



## Statement of H.E. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea



Statement of H.E. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea  
At the Second Summit of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation

Johannesburg  
4-5 December 2015

Your Excellency Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa,

Your Excellency Xi Jin Ping, President of the People's Republic of China,

Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Allow me to express, on behalf of the people and government of Eritrea, our profound appreciation and gratitude to our co-hosts for organizing this political, economic, business and cultural gathering of the first order.

It is only fifteen years since the first meeting of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Since that time, and despite complex challenges and continued difficulties, China has continued to march forwards and upwards, taking its rightful place in the community of nations. This past fifteen years has also seen unprecedented growth in the scale and scope of Africa-China relations. It is a tribute to the vision of China's leadership and the affinity and complementarity between Africa and China that today China is Africa's number one development and trade partner.

As we meet in this Second FOCAC Summit, it is indisputable that both Africa and China have benefitted from this booming partnership. And yet, we all agree that much more needs to be done and done better. We all recognize that going forward the partnership needs to respond to the complex changes taking place in the situation, challenges and priorities of both China and Africa. China is entering a new stage in its modernization; while Africa needs to break the cycle of being a mere provider of raw materials, a continent saddled with weak infrastructure, limited skills and low technology.

Today's China-Africa partnership has rightly prioritized economic and trade ties, without neglecting mutual support and solidarity in the political and diplomatic fields. Africa has supported China's legitimate core interests, while China has championed African causes and interests. Here too much more needs to be done, given China's increasing diplomatic weight, influence and responsibilities and the gross injustice and humiliation that Africa continues to face in the United Nations Security Council, other UN bodies and international financial institutions.

In his address to this gathering yesterday, President Xi Jing Ping, made a profound observation. He said, "China and Africa have a rare historical opportunity" for a win-win partnership and common development. Eritrea, along with all Africa, could not agree more.

We, of course, realize that we bear primary responsibility for the development of our continent and our countries and that external support, even the most generous, cannot be a substitute for our own efforts. But China's offer well utilized can provide a powerful boost to our own endeavours. Let's then seize this opportunity to provide a good quality of life to our citizens, end the dependency and marginalization of Africa, contribute to China's growth and a safer, better and more equitable world.