

The Beijing China-Africa Summit of 2006: The New Implementation Implications of Aid to Education¹

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The fourth and fifth November 2006 Summit was by any standard a truly extraordinary event in Beijing. It was the largest ever high-level conference on Africa outside of the continent. What was projected for the week before and after the Beijing Summit of the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was a hugely positive image of Africa, through the media, press, TV, photographs, posters and billboards. A representation of 'Amazing Africa'.²

Our purpose here will be to examine what it was possible to detect at this very public event about the character of China's "aid" to Africa. This is in inverted commas since China has traditionally avoided presenting itself as a donor, preferring to see itself as the largest developing country working alongside other development countries in a South-South relationship. The banners for the Summit proclaimed its title: "Friendship, Peace, Development and Cooperation", but note that it was development **and** cooperation, not development cooperation (which is another name for aid).

Our assumption prior to the Summit had been that the very visible presence of 41 Heads of State and other high level leaders from 48 of the 53 African countries might well generate sufficient pressure for the Government to make statements and pledges about aid to Africa, in a way that very seldom happens with official announcements in China.

We shall look very briefly, therefore, at the history of this concept of China's aid, its difference from Western and Japanese approaches, the particularity of what was actually pledged at the Beijing Summit, and the new implementation challenges generated by these very promises and pledges.

The focus will be especially but not exclusively on education cooperation with Africa. It is difficult to select out education as a completely separate and self-contained sub-sector,

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² For a detailed analysis of the Summit and its treatment of aid see King (2006c).

because China has a view of human resource and social development that covers education, health, culture, and people-to-people exchange and collaboration.

We shall look closely at the language of these promises and pledges as they represent a text that has been influenced both by the history of China's cooperation with Africa over 50 years (this year), as well as by the greater intensity of the last six years of interaction through the FOCAC process, and the special and very public character of the Beijing Summit.

China's aid credentials

Despite preferring not to use the discourse of aid, China, unlike Japan and the West, can embed its current stance towards Africa in a very special history of collaboration with the continent. That history, of course, goes back to Zheng He, the famous admiral of the early 15th century who led his fleets to the coast of Eastern Africa (Snow 1988). His name and example were invoked frequently during October and November 2006, in order to draw a contrast between him and Western explorers, who are identified as securing land, and seizing Africans as slaves. In the more recent period, however, China can point to a rather long history of diplomatic engagement with Africa, and it likes to be able to refer to the specific day and year on which relations were developed with Egypt, Sudan, Guinea, Algeria (all in the 1950s) and each of the other African states. But China's cooperation credentials are not only long-standing; they have the added legitimacy of having been laid down by Zhou Enlai during his visits to Mali and Ghana in late 1963 and early 1964.³ His eight principles of foreign aid have stood the test of time very well.

They are based, firstly, on the assumption that China is not so much a donor as a poor friend pulling on the oars with other poor friends, in the same boat. The principles insist on mutual benefit, and not on one-way alms-giving, as if to a beggar. They talk of the crucial need to respect the sovereignty of the recipient, and of the need not to attach any conditions. The assistance should not place a burden on the recipient, or make them dependent, but rather should allow the recipient rapidly to get results, build income and accumulate capital. If technical assistance is required, then there should be no special privileges for the Chinese experts; they should have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country.

Beyond these principles of more than 40 years ago, there are a whole series of historical documents and declarations available on the Beijing Summit website. These backgrounders cover the history of China-Africa cooperation over the past 6 years since the first FOCAC meeting of October 2000. Even though there have been dramatic changes within China over this period, there is nevertheless an apparent strong continuity in its approach towards Africa that can be appealed to. Thus African leaders coming to the Summit in November 2006 were able positively to reflect on this long history of

³ On the website of the Beijing Summit, there is information on each of the 48 states with which China has diplomatic relations. There is available for these countries detail on the actual date on which China started its official relationship, as well as some basic social, economic and political information. For each of these African countries, there is mentioned the current total of their bilateral trade with China, for instance.

cooperation, as was the Chinese leadership. No one put this more powerfully than Hosni Mubarak of Egypt as he arrived in Beijing: 'For me, visiting China is like going home. Egypt sees China more as a brother than an ordinary friendly nation' (King 2006c).

