

BRICS' synergy builds community of shared destiny

By Song Wei



JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA - JULY 27, 2018: The President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of Senegal Macky Sall, the President of Togo Faure Gnassingbe, and the President of Rwanda Paul Kagame (from R) at a meeting on Day 3 of the 10th BRICS Summit. (Photo from CFP)



JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA - JULY 27: Press members walk past a model of South African leader Nelson Mandela within the 10th BRICS Summit at Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa on July 27, 2018. (Photo from CFP)

The three-day 10th BRICS summit being held in Johannesburg, South Africa is scheduled to end on Friday. In the past 10 years, the event has become an important platform for consolidating development financing and promoting growth in developing countries. The BRICS - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - have long focused on four major development topics.

The first topic is public health. Since the first meeting of the bloc's health ministers was held in Beijing in 2011, annual gatherings have promoted cooperation in the field of traditional medicine and joint action on challenges in public health.

The second subject is education. A declaration was signed last year to support education collaboration for the BRICS Network University and encourage universities to participate in the BRICS University League.

Third on the list is the environment. The BRICS summits emphasized the bloc's commitment to the basic principles of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and called for implementation of the Paris climate accords.

The fourth item is humanitarian aid. BRICS members at the first summit proposed to launch programs in this area, and successive meetings have closely followed the Ebola epidemic in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

These four topics are closely aligned with the focus of Chinese aid to Africa, which can lead to great

synergies with compatible resources to build the China-Africa community of shared destiny.

First, China should closely coordinate with the other BRICS members to gain a greater voice on African development issues. In April 2017, BRICS countries issued a common statement at a UN meeting on financing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This move strengthened the voice of emerging and developing countries on issues of global governance.

China should coordinate further with other BRICS countries and address common positions on development issues, such as African security, trade promotion, enhanced connectivity and poverty reduction.

Together, developing countries should exhort developed countries to stop using aid as a means of political coercion, so their development aid can be based on the real development needs of African countries.

Second, through the BRICS platform, China can expand trilateral cooperation together with South Africa. South Africa is an important member of the BRICS, as well as an important source of aid to other parts of Africa, especially its immediate neighbors. Through its assistance programs, South Africa aims to share its development experience and technology with other African countries.

It seeks to help them upgrade their internal development abilities, shrink North-South development gaps, promote democracy, and support good governance, social and economic development. It also aims to boost regional integration, humanitarian aid and human capital development.

As an emerging economy itself, South Africa's development assistance is set to promote Africa's comprehensive strength and exert an influence on the global development structure, based on its leading position in Africa. Thus, China should work actively to expand areas of cooperation, giving more assistance to Africa.

Third, utilizing the BRICS platform, China can better finance African development programs, in concert with other members. Development financing is the key to implementing the 2030 Agenda for SDGs

BRICS members in 2012 proposed to establish a BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), with the aim of helping BRICS countries and other developing countries meet their financing needs for infrastructure and sustainable development. The NDB was founded in 2014, and the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement with \$100 billion of initial authorized capital was established shortly after. In 2017, the African Regional Center was established, enabling the NDB to better fund projects in Africa.

These initiatives demonstrate the BRICS' determination and ability to promote financial cooperation. China can provide market-based financing through the NDB's bond issues. It can also make use of BRICS cooperation mechanisms to encourage private companies, NGOs and other

bodies to participate in development finance in Africa and thus support the rise of African countries.

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