

**Panel on**  
**CHINA AND INDIA: WHAT'S IN IT FOR**  
**AFRICA?**

**Closing Remarks by**

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First, let me express my sincere gratitude to the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) and the OECD Development Center for organizing this important event. I recall with appreciation the launch of the joint OECD-ADB Annual African Economic Outlook in May, that I had the honour and pleasure to participate in; it was another sign of OECD's commitment to the African continent and its desire to effectively collaborate with our African partners.

I would also like to thank you for putting the spotlight on the recent significant strengthening of economic relations between Africa and China and India as well as the opportunities and challenges this development holds for Africa. This comprehensive and well-researched report makes an important contribution to our still nascent understanding of the economic impact of Africa's relations with China and India. We commend you for commissioning and publishing this report which, I can assure you, will be read with great interest in my office. I would also encourage you to promote this report with all relevant partners including Member States, the UN system and above all African Member States, regional organizations and civil society organizations.

Africa's economic relations with China and India have seen accelerated intensification over the recent years, particularly in the area of trade. For example, in 2000, the year of the first China-Africa Economic Forum, China-Africa trade passed \$10bn; by 2003 it had reached \$18.5bn and according to official figures, China-Africa trade has now surpassed \$40bn.

The recent visits of the Chinese President and Premier to Africa and the major investments undertaken by India represent major steps towards increased

economic cooperation between Asia and Africa offering great benefits for both sides and signaling a strategic relationship that will last for years to come. This is reflected in the recent reinvigoration of the Asia-Africa Summit of Bandung held in April of 2005, that constituted an important landmark event and led to the adoption of the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP). The New Asian-African Strategic Partnership is committed to meeting internationally agreed targets including for economic growth and poverty alleviation, as well as tackling issues such as terrorism and organised crime. Bilateral initiatives such as the China-Africa Cooperation Forum have also made significant contributions to increased cooperation. In this respect, I look forward to the outcome of the China-Africa Cooperation Summit to be held in Beijing this November.

Stronger economic cooperation with China and India offers immense opportunities to the African continent. In addition to increased trade and investment it is also China's and India's approach that adds value to Africa's economies. China and India make substantial investments in areas that are critical yet under-funded or neglected, including infrastructure, agriculture and industry. In addition, they are willing to encourage technology transfers and provide increased market access for African products. Of course, such cooperation also involves some challenges. As is noted by the report, challenges may emerge in the long-term and, if not properly tackled, they may lead to problems. China and India should continue to further their efforts to diversify their investment and economic ties with Africa beyond the fields of energy and natural resources and to pursue policies that will strengthen Africa's nascent industries, including textiles.

But let me be clear: Asia-Africa cooperation is neither new nor has it been weak. Asia-Africa cooperation has been the result of common political and economic strategic interests that were bolstered by common experiences and based upon the principle of mutual respect. Rooted in the struggle for independence in Asia and Africa and strengthened by such important vehicles of common political visions as the Bandung Conference in 1955, the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77, Asia-Africa cooperation has enjoyed strong continuity ever since. The recent intensification of this relationship therefore does not mark a diversion of earlier policy but is merely the opening of a new albeit more dynamic chapter of a well-tested, long lasting and dynamic relationship.

It is important to acknowledge that this mutually beneficial relationship and the growing cooperation are not limited to the economic realm but extend to politics, peace, security and cultural relations.

India has long played a critical role in promoting and consolidating peace in Africa as one of the most reliable suppliers of well-trained and capable troops to peacekeeping missions in Africa. China has recently taken on increased responsibilities in this area as reflected in its role as a peacekeeper in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and the Sudan. With its growing economic and political influence in Africa, Africans will increasingly look to China to expand its existing efforts to promote peace on the continent.

During his recent trip to Africa, President Hu Jintao has emphasized China's intention to expand cooperation in fields such as culture, education, health, tourism, media, environmental protection and sports.

In recognition of the importance of South-South Cooperation, the UN continues to support measures that promote South-South Cooperation and strengthen the relationship between emerging Asian partners and Africa. Indeed, I have just returned from a Senior Officials Meeting on the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership held in Durban as a follow-up to the Asia-Africa Summit. As the focal point for NEPAD within the UN system, OSAA continues to support the implementation of NEPAD through South-South Cooperation. For example, OSAA undertook consultation trips to China and Japan in connection with the SAPIS-NEPAD process (the Secretary-General's Advisory Panel on International Support for NEPAD), in May of this year, while last year, OSAA prepared a publication on "Asia-Africa Cooperation – Progress and Prospects in Economic and Technical Cooperation".

In conclusion let me say that the growing strength of South-South Cooperation holds great potential for the economic development of Africa. To fully realize this potential, and ensure that its fruits can be enjoyed by ordinary Africans throughout the continent, African leaders must be determined to use increased investments and revenues to build stronger and more diversified economies while creating peaceful, democratic and more just societies. To their Asian brothers Africans will be forever grateful if they ensure that their increased economic and political engagement in Africa fully contributes to peace, stability and prosperity in Africa and is in line with NEPAD principles and priorities, including good governance, democracy and African ownership, and helps Africa to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In this respect, we look forward to Asia's emerging donors to increase their existing efforts to build the capacity of Africa's regional and sub-regional organizations and assist Africa to attain its goals of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010 and attaining the MDGs by 2015. The United Nations will continue to do what it can in support of these efforts.

Thank you.