This genuine appreciation of each other, based on a long history of cooperation, was reflected in the fact that all the visiting presidents had individual, one-to-one sessions with President Hu Jintao. Indeed all African nations, even the five without diplomatic relations with China, were invited to the Summit. By contrast, in the G8 Summit in Gleneagles Scotland, the leaders were joined for the African discussions by just 7 selected African countries, the largest and most influential. On the Beijing Summit website, however, all countries, large and small, are represented with their own flags and brief history, including the scale of their bilateral trade with China.⁴

Other contrasts between the West and China in respect of Africa would include the tendency in the West to represent Africa as desperately in need of assistance; hence the Live Eight concerts of 2005, in which pop stars constantly reminded Western audiences about the needless deaths of children in Africa (King 2006c). Unlike 'amazing Africa', Western aid agencies have regularly represented Africa as the poorest continent in the world, and also as the continent most likely to fail to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is also characterised as lacking in good governance and as being plagued by corruption. All in all, the image of Africa in Western media and in Western aid agencies is dramatically different from that seen in the Beijing Summit or in the many 'backgrounder' documents about China and Africa on the Beijing Summit website.

Milestones in the identification of China's educational aid policy for Africa

Despite China's hesitation about 'aid' and its preference for the language of mutual cooperation and exchange, it may be possible to sketch some elements of what may be seen, especially in the most recent Summit, as elements of an aid policy. This discussion could equally well be elaborated around China's policy on health or on agriculture, but education, with its links to human resource development, has a measure of commonality with other aspects of social development. It is important to underline the point that this chronology makes it possible to identify the emergence of what may be represented as an educational aid policy. But this almost certainly misrepresents the holistic approach to bilateral cooperation which China has been pursuing. The aid component has seldom been thought of as separate programme, but just one relatively small element in an integrated cross-sectoral approach to cooperation.

In a first stage, from 1956, educational cooperation essentially meant some exchange of students and of staff between Africa and China. Somewhat later, in the era of support for the great TAZARA railway project in the late 1960s, aid policy for education could be said to have covered a large-scale attempt to transfer skills to thousands of workers and

⁴ Thus Burundi is described in the following terms, despite having only US\$12.22 million in trade: 'The two countries (China and Burundi) respect each other politically and treat each other on an equal footing, and work in close cooperation in international affairs and have carried out fruitful cooperation in such areas as trade, economic and social development' (King 2006b).

supervisors in Zambia and Tanzania. Despite the successful completion of the project, there were major concerns about the sustainability of the skilled training in this project.⁵

The First FOCAC Summit in Beijing, October 2000⁶

Moving from these early beginnings to the current period of the explicit FOCAC process which started in October 2000, and was marked by the Beijing Declaration of 2000 and by the Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development, we can note the emergence of specific mechanisms, and particularly the African Human Resources Development Fund. This latter was linked to a new modality, the short term training of African professionals in different disciplines. Beyond this, there was the continuation of the scholarship mechanism for longer term training, mostly at the degree level, and there was also the sending of teachers to Africa to facilitate channels of communication between universities of both sides. Also at the time of this first FOCAC meeting in 2000 there was agreement that the two parties should work out ‘country-specific training plans’, identify ‘specific cooperation projects’ and facilitate their implementation. The first FOCAC meeting did not set a series of hard and fast targets, but it nevertheless unleashed a new level of interaction in education, in many different modalities.

The Second FOCAC Summit in Addis Ababa, October 2003

By the time of the Second FOCAC summit in Addis Ababa three years later in 2003, there were one or two targets set but these were not like the MDG targets by which the progress of developing countries has so often been monitored by Western agencies. The specifically “aid” dimension of this Second Summit remained small. Indeed, in the whole document of 9 pages from the Summit, there were just three sentences on aid, or development assistance. And these were still very much in the spirit of Zhou Enlai:

African countries take note of the positive efforts of China, which is itself an assistance recipient country, to provide assistance to African countries to the best of its capability.

To support the development case of African countries, China agrees to continue to provide, in light of China’s financial position and economic development, economic assistance to African countries without attaching any political conditions, and increase grant assistance as may be appropriate for projects to be agreed by both sides.

African countries undertake that they will, in the spirit of South-South cooperation and under the principle of acting in accordance with one’s capability, propose, discuss and reach agreement with China on priority projects and strive to ensure their implementation. (FOCAC 2003: 6)

As is usual with China’s documents about cooperation with Africa, the specific commitments that could be called “aid” were embedded in a whole range of other two-way agreements at the political level, in economic and trade cooperation, agriculture, and infrastructure, and much else. This last has had a special place in the history of China –

⁵ See Snow (1988:170) for the major problems connected to training in TAZARA.

