

Good evening, colleagues and leaders from the UN agencies. Ambassador Li, there is a saying from Africa: "He who brings water brings life." This saying is both figurative and factual. When I arrived here, I was greeted with water and offered a bite to eat—simple acts of life and hospitality. But beyond that, we have this forum, which serves as a platform for life in itself.

Right now, in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa, people are struggling to maintain hope, peace, and security. The absence of these three is hindering development across the continent. Our role, both individually and collectively, is to inspire hope, to fight for peace, and to ensure security.

Why is this crucial? By 2050, Africa will host a quarter of the world's population, with a median age of 19.5. Our continent will be incredibly young, and as it rapidly urbanizes, it will need more food, better infrastructure, and an education system driven by technology and innovation.

Earlier today, I had the honor of attending the Kofi Annan Awards for Innovation, where I saw young Africans pioneering creative solutions to improve agriculture, end poverty, and tackle hunger. These are the areas where cooperation with China will make a profound impact. That is why FOCAC serves as a pillar, a foundation of life for both Africa and China.

Tonight, we celebrate the transformative impact of collaboration based on mutual respect and shared aspirations. For more than 20 years, FOCAC has been a testament to resilience and the strength of Africa-China relations. This partnership has brought tremendous progress across the continent, from Cameroon to South Africa, to Tanzania. China's investments in infrastructure, agriculture, energy—particularly renewable energy—are driving significant change.

As we come together in a world facing rapid transformation, with climate change being one of the biggest challenges, there is a great need for multilateral cooperation. By combining our strengths and sharing technologies, Africa and China have immense potential to tackle these issues together.

Africa has so much to offer China, just as China has much to offer Africa—whether it's in trade, technological transfer, or cultural exchange. Tonight, I celebrate this partnership, and I thank you for setting the table for this celebration.