



RAPPORTEUR REPORT: 2025 ABUJA FORUM CONFERENCE

A ONE-DAY CONFERENCE ON DEEPENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION 2035 VISION" – FORGING A CLOSER CHINA-AFRICA COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE (PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE)

**ORGANISED BY THE GUSAU INSTITUTE (GI) AND THE CENTER FOR NIGERIAN STUDIES,
INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES, ZHEJIANG NORMAL UNIVERSITY (ZJNU)**

Date: October 23, 2025
Time: 09h30-16h30 (WAT)
Venue: Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1** The 2025 Abuja Forum marked a significant milestone in the ongoing collaboration between the Gusau Institute (GI) and the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU), China. Since its inception in 2018, the Forum has served as a dynamic platform for dialogue, research, and policy engagement aimed at strengthening Africa-China relations across multiple sectors. Anchored in the shared vision of fostering security, development, and sustainable progress, the Forum continues to build on the guiding principles of mutual respect, shared prosperity, and collective responsibility.
- 1.2** This year's edition, the sixth in the series, convened at a pivotal moment in global affairs—when the imperatives of peace, economic resilience, and technological transformation have become more intertwined than ever. Under the theme *"Putting Theory into Practice,"* the 2025 Abuja Forum sought to translate strategic frameworks,

such as the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 and the Africa-China Dar es Salaam Consensus, into actionable outcomes.

- 1.3 Focusing on three critical areas—counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, agricultural development and food processing, and the advancement of renewable energy—the Forum aimed to generate practical solutions to contemporary challenges. Through open dialogue, research exchange, and policy collaboration, the Forum continuously aspires to deepen understanding, enhance cooperation, and chart new pathways toward a shared and sustainable future for Africa and China.

2. RATIONALE FOR THE CONFERENCE

- 2.1 Over the past decade, the concept of a global community with a shared future, introduced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, has garnered significant international support. This idea promotes the notion that all countries share a common future, and it envisions a world built on openness, inclusiveness, equity, justice, harmonious coexistence, diversity, mutual learning, unity, and cooperation. It highlights humanity's common interests and calls for peace, justice, and progress, aiming to foster global collaboration toward a better world.
- 2.2 The 2025 Abuja Forum assessed progress made in implementing the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 and the Africa-China Dar es Salaam Consensus. The goal was to explore new opportunities for strengthening China-Africa collaboration and modernization in the evolving global context.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The conference was a seven-hour hybrid event, held both onsite at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) and virtually via the Zoho platform. Proceedings began with a warm welcome from the Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Emeka Izeze, followed by goodwill messages from the organizers. Representatives from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Nigeria and a distinguished Chinese guest from Kano State also delivered goodwill remarks.
- 3.2 Subsequently, brief introductions of the Gusau Institute (GI) and Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU) were presented, paving the way for the keynote address and three panel sessions. Six speakers delivered their papers across the three panels, each introduced by the session moderator. The presentations were followed by an engaging interactive session and closing remarks, which officially concluded the event. Proceedings were conducted in English.

4. PARTICIPANTS

- 4.1 Participants were high-level decision-makers from the public and private sectors, as well as academics and diplomatic envoys. The conference had 98 attendees.
- 4.2 The short biographies of speakers and official participants are attached to this report as **Annexure A**.

5. GOODWILL MESSAGES AND INTRODUCTIONS

- 5.1 Lt. Gen. Aliyu Gusau Mohammed (Rtd.), the founder of GI, Mrs. Dong Hairong, a Counsellor representing the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Nigeria, and Mr. Mike Zhang, the Chairman of the Chinese Business Community Association of Nigeria, delivered goodwill messages.
- 5.2 In addition to the goodwill messages, the two co-hosts were introduced to the audience. The GI and its activities were introduced by way of a short documentary film while Prof. Xu Wei, Deputy Director (Academics), Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU), introduced the university and conveyed its support for the conference.
- 5.3 **Transcript of goodwill message delivered by Lt. Gen. Aliyu Gusau Mohammed (Rtd.):**

Honourable Ministers,
 The distinguished Keynote Speaker, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala,
 The Representative of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China,
 The Deputy Director of the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University,
 and the Delegates from China,
 The Director General of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution,
 Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
 Distinguished guests,
 Ladies and gentlemen.

- 5.3.1 It is with great honour and a deep sense of purpose that I deliver this goodwill message on behalf of the Gusau Institute at the opening of the 6th Abuja Forum.
- 5.3.2 Since its inception in 2018, the Abuja Forum has grown into a respected platform for dialogue, collaboration, and strategy—driven by the shared vision of the Gusau Institute and our esteemed partners at the Institute of African Studies, Zhejiang Normal

University. Today, we gather once more—not only to reflect on past achievements but to engage directly with the urgent work of implementation.

- 5.3.3** This year's theme, "Deepening the Implementation of the China-Africa Cooperation 2035 Vision – Forging a Closer China-Africa Community with a Shared Future: Putting Theory into Practice," is timely and compelling. It speaks to the transition from ideas to action, from ambition to execution. And it reflects the Forum's growing maturity as a space not just for discussion, but for delivering results.
- 5.3.4** The Gusau Institute was established on the belief that Africa needs institutions capable of strategic reflection and grounded in our continent's values and aspirations. We exist to offer insight, foster dialogue, and support good governance and security—across Nigeria, Africa, and in partnership with the global community.
- 5.3.5** Our collaboration with Zhejiang Normal University and the formation of the Abuja Forum represent that mission in action. It is a living example of how African and Chinese institutions can work together, not only to explore areas of mutual interest—such as defence, development, trade, technology, and capacity building—but to co-create the tools and partnerships necessary to bring shared visions to life.
- 5.3.6** The 2035 Vision for China-Africa Cooperation offers a bold and structured framework for building a more equitable and resilient future. But as the theme reminds us, the real challenge lies in implementation. In translating memoranda into mechanisms. Strategies into systems. Dialogue into development.
- 5.3.7** This is where institutions like ours—research centres, think tanks, academic bodies, and policy hubs—must step forward. To support decision-makers. To track progress. To hold ourselves accountable. And to ensure that the benefits of cooperation are felt on the ground, by citizens across both regions.
- 5.3.8** Let me take this opportunity to commend our Chinese partners—particularly the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University—for their continued commitment to this shared vision. Your collaboration over the years has exemplified true partnership rooted in mutual respect and enduring purpose.
- 5.3.9** To all Forum participants: your presence today is a clear signal that our collective work is far from finished. Let us use this gathering not only to share insights, but to build momentum. To forge lasting solutions. And to ensure that our cooperation delivers real and measurable impact for the people of Africa and China alike.

5.3.10 On behalf of the Gusau Institute, we reaffirm our commitment to this partnership and to the ideals behind this Forum. We are proud to be part of this journey and look forward to continuing to contribute in the years ahead.

5.3.11 Thank you, and may this year's Abuja Forum be impactful, forward-looking, and action oriented.

5.4 **Transcript of goodwill message delivered by Mrs. Dong Hairong:**
(*Transcript outstanding*)

5.5 **Transcript of goodwill message delivered by Mr. Mike Zhang:**

5.5.1 Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning!

I am Zhang Guangyu, Wakilin Yan China in Kano State, Nigeria, and also the Chairman of the Chinese Business Community Association of Nigeria. It is a great honor for me to be here at the 6th Abuja Forum and discuss with you on "Deepening the Implementation of the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035."

5.5.2 Twenty years ago, driven by curiosity and dreams about Africa, I set foot on this vibrant land of Nigeria. Starting from international trading and later expanding into mining and beverage factories, I have personally witnessed the growth of China-Nigeria economic and trade cooperation—from scratch, from small beginnings to remarkable scale. In 2019, with the trust bestowed upon me by His Royal Highness the Emir of Kano, Sanusi the Second, I was conferred the traditional title of "Wakilin Yan China"—the "Leader of the Chinese Community." This is not only a personal honour but also a symbol of the friendship and mutual trust between China and Nigeria.

5.5.3 As the wakilin yan China, I am deeply aware of my mission: not only to serve as an administrator of the Chinese community but also to act as a bridge for economic, trade, and cultural exchanges between China and Nigeria. I have seen firsthand the challenges faced by many Chinese enterprises when entering African countries—from understanding local policies to cultural integration, from land disputes to talent shortages. These experiences have strengthened my belief that only by rooting ourselves locally and integrating into the community can we achieve sustainable development.

5.5.4 To this end, I have actively promoted practical cooperation between China and Nigeria in multiple fields. Last year, we signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the IASZNU to jointly establish the "Kano Field Station" and co-found the "Nigerian

Institute of Chinese Businessmen Investment." Through the dual drivers of "academia + practice," we aim to provide Chinese enterprises with more precise insights into African markets while infusing Chinese wisdom into the cultivation of local African talent.

5.5.5 Looking ahead, I hope to deepen collaboration with top Nigerian think tanks and universities, such as the Gusau Institute and the University of Ibadan, in the following areas:

- First, co-establishing a "Demonstration Project on Africa-China Cultural Exchange" to conduct joint research on chieftaincy systems, ethnic groups' cultures, land policies, and other topics, to promote the mutual learning in governance between China and Africa.
- Second, setting up an "Entrepreneurship Incubator for China-Africa Youth," leveraging our practical resources in Kano and Lagos to provide entrepreneurial training, funding connections, and on-ground support for young people from both countries.
- Third, advancing the "China-Africa Digital Capacity Building Initiative," combining the academic strengths of Zhejiang Normal University with my business network to help African youth master core skills in the era of the digital economy.

5.5.6 I have always believed that true cooperation is not merely about the flow of capital but, more importantly, about the connection between people. On the day I was conferred the chieftaincy title, at that moment, I deeply felt that culture can transcend language, and trust can surpass borders.

