

China and Africa Deepen Civilizational Dialogue Through People-to-People Exchanges

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As the China–Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges unfolds in 2026, China and African countries are opening a new chapter in civilizational dialogue, strengthening mutual understanding and shaping a shared vision for future development.

The year features a range of cultural, academic, and social initiatives under the theme “Consolidate All-Weather Friendship, Pursue a Shared Dream of Modernization,” aimed at enhancing public engagement, deepening emotional bonds, and reinforcing long-term cooperation between the peoples of China and Africa.

Academic and think-tank collaboration has become a key driver of this relationship. In November 2025, the Global South Media and Think Tank Forum China–Africa Partnership Conference in Johannesburg brought together scholars and policymakers to explore new pathways for cooperation, emphasizing dialogue, mutual respect, and learning over civilizational confrontation.

African leaders and scholars highlighted the historical depth of China–Africa ties, citing the voyages of Zheng He during China’s Ming

Dynasty as examples of centuries-old trade and cultural exchanges based on reciprocity and peaceful engagement. Archaeological discoveries along the coasts of Kenya and Tanzania, including Tang Dynasty ceramics, further illustrate early connections along the Maritime Silk Road.

These historical links are now being translated into modern partnerships. Cultural heritage cooperation, including joint archaeological projects between China and Kenya, has expanded understanding of human origins and strengthened research capacity in Africa.

Beyond culture and academia, China-Africa cooperation spans science, technology, infrastructure, renewable energy, and biodiversity research, contributing to skills development and innovation across the continent.

At the 2024 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, mutual learning among civilizations was placed at the forefront of future collaboration, aligning with growing international calls for dialogue as a foundation for peace and sustainable development. Observers note that China-Africa relations continue to emphasize equality, diversity, and shared progress, offering a model of cross-civilizational cooperation rooted in respect, dialogue, and common aspirations.

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