

China's president Xi Jinping "needs Africa more than ever" as Beijing faces a backlash in the West over its alleged role in the coronavirus crisis, [a CNN article informs us](#) this week.

It goes on to say that its relationship with Africa is at a "critical and precarious juncture", citing a letter by African ambassadors last month criticizing the treatment of African residents in China.

The sentiment is part of efforts - [mostly by the media](#) and some governments in the West - to peddle the narrative that the coronavirus pandemic has exposed tensions in the China-Africa relationship, putting it on shaky ground.

This is misleading.

While doubts about China's motives on the continent aren't new - they're both necessary and healthy - African governments literally can't afford a breakdown in relations.

For example, it's estimated that Beijing contributed [\\$25.68bn of \\$100.8bn spent on infrastructure](#) across Africa in 2018 - second only to the combined spending of all African governments. This is just part of China's financial contribution to the continent, which will become more - not less - critical in the face of a crippling coronavirus-induced economic crisis.

In short, keeping Beijing happy has never been more important.

To be clear, African governments should be very vigilant in their dealings with China, and there are serious questions to be asked about financial dependency.

But this narrative has more to do with the West's concerns about competing with Beijing, not Africa's well-being, or a "critical and precarious juncture" in relations.

This week's Picks

From The Continent

Kenya has received World Bank approval for \$1bn in budget support to help the East African country contain a widening deficit. Often lauded as one of Africa's most dynamic economies, Kenya is facing a debt crisis amid deteriorating finances. **More:** [World Bank](#)

Ethiopia on Thursday opened a month-long window for potential buyers of two new telecommunications licenses to submit expressions of interest - part of a long-anticipated opening of the sector. Africa's last big untapped mobile market is expected to attract significant interest from global and regional operators. **More:** [Bloomberg](#)

THE WEEKLY STAT

99%

Sudan's inflation rate in April. **More:** [Africanews](#)

The Global Perspective

French oil major Total has reportedly secured \$14.4bn in funding for a giant liquefied natural gas project in Mozambique, with financing coming from a group of around 20 lenders. The southern African country is sitting on some of the world's biggest untapped reserves, and is expected to become a major supplier in the coming years. **More:** [Reuters](#)

The World Bank has warned that the coronavirus pandemic could push up to 60m people into extreme poverty worldwide. The lender has so far deployed emergency operations in 100 countries aimed at limiting the pandemic's impact, 39 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa. **More:** [World Bank](#)