5.5.7 Dear friends, China-Africa cooperation is not just a topic for governments or a business opportunity for enterprises. It is a chapter of history we are writing together—whether as scholars, businesspeople, chiefs, or youth. Let us join hands to turn the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 from a blueprint on paper into a path beneath our feet. Thank you!

5.6 Transcript of introduction and goodwill message delivered by Prof. Xu Wei:

5.6.1 Your Excellency, Gen. Aliyu Gusau Mohammed, distinguished guests and dear friends – Good morning!

It's a pleasure to be here with you in Abuja. On behalf of Zhejiang Normal University, I'd like to express my sincere thanks to the Gusau Institute, the IPCR, the organizers, supporters, and everyone who has worked hard to make this forum happen.

- 5.6.2** Today's forum focuses on "Deepening the Implementation of the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 and Building a Stronger China-Africa Community with a Shared Future: From Theory to Practice." Holding this event here at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria feels both professional and well-suited to the topics and methods we'll be discussing.
- 5.6.3** Abuja Forum: Six Years of Growing Impact
Since its start in 2018, the Abuja Forum has now reached its sixth edition. It was launched by the Gusau Institute and the Africa Institute of Zhejiang Normal University to strengthen practical cooperation between China and Africa—especially Nigeria—in key areas like security and development, capacity building, trade, and technology.
- 5.6.4** Over the past six years, the Forum has met annually and improved each time. It has built a stable set of discussion topics and a strong network of partners, becoming a sustainable platform and a regular part of China-Nigeria exchanges. Last year, the fifth forum was held in Jinhua, Zhejiang. We were delighted to welcome a delegation from the Gusau Institute and many African scholars to our campus. That edition focused on "implementing the outcomes of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and advancing shared goals in Chinese and African modernization." Nearly 100 scholars from China and Africa had in-depth discussions on education, the economy, governance, and more. That gathering in Jinhua wasn't just about renewing friendships—it was about strengthening consensus and taking action.
- 5.6.5** This year, the sixth forum continues to emphasize "from theory to practice." The three panel discussions will focus on:
- Counter-terrorism and security in the Sahel region
 - Agriculture and sustainable development
 - Renewable energy and modernizing power grids
- 5.6.6** This "problem–situation–solution" approach is key to the Forum's success—staying relevant, achieving results, and making a real impact. I'd like to thank the Gusau Institute for its long-term commitment, and General Aliyu Gusau Mohammed (rtd) for helping build a high-quality, professional platform. Thanks also to the IPCR for its support, and to Chinese embassy, Chief Zhang for the support. My gratitude also goes to friends from government, academia, industry, and the media. We're especially looking forward to the keynote speech by Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organization. I'm sure it will set a clear direction and tone for this year's forum.

5.6.7 Zhejiang Normal University's Work on Africa: Using Knowledge for Shared Development

Let me briefly introduce our university and what we do. Zhejiang Normal University was founded in 1956. We now have over 50,000 students and more than 3,000 faculty and staff. Ten of our disciplines rank among the top 1% globally under ESI, and we cooperate with over 280 institutions in more than 60 countries across five continents. We have a strong system for international exchange and talent development.

In African studies, we follow a “six-in-one” approach:

- Building strong academic programs
- Providing policy advice
- Sharing knowledge globally
- Staying rooted in African realities
- Working together with African partners
- Promoting innovation through collaboration

5.6.8 We lead the Joint Institute of African Studies under China's Ministry of Education and have held the China-Africa Think Tank Forum 13 times. Outcomes like the “Dar es Salaam Consensus” have influenced national policies. We're committed to platform-building, research output, global outreach, and training talent. Our goal is clear: to make African studies a top-tier discipline and a high-level national think tank, supporting China-Africa cooperation with quality research, practical solutions, and young talent.

5.6.9 Looking Ahead

From 2018 to 2025—this is the sixth Abuja Forum. Sustainability doesn't just mean meeting every year. It means turning discussions into action plans, ideas into projects, and friendships into shared benefits. Zhejiang Normal University is ready to work with the Gusau Institute, IPCR, and leading think tanks and universities in Nigeria to make this forum a model of “from theory to practice.”

Thank you all!

6. PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Keynote Address: Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General, World Trade Organization (WTO)



- 6.1.2 Transcript:** Dear Lieutenant General Aliyu, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for inviting me to this year's Abuja Forum. Prior commitments kept me from joining you there, but I want to congratulate the teams from Gusau Institute and Zhejiang Normal University for putting together this exciting dialogue. It goes to the heart of ongoing shifts in the global economy and of opportunities to build a more prosperous, more resilient future for people in Nigeria, the rest of Africa, China and beyond.
- 6.1.3** These are difficult times for the global trading system, which is facing the biggest disruption since the Second World War. The international economic architecture that enabled decades of trade-led growth in many developing countries, most spectacularly China, is under strain. Yet, focusing only on the latest news headlines from around the world would give you an incomplete picture of what is really happening in world trade.
- 6.1.4** Most countries continue to trade with each other on more or less normal terms. 72% of global goods trade continues to operate on core WTO most favoured nation tariff terms. Many governments have responded to the current trade tensions by reinvigorating bilateral and regional trade integration efforts.
- 6.1.5** This gathering, with its focus on forging closer commercial and other ties between Africa and China, goes in that direction. South-South trade has expanded its share from under a tenth of total global goods trade in 1995 to about a quarter today. For context, the US accounts for 13% of world trade.
- 6.1.6** The WTO's back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest the trend is continuing. In the first half of 2025, South-South trade grew 8% year-on-year in value terms. Africa, however, has a great deal of ground to make up.
- 6.1.7** The continent accounts for less than 3% of global goods trade and an even lower share of services trade. Last year, Nigeria accounted for just 0.23% of global goods

trade. Africa's exports are overwhelmingly resource-based and commodity-driven, with limited value addition.

- 6.1.8** Nigeria's trade with China is a case in point, with an export basket dominated by oil and minerals, with only a tiny sliver of value-added chemicals, plastics and animal or vegetable fats and oils. I firmly believe that the current trade disruptions have created a window of opportunity for the continent to increase its footprint in value addition and trade, and that Chinese trade and investments tend to benefit from helping Africa seize this opportunity. As countries and companies around the world seek to diversify supply chains to manage risks and reduce exposure to natural disasters and other potential shocks, Africa can attract investment in value-added activities and move from the margins to the mainstream of the global division of labour, part of what we at the WTO call re-globalization.
- 6.1.9** Justin Lin, former chief economist at the World Bank, former colleague of mine, and now back at Peking University, has described how labour-intensive activities like textile production have always moved as countries grow richer and move up the value chain. That is happening in China now, and there is no reason why more of these flying geese cannot land in Africa. Some mega-trends also work in Africa's favour.
- 6.1.10** On an aging planet, Africa's young populations represent the workforce, skills base, and markets of the future. The UN projects that the continent's population will reach 2.5 billion by 2050, over a quarter of the world's total, and nearly as much of the working-age population. Africa also has the arable land and the critical minerals the world needs.
- 6.1.11** Realizing this potential requires action to tackle obstacles holding back the continent's re-globalization and growth prospects. These include some of the world's highest trade costs. WTO economists estimate that Africa's trade costs for agricultural goods are 16% higher than the average for the rest of the world.
- 6.1.12** For manufactured products, it's 37% higher. Intra-regional trade costs in Africa are 20% more than those for trade with external partners, underscoring the need to accelerate the implementation of the African continental free trade area, together with its transport corridors. The China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 goes in precisely these directions, with its call for deeper collaboration in infrastructure, agriculture, energy, technology, and trade.
- 6.1.13** China has an opportunity to lead on investing in African value chain development and enabling African economies to move up the ladder. China's government has already

taken an important step with this summer's announcement that it would offer duty-free access to exports from African countries. Chinese businesses can help unlock Africa's productive potential by drawing on their own experiences with catch-up growth to support industrial parks, agro-processing zones, and renewable energy projects.

6.1.14 By investing in capacity and transferring (5:42) technology and know-how, they can help raise productivity, create jobs, reduce poverty, and expand markets in which to deploy their capital and sell their own products. We already see signs of the win-win possibilities. Chinese firms investing in the Lekki and Ogun Gwandong free trade zones, as well as in private industrial parks, speak to a broader view of Africa and not just as markets for finished goods, but as basis for production and export.

6.1.15 The Think Tank EMBA Energy finds evidence for a solar energy take-off in Africa, propelled by a 60 percent increase in solar panel imports from China in the year through June. More electricity will help industrial production and may even contribute to balance of payments improvements. Savings on diesel can repay the cost of a solar panel within six months in Nigeria.

6.1.16 But we need to do much more, and we need leadership and boldness from public and private sector stakeholders in Africa and China. Fora like this will help build the bridge we need, across continents and to a better future. Thank you all, and I wish you a very productive forum.

7. PANEL 1: PEACE AND SECURITY

Topic: Strengthening China-Africa Counter-Terrorism Cooperation in the Sahel: Exploring New Pathways to Peace and Security
(Moderated by Brig. Gen. Saleh Bala (Rtd.), President of White Ink Institute for Strategy Education and Research - WISER)



7.1 Introductory Comments: Africa's Sahel region includes Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, and Senegal. It is characterized by frequent droughts and increasing conflict over scarce resources such as water and pasture. The rise of transnational criminal organizations and the rapid growth of Islamist extremist groups have exacerbated these conflicts. As terrorist groups continue to destabilize sub-Saharan nations, they have highlighted the need for greater engagement in addressing security challenges in the Sahel. A major issue for many African countries is the lack of sufficient counter-terrorism capacity, and the session explored how the capabilities of Sahelian nations can be strengthened to achieve peace and security in the region. Discussions highlighted the importance of empowering African Union (AU)-led initiatives and supporting African solutions to African problems, with China's role as a strategic partner.

