

AMBASSADOR ZHENG ZHUQIANG SAYS THE TIES ARE AT THEIR BEST IN HISTORY

By Geoffrey Mutegeki

China-Uganda relations are as old as Uganda. The relations date back to 1962 when Uganda got its independence from the British.

China was among the first countries that started co-operating with the new nation called Uganda. Even before the relations were formalised, China had contributed a lot to Africa's decolonisation — Uganda inclusive — and has continued to do the same.

Since independence, a lot of projects like roads, airport, power dams and industries have been constructed with the help of China. Entebbe expressway was built using \$350m (over sh1.2trillion) from Exim Bank of China.

Uganda's biggest sports facility, Mandela National Stadium Namboole, was constructed with the help of China. The sh40,000-capacity stadium was built using a sh30b soft loan from China in 1996.

Cordial relations

The Chinese ambassador to Uganda, Zheng Zhuqiang, says the Uganda-China relations are at their best in history.

"Our bilateral relations have been elevated to a new level of comprehensive co-operative relationship," Zhuqiang says.

The co-operation does not only end at government level but has since trickled down

Uganda-China relations blossom to new levels



The 10 winners of the 2019 My China Story essay competition with Chinese ambassador to Uganda Zheng Zhuqiang and Vision Group boss Robert Kabushenga

to various organisations such as Vision Group, which has a strong partnership with the Chinese Embassy in Uganda.

Vision Group's first

partnership with the Chinese Embassy in Uganda started with the publication of *New Era*, an in-depth monthly pull-out focusing on China-Uganda

ties.

This was followed by four projects that have seen 25 Ugandans win a trip to China. The first project was the Pakasa Youth Awards in 2018.

Three other projects that include *My China Story* essay competition, *Up close to Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy* and *Let's Talk Chinese* were also launched this year.

This year's essay competition winners were Adrew Rowland Kamagara, Moses Apolo Namisi, David Mulika, Hilda Ayebare and Steven Tusubira.

Let's Talk Chinese winners were Brian Kintu, Daphne Tayebwa, Cheer Kankunde, Samson Maraka and Elias Musinguzi.

The three quiz winners were Rodney Mukunzi, Kassim Wendi and Teddy Nakabuye, whereas Innocent Okwi and Benon Tumuhairwe were selected as lucky participants during a raffle.

Pakasa Youth Forum

Last year, Pakasa Youth Award winners Victor Kalenzi, Fred Nsubuga Bakka, Stephen Ssembuya and Nabila Mbogo as well as Maxima Nsimanta won a trip to China.

Also five winners of the essay competition 2018 — Gamal Abdul Nasser Ssebaggala, Jariah Nantanda Matovu, Andrew Ahabwe, Sadat Magezi and Andrew Mwisigwa had a chance to travel to China.

The ambassador commended



The Entebbe Expressway was built using a loan from China



Namboole stadium was also built by China

Vision Group for working with the embassy to promote China-Uganda relations.

"The embassy is committed to working with Vision Group to continue organising more activities to promote the friendship between us and the co-operative partnership between our countries," Zhuqiang said.

Several other participants have won phones in the various activities. The essay competition, which has seen over 40 stories published, aims to promote good relations between China and Uganda through stories about the experience of Ugandans in China or their relationship with Chinese.

"Let's Talk Chinese" runs under partnership between Vision Group and the Confucius Institute at Makerere University.

It is intended to improve communication between Ugandans and Chinese.

The Chinese language programme complements *New Era*, an in-depth monthly pull-out focusing on China-Uganda ties.

Up close to Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy quiz winners is where Ugandans who have read this book answer questions.

Launched in 2015, the Pakasa Youth Awards seek to recognise exemplary young entrepreneurs aged 18-40 from all over the country.

The project is aimed at inspiring a mindset change among young people in Uganda to regard entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood in the face of youth unemployment.



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