

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Professor Chris Alden

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Title of keynote:

China and Africa: a world after its own image?

Biography

Professor Chris Alden teaches International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and is a Research Associate with the Global Powers and Africa Programme, South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). He is author or editor of numerous books, including *New Directions in Africa-China Studies* (Routledge 2018), *China and Africa – Building Peace and Security Cooperation on the Continent* (Palgrave 2017), *Foreign Policy Analysis – new approaches* (Routledge 2017, 2nd edition), *China and Mozambique: From Comrades to Capitalist* (Johannesburg: Jacana 2014), *China Returns to Africa* (Hurst 2008), *China in Africa* (Zed 2007), *Land, Liberation and Compromise in Southern Africa* (Palgrave/Macmillan 2009), *The South and World Politics* (Palgrave 2010), *Mozambique and the Construction of the New African State* (Palgrave 2003), *South Africa's Post-Apartheid Foreign Policy* (Adelphi Paper IISS 2003) as well as having written numerous articles in internationally recognised journals. Professor Alden has held fellowships at Cambridge University, Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo; Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto; Ecole Normale Supérieure (Cachan), Paris; and University of Pretoria. He has taught courses at Sciences Po, University of Cape Town and Peking University and was a Senior Lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand from 1990-2000. He received his doctorate from the Fletcher School, Tufts University.

Abstract

Nowhere in the world is China's rapid rise to power more evident than in Africa. From multi-billion dollar investments in oil and minerals to the influx of tens of thousands of merchants, labours and a raft of consumer goods, China's economic influence is redefining Africa's traditional ties with the international community. This growing exposure of Chinese firms and citizens to localised risks – seen in cases as diverse as Libya, South Sudan, Kenya and Zimbabwe – has over time compelled Beijing to adopt a more pro-active role in continental peacekeeping as well as establish a permanent military base in Djibouti. And, as its debt-driven infrastructure projects and investment-led special economic zones proliferate across Africa, the depth and growing complexity of China's presence in Africa is all the more evident.

What is the direction and shape of this relationship between, to quote Julius Nyerere, these 'most unequal equals'? What does a reading of the past reveal about China-Africa ties? What are the implications of this changing relationship for African development and governance aspirations? How should we understand China-Africa within the broader context of China's assertive role in fomenting global transformation? This presentation will examine these concerns and accompanying efforts to recast the mould of the continent's traditional position within the global economy and international community at large.