7.2 Speaker 1: Brig. Gen. Abubakar Sadeeq Hanafi (ASH) Sa'ad (Rtd.)
(Former Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) and international security consultant)



7.2.1 Summary: The speaker examined the growing role of China–Africa cooperation in addressing terrorism, insecurity, and underdevelopment in the Sahel region, arguing that sustainable security requires a comprehensive approach that integrates military, economic, social, and governance initiatives.

7.2.2 The Security Situation in the Sahel

The speaker began by describing the Sahel as a strategically important region linking North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite its importance for trade and cultural exchange, the region faces numerous challenges, including:

- Terrorism and violent extremism
- Weak governance and fragile institutions
- Human trafficking and organized crime
- Environmental degradation
- Poverty and illiteracy

- Ethnic tensions and political instability

These interconnected problems have created conditions in which extremist groups can flourish.

7.2.3 China–Africa Relations

The speech traced China–Africa relations from China's support for African independence movements to the establishment of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000. According to the speaker, China's engagement has evolved from primarily economic cooperation to a broader partnership encompassing:

- Security cooperation
- Infrastructure development
- Agricultural investment
- Capacity building
- Technological cooperation
- Peacekeeping support

The speaker argued that China now views African security as closely linked to its own economic interests and investments on the continent.

7.2.4 China's Contributions to Peace and Security

The presentation highlighted several ways China has supported African security efforts:

- Military training and capacity building
- Equipment donations
- Logistical support
- Peacekeeping assistance
- Intelligence-sharing initiatives
- Financing development projects
- Support for African Union (AU) institutions

China's construction and support of the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa was cited as an example of its commitment to strengthening regional security institutions.

7.2.5 Development as a Counterterrorism Strategy

A central theme was that security and development are inseparable. The speaker argued that terrorism cannot be defeated through military means alone. Instead, long-term stability requires:

- Infrastructure development
- Employment creation
- Education
- Healthcare

- Improved transportation networks
- Better governance
- Youth empowerment

These investments reduce poverty, improve state presence in neglected areas, and diminish the appeal of extremist recruitment.

7.2.6 Governance and Institutional Reform

The speech emphasized that weak governance is one of the principal drivers of instability. China's cooperation is presented as extending beyond security to strengthening:

- Government institutions
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Public trust
- Local governance
- Institutional resilience

The speaker stressed that military operations must be complemented by reforms promoting the rule of law, human rights, and inclusive governance.

7.2.7 Challenges to China–Africa Cooperation

Despite its achievements, the speaker acknowledged several obstacles:

- Weak governance in countries such as Mali and Niger
- Limited institutional capacity
- Regional political fragmentation
- Competing geopolitical interests of Western nations and other international actors
- Differences between China's emphasis on sovereignty and Western emphasis on democracy and human rights
- Environmental concerns associated with some resource extraction projects

These factors complicate coordinated international counterterrorism efforts.

7.2.8 Future Areas for Cooperation

The speaker recommended greater collaboration in:

- Local governance reforms
- Community-based security initiatives
- Intelligence sharing
- Infrastructure investment
- Economic development
- Research on the long-term effects of Chinese investment
- Better understanding of local cultural and political contexts

The importance of evaluating the sustainability of China–Africa partnerships was also highlighted.

7.2.9 Security Recommendations

The presentation concluded with practical recommendations for strengthening counterterrorism operations, including:

- Enhanced intelligence collection and sharing using China's technological capabilities
- Provision of armoured personnel carriers for African militaries
- Increased helicopter support to improve troop mobility
- Improved communications equipment
- Better welfare for frontline military personnel
- Continued investment in grassroots development projects to address poverty and reduce vulnerability to radicalization

7.2.10 Overall Conclusion

The speaker argued that China–Africa cooperation has evolved into a multidimensional strategic partnership that combines security assistance with economic development and institutional capacity building. While military support remains important, the presentation contended that lasting peace in the Sahel depends on addressing the root causes of extremism through improved governance, infrastructure, education, employment, and sustainable development. Although significant challenges remain—including weak governance, geopolitical competition, and environmental concerns—the speaker concluded that a balanced partnership between China and African nations offers considerable potential for promoting long-term peace, stability, and development across the Sahel and the wider African continent.

7.3 Speaker 2: Maj. Gen. Mainasara Masanawa (Rtd.) (Director of Land Systems at DICON-D7G Ltd.)



7.3.1 Summary: The speaker discussed the military dimension of China–Africa cooperation, focusing on how China has supported Nigeria's fight against terrorism and arguing that the partnership should now evolve from simply supplying military equipment to helping Africa develop its own defence industrial capacity.

7.3.2 Background: Nigeria's Security Challenges

The speaker explained that before Nigeria became heavily involved in peacekeeping operations in Liberia and Sudan, the Nigerian Armed Forces possessed substantial stocks of weapons and ammunition. However, these overseas operations depleted military resources, leaving Nigeria less prepared when it later faced serious internal security threats such as:

- Boko Haram insurgency
- Militancy in the Niger Delta
- Other emerging terrorist groups

At the time, Nigeria lacked sufficient weapons and equipment to fight effectively on multiple fronts.

7.3.3 China's Support to Nigeria

The speaker praised China for providing critical military assistance when Nigeria urgently needed it. According to the speaker:

- China supplied much-needed arms and ammunition.
- Chinese support enabled Nigeria to strengthen its counterterrorism operations.
- China proved to be a reliable partner when other procurement options were difficult or delayed.

The speaker noted that this assistance helped Nigeria regain momentum in its fight against insurgency.

7.3.4 Need for a Defence Industrial Base

While acknowledging China's assistance, the speaker argues that importing weapons alone is not a sustainable solution. Instead, African countries should strive for self-sufficiency by developing their own military-industrial capabilities. Waiting up to a year for imported defence equipment is incompatible with the urgent demands of counterterrorism operations.

7.3.4.1 The speaker pointed to the Defence Industries Association of Nigeria and ongoing reforms aimed at strengthening Nigeria's defence manufacturing sector. The goal is for different Nigerian companies to produce components that can be assembled into complete military equipment. Such a domestic defence industry would not only meet Nigeria's own needs but could eventually supply neighbouring Sahel countries.

7.3.5 China's Future Role

The speaker proposes that China should move beyond being a supplier of finished products and become a long-term industrial partner by:

- Establishing defence manufacturing facilities in Nigeria.
- Helping Nigerian companies develop production capacity.
- Transferring technology and technical expertise.
- Supporting local industries that manufacture defence equipment.

This, the speaker argues, would strengthen regional security while creating jobs and technological development.

7.3.6 Standardisation of Equipment

One practical concern raised is the lack of standardisation in weapons and ammunition. The speaker explained that some imported Chinese weapons use calibres different from those already in service within the Nigerian military. This creates logistical challenges because different ammunition types must be maintained. The recommendation is that China align future equipment with internationally recognised ammunition calibres or with calibres already used by African militaries, thereby simplifying logistics and reducing operational costs.

7.3.7 Military Training and Capacity Building

The speaker acknowledges China's significant contribution to military education and training, noting that:

- Many Nigerian military leaders have received training in China.
 - Chinese institutions have trained Nigerian personnel, including special forces.
- However, the speaker believes cooperation should be expanded further through:
- Additional training institutions in Nigeria.
 - Better-equipped military schools.
 - Greater support for regional training centres serving the wider Sahel.
 - Peace and Development

7.3.7.1 Echoing an earlier speaker, the presenter emphasised that peace is the foundation of development. While economic cooperation between China and Africa is valuable, sustained development cannot occur without security. The speaker argues that effective military capabilities are essential to creating the stability necessary for economic growth and social progress.

7.3.8 Historical Relationship

The speech concluded by reflecting on the long history of China–Nigeria relations. The speaker recalled China's early involvement in Nigeria's textile industry, including textile

production in Kaduna that supplied uniforms, as evidence that China has long been an important development partner. Using a metaphor, the speaker described China as a neighbour who has helped extinguish Nigeria's fire but suggests that the partnership should now become even stronger by providing more sophisticated forms of support—particularly technology transfer, industrial development, and defence manufacturing.

7.3.9 Overall Conclusion

The central message of the speech was that China has been an invaluable partner in strengthening Nigeria's military capabilities, particularly during periods of intense counterterrorism operations. However, the future of China–Africa defence cooperation should focus less on importing weapons and more on building Africa's own defence industrial base. By supporting local manufacturing, technology transfer, military training, and standardised equipment production, China can help Nigeria and the wider Sahel achieve greater self-reliance, stronger security, and more sustainable long-term development.

8. PANEL 2: AGRICULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Topic: From Farm to Market: Advancing China-Africa Integrated Agri-Partnerships for Sustainable Development

(Moderated by Prof Xu Wei, Deputy Director, Institute of African Studies, Zhejiang Normal University)



- 8.1 Introductory Comments:** China has begun to prioritize environmentally sustainable agricultural practices in Africa. This includes efforts to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, promote organic farming, and address the impact of climate change on agriculture. This syndicate session discussed how China could support African farmers in developing sustainable agricultural value chains through modernization, thereby enhancing food security and fostering rural development. The conversation focused on joint efforts between China and African nations to promote

sustainable development, including green technologies and climate resilience strategies.

