

Agriculture key area of cooperation, leaders say

Sector seen as Africa's central nervous system

By LI LEI in Bijie, Guizhou
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

African countries are enthusiastic about Chinese assistance in agriculture and infrastructure, as the populous continent attempts to eradicate hunger in a decade and speed up modernization to achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2063, senior African officials said.

The agenda — adopted by the African Union in 2015 — aims to see Africa become a prosperous continent with the means and resources to drive its own development by 2063.

Nonofo Ezekiel Molefhi, minister of presidential affairs, government governance and public administration in Botswana, said agriculture offers plenty of opportunities for partnerships that can boost employment and combat poverty.

During a tour of successful poverty relief projects in Bijie, Guizhou province, in mid-August, he said Chinese methods of cultivating high-protein, fast-growing grass for livestock, which have already benefited African countries including Rwanda and South Africa, could be used to upgrade Botswana's animal farms, such as those raising Botswanan goats.

"We can also look at other opportunities in terms of agricultural production," he added.

Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, the African Union's commissioner for rural economy and



Chen Zhigang (left), deputy director of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, talks with Victoria Sekitoleko, Uganda's former agriculture minister, on the FOCAC group's tour in Bijie, Guizhou province. LI LEI / CHINA DAILY

agriculture, echoed Molefhi's comments while speaking at the poverty reduction and development conference of the 2018 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing on Aug 14.

"Agriculture is to Africa what the central nervous system is to the human body," she said, adding that African agriculture — plagued by low mechanization and a high dependence on rainfall — could see new opportunities as Chinese investments in and partnerships with African research institutes and universities accelerate the sector's transformation.

Clifford Katondo Tandari,

regional administrative secretary for Morogoro, Tanzania, said simple technologies could allow farmers in some places to double or even triple their output, which is crucial for poverty relief.

Impressed by China's excellent road network, he said he expects stronger partnerships in the infrastructure sector that aim to enhance connectivity.

"Better linkages means that farmers can access enough fertilizers, and their produce could reach urban markets where they can receive better prices," Tandari said.

Emmanuel Freddie Mugunga, undersecretary of science,

technology and innovation in Uganda, said China has offered help building roads and dams in his country, but he called for increased cooperation in training young engineers, scientists and entrepreneurs.

"We have lots of young people with lots of ideas, but they do not have the workplaces where they can go and concentrate and do things and get taught new skills," he said.

Official figures estimate that, by 2025, Africa will be home to 200 million people between 15 and 24 years of age, while one-fourth of the world's population under 25 will be

from Africa. Every year, about 10 million Africans join the workforce.

China has vowed to help African countries train more young talent in poverty relief as part of its effort to strengthen exchanges under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The country will continue to hold training sessions on poverty reduction tailored to African countries and innovate in training methods to ensure efforts deliver real benefits, Liu Yongfu, director of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, said at the opening ceremony of

Soundbites

For every program to succeed, you need to have the participation of the beneficiaries. You work to strengthen what they already know. If they are already accustomed to growing corn, there may be potential to expand their capacity by introducing cattle farming. That's what you did in Bijie (Guizhou province) by introducing Aberdeen Angus. ... You created job opportunities in a value chain. Providing jobs increases household income levels and strengthens people's capacity to do other things. Ultimately, they become less dependent on the government.

Nonofo Ezekiel Molefhi, minister of presidential affairs, government governance and public administration in Botswana

So far, we are impressed with the infrastructure in China. The road network is pretty good. This is one of the lessons we're learning on our tour. Also, the government's commitment to fighting poverty is very high, which we should also learn. You know how many they (the poor) are, and their percentage. The number is precise.

Clifford Katondo Tandari, regional administrative secretary of Morogoro, Tanzania

To address poverty, you don't just address the issue of finance. If you address education, you address poverty. If people are going to school, they are not going to have children too early. China and Uganda can work together on technical education. Also in healthcare. If one member of a family falls sick, their entire livelihood is affected. This is where we can have further cooperation.

Emmanuel Freddie Mugunga, undersecretary of science, technology and innovation in Uganda

the FOCAC's poverty reduction and development conference.

"China and African countries have accumulated rich experience in self-development and poverty reduction. China is willing to strengthen exchanges with African countries to benefit both parties," he said.

Liu said China has held 133 poverty reduction seminars

and shared its experience with 3,587 representatives from 133 countries and regions, including 2,122 from 52 African nations.

China has reduced extreme poverty by more than two-thirds over the past five years, according to figures from the central government, which has pledged to eradicate extreme poverty by the end of 2020.

Investing for a brighter tomorrow: Unlocking Guinea's golden potential

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The mineral-rich West African country Guinea's connection with the world's financial system stretches as far back as the 17th century, when bullion mined from the region was used to mint the first machine-struck quarter ounce gold coins in Great Britain which were called "guineas".

