countries-cyber-attacks/>.

<sup>6</sup> “Addis Ababa Consensus on the China-Africa Right to Development,” humanrights.cn, August 23, 2025, accessed August 31, 2025, <https://www.humanrights.cn/2025/08/23/7ac28f14c32a45479bed8094ece4fca.html>.

systematically sets out, across eight aspects, the shared concepts and action directions of China and Africa on the right to development. The document emphasizes that development is the key to solving all human rights issues; that the right to development is an inalienable human right; that a people-centered development philosophy must be upheld; that sustainable and high-quality development should be pursued; that the sovereignty, security, and development interests of all countries must be respected; that unilateralism, hegemonism, and protectionism must be firmly opposed; that joint actions should be taken to ensure the realization of the right to development; and that China-Africa cooperation is an effective pathway for promoting the realization of the right to development for both sides. The release of this *Consensus* marks a milestone in the practice of China-Africa human rights cooperation, demonstrating the high degree of alignment between the two sides in conceptual understanding, policy coordination, and value orientation, and providing a solid foundation for advancing South-South cooperation, promoting sustainable development, and deepening mutually beneficial cooperation. It not only systematically articulates a human rights concept centered on development and respectful of national conditions, but also provides practical guidance for China and Africa to secure greater institutional discourse power within the global human rights governance system. Meanwhile, the *Consensus* conveys a clear message to the international community: the right to development is a universal human right, and China-Africa cooperation not only focuses on economic growth, but also on the comprehensive development and well-being of people, achieving an organic unity of ideas and practice.

### **B. Deepening cooperation in key areas to consolidate the material foundation of human rights protection**

Focusing on the protection of core human rights such as the rights to subsistence and development, China and Africa should continue to deepen cooperation in key areas and translate shared conceptual understandings into tangible development outcomes. Specifically, five priority directions can be identified: transportation infrastructure, agricultural modernization, education and employment, healthcare, and digital development.

First, connectivity in infrastructure. Both sides have promoted the implementation of projects in roads, railways, ports, and energy, providing support for transport connectivity and creating conditions for improving access to public services such as education and healthcare. Lloyd Kuvuya, assistant director of the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria of South Africa, proposed that African

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countries should align their national development plans with poverty reduction, education, healthcare, and environmental protection as core priorities, and promote inclusive development through infrastructure and regional cooperation mechanisms. Chen Hai, Chinese ambassador to Ethiopia, stated that development is the fundamental prerequisite for the enjoyment of human rights, and that full use should be made of platforms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative to protect and realize the rights to subsistence and development of the people through concrete development achievements.

Second, agricultural modernization and food security. Cooperation focuses on increasing food production, stabilizing supply chains, and strengthening local capacity, thereby directly protecting the rights to subsistence and development of the people. Mohamed Osman Omar, state minister for Family and Human Rights of Somalia, stated that Somalia is currently facing severe food security challenges, and that China's expertise in modern agricultural technologies, irrigation systems, and drought-resistant crops is of great value. Knowledge sharing and technological cooperation can not only enhance agricultural productivity and resilience, but also provide strong support for protecting the right to food, and therefore cooperation with China in the agricultural sector should be further deepened. Wang Wen, dean of the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, argued that China and Africa should promote agricultural modernization through localized production, technological collaboration, and the strengthening of climate resilience, thereby enhancing Africa's food security and self-reliance. He emphasized that innovation in green agriculture will become an important China-Africa solution for addressing food crises and promoting global poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Third, education and employment. China-Africa cooperation focuses on providing more development opportunities for youth through vocational skills training, digital talent cultivation, and entrepreneurship support, thereby stimulating social vitality and innovation. Prof. James Mouangue Kobila, chairperson of the Cameroon Human Rights Commission and Vice-Chairperson of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, stated that the right to legal identity and the right to education are the most fundamental and core components of the civil rights system, and that their protection jointly constitutes the prerequisite and foundation of a complete human rights system. Liu Dongxu, head of the Research Center for Social and Cultural Studies of Developing Countries at the School of Ethnology and Sociology of Minzu University of China, pointed out that education and employment

are not only key engines of economic development, but also important supports for improving people's well-being, realizing the right to development of youth, and promoting social equity. Through comprehensive measures in frontier ethnic regions — including strengthening the rule of law, improving infrastructure, stimulating endogenous development momentum, and establishing basic social security — China has lifted long-term poverty in its border and ethnic minority areas through these comprehensive measures, offering valuable lessons for African countries in poverty alleviation.