8.2 **Speaker 1: Haj. Maimuna Lawal El-Labib**

(Director of Strategies, Innovation, and Sustainability, Women Farmers Advancement Network – WOFAN)



8.2.1 **Transcript: Introduction - Bottlenecks of Nigeria's agricultural value chains:**

Nigeria's agriculture stands at a critical stage where the convergence of climate change impacts and agricultural vulnerabilities threatens its food security, economic stability, and rural livelihoods. The majority of Nigerian farmers are elderly and tired. Reports indicate that the average age of a Nigerian farmer is approximately 60 years! While Nigeria has a vibrant youth population seeking to make an impact in the agricultural space, they are reluctant because they are unwilling to produce with traditional tools like the hoe and cutlass. This is a wake-up call for us to improve the adoption of climate-friendly agricultural mechanization.

8.2.2 Nigerian agriculture is characterized by 80% smallholder farmers who still produce using limited mechanization. FAO reports that the mechanization rate in Nigeria is 0.27 horsepower per hectare, which is considerably low compared to the FAO-recommended rate of 1.5 horsepower/hectare. Smallholder farmers in Nigeria require labour-saving devices and farm equipment that are specifically designed for smallholdings. China is recognized as an industrial giant and has advanced in the manufacture of several tools and equipment that will be beneficial for agricultural tasks on smallholdings.

8.2.3 Some of the major bottlenecks faced by farmers in terms of adopting agricultural mechanization are:

- The costs involved in purchasing agricultural equipment.
- Inadequate supply and access to modern agricultural tools and equipment due to a lack of information to farmers.

- Inadequate skills in operating and maintaining some of the equipment, and the challenge of readily accessing spare parts for repairs.

8.2.4 Solutions - Areas for China-Africa Partnership: Nigeria faces structural constraints that limit smallholders' ability to capture benefits from bilateral agricultural partnerships, including high input costs, weak value chains, and climate and security shocks. The China-Africa partnership can provide solutions to some of these bottlenecks in the following ways:

- Smallholder farmers need to coordinate and pool resources to purchase required equipment from China for agricultural tasks. A dedicated, reliable platform to make this seamless will be required; this can be facilitated under the China-Africa collaboration.
- More collaborations with financial institutions are needed to target smallholder buyers and support their access to the acquisition of agricultural equipment. The partnership can advocate for tailor-made financial products to meet this goal.
- The creation of platforms for farmers to network with Chinese manufacturing companies and retail companies will increase access to information required on available equipment and innovations for agricultural tasks. Regular agricultural fairs and exhibitions can be organized and brought closer to the rural farmers. Additionally, establishing supply outlets for agricultural equipment in rural farming areas will also go a long way toward increasing access for smallholder farmers. This can be facilitated under the China-Africa collaboration.
- China has the opportunity to lead the market in terms of supplying Nigeria's agricultural value chains with quality agricultural equipment, that are climate-friendly, including solar-powered tools and facilities for production, aggregation, processing, cottage industries, packaging and branding, etc that are suitable for use by smallholders.
- Nigeria's agricultural sector is challenged by inefficient transport vehicles for agricultural produce, which has contributed to the food loss experienced by farmers. The partnership with China can review how to increase access to cold trucks, and suitable equipment for transportation, aggregation, and storage of agricultural produce.
- The establishment of more China-Nigeria manufacturing companies will increase access to agricultural equipment and innovations and build capacities of Nigerian youths in the manufacture, operation, and maintenance of agricultural equipment, as well as increase access to spare parts for repairs. By doing so, both China and Nigeria will benefit from the collaboration. Chinese

products will be patronized more, and the co-manufacturing with Nigerian youths will enable the development of more tools and equipment that are better suited to the Nigerian agricultural terrain.

- The partnership should also facilitate training opportunities and slots for internship positions for interested women and youths from rural agricultural communities to learn how to co-manufacture equipment and tools in Chinese companies.

8.2.5 Conclusion: The China-Africa integrated partnership can be very instrumental in improving the agricultural productivity, technology access, and market integration for smallholder farmers in Nigeria and create more demand for Chinese agricultural equipment in the country, thereby ensuring a win-win situation for both parties. The initiatives of the Gusau Institute in facilitating such forums are highly commended and appreciated.

8.3 Speaker 2: Dr Ehizuelen Michael Mitchel Omorouyi

(Associate Professor and Executive Director, Centre for Nigerian Studies under the Institute of African Studies, Zhejiang Normal University)



8.3.1 Summary: The speaker argued that Africa's agricultural transformation must begin by listening to farmers and fishermen, whose practical knowledge provides the best understanding of the challenges facing agricultural production and marketing. Drawing on personal research, the speaker explained that many African farmers are capable of producing more food than they can sell, but are limited to local markets because they lack access to wider domestic and international markets.

8.3.2 A central theme of the presentation was that Africa's persistent trade deficit with China and other global partners is not primarily due to low production, but rather to the continent's continued dependence on exporting raw agricultural commodities while

importing higher-value processed goods. The speaker emphasized that value addition through processing, packaging, and manufacturing creates employment, wealth, and economic growth. Madagascar is presented as an example of a country that produces most of the world's vanilla but earns relatively little because most of the value is added abroad.

- 8.3.3** To address these challenges, the speaker proposed the development of a China-Africa Trade Index, described as a "GPS" for agricultural and trade development. Unlike conventional trade statistics, this index would identify gaps in value addition, digital infrastructure, financing, and market access, providing practical guidance for governments, businesses, and farmers on where improvements are needed.
- 8.3.4** The presentation highlighted the importance of digital technology in reducing the gap between farmers. Farmers with access to internet connectivity, digital finance, and e-commerce can reach global markets and earn significantly higher incomes, while those without digital access remain confined to selling within their local communities. Bridging this digital divide is presented as essential for Africa's participation in global value chains.
- 8.3.5** The speaker also advocated stronger collaboration between universities, governments, and industry. Universities should establish smart agriculture laboratories, identify real-world agricultural challenges, and encourage students to develop practical, solution-oriented research that can inform public policy and entrepreneurship. A partnership with Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique was cited as an example of this approach.
- 8.3.6** China was presented as a valuable development partner, particularly in areas such as hybrid seeds, irrigation, renewable energy, modern storage facilities, and agricultural technology. Rather than relying on foreign aid, the speaker argued that Africa should prioritize investment in skills development, technology transfer, and productive partnerships that strengthen local capacity and competitiveness.
- 8.3.7** The presentation concluded by calling for Africa to move away from colonial patterns of production, distribution, and consumption by investing in people, adopting the proposed trade index, expanding digital access, and strengthening regional cooperation. Ultimately, the speaker emphasized that farmers and fishermen are not merely beneficiaries of development but the true drivers of Africa's economic transformation. By equipping them with technology, digital market access, and opportunities for value addition, Africa can successfully move "from farm to market" and build a more prosperous future.

9. PANEL 3: ENERGY AND POWER SECTOR

Topic: Powering Sustainable Growth: China-Africa Collaboration on Renewable Energy and Grid Modernization

(Moderated by Dr. Joseph Ochogwu Director-General, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution – IPCR)



9.1 Introductory Comments: This panel session focused on China's growing involvement in Africa's renewable energy sector, particularly in solar, wind, and hydroelectric power projects. As Africa faces significant energy access challenges, China's technology, investment, and expertise are seen as crucial to addressing these needs.

9.2 Speaker 1: Dr. Chen Biao

(Researcher/Lecturer, Institute of African Studies, Zhejiang Normal University – ZJNU)



9.2.1 Transcript: Good afternoon, distinguished guests, colleagues, and friends. It is a great honour to be here today to discuss one of the most vital partnerships for our sustainable future: China-Africa collaboration on renewable energy and grid modernization. Today, we will journey through China's own remarkable energy transformation, explore the fruitful collaboration with Africa, and chart a course for an even brighter, shared future.

9.2.2 The Evolution of China's Energy and Power Sector: China's energy journey began from a fragile foundation. In 1949, the nation's total installed power capacity was only 1.85 GW, with an annual electricity output of just 4.3 TWh. Widespread power

shortages were the norm. Yet, over the past seven decades, through relentless effort, China has built the world's largest and most technologically advanced power system. This evolution can be summarized in four critical phases:

1. Initial Construction (1949–1978):
This period saw the establishment of a relatively comprehensive power industry. Installed capacity and power generation increased by nearly 30 times and over 58 times, respectively. Despite this, per capita electricity consumption remained low, and power shortages were not fully resolved.
2. Reform, Opening-Up, and Market Transformation (1978–2000):
Policies such as "pooling funds for power generation" and "separating government functions from enterprise management" successfully mobilized private and foreign capital. By 2000, China ranked second in the world for both installed capacity and power generation, fundamentally resolving the chronic power shortages that had constrained economic growth.
3. Market Reforms and the Rise of Clean Energy (2001–2012):
Reforms centred on "separating power plants from grids, and separating core businesses from ancillary services" further stimulated market vitality. By 2012, China's installed capacity exceeded 1,100 GW, with its hydropower and wind power capacity successively becoming the largest in the world. The construction of ultra-high voltage (UHV) transmission lines and nationwide grid interconnection laid a solid foundation for optimizing energy resource allocation.
4. High-Quality Development and Green Transition (2012–Present):
proposed a new energy security strategy focusing on "Four Revolutions and One Cooperation," driving the energy mix towards diversification and cleaner sources. By 2023, China's renewable energy installed capacity surpassed 1,500 GW, accounting for 52% of the national total, with hydropower, wind, and solar PV each leading the world in scale. Meanwhile, China has established a diversified energy supply system driven by coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear, and renewables. Total primary energy production has grown more than 200-fold since 1949.

9.2.3 This journey not only marks China's transformation from an energy-deficient nation to a global power leader but has also accumulated rich experience for cooperation with Africa in the energy sector.

