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Strengthening of the United Nations system

Letter dated 17 June 2020 from the Permanent Representatives of China, Senegal and South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to bring to your attention the joint statement made at the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19, which was adopted at the Summit via videoconference on 17 June 2020 (see annex).

We respectfully request your good offices for circulating the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 123.

(Signed) **Zhang Jun**

Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the People's
Republic of China to the United Nations

(Signed) **Cheikh Niang**

Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations

(Signed) **Jerry Matthews Matjila**

Ambassador
Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 17 June 2020 from the Permanent Representatives of China, Senegal and South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Joint statement made at the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19

17 June 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic is a major challenge to humankind, and is the most serious global public health emergency since the end of World War II.

To defeat COVID-19 through greater solidarity and cooperation, and to highlight an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future, we, Chinese and African leaders, convened an Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19 via video link on 17 June 2020. The Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19 is a joint initiative between the People's Republic of China, the Republic of South Africa in its capacity as the Chair of the African Union (AU), and the Republic of Senegal in its capacity as the Co-Chair of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

The Summit was attended by H.E. President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China, H.E. President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. President Macky SALL of the Republic of Senegal, H.E. President Abdel Fattah Al-SISI of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi TSHILOMBO of the Democratic Republic of Congo, H.E. President Abdelmadjid TEBBOUNE of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, H.E. President Ali Bongo ONDIMBA of the Republic of Gabon, H.E. President Uhuru KENYATTA of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. President Ibrahim Boubacar KEITA of the Republic of Mali, H.E. President Issoufou Mahamadou of the Republic of Niger, H.E. President Muhammadu BUHARI of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. President Paul KAGAME of the Republic of Rwanda, H.E. President Emmerson Mnangagwa of the Republic of Zimbabwe, H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and H.E. Moussa Faki MAHAMAT, Chairperson of the AU Commission.

Secretary-General Antonio GUTERRES of the United Nations (UN) and Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom GHEBREYESUS of the World Health Organization (WHO) were invited as Special Guests to the Summit.

After cordial and in-depth discussions, leaders attending the Summit reached the following consensus:

1. We express deep concern over the unprecedented, immediate and consequent challenges posed by the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic to people around the world, especially its major impact on the lives and health of the African people.

We recognize the importance of public health issues to global peace and security and the well-being of people around the world, particularly the fact that Africa is extremely vulnerable to the ravages of this virus and needs solidarity and support, including resources from various parties to bolster its response to the pandemic and to support its economic and social development.

We commend and support the UN Secretary-General's call for a united response to COVID-19, and commit to jointly safeguard global public health security, protect the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, make greater contribution to world peace and development, and build a community of health for all.

We underscore the close relationship between peace, security and development, call on the international community to support Africa in implementing its “Silencing the Guns” campaign and urge for an early lifting of economic sanctions on the Republics of Zimbabwe and Sudan.

In accordance with the FOCAC spirit and long-term values cherished by both sides, we remain committed to extending mutual support on issues regarding each other’s core interests and major concerns. China supports African countries in exploring development paths suited to their national conditions and opposes interference in Africa’s internal affairs by external forces. The African side supports China’s position on Taiwan and Hong Kong, and supports China’s efforts to safeguard national security in Hong Kong in accordance with law.

2. We highly commend and actively support WHO’s role, under the stewardship of Director-General Dr. Tedros, in leading and coordinating the global response to COVID-19, and call on the international community to scale up political and financial support for the WHO.

We welcome the 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution on COVID-19 response, which expresses deep concerns about the negative impacts and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizes the importance of global collaboration, and calls for intensified international cooperation, unity, solidarity and joint efforts to contain and mitigate the pandemic, and to pay particular attention to the needs of people in vulnerable situations. We reiterate opposition to the politicization and stigmatization of the virus, and call on the international community to jointly prevent discrimination and stigma, reject misinformation and disinformation, and strengthen cooperation on the research and development of diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines and the identification of the zoonotic source of the virus.

