

By Dr Chiedza Kambasha MAIB PGDipIB DBLI MIAC MIMS(Dip.IMS) PhD

Africa has long been a subcontinent known by the warring factions, poverty and low penetration of technological developments. This was Africa, a few decades ago. The past few years have seen a marked change in this perception. Currently, the world views the subcontinent as a goldmine of resources (even literally, as Africa has almost half of the world's gold deposits). This has not come overnight, but through a slow and planned shift in economic activities. Due to the available natural resources, the developed and developing countries have flocked to assist Africa in its infrastructural growth, seeing a personal benefit as well. China is one of the major partners of most African countries in such endeavors. Zambia is a notable example. From an economic powerhouse back in the 1920s, when its mines were opened for extraction, to a poor state in the recent history, Zambia had seen a marked deterioration in its economic capabilities over the years. This led to an ailing nation, with little power to capitalize on its own resources. After the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was initiated by China in 2000, Zambia became the biggest benefiter of the policy. Chinese investments, over the years, especially in the mining sector, improved Zambia's economy by leaps and bounds. Since Zambia sits on some of the richest copper ores, Chinese investments mainly focused on mineral prospecting, copper mining and its refining. They also manufacture copper based products. This FDI by China has seen large growth over the years. Recent globalization of Information Technology has also found an unsuspecting market in the African subcontinent. With little to no development in the preceding years in the IT industry in the subcontinent, the influx of IT firms has been seen as a boon to the countries in the region. This has generated jobs, and has improved the living standards of the people in general, apart from improving communication and other factors throughout the countries and the subcontinent. The African countries were at a bad standing with regard to the development of IT sector, with acquisition of hardware and software resources seeming a farfetched idea. This would have caused their marginalization in the global economy, and cause a competitive disadvantage for their services and products. But the foreign investments and assistances have changed it. The communication industry, especially in wireless communication field, led by Vodafone in the African subcontinent, has also assisted people in making better choices regarding their information needs. Where people needed to drive all the way to doctors to fix an appointment, or have huge troubles seeking ambulance services, the developments in the communication field have made all these things very easy, thus improving the general state of happiness among people, and reducing the effort spent by the individuals for such things. This has made people more productive and added to the economies as well.