9.2.4 Exploring China-Africa Cooperation in Energy and Power: Africa is endowed with the world's most abundant solar resources. Yet, as of 2023, approximately 600 million people on the continent still lack access to electricity. China-Africa energy cooperation,

guided by a clean and low-carbon orientation, has achieved remarkable results in both policy frameworks and project implementation:

1. **Policy and Institutional Frameworks:**
Documents such as the FOCAC Beijing Action Plan (2025–2027) and the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 have charted the course for collaboration in green energy and energy conservation. In 2021, the establishment of the China-AU Energy Partnership further solidified the foundation for cooperation on clean energy transition. Last year, the 2nd project promotion conference of Energy cooperation Under the China-AU Energy Partnership was held and China-Africa Renewable Energy Cooperation Report 2023 was launched.
2. **Clean Energy Project Implementation:**
According to the latest data, the cumulative installed capacity of PV power stations built through China-Africa cooperation has exceeded 1.5 Gigawatts. For example: In the Central African Republic, the Sakai Solar Power Plant, built with Chinese assistance, meets about 30% of the capital Bangui's electricity demand, boosting the local night-time economy. In Cameroon, Huawei's off-grid solar power projects for rural areas can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 36,000 tons annually, equivalent to planting 100,000 trees. Chinese-built projects, such as the De Aar wind farm in South Africa and the Karuma Hydropower Plant in Uganda, have significantly enhanced local clean energy supply capacity.
3. **Grid Modernization and Technical Cooperation:**
China Southern Power Grid has collaborated with countries like Zambia and Mozambique on power dispatch system construction and grid upgrades. LONGi Group, in partnership with the Africa Power Alliance, is exploring micro-grid solutions to provide rapid electricity access in remote areas. Just a few days ago, Nigeria and this Chinese multinational company signed an MoU, that they going to set up a 500 to 1,000-megawatt solar panel production facility in Nigeria. These collaborations not only improve cross-regional grid connectivity in Africa but also promote the application of digital and smart grid technologies.

9.2.5 Recommendations for the Future China-Africa Energy Cooperation

Looking ahead, how can we deepen this partnership to power sustainable growth for all? Based on past experiences and future needs, I propose the following recommendations:

1. **Foster Integrated Policy and Planning.** We must move beyond project-by-project engagements. China and Africa should work together to formulate comprehensive national energy transition plans. This includes strengthening policy coordination and improving governance frameworks to create a stable

and predictable investment environment. The success of China's Renewable Energy Law shows the power of a clear, top-level policy design.

2. **Accelerate Technology Co-Creation and Localization.** The future is not just about exporting finished products, but about co-creating solutions tailored to Africa's unique environments—be it high temperatures, dust, or specific hydrological conditions. We should establish more joint R&D centres, like the proposed "China-Africa New Energy Joint Lab". Furthermore, we must support the localization of production and supply chains, setting up assembly plants and component manufacturing facilities within Africa to create jobs, transfer skills, and reduce costs.
3. **Innovate Financial and Business Models.** The scale of investment required is immense. We need to innovate beyond traditional loans. This involves exploring mixed financing models that blend public and private capital, utilizing green bonds, and developing project structures that better share risks and rewards. Chinese companies can also pioneer new business models, such as "PV + Modern Agriculture" projects inspired by China's own "Fishery-PV Complementarity" model, which address energy and food security simultaneously.
4. **Build a Resilient "Green Industrial Chain."** We can build an integrated green industrial ecosystem. China's expertise in photovoltaic modules and energy storage systems can combine with Africa's vast resources and development needs. Imagine creating value chains that link hybrid rice cultivation with solar-powered irrigation, or use prefabricated building tech for sustainable urban development. This "three-chain integration" approach—linking the industrial, talent, and innovation chains—can create a lasting foundation for growth.
5. **Strengthen People-to-People Bonds and Knowledge Sharing.** Ultimately, collaboration is about people. We should expand training programs for African technicians and engineers. Simultaneously, we need to cultivate a new generation of Chinese professionals who deeply understand African markets and cultures and a new generation of African professionals who know how China develops in the past 7 decades. Besides, most of the international technical standards were set up by the West. If Africa and China can reach standardization systems of their own, the collaboration between the sides can also go smoother and safer.

9.2.6 Conclusion: Scholars, Friends, Ladies and gentlemen,

China-Africa energy cooperation is not merely about the flow of capital and technology; it is a resonance of development philosophies and a connection between our peoples. From China's own energy transition journey to the green projects jointly built in Africa, countless stories have proven that trust can transcend borders, and collaboration can

illuminate the future. Let us use the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 as our blueprint and join hands to turn the vision of sustainable development into a tangible reality that benefits all our people! The challenges are great, but our collective will, ingenuity, and partnership are greater.
Thank you for your attention.

9.3 **Speaker 2: Dr. Suleyman Ndanusa**

(Banker, Lawyer, Economist, Certified National Accountant, Stockbroker and Chartered Secretary)



- 9.3.1 Transcript:** Africa is a continent of immense promise. With 60% of the world's arable land, the youngest population globally, and rapidly expanding digital infrastructure, our continent holds the potential not only to rise, but to lead. Yet we must confront a central question: What kind of growth do we want—and at what cost?
- 9.3.2** For too long, “growth” in Africa has been measured solely in GDP figures, foreign investments, and urban expansion, but we cannot speak of progress if millions remain excluded from opportunities especially women, youth and rural communities. True development must be inclusive, environmentally responsible, and resilient. Sustainable growth is not a luxury—it is the only viable path forward. Growth without sustainability is short-lived and sustainability without growth leaves millions behind. What we need is a path that does both - a growth that lasts, and a future that lifts everyone.
- 9.3.3** Africa remains home to nearly 600 million people without access to electricity, and millions more suffer from erratic supply. Energy poverty stifles education, healthcare, job creation, and industrial growth. No meaningful development can occur without power. Africa is rich in solar, wind, hydro, and geothermal resources. What we need is the technology, investment, and strategic partnerships to unlock this potential. This brings us to why China–Africa Cooperation Matters.

9.3.4 Potential Benefits of China's Involvement in Africa's Energy Transition, both for African Countries and for Global Sustainability Efforts:

- China brings significant strengths to the table as it is the world's largest investor in renewable energy and smart grid infrastructure, it has successfully scaled up clean energy while reducing costs and, it has experience in high-capacity infrastructure delivery, often under challenging conditions. Africa, meanwhile, offers growing demand, a young workforce, and vast untapped clean energy potential.
- China's growing involvement in Africa's renewable energy sector, particularly in solar, wind, and hydroelectric power projects, is significantly transforming the continent's energy landscape. Recent developments in projects like Olkaria IV Geothermal power plant and Garissa solar park in Kenya, a major hydroelectric project in Zambia, the Diamond Farm in South Africa (2017), the involvement in large scale initiatives like the Lake Turkana Wind Power project in Kenya and the China Renewable Energy Research Centre in Nigeria indicate that China has positioned itself as a leading collaborator in fostering green development and digitalization across Africa. China also has exhibited its understanding of Africa's energy challenges by decentralizing solutions to address rural specific electricity shortages and alleviating energy poverty. The significance of China's collaboration with Africa on solar power goes beyond mere electricity generation. It also provides financial support, like the loan for solar power plant in Burkina Faso in 2023; it directly influences economic growth, environmental preservation, and social upliftment across the continent. Solar projects help bridge the energy gap in off-grid areas, empower local communities with new opportunities, and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, driving sustainable development and addressing pressing energy challenges across the continent.
- Also, direct project-based learning from China through various platforms, primarily through bilateral and multilateral forums like the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) where China's investment and construction of energy projects like hydropower, solar, and wind farms have provided practical, on-the-ground experience and technology transfer which has contributed significantly to employment, both during construction and operation phases. However, several Chinese companies have developed partnerships and collaborated with African governments and businesses to develop renewable energy projects, ranging from hydro- and wind power to solar and geothermal energy.

9.3.5 Challenges African Nations Face in Implementing these Renewable Projects: Despite ongoing collaboration between China and Africa, several power challenges persist across the continent. Key issues include:

1. Dependence on Imports: Many African countries, such as South Africa and Nigeria, rely heavily on imported clean energy technologies due to the competitiveness of Chinese products, which poses obstacles to local manufacturing and value addition resulting to export of its electronic raw materials.
2. Infrastructure Gaps: Chronic energy shortages persist due to insufficient infrastructure, limiting the ability of most African nations to produce and distribute adequate electricity.
3. Local Content Restrictions: The affordability and quality of Chinese imports often make it challenging for local industries in Africa to develop and thrive in the energy sector despite its abundance in electronic raw materials.
4. Policy Ambition vs Implementation: Although there is a strong policy drive towards sustainable growth and green energy adoption, translating these ambitions into effective implementation remains difficult. Bureaucratic delays in obtaining necessary approvals slow down project implementation and increase cost.
5. Regional Energy Poverty: Over 600 million people in Africa still lack access to electricity, hindering economic development and exacerbating social inequalities. E.g., Nigeria, where there is a large gap between urban and rural areas, with rural areas having very low access to renewable energy.

9.3.6 While China-Africa partnerships have significantly contributed to the advancement of renewable energy and provided much-needed technological support, these structural challenges continue to affect the region's ability to fully realize its energy transition goals leaving us with the question before us today: how do we deepen this cooperation? How can China Help Overcome Them?

9.3.7 Therefore, to enhance this collaboration, deepening on renewable energy initiatives could foster progress. To further enhance its support, China could consider the following additional steps:

1. Enhance Technology Transfer and Capacity Building
Beyond supplying renewable energy equipment, China can intensify efforts in transferring relevant technologies and building local capacities. Establishing renewable energy training centers staffed with Chinese experts can help train local technicians in installation, maintenance, and management of solar, wind, and hydroelectric systems. Training African professionals in advanced fields such as artificial intelligence applied to energy management can empower local

talent and drive innovation. Collaborative research centers focused on AI and renewable energy could further solidify this knowledge exchange.

