
African exporters eye gains from China tariff cuts



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African experts say China's zero-tariff policy for 53 African countries could boost exports, provided African economies strengthen industrial capacity, improve product quality and expand value-added production.

The views emerged during a webinar hosted by the Sino-SA Media Club on China's initiative,

effective May 1, aimed at deepening trade cooperation with African partners.

Senior lecturer Gabila Nubong of North-West University said African countries must scale up manufacturing and address structural weaknesses to fully benefit, calling it a key opportunity for partnership.

He urged the Southern African Development Community to coordinate industrial strategies and develop regional value chains to maximize gains from tariff-free access to the Chinese market.

David Monyae, director of the Centre for Africa-China Studies at the University of Johannesburg, called the policy a “golden opportunity” for export diversification, especially in agriculture, noting Africa’s vast uncultivated arable land.

He said Africa holds around 60 percent of the world’s unused arable land, offering strong potential for agricultural exports to China, but warned that competition from other regions remains strong.

Monyae stressed exporters must maintain quality standards, competitive pricing and reliable supply chains to succeed in the Chinese market.

Ambassador Wu Peng encouraged African businesses to join trade expos and use e-commerce platforms to expand market access and strengthen bilateral trade ties