Fourth, healthcare. China-Africa cooperation should prioritize improving primary healthcare service capacity and strengthening public health response capabilities, so as to effectively safeguard people's lives and health. Through building modern medical institutions, enhancing medical technologies, improving service networks, and training healthcare personnel, China-Africa cooperation has continuously strengthened community health protection capacity, providing a solid foundation for social stability and economic development. Carlos- Edmilson Marques Vieira, president of the College of Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau, noted that human rights must be realized in everyday life, and that healthcare is a key component in ensuring the right to health, as well as an important pillar of sustainable development, peace, and social stability. Ensuring citizens' access to quality healthcare services, together with the right to education and judicial justice, constitutes a crucial foundation for the realization of comprehensive human rights. Luo Liangcai, deputy director of the Economics and Technology Research Institute of China National Petroleum Corporation, argued that corporate social responsibility should be integrated into enterprise development, and that a coordinated mechanism linking energy development with the improvement of people's livelihoods should be established. He suggested that China-Africa cooperation should continue to increase investment in healthcare, education, agriculture, and vocational training, in order to promote local economic development and social progress and improve public health. Through systematic planning and long-term cooperation, China and Africa can, while enhancing people's well-being, provide reliable support for the rights to subsistence and development.

Fifth, digital development. With the rapid growth of Africa's youth population and the continuous increase in internet penetration, digitalization has become a key driver for promoting employment, improving governance capacity, and enhancing inclusive development. Relying on projects such as the Digital Silk Road (DSR), China has assisted Africa in bridging the digital divide and promoting the

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comprehensive development of e-commerce, electronic payment, and digital governance, enabling digital technologies to become new tools for protecting human rights in the new era. Dossou Rodrigue Akohou, deputy director of Legal Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Benin, pointed out that Africa must seize the opportunities brought by digitalization and avoid being marginalized in the new wave of global development. He emphasized the need to vigorously promote digital infrastructure construction through platforms such as the DSR, narrow urban–rural and regional disparities, and gradually improve overall digital development levels. Benin has signed cooperation agreements with China to advance modern projects such as e-commerce and electronic payment, which not only facilitate trade and financial services but also provide new channels for youth entrepreneurship. Cai Gaoqiang of the Law School of Xiangtan University proposed a forward-looking initiative to establish a China-Africa satellite space and climate data-sharing mechanism to address the growing threats posed by climate-related disasters to Africa’s right to development. He suggested that, as a major spacefaring nation, China could support Africa in enhancing meteorological monitoring and early warning capabilities by sharing data resources such as those from the Fengyun meteorological satellites, and assist in building foundational space and climate governance infrastructure. This would not only improve Africa’s capacity to respond to disasters, but also provide solid data support for agricultural security, urban planning, and sustainable development.

### **C. Focusing on key groups and mobilizing multi-stakeholder participation to build momentum for human rights development**

The development of human rights requires strengthened protection of the rights and interests of groups such as youth, women, and children, as well as the active role of think tanks and media in knowledge production and public communication, so as to bring together the efforts of diverse actors and inject sustained momentum into human rights cooperation.

