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RISING AFRICA SHOULD SEIZE THE MOMENT

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Rising Africa should seize the moment

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BENEDICT TEMBO
The sixth Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit has come and gone.
The most recent FOCAC, held from December 4 to 5 in Johannesburg, South Africa, saw Chinese President Xi Jinping dangling US\$60 billion for African countries to be shared over the next three years. The US\$60 billion Beijing is doling out will come in form of US\$5 billion as grants in zero interest loans and US\$35 billion in preferential facility and export credit loans and concessional loans. Beijing has also offered to cancel all loans which will mature at the end of this month.
Being an emerging economic power house, China's gesture has resonated to all parts of the continent.
Worth noting has been the rotational nature of the FOCAC, a platform established by China for interaction with African countries.
The FOCAC, a symbol of south-south cooperation between Beijing and Africa, is an important vehicle for consultation, dialogue and cooperation. It is gratifying how the event which started as a conference in 2000 has matured into a summit with heads of state and government being the key players.



However, FOCAC is not the only platform where African heads of state and government meet their common benefactor.

India, which also has a cordial relationship with African, equally hosts the India-Africa Forum summit.

This year's Forum summit held on October 29-30 in New Delhi where Zambia was represented by vice-president Inonge Wina had a huge presence of African leaders who included South African President Jacob Zuma.

Other countries which host African leaders' summits are Japan which also stages the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, TICAD.

The next TICADVI will be held in Kenya and will be the first TICAD to take place in Africa.

Not be left out, United States President Barrack Obama in 2014 hosted three-day US-Africa leaders' Summit, the first such event of its kind.

The summit was the largest event any US President has fellowshipped with African heads of state and government.

The August 4-6 event built on Mr Obama's trip to Africa in the summer of 2013 which aimed to strengthen ties between the US and Africa – one of the world's most dynamic and fastest-growing regions.

The US-Africa leaders' summit advanced the US Administration's focus on trade and investment in Africa and highlighted America's commitment to Africa's security, its democratic development, and its people.

It also highlighted the depth and breadth of the United States' commitment to the African continent, advanced our shared priorities, and enabled discussion of concrete ideas to deepen the partnership.

At its core, the summit, whose theme was "Investing in the next Generation about fostering stronger ties between the US and Africa.

The platform provided an opportunity to discuss ways of stimulating growth, unlocking opportunities, and creating an enabling environment for the next generation.



Other countries such as Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, France, Norway, Saudi Arabia, and Sweden, may not have African leaders' summits but their commitment to developing the continent cannot be doubted.

For instance, a German economic delegation led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier was in the country seeking investment opportunities.

Dr Steinmeier's delegation also visited Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda during their four-nation tour of Africa.

The high-powered delegation had Frank Berger, a member of the executive board of AMG Mining AG, Carl Heinrich Bruhn, founder and chief executive officer of the Amatheon Agri Holding NV, Heinz-Walter Grobe (Professor), the chief executive officer of B.

Braun Melsungen AG, Hans Wolfgang Kunz, the chief executive officer for Veridos GmbH, Klaus Lasker, a member of the Ferrostaal GmbH executive board, Peter Luns, the sales manager, sales and marketing Africa for ABB AG, Roland Munch of Voith GmbH, Clas Neumann, the vice-president of SAP SE and Maixm Nohroudi, the chief executive officer for allyApp/Door-to-Door GmbH were in the tour.

Others were Nico Scharfe (PLATH GmbH), Alfre Schmitt of Andritz Hydro Power GmbH, Roland Schuler of BayWa AG, Michael Sprang (Herrenknecht AG), Stephan Tavares Bollow (Gauff GmbH and Engineering KG), Markus Thill (Robert Bosch), Manfred Vohrer, chief executive officer (global-woods international AG), and his co-chief executive officer, Matthias Baldus and Stefan Zelazny, CEO, (Mobiso GmbH), the Solar Home Systems.

In Dr Steinmeier's delegation from the Federal Foreign Office were the director-general Dieter Haller in the department of Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development and Ana Dujic, the head of external economic consultancy task force.

To Government's credit, President Lungu, the country's top diplomat, met the high-powered delegation and assured them of a conducive investment environment in Zambia.

Zambia could not have asked for better potential investors than the Germans – all of them from the critical sectors – agriculture, energy, manufacturing, IT, engineering – at this crucial moment of our country. They are all decision-makers and I hope they went back with a positive impression of the country.



“Back in Germany, Africa is ebola (disease) and Boko Haram (wars). Africa is not a continent of crises but opportunities,” Frank Hofman, head of Development Cooperation at the German embassy in Lusaka said. The narrative of Africa and Zambia is changing. It is imperative that as a continent and country, we seize the moment. The author is Zambia Daily Mail editorial editor.