We support the initiation, at the earliest appropriate moment and in consultation with WHO Member States, of a stepwise process of impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation, including using existing mechanisms as appropriate, to review experience gained and lessons learned from the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19 after the virus is brought under control worldwide, in an objective, impartial science-based and professional manner.

We further commend the UN Secretary-General for his leadership and support for the WHO and related health initiatives during this pandemic, which aims at making vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics for COVID-19 accessible worldwide.

3. Africa commends the decisive measures taken by the Chinese government to contain the spread of the virus and its timely sharing of information with WHO and relevant countries in an open, transparent and responsible manner, which bought precious time for the rest of the world. China commends the solidarity and support extended by African countries, the AU and other regional organizations for China’s COVID-19 response and appreciates the establishment of the AU COVID-19 Strategy and the appointment of Special Envoys to mobilize international support for Africa’s efforts to address the economic challenges faced as a consequence of the pandemic, and further commends the resilience African countries have demonstrated and the positive results thus achieved in curbing the spread of the virus by adopting preventive measures.

African countries express appreciation for China’s substantial assistance for Africa’s fight against COVID-19 and commitment to China-Africa solidarity against COVID-19, and highly commend the new measures China announced at the 73rd WHA to support developing countries’ COVID-19 response. China reaffirms its commitment to actively delivering relevant initiatives and measures to help Africa

build capacity for disease prevention and control and for sustainable development, and expedite the construction of the Africa CDC headquarters. China undertakes to make its COVID-19 vaccine development and deployment, when available, a global public good as part of China's contribution to vaccine accessibility and affordability in developing countries, in particular African countries.

We reaffirm the commitment to take active measures to protect the health and security of each other's nationals and uphold their legitimate rights and interests, and promote the use of Chinese and African traditional medicine.

African countries express profound gratitude and appreciation to the Chinese institutions and companies that have provided medical supplies and material assistance in the effort to combat the COVID pandemic.

4. We fully recognize the positive role of China-Africa investment and financing cooperation in promoting development and improving people's lives in Africa, and call on the international community to work in solidarity and collaboration, share best practices, and provide more material, technical, financial and humanitarian support to help African countries overcome the impact of COVID-19 and achieve independent and sustainable development.

China takes seriously the debt concerns of African countries and will earnestly act on the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative, through friendly consultation as equals, and expedite support for the African countries worst hit by COVID-19.

The African side expresses appreciation for China's actions, and calls on the international community, especially developed countries and international financial institutions, to take concrete measures to ease the debt burden of African countries.

5. We reaffirm the commitment to supporting multilateralism, opposing unilateralism, safeguarding the UN-centered international system, and defending international equity and justice.

We call on the international community to build an open world economy, enhance macroeconomic coordination, and jointly keep global industrial and supply chains stable and unclogged. We express strong support to the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

We recognize the importance of digitalization in the post-COVID-19 era and support efforts to speed up the development of Africa's digital economy and expand exchanges and cooperation on digitalization, information and communication technologies, especially tele-medicine, tele-education, 5G and big data.

We support efforts to explore with global partners trilateral or multilateral cooperation in Africa in a way that is active, open and inclusive and based on respect for African countries' wishes, with a view to facilitating an early victory against COVID-19 and faster development in Africa.

6. We extend congratulations on the 20th anniversary of FOCAC, recognizing the important progress in delivering the follow-ups to the FOCAC Beijing Summit, and support a greater focus on public health under the Eight Major Initiatives on China-Africa Cooperation.

We undertake to chart the course for China-Africa cooperation in a post-COVID-19 era, and work together to ensure the success of events on the 2021 FOCAC calendar.

7. We applaud the joint initiative of China, South Africa and Senegal to convene this Summit at a critical juncture in Africa's battle against COVID-19.

We pay high tribute to all African leaders who did and did not attend the Summit for their great efforts to contain COVID-19.

Leaders attending the Summit expressed deep condolences over the passing of H.E. President Pierre Nkurunziza of the Republic of Burundi, and extended sincere sympathy to the people of Burundi.