⁶ Where not otherwise mentioned, these documents are available on the Beijing Summit website.

Africa cooperation, and it was agreed that the two parties would ‘continue to place infrastructure development on top of China-Africa cooperation agenda, and actively explore diversified forms of mutually beneficial cooperation’ (FOCAC 2003: 4). In other words, the conclusions of these FOCAC meetings cannot narrowly be termed aid agreements since they cover a great deal else, much of which is not strictly Official Development Assistance (ODA) at all.

Nevertheless, ‘human resource development and educational cooperation’ was a significant element in the Action Plan. There had already been activity in organising short courses in China for large numbers of African professionals. This was now given a target for the next three years of no less than 10,000 African personnel. It was presented as a joint programme, with the African governments selecting the appropriate trainees and providing logistical support.

In addition, higher education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in Africa would be helped by China to improve and expand their disciplines and fields of specialisation. This had already started but would be intensified, along with the award of new scholarship and communication exchange. It is interesting to note that the Action Plan specifically mentioned both higher education and TVET as appropriate sectors for support. These are certainly felt to be high priorities by many African governments, as compared to the Western focus on the basic education Millennium Development Goal.

Although not specifically termed education cooperation, it is worth noting the importance assigned in the Action Plan for Cultural Exchange and Cooperation. In many ways, two-way cultural exchange might be thought to relate more readily to the symmetrical South-South cooperation preferred by China than does the one-way offer of scholarships and short-term professional training in China. Hence it is worth remarking that cultural exchange and people-to-people exchange get almost as much space in the Action Plan as do human resource development and education.

The Sino-African Education Minister Forum, November 2005

The next event that moved forward the agenda of specifically educational cooperation was the meeting of 17 African ministers of education in conjunction with the high level group on Education for All, which met in Beijing in late November 2005. This Sino-African Education Minister Forum began to draw together something of the scale of what had been achieved in China’s education cooperation over the years. There had been almost 18,000 African scholarship students trained in China, coming from 50 different countries; the total number of Africa scholarships in 2005 and in previous years was running at just 1200. There were some 60 education assistance projects where China had been present in 25 African countries. Already there were six Confucius Institutes underway in Africa, and there were 8000 students in Africa studying Chinese; and in relation to this demand, as well as for other subjects, there had been, over the years, no less than 530 teachers despatched to Africa.

What was intriguing was that although this Forum was piggy-backed on the High Level Meeting on Education for All, it struck out on its own. It did not dutifully mention the need to emphasise the MDGs, nor focus mainly on basic education. Rather it emphasised the need to pursue prudent policies for vocational and technical education, as well as encouraging higher education, and cultural diversity. This last element of the critical importance of cultural policies is something we shall return to as it continues to be an arena where, in China's perspective, there can be genuine, mutual exchange rather than the more one-way exchange associated with scholarship programmes.⁷

Education in China's African Policy, January 2006

Just six weeks after the Ministers' Forum, there was a further step towards the consolidation of a policy towards Africa. This should absolutely not be thought of as aid policy, but as a holistic engagement with a series of individual countries in which what the West might term 'aid' plays a very small part. Thus, in *China's African Policy* (China 2006), there are really only two sentences on its 'economic assistance': 'In light of its own financial capacity and economic situation, China will do its best to provide and gradually increase assistance to African nations with no political strings attached. In light of its own financial capacity and economic situation, China will do its best to provide and gradually increase assistance to African nations with no political strings attached.'

Apart from not being an aid policy document, as it might be if Sweden or other Western donors had produced a text called 'Our Africa Policy', China's Africa policy did not have the usual Western focus on poverty reduction. Indeed, the words poverty and poor do not occur in China's policy – which would be almost unthinkable if it was authored by a Western aid agency. The same is true of the single sentence mentioning the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This seems more of a courtesy acknowledgement of the MDGs than an emphasis on their central priority.⁸

As to its education content, there is nothing new here that was not already mentioned in the Addis Ababa Action Plan or in the Ministers' Forum of 2005. Most crucially, there were no major new or dramatic targets set. In fact, the overall sense of the African policy paper is of expansion for the professional training of Africans, continuation of the exchange of students between China and Africa, increase of the number of scholarships 'as it sees fit'. As far as people-to-people exchange was concerned, this was encouraged and there was just mentioned, with no indication of scale, the ideas of encouraging and guiding Chinese volunteers to serve in Africa. In other words, the African policy seems to reflect a kind of business-as-usual approach to education. We shall see that this was to change rather sharply in the Beijing Summit itself, as new and much higher targets were suddenly set for the education sector.

