

Conclusion

The essence of highlighting some of the nuances between the laws of China and Africa is to appreciate the interconnectedness and divergence within the two regions as they continue to strengthen their strategic cooperation. Indeed, this knowledge is expected to guide the construction of the legal and regulatory environment on challenges faced by the burgeoning socio-economic cooperation between the two regions.

The evolution of law in China-Africa from prehistoric to contemporary is also a journey into the economic, political, and socio-cultural development of the two regions. The legal systems evolved from years of revolutionary struggles against colonialism, imperialism, and military dictatorship respectively, and borrowed from the influences of other systems. Thus, as the cooperation between the two regions expands, it throws up the need to harmonise the mechanism for dispute resolution in a win-win manner.

Indeed, given the historical factors underlying the development of law on the African continent, it seems apposite to interrogate whether the evolutionary trend would lead, on one hand, to the attainment of the

proposed global legal convergence of some sort, or the crystallization of Africa-China legal cooperation.⁵⁷

In the new era, the focus has been on how to build more cordial international relations using the rules-based option. The existence of institutions and instruments such as the UN Charter, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Treaty shows the world is increasingly transcending presumed regional differences and conflicts. This is where China-Africa cooperation stands to gain from the available opportunities.

So far, in the controversial area of investment and loans procurement, China has proven to be a better partner to Africa. China's concessional loans and other facilities have provided tangible benefits to Africa over the years with the most needed infrastructure such as railways, highways, seaports, airports, and schools constructed. Arguments persist against some perceived ills in the industrial practices of some Chinese companies in Africa and the desirability of loans for infrastructure development when there are other development funding models. But compared to Western lending institutions under the Washington Consensus with strict conditionalities, China loans have proved to be a positively disruptive factor in the growth of the African continent.

China has shown its willingness to abide by the rules of international engagement. The country's intention to be a non-belligerent state is rooted in its Confucius cultural values which emphasises harmonious relationship, interdependence, and cooperation. Indeed, within the committee of states, these values are spotlighted by the country's preoccupation with wealth creation and quality development. It seems most of Africa has accepted China's hands of fellowship to build a shared future for mankind. That will be a future where disputes are resolved by the instrumentality of diplomacy, rules, transparency and accountability.