2. Localization

Promoting localized production and technology adaptation within African countries will maximize the impact of these projects. Although current investments have led to job creation and some local linkages, broader economic benefits can be achieved by deepening local participation in manufacturing and operational processes. We must move from importation to co-production. This means local manufacturing of solar components, training African engineers, and fostering innovation hubs.

3. Modernize the Grid

Africa countries require significant investments to upgrade their outdated grid infrastructures, many of which dated back to the colonial era and are beyond their economic lifespan. China can play a pivotal role by providing financial support and technical assistance for these upgrades. E.g., the Nigeria's talk with China's import and export bank for a \$2 billion loan to build a new super grid. Similarly, grid integration solutions to address the intermittent wind generation.

4. Expand Accessible Financing Options

One of the primary obstacles to Africa's energy transition is limited financial resources. While China already provides concessional loans and blended finance packages, increasing the availability of low-interest financing specifically targeted at renewable energy projects would accelerate infrastructure development. Ensuring transparent and sustainable debt management practices is equally important to prevent future financial instability.

5. Impact Assessment

That is, a more robust and standardized assessment criteria needed to accurately evaluate the economic, social, and environmental impacts.

9.3.8 Long-Term Impact of Chinese Investment on Africa's Energy Infrastructure, Local Economies, and Geopolitics

Long-Term Impact of Chinese Investments on Africa's Energy Infrastructure

1. Expansion of Installed Capacity

Over the past decade, Chinese investments have led to a notable increase in Africa's installed power capacity. Since the beginning of China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025), Chinese entities have undertaken approximately 80 solar photovoltaic, wind power, and hydropower projects across 28 African nations, collectively adding over 120 gigawatts of capacity. This surge supports Africa's goal of enhancing energy accessibility and reliability, directly addressing the

challenge faced by over 600 million people lacking electricity, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa

2. Focus on Renewable Energy

There has been a marked shift in China's approach toward renewable energy within Africa. While historically investments were concentrated in fossil fuels and large hydropower projects, recent trends indicate a growing emphasis on renewables. During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, Chinese power companies have invested \$272 million specifically in Africa's renewable energy sector and secured engineering contracts valued at \$24.578 billion.

Furthermore, the quality of infrastructure varies among Chinese-supported projects, with some being cost-effective while others raise affordability issues. Additionally, China has expressed strong commitments to joint ventures like the "Africa Solar Belt" program, aiming to foster a green and low-carbon development pathway.

Overall, Chinese investment in Africa's energy infrastructure promises substantial long-term gains in terms of expanded access and technological advancement. However, it is crucial for African nations to strike a balance—leveraging these investments for sustainable development while proactively managing debt risks and advocating for higher environmental standards.

3. Economic and Employment Benefits

Chinese-backed projects have generated economic co-benefits, including job creation and the development of local supply chains. Although these benefits are described as "bounded," meaning they are present but limited in scope, there is evidence of new employment opportunities, local system linkages, and staff training activities associated with renewable energy projects. Furthermore, special economic zones established through Chinese investments have attracted enterprises, forming industrial clusters that enhance local economies.

9.3.9 The long-term impact of Chinese investment in Africa's local economies is multifaceted, encompassing both significant benefits and notable challenges.

Positive Impacts:

1. Economic Growth and Development

Chinese investments have contributed substantially to economic growth in various African countries by enhancing infrastructure development, which includes building roads, bridges, and energy facilities. This improved infrastructure has been linked to increased economic activity, as evidenced by heightened nighttime luminosity in regions near Chinese-funded projects.

Additionally, these investments have supported the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), such as Egypt's TEDA Suez Economic and Trade

Cooperation Zone and Nigeria's Lekki Free Trade Zone, promoting industrialization and job creation.

2. Diversification of Investment Sources

For many African nations, Chinese investment serves as an alternative source of capital and development assistance, filling gaps left by Western donors who are often reluctant to invest in certain sectors. This diversification helps African countries negotiate better terms and reduces dependency on traditional Western aid models.

3. Technology Transfer and Capacity Building

There has been a noticeable shift in recent years toward greater technology transfer and capacity-building initiatives in Chinese investment projects. Efforts are being made to localize employment and train African workers, which can foster long-term economic resilience and technological advancement.

9.3.10 The long-term impact of Chinese investment in Africa's geopolitics is multifaceted, involving both economic transformation and shifts in regional alliances.

1. Economic Influence and Dependency

Chinese investment in Africa has significantly boosted infrastructure development and provided much-needed capital for various sectors such as mining, manufacturing, energy, and real estate. Since the inception of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), China has emerged as a crucial investor, accounting for between 6% and 12% of total foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into the continent. As of 2023, the cumulative stock of Chinese investment reached \$42.11 billion, illustrating steady growth over the past two decades. However, this influx of investment has raised concerns about economic dependency and rising debt levels among African nations. Some critics argue that while Chinese investments bring immediate economic benefits, they could lead to long-term vulnerabilities if African economies become overly reliant on Chinese funding and markets.

2. Shift from Extractive to Value-Added Projects

Initially, Chinese investments were concentrated primarily on extracting natural resources to feed China's own industrial demands. Nonetheless, there has been a noticeable shift toward investing in manufacturing, technology transfer, and local employment opportunities. This evolution indicates a move toward deeper economic integration and potentially greater developmental impacts for African nations.

3. Strategic and Geopolitical Implications

Beyond economics, Chinese investments carry strategic implications. By embedding Chinese technology and infrastructure into critical sectors, Beijing enhances its geopolitical clout in the region. Notably, projects under the Digital

Silk Road initiative have facilitated extensive digital connectivity across Africa, allowing China to exert influence over governance models and technological standards. For example, Huawei's involvement in 4G infrastructure and collaborative efforts with the African Union highlight China's expanding digital footprint.

9.3.11 This growing presence challenges traditional Western dominance and offers African nations alternative pathways for development and modernization. Consequently, some African countries are reconsidering their alliances and seeking to diversify their partnerships to mitigate risks associated with over-dependence on any single external actor.

9.3.12 Challenges and Concerns

Despite these positive developments, there remain valid concerns regarding debt sustainability and environmental standards. Many African nations are reliant on concessional loans provided by China, which may lead to increased national debt as some analyses indicate that increased reliance on Chinese loans could lead to unsustainable debt levels if not managed properly. Additionally, while China promotes green initiatives, it continues to invest heavily in traditional energy sources like coal, oil, and gas, maintaining its status as the world's largest CO₂ emitter. Some critics argue that while Chinese investments bring immediate economic benefits, they could lead to long-term vulnerabilities if African economies become overly reliant on Chinese funding and markets. Finally, many projects tend to maintain "enclave" characteristics, meaning they rely heavily on imported labour and equipment from China, restricting broader local economic development.

9.3.13 Africa cannot afford to follow the same carbon-intensive path taken by industrialized nations. But we also cannot be left behind in the global green transition. Through this collaboration with China, we have the chance to leapfrog into a low-carbon, high-impact energy future—one that supports jobs, manufacturing, digital innovation, and rural development.

9.3.14 In conclusion, the work before us is not only technical—it is generational. We are laying the foundation for the next 50 years of African development.

The following considerations are essential:

- **Prioritize local needs:** Future projects should be better aligned with the specific needs of recipient countries, focusing on appropriate technology design and local demand.

- Foster local capacity: Greater emphasis should be placed on building local human resources and skills to support the long-term sustainability of projects, rather than relying solely on foreign expertise.
- Strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration: Projects should involve a more diverse set of actors, including local communities, civil society organizations, and other international partners, to ensure more balanced and equitable outcomes.

9.3.15 Let us commit to a model of China–Africa collaboration that is:

- Aligned with African priorities,
- Rooted in mutual respect,
- And focused on powering not just growth—but sustainable, inclusive, and resilient growth.

10. Interactive Question and Answer Session



- 10.1** Ambassador Usman Sarki, seasoned diplomat, academic, and global thought leader, moderated the interactive question and answer session after all speakers have delivered their speeches. He began by thanking the GI and Zhejiang Normal University of China for organizing the conference, describing it as a successful example of productive China–Africa collaboration. He emphasized that the Gusau Institute is more than a think tank or research centre; it serves as a bridge connecting people, countries, and continents, particularly within the framework of South–South cooperation, noting that China continues to identify itself as part of the Global South.
- 10.2** Amb. Sarki highlighted the strong interconnection between the conference's three main themes—security, food security, and energy—arguing that they are all linked through the broader political economy of development. He suggested that an equally important area requiring attention is transport infrastructure, which underpins progress in all three sectors. Citing China's extensive network of expressways, rural roads, and railways, he argued that modern transport infrastructure has been fundamental to

China's economic transformation and modernization. He recommended that the Gusau Institute consider organizing a future conference focused specifically on transport infrastructure, as it would complement and connect discussions on security, agriculture, and energy.

10.3 He also drew attention to the recent meeting of the Chinese Communist Party to formulate China's 15th Five-Year Plan, describing it as evidence of China's systematic, long-term approach to economic planning. He contrasted this with other development models, arguing that China's engagement with Africa is distinguished by continuity, consistency, and sustained implementation.

10.4 According to the moderator, China's development success rests on three key factors:

- A capable and stable state;
- Reliable and consistent leadership; and
- Strong institutional capacity to organize and implement policies with the support and commitment of the population.

He concluded by expressing appreciation to the organizers, panelists, and audience, commending those who remained until the end of the session for their dedication and engagement, before formally opening the floor for questions.

