

Yang Yan

Franco-Chinese Cooperation in Africa

Ms. Yang Yan is the Political Counselor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Paris. She delivered these remarks during Panel 4 of the Schiller Institute's April 25-26 teleconference.



Yang Yan

Schiller Institute

April 26—Before I begin, I would first like to thank the Schiller Institute for inviting me to this video conference. It is a great pleasure to be able to participate, and I intend to benefit from this great opportunity to discuss Sino-French cooperation in the African market with you.

In June 2015, the Chinese and French governments published a “joint declaration on cooperation for the development of third markets,” for the first time evoking the concept of cooperation in third markets. It is not only a major initiative in Sino-French relations, but also a great innovation in the model of international cooperation. The main thing is to effectively combine China’s superior production capacity, and France’s advanced technologies to development needs in developing countries. This helps Chinese and French companies to complement each other and jointly promote the growth of industries, infrastructure, and the well-being of the population of developing countries to obtain the effect that “one plus one plus one is greater than three.”

Cooperation in the third market is of particular significance for African countries, which have immense demands for development. Rich in natural and human resources, Africa has a keen desire to translate those potential assets into development in a concrete way, and to move forward on the path towards industrialization, urbanization, and modernization.

In order to achieve this goal, considerable investment in infrastructure, training for women and men, and support for technology, production capacity, and finance is required. This cannot be done by Africa alone, nor with the help of a single party from outside. On the other hand, within the framework of cooperation in third markets, China and France can, highlighting their respective advantages and taking into account African demand for development, cooperate in the fields of infrastructures, energy, transport, agriculture, health, etc. This is of benefit to Chinese and French companies, but it also bene-

fits the economic and social development of Africa.

In recent years, under the impetus of the Chinese and French heads of state, cooperation in this third market has developed at an accelerated rate. In the Chinese government’s 2019 work report, there is talk of expanding cooperation in third markets. Guided by this policy, Chinese companies have an increased desire to move in this direction. Currently, the Chinese and French parties have

signed onto a list of the third series of demonstration projects of cooperation in third markets and have created a cooperation fund for third markets.

This cooperation has yielded concrete achievements. The China-Africa Development Fund has worked with the French group Bolloré to put a container terminal into operation at the Nigerian Tincan port, bringing container throughput to 500,000 TEU (20-foot equivalents), creating more than 600 local jobs and making an accumulated contribution of more than \$100 million. The Republic of Congo’s National Route 1 project, which is the subject of joint investments by China and France, has been launched. This project, which links Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire, reduces the journey from 7 days to 6 hours. In addition to these infrastructure projects, China and France have collaborated on projects for the well-being of the African people, including treatment of wastewater in Senegal.

The Sino-French partnership in third markets serves as a good example for other developed countries. As of June 2019, China has signed third-market cooperation documents with 14 countries including France, Japan, Italy, and the United Kingdom. The Chinese Silk Road Fund and the European Investment Bank have created a market fund in this area. Cooperation in third markets is indeed an important activity within the framework of the “New Silk Road” initiative.

Principles of Cooperation

To make Sino-French cooperation successful in the African market, we must stick to the following principles:

First, let’s stick to the principle of joint consultation, joint construction and sharing, and to the principle of benefitting the third party. Africa is the main ground for

this partnership. In order to guarantee the success of such cooperation, it is imperative to fully respect the will of African countries in promoting these projects, thus ensuring that the projects are in compliance with the development objectives of these countries. You also have to raise the level of “localization” so that the investment will benefit their economy, employment, and the well-being of the local populations. Pursuing self-interest while taking into account the concerns of partners is the only way to make the cooperation of the three parties successful.

Second, let’s enhance the central role of business through government assistance. Having companies as a

major player, this partnership must be market-oriented and fully respect commercial principles and international conventions. The government, on its side, must play its coordinating role and employ policy measures that encourage and support businesses in order to motivate them to pursue this cooperation.

Third, let’s keep a spirit of openness, inclusiveness, and value cooperation that benefits everyone. Sino-French cooperation in the African market must be open to other countries, including African countries, and to regional and international organizations, to contribute together to the development of Africa.