The sudden targeting of Education and Health at the Beijing Summit

It is interesting to compare the different drafts of what became the 'Beijing Action Plan,

⁷ For much more detail on the Sino-African Education Minister Forum, see *The proceedings of Sino-African Minister Forum* Peking University Press, 2005 (In Chinese).

⁸ 'It will step up cooperation with other countries and international organizations to support the development of Africa and help realize Millennium Development Goals in Africa.' (China 2006)

2007-2009'. Doing so suggests that the specific targets and pledges were only introduced in the very final discussions surrounding the Summit. It was these pledges that made the final document apparently somewhat more of an aid policy. We say apparently because the communiqué still retains a good deal of continuity with the older, gradualist cooperation approach which we have outlined. This integrated approach emphasized the mutuality and two-sidedness of the cooperation, whether in high level political exchanges, in economic cooperation, trade and investment, or in human and social development. The Beijing Action Plan was still not an ODA policy, but the various pledges, promises and targets certainly gave it more of an aid flavour. It was these pledges that have led to the need to consider the implementation challenges, which we shall turn to in the final section of this paper.

In the draft of the Beijing Action Plan which had been discussed with selected African ambassadors in Beijing and in Africa in mid-October, and had also been exchanged with NEPAD, there were no targets, no specific figures mentioned for Education, Health or the other sectors, let alone overall aid pledges.

For instance, as far as the overall assistance package was concerned, the Draft of 16th October, less than 3 weeks before the Beijing Summit, had the following language which was very much in keeping with China's view of itself as a large developing country helping other poor countries to the best of its ability. Here is the key section of the text:

5.1.2 The Chinese Government decided to:

- Continue to provide development assistance to African countries to the best of its ability and **gradually increase such assistance** in keeping with the growth of its economy.
- Continue to provide concessional loans to African countries in the next three years to help them enhance capacity for self-development.
- Cancel more debts contracted by governments of heavily indebted poor countries and LDCs in Africa that have become due and take an active part in debt relief operations for Africa (FOCAC 2006a: 5.1.2. emphasis added)

This should be compared with the final version which emerged some 10 days after the Summit in Beijing, but which had been anticipated in the detail of its pledges and commitments by President Hu Jintao's speech in the Great Hall of the People on the 4th November 2006. The differences were quite dramatic, and moved China from its gradualist, two-sided, win win perspective on Africa to somewhat more of a donor flavour.

Thus, the first item of 5.1.2 above suddenly became a pledge to double aid to Africa:

--Continue to provide development assistance to African countries to the best of its ability and by 2009 **double the size of its assistance** to African countries in 2006 (sic); (FOCAC 2006b)

We have argued elsewhere (King 2006c) that this single pledge had a G8 flavour to it; it was reminiscent of the commitments made in the G8 Summit in Gleneagles Scotland in 2005. It also attracted a good deal of Western media attention, much of it rather negative.⁹ The other gradualist promises above were turned into US\$5 billions of preferential loans and buyers credits over the next three years, and a cancellation of the government's interest free loans that had become due by the end of 2005.

The Pledges on Human Resources Development

It was the same picture with human resource development. The language of the mid-October draft text was gradualist. The aim was 'to train more African professionals over the next three years'. This suddenly became 15,000 professionals in the Summit version.

But it was in education (and in health) that the gradualist language of mid-October was most dramatically to shift. In the October draft, after a series of general comments about expanding cooperation in education 'on the basis of existing sound cooperation' (FOCAC 2006a, 5.4.10), the text moved to:

5.4.4. The Chinese Government decided to:

- Help Africa countries set up a number of rural schools within three years;
- Gradually increase the number of scholarships** for African students in China, which now stands at 1,200 per year;

This became:

5.4.4. The Chinese Government decided to:

- Help African countries set up 100 rural schools in the next three years;
- Increase the number of Chinese government scholarships to African students from the current 2000 per years to 4,000 per year by 2009. (FOCAC 2006b. 5.4.4.)

