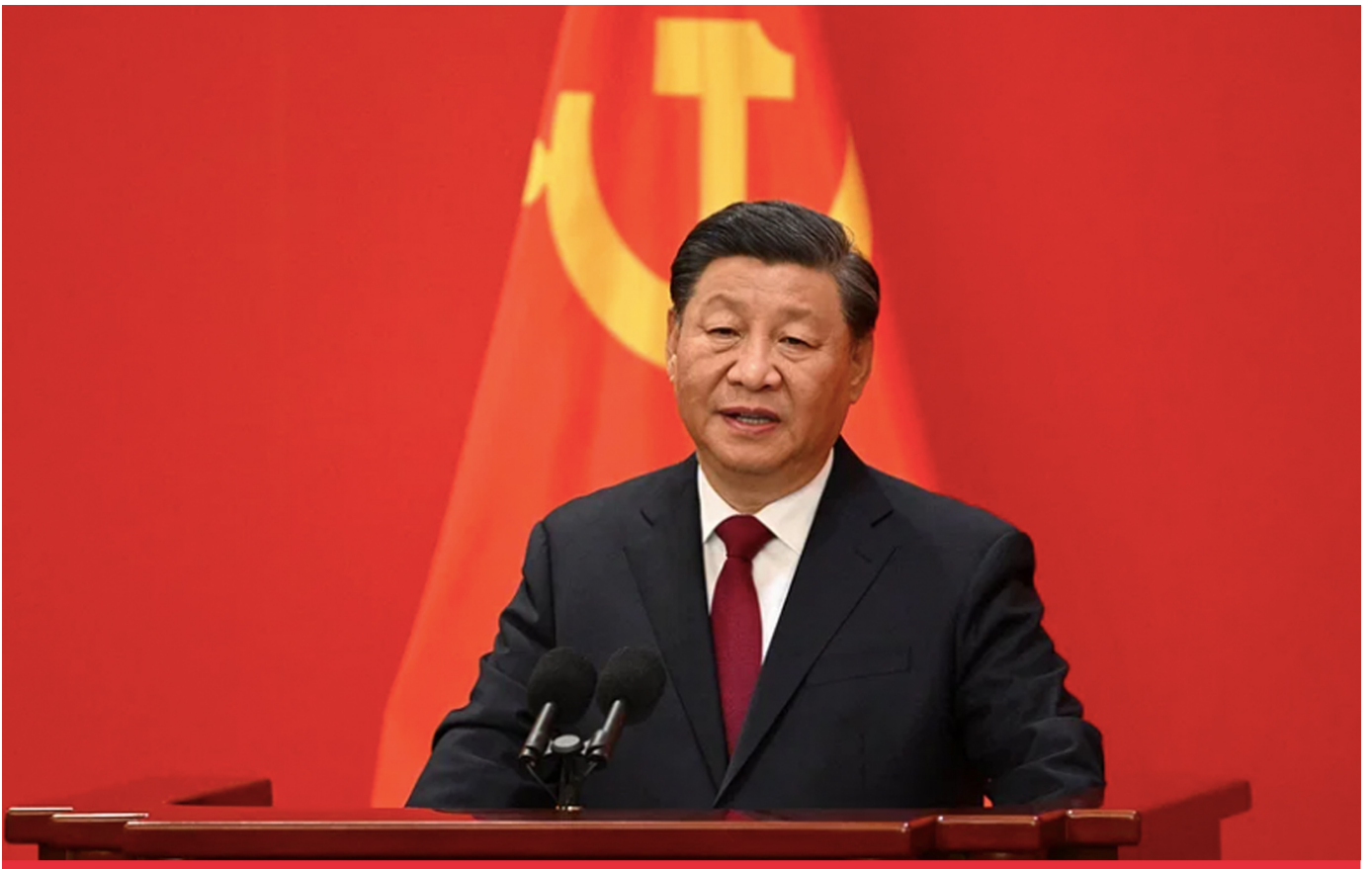


# **CHINA LIFTS COVID-19 RESTRICTION:** *Why does this matter?*





**AFRICA-CHINA**  
CENTRE FOR POLICY  
& ADVISORY

**INSIGHTS**

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There's no downplaying the significant negative impact the deadly Corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic has had on the global health system and economy.

The robustness of the global public health system was and is still put to the test by the COVID-19, which has been a global pandemic since its breakout in late 2019.

Just to name a few, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a shocking loss of life on a global scale and has presented and continues to present an unparalleled threat to food systems, public health, and the workplace.

The pandemic has had a terrible impact on society and the economy; tens of millions of people face the possibility of living in abject poverty, and the number of undernourished individuals could increase threefold.

As the infection spread, governments across the world tightened containment measures, including introducing screening at ports of entry, quarantine for infected people, and the closure of public gathering places. Multiple countries introduced partial or total lockdowns in the early stages of the pandemic.