10.5 The questions raised by participants focused on several key themes concerning China–Africa cooperation, particularly in the areas of security, economic development, technology, and sustainable partnership.

1. Modernizing Security Cooperation

- Whether military assistance from China should move beyond conventional hardware such as helicopters and tanks to include advanced digital technologies for counter-terrorism.
- The effectiveness of existing military acquisitions, such as Nigeria's Super Tucano aircraft, in addressing terrorism in the Sahel.
- The need for technology-driven approaches to security rather than relying solely on traditional military equipment.

2. Labour Practices and Mutual Benefits

- Concerns over whether China–Nigeria cooperation genuinely reflects a "win-win" partnership.
- Allegations that some Chinese companies employ expatriate workers for jobs that Nigerians could perform.
- The need for Chinese investments to generate employment, transfer skills, and provide greater benefits to local workers.
- Questions regarding labour standards and corporate practices of Chinese companies operating in Nigeria.

3. **China–Africa Financing and National Security**

- The relationship between Chinese grants, loans, and development assistance and their implications for national security.
- How security challenges affect the viability of infrastructure projects financed through Chinese loans, using the Abuja–Kaduna railway as an example.
- Questions surrounding sovereignty clauses in China–Africa agreements and their long-term implications.

4. **Technology Transfer and Defence Industrial Development**

- The need for a new defence procurement strategy that prioritizes technology transfer rather than simply importing military equipment.
- Calls for Chinese support in developing Africa's local defence manufacturing capabilities.
- Suggestions that Nigeria pursue greater technological adaptation and reverse engineering to strengthen domestic defence production.

5. **Local Manufacturing and Industrialization**

- Appeals for China to establish more manufacturing facilities in Africa rather than exporting finished products.
- Emphasis on building local production capacity, creating employment, and strengthening Africa's industrial base.

6. **Agricultural Innovation and Indigenous Technology**

- Concerns that discussions on agricultural value addition often overlook Africa's indigenous technologies and traditional knowledge.
- The need to improve and modernize local agricultural practices instead of relying exclusively on imported technologies.
- Questions about balancing large-scale commercial agriculture with the realities of subsistence farming across Africa.

7. **Development Priorities for China–Africa Cooperation**

- A broader strategic question regarding which sector should receive the highest priority: **security, energy, or education**.
- The argument that education underpins both technological innovation and improved security, suggesting it may be the foundation for sustainable development.
- A call for the panellists to identify the most effective entry point for strengthening future China–Africa relations.

10.6 **Overall Themes**

Collectively, the questions emphasized the need for:

- More effective and technologically advanced security cooperation.
- Fairer and more mutually beneficial economic partnerships.

- Greater technology transfer and local manufacturing.
- Stronger support for indigenous innovation. Better integration of security, infrastructure, agriculture, education, and energy into a coherent long-term China–Africa development strategy.

11. Votes of Thanks were delivered by the co-hosts and the conference concluded at 16h30 WAT.

11.1 Transcript of Vote of Thanks delivered by Maj. Abubakar Yusuf (Rtd.) on behalf of the GI:



11.1.1 Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

It's a great honour for me to say a few words of appreciation as we bring this inspiring 2025 Abuja Forum to a close. Let me begin by expressing our deep gratitude to our keynote speaker, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, for her brilliant and forward-looking address. You have, as always, challenged us to think bigger and to act with purpose in shaping the China-Africa partnership of the future.

11.1.2 We also extend our sincere thanks to Lt. Gen. Aliyu Gusau Mohammed (Rtd.), Founder of the Gusau Institute, whose vision and leadership continue to guide our collective efforts to promote peace, security, and development across Africa.

11.1.3 Our appreciation equally goes to Mrs. Dong Hairong, Counsellor at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, and Mr. Mike Zhang, Chairman of the Nigeria-Chinese Business Association, for their goodwill messages and enduring support in strengthening China-Africa relations.

11.1.4 A special word of thanks to our host — the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Ochogwu, and our valued partners from Zhejiang

Normal University, ably represented by Prof. Xu Wei and Dr. Wang Yan. This collaboration truly demonstrates the spirit of shared vision and mutual respect that defines our theme today.

11.1.5 I also wish to acknowledge our moderators and panelists — Rtd Gens. Saleh Bala, Sa'ad and Masanawa, Haj. Maimuna, Associate Prof. Ehizuelen Michael, Dr. Chen Biao, Dr. Suleyman Ndanusa, Amb Sarki and others — for their thoughtful contributions that gave real depth to today's discussions.

11.1.6 Finally, I must thank all the senior officers from the 3 services, policymakers, diplomats, academics and every participant, guests, members of the press, and our very dedicated support groups as well as members of the organizing team who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make today's event such a success.

11.1.7 As we leave here, may the ideas shared today not end in this hall, but inspire tangible actions that deepen the implementation of the China-Africa Cooperation 2035 Vision and help build the shared future we all aspire to.
Thank you all, and safe journey home.

Ends

PARTICIPANT PROFILES**1. Keynote Speaker: Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**

Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is the Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. The first woman and first African to hold the position.

She is an economist and international development expert with over 40 years of experience. Dr Okonjo-Iweala was Chair of the Board of Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, African Risk Capacity and Co-Chair of The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, in addition to serving as a Senior Advisor at Lazard and sitting on the Boards of Standard Chartered and Twitter, now X. She is Co-Chair of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Brookings and a Harvard Kennedy School Global Public Leader.

She served as Nigeria's first female and longest serving Finance Minister (7 years) and was also the first female Foreign Minister. Her 25-year career at the World Bank culminated in her rising to the No.2 position of Managing Director, Operations.

Dr Okonjo-Iweala is the recipient of numerous honours and has authored several books. She holds a Bachelor's in Economics from Harvard University and a PhD in Regional Economics and Development from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

2. Master of Ceremonies (MC): Mr. Emeka Izeze

Mr. Emeka Izeze is a seasoned Nigerian journalist and media executive with over three decades of experience in the media industry. He served as the Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief of The Guardian newspaper, a position he held until his retirement. During his tenure, he played a pivotal role in shaping the editorial direction and operational strategies of the publication. His leadership was instrumental in maintaining the newspaper's reputation for quality journalism and editorial independence.

A graduate of the University of Lagos, Mr. Izeze furthered his studies with a Master of Arts in Mass Communication from the University of Leicester, England. He also pursued business management at the Lagos Business School and completed a certificate in strategic leadership at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford. Additionally, he undertook a course in leadership and development at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Beyond his editorial roles, Mr. Izeze has been actively involved in media governance. He chairs the Nigerian Media Ombudsman, a nine-member board established by the Nigerian Press Organisation to address complaints against the media and promote ethical journalism practices. The commission aims to enhance public confidence in the media by ensuring accountability and transparency in media operations.

In recognition of his contributions to journalism, Mr. Izeze was honoured with the Diamond Award for Media Excellence (DAME) Fellowship in 2023. This accolade celebrates his sustained positive impact on the media landscape in Nigeria.

3. **Moderator Panel 1: Brig. Gen. Saleh Bala (rtd.)**



Brigadier General (rtd) Saleh Bala is a veteran Nigerian Army officer and a leading expert in security, strategy, and governance. He is the Founder & President of the White Ink Institute for Strategy Education and Research (WISER), and CEO of White Ink Consult, based in Abuja.

Throughout his military career, he held senior roles including Chief of Staff, Nigerian Army Infantry Corps Center (2012-2013), and served in multiple United Nations peace support missions — as a Military Observer in Angola and Military Chief of Staff in Côte d'Ivoire.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Literature from the University of Maiduguri; a Master's degree in International Peace Studies from the University for Peace (Costa Rica); and a Master's degree in National Security Strategy from the National War College, National Defense University, USA. He is a

distinguished graduate of the U.S. Special Forces Officers Qualification Course at Fort Bragg, and has also been involved in specialized humanitarian law and refugee law trainings.

Since retiring from active service, he has focused on defense, peace, and security work, particularly around strategy development, security sector reform, and policy advisory. WISER under his leadership emphasizes capacity building for executives and middle management in national security, strategy, and governance, with special attention to the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, and related regional security challenges.

4. **Speaker Panel 1: Brig. Gen. ASH Sa'ad (rtd.)**



Brigadier General Abubakar Sadeeq Hanafi Saad (rtd.), Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mali, is a seasoned Defence and Security Consultant with over 33 years of distinguished military service. A former Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) during the peak of the Boko Haram insurgency, he was pivotal in shaping Nigeria's military intelligence and national security strategy. He has held command and staff appointments up to corps level and served as an instructor in three premier military institutions, including the Command and Staff College, Jaji.

Gen. ASH is a certified Crisis, Disaster, Emergency, and Risk Manager, a Maritime Security Professional, and an IMO-certified trainer. He has extensive experience in conflict prevention, mediation, and post-conflict rehabilitation, notably as Nigeria's Defence Attaché to Mali during the height of the Malian conflict (2012–2015), where he actively engaged in regional peace efforts under ECOWAS, AU, UN, and EU platforms. For his role, he was awarded Mali's national honour: Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mali.

He holds an MSc in National Security and War Studies from NDU Pakistan, another MSc in Global Security from Cranfield University (UK), and multiple professional certifications in international security, humanitarian law, and disaster management from institutions including Harvard University and Complutense University of Madrid.

A decorated officer and academic achiever, Abubakar was the recipient of the Rupert Thornehoe Prize at Cranfield and emerged top of his class in several military courses. In retirement, he has continued to contribute as a consultant to organisations such as the UK-funded Nigeria Policing Programme, Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), UNITAR, and the Arewa Research and Development Project (ARDP). He remains a vocal advocate for civilian protection, security governance reform, and strategic leadership in peace and conflict environments across Africa.