These raw figures of 15,000 African professionals, 100 schools, and 4000 times 3 years – or 12,000 African scholarships are sizeable new commitments. They had their exact parallels in the field of medical care in the sudden commitment to build 30 hospitals and 30 malaria demonstration centres, where there had been gradual increase in the earlier drafts. Also in the new area of Chinese volunteers, the promise to 'gradually expand the "Chinese Young Volunteers Serving Africa"' had turned into dispatching 300 young volunteers over the next three years (FOCAC 2006a, 5.9.3; FOCAC 2006b, 5.9.3).

⁹ See the *Guardian Unlimited*, 'Beijing pledges aid billions to woo Africa' (McVeigh, 5.11.2006), and King 2006c for further detail.

It should be emphasised that the introduction of specific numerical pledges was not restricted to what might be called the ODA side of the Action Plan; the Chinese Government also pledged to set up a China-Africa Development Fund which would reach US\$5 billion to encourage well-established and reputable Chinese companies to invest in Africa.

We shall leave aside for the moment a consideration of why the Chinese Government might have felt it should change so radically the earlier text. Of course, the Beijing Summit had a dramatically different composition from the earlier meetings which we have summarised. No less that 41 Heads of State were in the Great Hall of the People, and the sheer visibility internationally of the occasion may have increased the pressure to offer some tangible promises. My own judgement is that the majority of African presidents were actually much more interested in the economic cooperation with China, by the continued involvement of Chinese business in Africa, and opportunities for two-way trade and investment. Their agenda was trade, not aid. Be that as it may, the pledges were made, and they have a series of consequences to which we now turn.

The Structural and Organisational Challenges of the Beijing Pledges and Targets

With the benefit of history, it may well be that this Summit will be looked at as a turning point in the whole structure of China's international cooperation. Unlike some of the G8 governments that pledged to double aid to Africa in the Gleneagles Summit, but have little intention to honour their commitment, the Chinese are aware that their pledges will be reviewed in just three years' time in Egypt and the next FOCAC summit. The scale of the human development targets may well generate a valuable debate about the support structures needed in China and in Africa for a cooperation programme that is growing in this manner.

Training 15,000 African professionals

The commitment to train 15 thousand African professionals in short term training programmes in a range of disciplines requires resource bases geared up to receive groups of selected trainees; it also implies a careful mechanism in Africa for their selection. In the education field alone, the promise to 'provide annual training for a number of educational officials as well as heads and leading teachers of universities, primary, secondary and vocational schools in Africa' is a huge undertaking. Unlike the other items, it does not have a numerical tag on it, since these trainees will be part of the 15,000. But the provision of well-structured training, even right down to the level of primary schools is a large and complex project. This has of course already been happening with University president and leaders coming to Zhejiang Normal, and vocational educators going to Tianjin University of Technology and Education, while North East Normal will be taking educational administrators, and Jilin University will focus on distance education. A division of labour has already been worked out.¹⁰

But if these university resource bases are to become known and respected in Africa, they will need to build the capacity of their faculty in the understanding of African educational

¹⁰ For detail on what these resource bases have already been doing, see *Proceedings of Sino-African Education Minister Forum* (2005), part 4 (In Chinese).

development. This will in turn require research funds, and targeted analysis of structures of higher education, vocational and basic primary and secondary education. Nor should this just involve faculty, but there is a great opportunity here for masters and doctoral students to break out of the tradition of doing their theses without the exposure to fieldwork. Again, this is already beginning to happen in the plans of resource bases such as Zhejiang rapidly to build their capacity in the area of African higher education, linking this to their existing reputation in the study of tertiary education development.

4,000 African Scholarships annually

The pledge to raise African student numbers from the 1,200 annually in the October draft to a total of 4000 a year by the end of the plan period is a massive increase. For instance it takes the Chinese target far beyond the figure of 2,300 annually for the respected Chevening Scholarships associated with the British Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office. But again this means that the structures for judicious selection need to be increased from what has been servicing 1,200 African students to something more than three times that number. At the moment, only one of the African Embassies (South Africa) has an education counsellor; so this may be the moment for considering how selection can continue to be implemented in a fair and meritocratic manner across all the fields where there may be interest in accessing relevant knowledge.

