

## **Chinese business companies in Africa: a different perspective on the responsibility for human rights? (Pro-CEAO Public Notice)**

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Over the last few decades both China and Africa have gained ample visibility in the international community: China as the emerging power that has achieved incomparable economic growth and risen as the main challenger of US hegemony; Africa as the continent that, after being marginalized in the 1990s, has become a target of interest to the hegemonic, middle and emerging powers in search of natural resources. In this context, China's presence in Africa is crucial to the study of recent changes in cooperation policies, and particularly in analyzing whether the presence of Chinese enterprises on the African continent brings an innovative approach to international cooperation or just reproduces the same traditional practices. The research articulates two studies that have been developed by the research group on Globalization, Development and Cooperation of the Graduate Program in International Relations (PPGRI): 1) the study about the role of China in the UN initiatives on corporate responsibility in human rights; and 2) the study about the contradictions in Chinese cooperation with Lusophone Africa. So, based on previous research about China's performance in UN initiatives on business and human rights, and on the analysis of statistical data about Chinese investments in Africa, the researchers examine what view of responsibility permeates the presence of Chinese companies in Africa and to what extent this view, by not imposing the same conditionalities attached to the Western countries' views on human rights and democracy, allows for a different perspective on the responsibility of transnational companies. In the case of China, there is the specific particularity that most companies are state-owned. Considering that China supports initiatives at the UN that legitimize global capital and, at the same time, others aimed at the regulation of transnational corporations, what strategy does China actually employ in its global activities and in Africa in particular? The research focuses on themes pertinent to Chinese companies in three countries of Lusophone Africa: Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. Its main goal lies in understanding the views of government, business and academic sectors on how Chinese companies act regarding social, labor, environmental, and other issues that call for responsibility in their global performance, and especially in Africa.