Focusing on youth, women, and children to achieve inclusiveness in human rights protection. Melha Rout Biel, executive director of the Institute for Strategic and Policy Studies of South Sudan, noted that 70 percent of Africa’s population is youth, and that greater support should be provided in areas such as vocational training, digital talent cultivation, and employment assistance to help young people enhance their skills, integrate into the labor market, and stimulate social vitality, thereby laying a solid foundation for the long-term development of China and Africa. Edvalda Jandira Morgado dos Santos, director of the Human Rights Department of the

Ministry of Justice and Human Rights of Angola, pointed out that achieving gender equality and empowering women is one of the core goals of the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*, and that China and Africa should pay greater attention to gender equality by prioritizing women in scholarship and training programs to promote women's empowerment. Débora Cotrim, adviser on Women's Rights to the Minister of Justice of São Tomé and Príncipe, emphasized that poverty is essentially a deprivation of human dignity, and that China-Africa poverty reduction cooperation must adhere to the principle of inclusiveness to ensure that vulnerable groups such as women and children are not marginalized in the process of development.

In terms of cooperation between think tanks and academia, efforts should be made to strengthen the construction of human rights discourse systems and promote knowledge sharing. Jiang Jianguo, member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, vice-director of the Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs, and executive vice-president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, proposed the establishment of a "China-Africa Network for Human Rights Research" to promote regular exchanges between academic communities and think tanks on both sides. Liu Hongwu, director of the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University, suggested that Chinese and African scholars should base themselves on their respective practical experiences to build an independent system of human rights knowledge and discourse, break through Western-dominated narratives, enhance the voice of developing countries in global human rights governance, and achieve intellectual independence and academic self-strengthening. Crispin Kaheru, a member of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, noted that in the face of Western bias, China and Africa need to strengthen the development of indigenous discourse systems and enhance their international discursive power and influence on public opinion.

In terms of media communication, it is important to effectively tell the stories of China-Africa human rights cooperation in a vivid and compelling manner. Frederick Mutesa, secretary-general of the Zambia-China Friendship Association, suggested integrating traditional and emerging media resources and making use of platforms such as X (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, as well as online seminars and international forums, to accurately disseminate successful cases of China-Africa cooperation. Only through diversified and targeted communication strategies can different social groups genuinely perceive the positive outcomes of China-Africa

cooperation in the fields of human rights and development, thereby strengthening public recognition and social support.

### **III. Summary and Prospects of China-Africa Human Rights Cooperation**

China-Africa human rights cooperation represents both a synthesis of the development experiences of both sides and a proactive exploration in addressing challenges in global human rights governance. Wang Heng, executive director of the think tank and deputy director of the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University, stated in the conference summary that, looking back at history, China and Africa have shared similar experiences and faced common challenges, which has fostered deep resonance and shared aspirations in the field of human rights. Based on the views expressed at the seminar, a systematic summary of the core connotations, practical pathways, and future directions of China-Africa human rights cooperation is of great significance for promoting high-quality development of China-Africa human rights endeavors and improving the global human rights governance system.

In terms of the substance of cooperation, China-Africa human rights cooperation has consistently upheld the rights to subsistence and development as the primary human rights, grounded in the actual development conditions of China and Africa, and has sought to address prominent challenges such as poverty and hunger that constrain the realization of human rights. It adheres to respect for national conditions and differences in development paths, opposes the politicization and instrumentalization of human rights issues, and firmly resists external interference. It also upholds win-win cooperation and a shared future, relying on platforms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative to achieve shared concepts, mutual learning, and shared outcomes, thereby demonstrating the distinctive features of South-South cooperation.

In terms of practical pathways, the core of China-Africa human rights cooperation lies in protecting the right to subsistence through poverty reduction and infrastructure development, improving people's livelihoods through the realization of the right to development, and jointly addressing new opportunities and challenges in human rights governance in the digital era. It further involves deepening cooperation in key areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, and the digital economy to consolidate the material foundations of human rights protection. Meanwhile, greater attention should be given to the development of key groups such as women, youth, and vulnerable populations, so as to mobilize broad-based forces for advancing human rights.

