Chinese policy and its effects on Africa

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The Committee on Development adopted an own-initiative report by Ana Maria **GOMES** (PES, PT) on China's policy and its effects on Africa.

MEPs welcome China's willingness to provide practical and pragmatic cooperation to African countries. However, they regret China's cooperation with repressive regimes in Africa and point out that cooperation should be subject to political conditions and that human rights and environmental standards should play a greater role. The EU is urged to develop a coherent strategy to respond to the new challenges raised by emerging donors in Africa, such as China, via a coordinated approach from different Member States and EU institutions.

Sustainable development: the report calls for dialogue to be pursued between Africa, the EU and China in order to explore concrete avenues for development cooperation and enhancing partnerships, avoiding the creation of separate pockets of action. MEPs propose that the EU, the AU and China should set up a standing consultative body to improve the coherence and effectiveness of their respective activities in the area of development cooperation. They also call on the EU, China and Africa to establish a global framework for concrete operational projects on common challenges such as adaptation to climate change, renewable energies, agriculture, water and health.

MEPs call on the EU to encourage China to: (i) ensure that economic conditions attached to international grants or loans will not undermine sustainable development; (ii) engage in the expansion of the local African labour market, instead of bringing in thousands of Chinese labourers; (iii) make use of its health expertise to support initiatives aimed at improving public health systems in Africa; (iv) participate in meeting the challenges linked to the demographic situation in Africa.

Energy and natural resources: MEPs would like to see active cooperation on energy policy between Africa and the EU. They call on the EU to promote transparency of revenue collection of natural resources as well as the principle of 'responsible lending' by all donors. International conventions on energy resources extraction or exploration should include provisions on the transparency of licensing arrangements and contractual terms that determine fiscal flows to governments and a clause on the investment of a percentage of profit in local community development.

Trade, investment and infrastructures: the report highlights that Chinese exports of products towards Africa should not hinder the development of African industries or destroy the competitiveness of those industries.

The Committee on Development calls on the EU and appeals to China to offer Africa a way out of the 'commodity trap' and to encourage its transformation so that it becomes a region which processes commodities and develops services. MEPs urge the EU to encourage all Member States and emerging donors, such as China, to: (i) diversify trade and investment; (ii) transfer technology to Africans; (iii) strengthen international fair trade rules; (iv) expand global market access for African products; (v) lower tariffs on processed goods from Africa; (vi) promote the development of the private sector and its access to finance; (vii) promote trade facilitation; (viii) encourage regional integration in Africa; and (ix) facilitate remittance flows from African residents.

MEPs recommend that the Commission insist, within the framework of the ongoing negotiations with China, on a new trade chapter in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, on binding language with respect to ILO core labour standards, corporate social and environmental responsibility, provisions against

social and environmental dumping, ILO recommendations for decent work and the upholding of requirements deriving from international human rights covenants.

The environment: noting the ecological impact of China's presence in Africa, MEPs urge China to act as a responsible steward of the environment, both in China and in Africa. They call upon the EU to encourage Chinese export-credit agencies, including the Exim Bank, to conduct systematic environmental assessments of infrastructure projects in Africa, such as dams, roads and mines.

The report also calls on the EU to strengthen dialogue with Africa and China and to develop common approaches to deal with global environmental problems such as deforestation, desertification, decline or loss of biodiversity and soil fertility, as well as water and air pollution.

Good governance and human rights: the report highlights that China's "no-conditions" investments in those African countries misgoverned by oppressive regimes contribute to perpetuating human rights abuses and further delay democratic progress and hinder recognition of good governance.

MEPs urge the Chinese authorities to respect the principles of democracy, good governance and human rights in their relations with Africa. The EU is called to act consistently with its own values, principles and commitments under the Cotonou agreement in its relations with those African governments that obstruct democracy and violate human rights by denying them control of aid, budget support or investments.

Peace and security: MEPs call on the EU and China to suspend arms trade deals with those governments that are responsible for human rights violations, are involved in conflicts or are on the brink of war, such as the governments of Kenya, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. The report highlights that China should also increase the transparency of its national arms export control regime, namely by ensuring complete reporting on exports to the UN Register on Conventional Arms Exports.

The EU should maintain its arms embargo on China, as long as China continues to export arms to armed forces and armed groups in countries, many of them in Africa, that fuel and perpetuate conflicts and perpetrate gross violations of human rights.

Lastly, the report urges the EU to encourage China to continue increasing its participation in UN and AU peacekeeping missions in Africa, and to supply combat troops, when necessary.

MEPs stress their willingness to engage with the **Chinese National People's Congress**, the PAP and African national parliaments in a **dialogue** aimed at fostering sustainable development and enhancing their scrutinising capabilities over the executive branch.