

Dear Reader,

The 5th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC V) is casting its shadow ahead. The tri-annual ministerial meeting will already be held in July this year. This change of schedule is due to the leadership change in Beijing, where we will see Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao leave their party positions in October. Preparations and preparatory meetings for FOCAC are taking place across the continent at the moment, discussing points of entry for new opportunities in the relationship and discussing concerns and challenges of the relationship, too.

We often hear that mutual learning is a key element in South-South Cooperation, in which China-Africa relations are one element. We want to explore where learning does or could take place in the relationship, and we are interested in truly mutual learning, i.e. both sides, China and African states, learning from each other. Learning never is a one-way street; we can testify to this, not least as a University institution. More than ten years into the revived China-Africa relations, the view opens up from the immediate cooperation towards longer-term issues. One of the elements under discussion in FOCAC is the sustainability of the relationship.

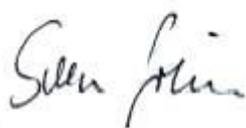
Sustainability is a broad concept and can include many things, from political and social to economic or ecological aspects. In this edition of *African East-Asian Affairs*, we focus on the ecological aspects of China-Africa relations. The topic of how to engage in 'greening' FOCAC will also be the topic of a workshop that the CCS organises in mid-May in Stellenbosch, in cooperation with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the People's Republic's embassy to South Africa. We are expecting high-level speakers from China, Africa and elsewhere and are looking forward to this opportunity to engage with Chinese and other African scholars on a topic area that is crucial for future relations.

With this year, FOCAC will be co-chaired by South Africa, who is taking over from Egypt; the next FOCAC in 2015 is planned to take place in South Africa. And we will see the next BRICS summit in 2013 in South Africa. There is thus plenty of space and opportunity to engage.

We have introduced our work-strand on sustainability before. Since mid-April, the CCS has two research analysts working on environmental aspects in China-Africa; the new appointment is introduced to you in the last section of this edition of *African East-Asian Affairs*. With this newest appointment, the CCS has now reached full 'operational size' again – and we do hope that our new offices on Stellenbosch campus will be ready soon so that we can properly accommodate for everyone in our new work space.

We are also pleased to welcome our first visiting scholar in our *Phandulwazi nge China* programme, Hannane Ferdjani, who will be with us for the next three months. Together with our regular visiting fellows from China, the CCS is an extremely interesting place to work and exchange on China-Africa relations and we certainly look forward to convey the results of these debates and intellectual stimulations to you. We hope you enjoy the read!

Yours sincerely,




Dr Sven Grimm
Director