Participants unanimously agreed that China-Africa human rights cooperation embodies the diplomatic philosophy of ‘sincerity, amity, mutual respect and real results’ (the guiding principle for China-Africa relations), the value of balancing justice and interests, and the development goal of win-win cooperation. Looking ahead, the continued deepening of China-Africa human rights cooperation will inject new momentum into the building of a China-Africa community with a shared future, contribute wisdom and strength to the improvement of the global human rights governance system, and promote the continuous advancement of the global human rights cause.

### **Appendix:**

#### **The Addis Ababa Consensus on the China-Africa Right to Development**

On August 22, 2025, over 200 representatives from China and 44 African countries gathered in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, for the inaugural “China-Africa Human Rights Seminar.” Centering on the theme “Building a China-Africa Community with a Shared Future and Jointly Realizing the Right to Development,” the participants engaged in vigorous discussions and reached the following consensus on the protection and realization of the right to development.

Here is the full text of the joint statement:

I. Development is the Key to Solving all Human Rights Issues. As fellow Global South countries, China and African nations remain mindful of the historical wounds inflicted by colonial rule, resource plundering, and unequal trade, as well as the resulting long-term development setbacks and severe constraints on human rights. We share similar development tasks and common aspirations for development, deeply understanding the vital significance of development for their nations and peoples.

II. The Right to Development is an Inalienable Human Right. The right to development is a fundamental and primary human right. Efforts must be made to continuously eliminate obstacles ,such as poverty, hunger, conflict, and discrimination.

We must uphold human rights through security, advance human rights through development, and promote human rights through cooperation. We are committed to pursuing development that is more equitable, inclusive, balanced, and mutually beneficial, enhancing its resilience and autonomy to better safeguard the fulfillment of the right to development.

III. Upholding a People-Centered Approach to Development. We adhere to the

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principle that development is for the people, by the people, and its fruits should be shared by the people. We respect the principal role of the people of all countries, honoring their expressed will, accumulated experience, and inherent rights. Efforts shall be made to ensure that the benefits of development reach all peoples more extensively and equitably, protecting the right to development for Chinese and African people.

IV. Adhere to Sustainable and High-Quality Development. We emphasize the critical role of *Charter of the United Nations*, and *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* in fulfilling the right to development, ensuring equitable rights to development through sustainable and high-quality development. Together, we will advance modernization that is just and reasonable, open and win-win, people-centered, diverse and inclusive, eco-friendly, and peaceful and secure, thereby achieving higher standards of human rights protection.

V. Respecting National Sovereignty, Security, and Development Interests. Both China and African countries have the right to choose their own paths of human rights development based on their actual national conditions and historical-cultural traditions. We respect the diversity of human rights civilizations, oppose the politicization and instrumentalization of human rights issues, as well as the use of human rights as a pretext to interfere in other countries' internal affairs or deprive their peoples of the right to development.

VI. Resolutely Opposing Unilateralism, Hegemonism, and Protectionism. The reckless imposition of tariff measures severely undermines the right to development. We call upon all nations to promote a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation. By adhering to the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits, we shall create more favorable conditions and a conducive environment for the realization of right to development in China and Africa.

VII. Taking Joint Action to Safeguard the Realization of the Right to Development. Resolutely uphold the international norms based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, adhere to the guiding principles of *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and *Declaration on the Right to Development*, we will actively promote the integration of the right to development into the United Nations agenda. We call upon all countries and the international community to adopt legal frameworks, policies, and development strategies to ensure the full realization of the right to development, thereby contributing to the improvement of the global human rights governance system.

VIII. China-Africa Cooperation as an Effective Pathway to Realizing the Right to Development for Both Parties. We will give full play to the role of mechanisms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative, and actively establish platforms including the “China-Africa Human Rights Seminar” and “China-Africa Human Rights Research Cooperation Network”. Through mutual learning and exchange, we will consolidate the foundation of the China-Africa community with a shared future and comprehensively promote the progress and development of human rights endeavors in both China and Africa.

(Translated by *CHEN Feng*)