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L'Afrique et les défis du XXIème siècle
Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty First Century
A África e os desafios do Século XXI

إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

**Emerging Powers and Africa's Future:
Unpacking China's Rise on the Continent**

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The expansion of Chinese political and corporate interests into Africa is arguably the most important development for the continent since the end of the Cold War. China is now Africa's largest bilateral trading partner. Much of this expansion is driven by a desire to obtain sources of raw materials and energy for China's ongoing economic growth and for new export markets for Chinese producers and traders compelled to seek new markets by domestic dynamics within China's economy. Whilst there has been scare-mongering in the West about China's emergence in Africa, it must be emphasized that China's policies towards Africa are evolving and maturing and Beijing is going through a steep learning curve. Sino-African relations are processes not of colonization but of globalization and the reintegration of China into the global economy—a project that ironically has enjoyed the enthusiastic support of Western capitalism. At present the picture appears mixed—there are instances where the Chinese role in Africa is clearly positive and appreciated. Equally, there are issues where Beijing is, at present at least, playing an equivocal role. Beijing's current policies are, like all other external actors, diverse and its effect in the continent varies widely depending on local economic and political circumstance. A balanced appraisal on the various themes of China's engagement in Africa is needed. The diversity of both China and Africa, as well as the nature of the individual African states where Chinese interests operate is central if we are to have a coherent picture of what is going on.