An analysis of China’s aid and relief support to countries struggling under serious natural disasters reveals that it is emerging as a formidable actor in the humanitarian space particularly in South-South assistance. This is in sharp contrast to the traditional discourse which set up the “North” as the giver and the “South” as the receiver of humanitarian assistance. Its emergence in the humanitarian space has disrupted the prevailing existing established western norms and standards that have historically characterized the nature and actors prevalent in humanitarian activities. While this has not been met with unmitigated acceptance by the more established humanitarian actors, China’s response to Africa’s natural disasters is unabated in its growth and there is no doubt tha
This is in line with China’s soft power projection aligned and commensurate with her growing status and emergence as the world’s second-largest economy after the United States. During the United Nations, Sixty-Seventh General Assembly in 2012-member states was encouraged to dialogue among themselves and with UN Agencies to bolster the Emergency Response System as a means of confronting the evolving nature of humanitarian crises. During this session, China came out strongly by calling “on the international community to take immediate action and foster close cooperation to respond to increasingly grave humanitarian situations.” In this respect, it further “firmly supported concrete steps to strengthen capacity-building in the humanitarian and development field, including transferring technology and expertise to developing countries and bolstering infrastructure in disaster-affected countries.”

An overarching consideration is that attempts to further engage Chinese in continuing with that vein in humanitarian activity would be to frame humanitarian action in terms of their leaning towards the existing discourse and wide scope of “South-South Cooperation.”

Humanitarian Aid

This partly explains why it is increasingly participating in bilateral and multilateral humanitarian relief operations and sharing its experience and technology to cope with natural disasters with other developing countries across the world. Examples abound such as China giving food aid to Chad and other countries in the Sahel region, and humanitarian aid to Cuba and Syria, among others. In terms of peacekeeping, China is also playing a critical role under UN auspices as part of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). A larger role in peacekeeping, security and humanitarian intervention is envisioned in the future particularly as a result of the fact that China’s first overseas military base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa that was opened in August 2017 allows the presence of up to 10,000 soldiers in the country until 2026 to maintain peacekeeping missions. It is expected to also boost maritime security against pirates and terrorist activities along the troublesome extensive Somali coastline together with Japan, the United States, France, and Italy which also have bases in Djibouti.

Win-Win Discourse

With the current renewed emphasis on ‘value for money’ and ‘results,’ information is also proving vital in making both the case for aid, as well as being able to undertake the analysis of results beyond the gains in the international exposure of Chinese enterprises that implement humanitarian projects. This would provide more arguments for a balanced win-win situation, as advocated by the Chinese government. An overarching consideration is that attempts to further engage Chinese in continuing with that vein in humanitarian activity would be to frame humanitarian action in terms of their leaning towards the existing discourse and wide scope of “South-South Cooperation.” This is especially because China’s soft power projection through

Humanitarian Catastrophe

The most populated countries are themselves the biggest victims of humanitarian crises. Between 2002 and 2011 India and China alone accounted for close to 80 percent of people that are affected by natural disasters. As a result, a nation that considers itself to be part of a developing country community, that is also prone to natural disasters, China places a premium on international cooperation in the humanitarian field.
humanitarian diplomacy in Africa is inextricably tied to its other globalization initiatives and affiliations such as the Belt and Road Initiative, with its 21st maritime Silk Road component and its ardent commitment to the BRICS South-South group of emerging economies.

**Accountability**

Aid recipient countries also have a role to play in ensuring that more comprehensive, timely and comparable information about China donors’ activities and plans are being met when and as needed or requested in the spirit of aid transparency and improving aid effectiveness.

This includes joint risk reduction and development programmes with aid givers and a greater ability to afford the investments needed to build more disaster-resilient communities.

**China’s In-road**

All in all, due to China’s increasing influence in Africa in the past few years there is no doubt that in due course, it will occupy the largest humanitarian space in Africa commensurate with its emergent globalization leadership status and its current position as the continents’ biggest and most important trading partner.

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