

Chinese Foreign Minister Visits Africa: What to Know



www.africachinacentre.org

Chinese Foreign Minister Visits Africa: What to Know

WRITTEN BY:

Mercy Tedeku
Research Associate, ACCPA
E: mercyt@africachinacentre.org

In the dynamic landscape of Sino-Africa relations, the year 2024 unfolds as a pivotal chapter, marked by the impending 9th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) due to take place in Beijing, the first during President Xi Jinping's third term. FOCAC 2024 signify not only a renewed commitment to enhancing collaboration between China and Africa but also a year of accountability, where the outcomes of various initiatives in the Africa-China space is expected to come under review and the way forward discussed.

Amidst this pivotal event, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi recently concluded his 11th first annual visit to Africa as part of the established tradition. Minister Wang Yi's recent visit marks the 34th consecutive year that the continent has been the chosen destination for China's ministers first overseas visit.

Visiting Egypt, Tunisia, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire, Minister Wang Yi's diplomatic journey holds significant importance in the context of the broader Africa-China engagement. Beyond the formal platforms of FOCAC and BRI, this tour does not only serve as a dynamic channel to deepen bilateral cooperation, address issues of mutual benefit and setting the stage for a future characterized by strengthened diplomatic ties but also sends powerful signals regarding the future trajectory of Africa-China collaboration.

Highlights of the Visit:

- 1. Review of diplomatic relations:** During the recent visit of the Chinese Foreign Minister to Africa, the opportunity came to review diplomatic ties, focusing on key areas like economy, infrastructure, health, agriculture, education, and culture. The China-Togo relationship, spanning over half a century as well as Wang's visit to Tunisia which coincided with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Tunisia, was highlighted for China's firm support and continuous enhancement of political mutual trust. Meanwhile, with Cote d'Ivoire, the emphasis was on their friendship and partnership for development, with tangible results in mutually beneficial cooperation. Notably, China's contribution to Cote d'Ivoire as it hosts the 34th Africa Cup of Nations showcasing the diverse facets of collaboration. Egypt was also congratulated on becoming a new member of BRICS.
- 2. Economic Cooperation and Development:** Minister Wang Yi's discussions in each country focused on strengthening economic ties and promoting development initiatives. Discussions revolve around enhancing trade volumes, diversifying trade products, and promoting investment in key sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture and the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative placing a renewed emphasis on environmental sustainability.
- 3. Peace and stability:** The visit also showcased China's commitment to promoting peace and stability in the African continent. Minister Wang Yi emphasized China's support for African-led initiatives and its willingness to contribute to resolving regional conflicts. In Egypt, hot-

spot issues especially the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip, and its spillover in the region such as the Red Sea turmoil was highly discussed, agreeing on the need for an immediate cease-fire and preventing further conflict escalation as Egypt has been playing a pivotal role in mediating the conflicts and brokering ceasefire deals.

Minister Yi emphasized on the fact that China will firmly support Africa in safeguarding national sovereignty, independence and national dignity, and support African countries in seeking strength through unity and exploring a development path with African characteristics that accelerates its development while maintaining independence and stability.

Implications and Future Prospects:

1. **Long-Term Partnership:** the fact that Africa has been the chosen destination for China's ministers first overseas visit for 34 consecutive years showcases the importance China places on its diplomatic ties with African countries.

This illustrates that China-Africa friendship has withstood challenges, rooted in past accomplishments, and is poised for a promising future. It demonstrates China's commitment to maintaining and deepening its relationship with the continent, highlighting the long-standing and enduring nature of their partnership.

Wang Yi's annual tour to Africa not only reinforces the long-standing diplomatic relationship between China and Africa but also signals China's dedication to further collaboration and cooperation. The visit holds significant implications for the future trajectory of Africa-China relations.

2. **Bilateral Cooperation Strengthening:** The visit underscores a commitment to strengthen bilateral cooperation between China and the African nations visited and even Africa as a whole. By reviewing diplomatic ties in crucial areas such as the economy, infrastructure, health, agriculture, education, and culture, both parties signal their dedication to fostering multifaceted collaboration and indicates China interest in real results. Also, the emphasis on continuous enhancement of political mutual trust, as seen in the case of China and Togo, suggests a commitment to a stable and supportive political relationship. This trust forms the foundation for deeper cooperation in various domains.
3. **Commitment to New Prospects:** The commitment to advancing pragmatic cooperation and opening up new prospects for bilateral relations, guided by the consensus reached by the heads of state, implies a forward-looking approach. Both parties are signaling a commitment to exploring new opportunities and adapting their collaboration to evolving circumstances. China envisions future collaboration in emerging fields such as green development, digitalization, and healthcare. As Africa's economic and technological landscapes undergo transformation, China aims to support its partners in leveraging these opportunities and achieving sustainable development.
4. **Shared Development Goals:** The discussions underscored a shared vision for development, focusing on economic growth, and sustainable development. China's commitment to the

Belt and Road Initiative aligns with Africa's aspirations for infrastructure development and economic transformation. Minister Wang Yi's visit to Africa signifies a commitment to strengthening trade relations, infrastructure development, and investment in African countries. This will lead to increased Chinese investments in sectors such as mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and energy, which will contribute to economic growth in both China and Africa.

5. **Diversification of Partnerships:** China's engagement with multiple African nations reflects a commitment to diversifying and deepening its partnerships on the continent. This strategy promotes inclusivity and allows for a more comprehensive and robust collaboration in various fields. By visiting countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire, Minister Wang Yi's visit extends beyond traditional partnerships, reflecting China's intention to engage a diverse range of African nations. This highlights China's recognition of Africa's growing importance on the global stage and its desire to forge stronger relationships with a broader array of African states. Acknowledging China's contribution to a football tournament demonstrates the diversification of collaboration beyond traditional diplomatic spheres. This cultural and sporting engagement highlights a more comprehensive approach to cooperation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's recent visit to Africa, amidst the upcoming 9th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the 11th Belt and Road Initiative conference, is pivotal for Sino-Africa relations. This 34th consecutive annual tour to Egypt, Tunisia, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire goes beyond diplomatic tradition.

The visit highlights China's commitment to deepening cooperation in key areas like the economy, infrastructure, health, agriculture, education, and culture. It signifies a forward-looking approach, emphasizing the enduring nature of diplomatic ties and a dedication to exploring new opportunities. The implications include a strengthened partnership, enhanced bilateral cooperation, and a shared commitment to development goals. This visit serves not only as a testament to the diplomatic relationship between China and Africa but also as a proactive step towards shaping a future characterized by strengthened diplomatic ties, mutual benefit, and shared prosperity.

About author



Mercy Tedeku

Research Associate, [Africa-China Centre for Policy & Advisory](#)

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

Email: mercyt@africachinacentre.org



CONTACT

Building No. 49-01, North Legon,
Accra, Ghana
+233 303 965259
info@africachinacentre.org

www.africachinacentre.org