Today it still possesses significant gold, diamond, bauxite and iron ore reserves — as well as abundant hydro-power and agricultural resources.

Under the leadership of the present head of state, President Alpha Conde, who analysts say is committed to progress and change, the country is aiming to mobilize its abundance of natural resources to drive the country's economy forward.

Guinea has put in place a master-plan to focus on the construction of infrastructure and needed development activities, which is using the mining sector to support the republic in taking its next big steps.

Analysts say it aims to do so with the promotion of governance, economic transformation, development of human capital, the preservation of the environment and with sustainable development.

Investment bank Banque de Développement de Guinée is a key partner in this venture, working with the country's administration and international financiers as a central, trusted presence in assessing, processing and delivering financial advisory services to help take projects from blueprint to the construction phase.

The only investment bank in Guinea, BDG is committed to adopting the strictest international standards and best practice, emphasizing transparency, governance, internal controls and corporate social responsibility.

It is striving hard to be accredited to the World Bank, the IFC, African Development Bank and other NGOs — like the Green Climate Fund — to be partners in financing and to gain grants for projects in Guinea.

Managing Director David Ng had



CFO of BDG Ken Looi (third left) meets with a team that installs solar panels. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



We see tremendous investment banking opportunities here and a lot of Chinese interest in taking part in Guinean projects ..."

David Ng, managing director of the investment bank Banque de Développement de Guinée

35 years banking experience in Hong Kong, including in JP Morgan Chase and Bank of East Asia, before taking up leadership of BDG in February 2017.

"We see tremendous investment banking opportunities here and a lot of Chinese interest in taking part in Guinean projects, after the signing of the \$20 billion master loan agreement between China and Guinea in Sept 2017," he said.

"Our bank was named by presidential decree in early 2018, as the only nongovernment member in the operating committee responsible for reviewing Guinean projects with Chinese investment," Ng added.

"The first few years after our formation in 2013 were mostly spent on getting vital information on the priority projects for Guinea, building trust and a working relationship with

the ministries and bringing in the right talent."

He said the bank's Deputy MD, Fatoumata Toure, a returning Guinean who enjoyed a successful banking career in the US, was crucial to BDG's formula for success.

Toure was recently named vice-president of the Guinean Professional Bankers' Association.

BDG is close to completing its first green project — a solar energy plant — after having brought in a Chinese partner to establish further solar development in the country.

"We believe BDG has built a strong momentum and is ready to accept the challenge to help Guinea to attract interested and professional investors," he said.

"Our ultimate goal is to find long term, strategic investors whose goals are in line with the national interest of the country and its people."



CMEC Contribution To Côte d'Ivoire

Established in 1978, China Machinery Engineering Corp's core business is engineering contracting. With more than 30 years of experience in the industry, CMEC has developed the capacity to provide one-stop, customized, complete plant solutions spanning preliminary planning, EPC (engineering, procurement and construction), financing, operation and maintenance.

It has a presence in 47 countries and regions across Asia, Africa, Europe and South America, forming a project contracting system with electric power energy at the core, covering transportation, telecommunication, waterworks, building materials and cement, to name just a few. CMEC has set up a complete system for quality, environmental and occupational health management, to ensure the high-standard and quality of its products and services.

As China's top-ranking engineering contractor and service provider with an international reputation, CMEC embraces the philosophy of "Create Ideas, Achieve Dreams".

CMEC was the EPC contractor of the Abidjan-Grand Bassam Highway project, a key project in Côte d'Ivoire. The starting point of the highway project was Statue Akwaba Ring Island in Abidjan and the ending point is Moossou in Grand Bassam, for a total distance of 42 kilometers. The owner of the project was Côte d'Ivoire's Ministry of Economic Infrastructure, the owner's representative was Ageroute, and the consultant was BNETD. The project was started in August 2012 and was completed in February 2015.

During construction, CMEC established an efficient and reasonable management mechanism, standardized project management, guaranteed project quality and completed the project smoothly and on schedule.

After the project was completed, the traffic between Abidjan and Grand Bassam was greatly improved and road congestion was completely eliminated. Previously, it took at least one hour to drive from Statue Akwaba Ring Island to Grand Bassam. If encountering congestion, it would take 2 hours. Today, this stretch of road takes only 20 minutes to drive along.

The completion of the road has brought great opportunities to the economic development of the Bassam region and has led to the construction of the Grand Bassam Special Economic zone. Looking ahead, the road is now lined with houses, factories and prosperity.

CMEC will provide the Ivorian people with high-value-added, high-return services and is continuously committed to China's and Côte d'Ivoire's mutual benefit, common development and harmonious progress.

CMEC Office in Côte d'Ivoire:
Contact: Mr. Wei Zhongzheng
Tel: 00225-89699809
Address: 187# Vallon, Plateaux II, Abidjan
E-mail: DZcmecc@126.com

