

**Frederick Kang'ethe Iraki**  
**United States International University, Kenya**

**Book titles:**

***A. East Africa-India Security Relations***

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***B. China-Africa Partnership: the Quest for Win-Win Relationship***

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**The review**

Kenyan media as well as international media such as VOX Africa continue to report that Uhuru Kenyatta returned this week with an investment package totaling 425 billion shillings (5 billion dollars) from China. The target domains are railroad from Mombasa to Kisumu and energy generation. The move is interpreted as the enactment of the often-touted Kenya's "Look East Policy". It is yet to be seen what investment deal Kenya will broker with India and other Asian countries in the next few years. Evidently, one deal with China cannot qualify as an entire East policy; *one swallow does not make a summer*. Nonetheless, there are new developments from China and India that command attention in Africa.

Both China and India have had relations with Africa stretching far back into history. Traders from the East plied the East African coast in the first century AD as recorded in the *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*. Imports from Zanj coast, as East Africa was called then, included ivory, incense, palm oil, myrrh, gold, copper, spices, rhino horn and hides from game. The exports included cloth, porcelain, glassware, metal implements, wheat, rice and jaggery. In more modern times, China and India have undergone dramatic political and socioeconomic mutations that have made them occupy a coveted position among world nations. To wit, China under Mao Zedong, embraced brave economic reforms after 1949 that have made China become the second largest economy in the world after the US, with a GDP of 7.47 trillion dollars. Similarly, India, a British colony since 1757, gained independence in 1947 and embarked on transforming a backward nation into the food-sufficient and prospering India of today. The new Asian nations have now turned to Africa with more focus and urgency in view of their need for raw materials to sustain their fast-growing economies. China and India have had sustained economic growths of 10 and 9 percent respectively in the last ten years or so.

In terms of foreign policy, both China and India have striking similarities. Indeed, they both champion building friendship, win-win cooperation, respect for country sovereignty, mutual cooperation and consultation in international issues. These principles are the beacons that guide China and India in their pursuit for a deeper and more engaging South-South cooperation with Africa. Clearly, the principles contrast sharply with North-South cooperation where African countries are patronized and “guided” by the West.

Africa is rising from its ashes too like the legendary phoenix. With improved leadership, better macroeconomic management and political stability, African countries such as Botswana, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda have had economic growths of about 10% for the last ten years. The discovery of more oil and gas reserves poses both opportunities and threats in the continent. However, what is more worrying is Africa’s lack of a comprehensive and integrated foreign policy, especially in regard to China and India. Whereas, China and India are very eloquent about what they need from Africa it remains unclear what Africa wants from them. This confirms ESPON classification of Africa as an area of “European responsibility” whereas India is labeled an area of “opportunity”. African agency in the South-South cooperation is desperately needed to articulate and promote a common foreign policy that define how Africa intends to engage with other regions of the world, East or West. Last year, two books were published in Kenya in collaborative efforts with China and India to take stock of the relationships between the two Asian giants and East Africa, particularly Kenya.

*East Africa-India Security Relations* edited by Prof. Makumi Mwagiru and Prof. Aparajita Biswas is an informative book combining perspectives from East African and Indian scholars. The opus underscores the importance of security as a *sine qua non* condition for international peace and development. The long and poorly manned 2,300 miles of the East African coast poses a real threat to trade between East Africa and India. There is need for an East African maritime strategy. Additionally, weak or failed governments, poverty, weak institutions and fragility to external shocks undermine security of persons and State in East Africa. While the African scholars tend to be more academic and abstract in the main, Indian scholars have provided detailed accounts and figures of Indian business interests in East Africa. It’s not clear if there are any African businesses in India. Further, the book provides unique papers on how Africa can benefit from India’s extraordinary experience, especially in food sufficiency and IT revolution. Again, it’s not clear whether East Africa has anything to offer India other than oil and consumers for her products. In contrast to India’s slow-paced and low-level engagement with Africa, China has recently been very aggressive in pursuing her interests in Africa.

*China-Africa Partnership: the Quest for Win-Win Relationship* edited by David Shikwati is the best summary of China’s foreign policy within the framework of South-South cooperation. The book presents papers from both African and Chinese scholars virtually on all aspects of development and how Africa and China can benefit from each other. China declared 2006 as the “Africa Year” and developed the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) as a framework in a bid to define her engagement with Africa. Sadly, Africa has been slow and disjointed in taking advantage of FOCAC; some prefer to pursue narrow bilateral interests at the expense of broader regional interests within a coordinated and integrated African forum. China has 1.2 billion people with one government; Africa has 1.3 billion people with 54 governments. Interestingly, the book presents papers bearing on cultural similarities between Chinese and African peoples that could be the basis for deeper cross-fertilization of ideas and experiences. These include collectivism, respect for elders, sense of equality and forbearance. Chinese scholars believe that China could borrow family values, optimism, female empowerment, music, dance and paintings from Africa.

In sum, the two books are eye-openers with respect to Africa's interaction with China and India. China's trade with Africa rose from 20 billion dollars in 2001 to 120 billion in 2009; India's rose from 9.9 billion in 2004 to 39.5 billion in 2009. These trends speak volumes about the importance of the two Asian giants to African development. China's development is State-driven while India's is private sector driven. It remains to be seen how Africa intends to engage with her historical friends and partners. For instance, Africa could develop a forum similar to FOCAC to deal with other world regions. Moreover, commitment, capacity and cooperation (the 3 C's) seem to be wanting in Africa.

The two books are excellent reference books for university students and faculty, economists and social scientists in general.