The selection of African students to come to China has implications for language training, either in Africa or in China (which has been the established pattern). But the issue of language naturally raises the role of the Confucius Institutes which focus on the teaching of Chinese, and these may well expand as is predicted from their current level of 6 in Africa to many more.

Of course, it should not be assumed that all 4,000 African scholarships should be taken up by students coming to China; it could well prove to be a more even-handed and symmetrical arrangement if some of the 4,000 scholarships were dedicated to supporting bright but poor African students to attend universities in their home countries. Many universities in Africa which routinely charge fees or encourage students loans are becoming inaccessible to talented young people from poor families. Equally, the many investment projects with which the Chinese Government and Chinese companies are involved in Africa may have large demands for targeted training; such project-related training could well be carried out in country, and thus would cross the aid/non-aid boundary.

100 Rural Schools in Africa

In one way, this is one of the most intriguing of the aid pledges. Why rural? Why not vocational or tertiary level institutions? But given that the pledge has been made, there may be ways to implement this creatively. Should China seek to build 2 model schools in each of some 50 countries in Africa? Should Chinese contractors take on these tasks in the way that has been commonplace in the huge school construction projects associated with Japanese grant aid over the past many years? Should the focus be on merely the hardware, paying little or no attention to the software of teaching quality and curriculum? Should the projects be completed and handed over as turnkey initiatives, with no

concerns for sustainability and future maintenance? It can be seen that this small offer of 100 rural schools raises all the well-known issues of educational aid. And the same will be true of the even more demanding task of providing 30 hospitals in Africa.

But there may be some more creative ways of thinking about the challenge of how the Chinese Government can ‘help African countries set up 100 rural schools’ in Africa. For example, what models should China think of? In its own poorer provinces, there is a good deal of experience of thinking about how rural schools should complement other integrated development initiatives (LGOP 2003). Or should rural schools provide vocational skills for future migrants, which is also being currently discussed in Western China? And are there valuable models from the Gansu Basic Education Project or from the Basic Education in Western Areas Project, supported by the World Bank and DFID, which could be drawn upon?

Almost certainly what should not be done is carefully select two sites per African country where model schools can be constructed and where a Chinese plaque or flag can identify its aid origins. That seems far away from the way China has operated in the education sector already for 50 years, in its support to educational exchange and university cooperation. The Chinese Ministry of Education could perhaps operate in the way that was done so successfully with Chile’s 900 schools project where schools competed to ask for assistance to improve their quality (Gutman 1993). This did not involve building any schools at all, but in providing key items that schools identified as being crucial for the building their capacity. Something similar might be considered for China’s 100 Schools Project, and it could fulfil the pledge of the Beijing Summit more effectively than merely building 100 new schools.

But such an initiative could also mean that expertise drawn from the years of improving school quality in China could be attached to a country such as Ethiopia, Kenya or Cameroon, where China has already got excellent contacts in education. Almost certainly, as in the Chile project, all 100 schools to be helped should be in a single country. And perhaps the selection should be the African country responsible for co-chairing the FOCAC process, i.e. Ethiopia or Egypt. If it were the latter, then heads of state in 2009 could actually visit the China-Egypt 100 Schools Project in conjunction with the next Summit.

300 Chinese Young Volunteers Serving Africa

Lastly, there is the pledge on volunteers. Like the recommendations above, for research funding and for support of studentships for Chinese masters and doctoral students to do fieldwork in Africa, this proposal for volunteers could ultimately prove to be a crucial part of the integrated thinking about building capacity in China to support development in Africa. In other countries such as Japan, UK and USA, the presence of JOCV, VSO¹¹ and Peace Corps respectively has proved to be a fruitful source of young people coming into international development, whether for further study or for working in NGOs. The same would almost certainly be the case for China.

¹¹ Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV); Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

Again, of course, a structure and an organisational framework would be needed. But this volunteer element could prove to be a critical component in the overall thinking about China's role in international development.

Concluding Comments

It may well be that the late addition to the Beijing Declaration of some specific targets will have a knock-on effect that proves to be beneficial in encouraging the necessary academic, research and consultancy structures for an expanded programme of external assistance by China. This need not make China into a Western or Japanese style donor, but if China is to continue to be true to the Eight Principles of Foreign Aid, there are ways in which its aid pledges can be implemented which build upon those foundations of mutuality, equal benefit and self-reliant development, and avoid the many pitfalls of traditional donor-recipient relations.

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