The case of China is no different. A country of 1.4 billion definitely has the core responsibility to protect lives and live to fight for the rebound of the economy again. Every nation's first and foremost priority in the fight against the pandemic has always been the protection of human lives.

## What's China's Dynamic Zero-COVID Policy?

China, like all countries, wanted to minimize the number of cases of COVID-19 as much as possible. To do this, it carried out mass testing, housed the infected in government facilities, and enacted lockdowns. The government named this the 'Dynamic Zero-COVID Policy'.

The key pillars of the Dynamic Zero-COVID Policy were to balance socioeconomic stability with the prevention and control of this disease while minimizing the epidemic's negative effects on the economy, society, production, and people's regular lives.

Compared to conventional containment and mitigation measures, this is distinct. The most important thing is that, China was committed to taking comprehensive and effective action to precisely handle localized COVID-19 cases, to immediately break the chain of transmission, and to quickly put an end to the epidemic.

To achieve the greatest impact at the lowest cost, the country implemented precise prevention and control measures to swiftly identify, contain, and treat infected

individuals in each cluster outbreak within a particular geographic area. This was done to prevent having an impact on the social and economic development of other regions.

Accordingly, compared to other nations, the number of coronavirus cases and fatalities has been kept low in China. The United States, the nation most severely affected by the epidemic, has documented more than a million deaths, while China, with a population of 1.4 billion, has registered nearly 16,000 COVID-19 deaths.

## Restrictions lifted & why does it matter?

China has announced major policy changes in respect of the "Dynamic Zero-COVID Policy". Beginning January 8, 2023, most of the restrictions related to the management of COVID-19 will be lifted because of the virus' mutation, the spread of vaccination, and the accumulation of experience in prevention and control.

The key phrase in the new directives indicates that China is now ready to receive international travellers. At the same time, Chinese travellers can make trips outside of the country. Mandatory testing in public places is no longer the case, making in-country travel easier than before.

This major shift in policy direction has received mixed reactions, and understandably so, when most of the negative reactions are emanating from Western media outlets.

There seems to be an acute bias in reporting aimed at creating a negative narrative against China, first, for implementing COVID-19 restrictions, and then for lifting them. That's a clear case of double standards.

The relevance of every policy directive issued and implemented by every country in the world during this COVID-19 pandemic is unique and peculiar to that country's risks with respect to the virus.

China has successfully responded to five worldwide COVID waves over the past three years and has prevented the spread of the original strain and the Delta variation, which is considerably more virulent than the other variants.

From all indications, the 'Dynamic Zero-COVID Policy' has successfully worked for China and now provides room for major restrictions to be lifted.

There is no doubt that Covid-19 is still spreading in almost all countries in the world despite some of them have announced that the pandemic is over. According to the latest data released by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), XBB.1.5 variant accounted for 40.5% of the Covid-19 cases last week, almost doubling from 21.7% in the previous week. The XBB variant of Omicron increase in a fast speed in some countries but they even strangely require passengers departing from China for

more restrictions. This is clearly a political act but not based on science and obvious facts.

Governments of all countries should focus on reducing their own cases and increasing vaccination rates, rather than hastily imitating individual countries and taking targeted measures.

# Economy, Business & Growth

The world economy is extremely susceptible to any slowdown in China's economy brought on by COVID-19 limitations. Therefore, it should rather be a welcoming news that China is finally open for trade and people to people exchange.

The recent announcement by the Chinese government to lift the restrictions has ushered in a fresh breath of opportunity, not just for the rebound of the Chinese economy, but for the recovery of the global economy as well.

American, British, German, and other foreign chambers of commerce in China, as well as some foreign diplomatic missions there, are said to have noted that China's decision to downgrade the management of COVID-19 will pave the way for the resume of personnel exchange and business travel, rebuild foreign investors' confidence in the Chinese market, and contribute to the restoration of optimism and reinstating China as a priority investment destination.

Foreign companies have high hopes for their success on the Chinese market in the upcoming year as the country's COVID-19 policies continue to be improved and the country's economic recovery gains momentum.

The prediction made by J.P. Morgan Asset Management indicates that China's GDP growth could increase to over 5% in 2023.

With consumer and corporate confidence already on the rise, consumption will be the key driver of China's economic recovery in 2023.

This certainly present an opportunity for African and Ghanaian businesses to resume full cycle trade with China without any limitations.



INSIGHTS

# Who we are.



The Africa-China Centre for Policy and Advisory is a Sino-African research and policy think tank and advisory firm headquartered in Accra, Ghana.

The Centre is dedicated to providing unbiased policy and market research as well as distinct views on Africa-China relations.

**We offer strategic guidance on key issues regarding China and Africa, covering multiple sectors and industries.**

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