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China's zero-tariff treatment to boost Africa's industrialisation

BY XINHUA

BEIJING. Analysts have welcomed China's zero-tariff treatment to 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic relations, highlighting its significance to boosting the continent's industrial development and participation in global value chains.

Effective on May 1, the zero-tariff treatment, together with an upgraded "green channel" for African agro exports, reaffirms China's commitment to a high-level opening up and is ex-

pected to facilitate deeper China-Africa cooperation in trade and investment.

Experts said the zero-tariff measure comes at a critical moment as many African economies seek to shift from reliance on primary commodity exports toward value-added production and to diversify trade structures.

"The policy directly supports Africa's industrialization by reducing barriers for semi-processed and finished goods, not just raw materials," said Leseko Makhetha, head of the Department of Economics at the National University of Lesotho.

"It encourages local industries to scale up production, fosters value-added processing and creates jobs across various sectors," he said, noting the zero-tariff treatment aligns with Africa's goal of moving up value chains.

South African political analyst Sandile Swana highlighted greater opportunities arising from the widened access to the Chinese market, hailing the measure as "an unequaled opportunity" for African exporters.

"The initiative aligns with the vision of (Agenda) 2063, as well as the efforts of regional bodies such as the South-

ern African Development Community to integrate and diversify their economies," he said.

Tabani Moyo, a research fellow with the Graduate School of Business and Leadership at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, said Africa should seize the opportunity presented with China's vast consumer market.

"African products must take this opportunity to stimulate trade between their countries and China, because of the sheer size of China in terms of consumption and the broader industries that are in China," he said.

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