5. **Speaker Panel 1: Maj. Gen. Mainasara Masanawa (rtd.)**



Major General (retired) Mainasara Abdul Masanawa was commissioned into the Nigerian Army Ordnance Corps in 1989 after earning a BSc in Chemistry from the Nigerian Defence Academy. Over a distinguished military career spanning more than three decades, he held several key appointments in command, staff, and instructional roles, including Director Land Service Ammunition, Commandant Nigerian Army Ordnance School, and Director Policy at Defence Headquarters. He retired in 2021 as a Major General.

Following his retirement, Maj. Gen. Masanawa has been involved in defence innovation and industrial development. He focuses on enhancing Nigeria's defence capabilities and reducing dependence on foreign procurement of arms.

A Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Logistics and Transport and a Senior Armament and Ammunition Technical Officer, he also holds a Master's degree in Public Administration. He currently serves as Director of Land Systems at DICON-D7G Ltd and is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Benin's Centre for Forensic and DNA Studies.

6. **Moderator Panel 2: Prof. Xu Wei**



Professor Xu Wei is Deputy Director (Academics) of the Institute of African Studies (also known as the African Area & Country Studies Institute) at Zhejiang Normal University, China.

She holds a PhD in Anthropology and serves as a doctoral supervisor. Her research specializes in African anthropology, with particular focus on the social dynamics of ethnicity and identity, studies of overseas Chinese communities in Africa, and China-Africa cooperation in poverty reduction.

Prof. Xu Wei has published multiple books and articles in both Chinese and international scholarly journals. Her publications include studies of ethnic relations in Botswana, social change, and the experiences of African Chinese diaspora, among others. She has also been recognized with provincial social sciences awards for her academic excellence.

In her leadership capacity at the Institute, she contributes to academic program development, talent cultivation (especially interdisciplinary training with an international or Africa-focused dimension), and aligning research priorities with China-Africa cooperation goals and national strategies.

7. Speaker Panel 2: Hajiya Maimuna Lawal El-Labib



Hajiya Maimuna Lawal El-Labib is the Director of Strategies, Innovation, and Sustainability at the Women Farmers Advancement Network (WOFAN). With over two decades of experience in agricultural development, she is a recognized advocate for the empowerment of women and youth across West Africa.

Hajiya Maimuna has served in several strategic roles, including as a Value Chain Advisor with GIZ-CARI and Head of Component for Human Capital Development in the rice sector under the GIZ-MOVE Project. She played a pivotal role in establishing the Women in Rice platform, supporting smallholder women across three West African countries. Her work reflects a deep commitment to sustainable agriculture, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth.

She holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Agricultural Economics and Extension from Bayero University, Kano, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Sustainable Agriculture with a focus on Bioresource Economics and Climate Change. She has also undertaken professional training at institutions such as the University of Virginia, University of Exeter, GIZ, and MIT.

8. Speaker Panel 2: Prof. Ehizuelen Michael Mitchell Omoruyi



Associate Professor Ehizuelen Michael Mitchell Omoruyi is an academic and scholar specializing in China-Africa relations, development studies, and cultural exchange. He serves as the Executive Director of the Center for Nigerian Studies at the Institute of African Studies, Zhejiang Normal University, China. He helps lead the academic and research engagement between Africa and China, especially Nigeria. His role involves not just research and publication but also institutional leadership, supervising, mentoring, and strengthening bilateral ties especially through educational and cultural programs.

His research interests include trade and investment flows between China and African countries, infrastructure development, skills transfer (notably in the context of the “flying geese” paradigm), cultural diplomacy, and the role of education and cultural exchange in strengthening mutual understanding.

He has published widely on topics such as development partnerships between China and Africa, demographic trends, youth employment, and trade and policy dynamics.

Prof. Michael's work places strong emphasis on facilitating cultural understanding, knowledge sharing, and strengthening academic linkages between Nigeria, other African countries, and China. He contributes to teaching, supervising research, and institutional leadership in his Center.

9. Moderator Panel 3: Dr Joseph Ochogwu



Dr Joseph Peter Ochogwu is the Director-General of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Abuja, having assumed the role in May 2023. He previously served as Director of Research & Policy Analysis at IPCR, and has a long track record in conflict advisory, peacebuilding, governance, and policy formulation.

Dr Ochogwu holds a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from the University of Jos; a Master of Science in Political Science from the University of Lagos; a Master of Arts in Peace Studies (Merit) from the University of Bradford, UK; and a PhD in International Relations & Strategic Studies from the University of Jos.

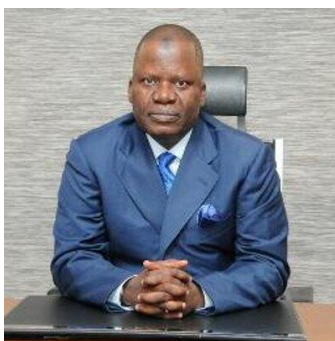
Under his leadership, IPCR has emphasized non-kinetic approaches to resolving conflicts—dialogue, mediation, negotiation—and has prioritized empirical research, youth empowerment, community-level interventions, and the strengthening of local governance as foundations for sustainable peace.

10. **Speaker Panel 3: Dr Chen Biao**



Dr Chen Biao is a researcher and lecturer at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU), China. His academic focus encompasses African studies, with particular attention to the dynamics of China-Africa relations. Dr Chen has been actively involved in research initiatives aimed at strengthening educational and cultural exchanges between China and African nations. He has participated in collaborative projects that explore areas such as vocational education cooperation and the integration of African studies into Chinese academic curricula. Additionally, Dr Chen has contributed to the development of strategic plans to enhance Zhejiang Province's engagement with Africa, aligning with broader national objectives for international cooperation.

11. **Speaker Panel 3: Dr Suleyman Ndanusa**



Dr Suleyman Abdu Ndanusa, OON is a distinguished Nigerian banker, lawyer, economist, certified national accountant, stockbroker, and chartered secretary.

He earned a B.Sc. in Economics (1978) and an MBA (1982) from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He later obtained an LLB from the University of Lagos (2000) and was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2003. He holds advanced executive education credentials, including the Harvard Business School Advanced Management Programme, and Cambridge University's Advanced Leadership Programme. Additionally, he has earned Ph.D. degrees in Corporate Governance (University of San Juan) and Security & Strategy (Nasarawa State University).

Dr Ndanusa has held senior positions across both the regulatory and financial sectors. He served as Director-General of the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC), Nigeria (1999-2004), and later as Chairman of SEC (2013-2015). He was Managing Director/CEO of Spring Bank Plc (2007-2008, during

a crisis period) and has been involved in consultancy on bank consolidation for the Central Bank of Nigeria.

He has also held academic and advisory roles: adjunct professor at Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER) and Nasarawa State University, senior visiting fellow at Lagos Business School. He was Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Council of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University (IBBU), Lapai, Niger State (2009-2015).

Dr Ndanusa is currently CEO of Global Mandate Consulting Limited, Abuja, providing advisory services in corporate governance, risk management, finance, and policy. He also serves as Independent Non-Executive Director at PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc (from 2023) and on the board of other major corporations. He is a recipient of the national honour Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON).

12. Moderator of Q&A Session – Ambassador Usman Sarki



Ambassador Usman Sarki is a seasoned diplomat, academic, and global thought leader. He has had a remarkable career in international diplomacy, notably serving as the Deputy Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations in New York, where he played a key role in advancing Nigeria's multilateral interests and contributing to global peace and security dialogues.

Amb. Sarki holds a Bachelor's degree in Geography, a Master's in International Relations, and further postgraduate qualifications in development and diplomatic studies, including training from Oxford University and the University of London. His academic background is matched by a deep commitment to ethical governance and sustainable development. Ambassador Sarki is also a regular contributor to intellectual and policy discourse, particularly in the areas of African development, global governance, and the philosophy of leadership.

Beyond his diplomatic service, he has been actively involved in educational and cultural initiatives, and continues to advocate for principled leadership, equity, and international cooperation.

13. Expert from Tomato Jos: Mr. Esson Akolo



Esson Akolo Elijah is the Deputy General Manager at Tomato Jos Farming and Processing Ltd., a pioneering agribusiness reshaping Nigeria's tomato value chain. He is passionate about building climate-smart and inclusive agricultural systems that empower smallholder farmers and drive long-term food security across West Africa. Under his leadership, Tomato Jos has successfully integrated over 2,500 smallholder farmers with over 50% women inclusion into a commercially viable supply chain. This benchmark remains unmatched by any other private-sector-led initiative in the country.

Esson has also overseen agronomic programs that have delivered some of the highest recorded yields of maize, tomato, and soybean in Nigeria, outperforming national averages by up to 400–500%. These results were achieved through rigorous field trials, data-driven input use, and scalable best practices in soil health, IPM, and smart irrigation.

Over the next five years, Esson aims to scale regenerative crop production and carbon-smart agricultural practices to reach tens of thousands of farmers, positioning them for climate resilience, higher productivity, and access to premium markets through innovation and strategic partnerships.

Before joining Tomato Jos, Esson worked as a research assistant with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and Ahmadu Bello University. His expertise spans donor engagement, environmental impact assessment, farmer training systems, and inclusive agribusiness models. He has successfully mobilized and implemented millions of dollars' worth of donor-funded projects that advance rural livelihoods and climate adaptation.

Esson holds a Master's degree in Plant Biology from Ahmadu Bello University and has received advanced training in climate-smart agriculture, irrigation and water systems, and monitoring and evaluation. Fluent in English and Hausa, he brings a deep understanding of Nigeria's agricultural systems, rural dynamics, and sustainability pathways to every project he leads.

Ends