What is the China–Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF)?

Source: (The Diplomat, 2014) (Xinhua, 2016)

- CASCF is a formal dialogue initiative between China and the Arab League (AL), which has currently 21 members.
- It was established in 2004 during a visit of the then-Chinese President, Hu Jintao, to the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo, Egypt.

Mission and Principles

Source: (Xinhua, 2016) (Kuangyi, 2014)

CASCF aims to promote cooperation in various fields, such as politics, trade, culture, technology, foreign affairs, as well as to advance peace and development through friendly exchanges.

On the establishment of the forum, Hu Jintao proposed four principles to guide the new era of China–Arab interactions: (i) Establish political relations based on mutual respect; (ii) Foster economic and trade exchanges to accomplish common development aims; (iii) Learn from one another via cultural exchanges; (iv) Promote world peace and common development by cooperating in international affairs.
Structure

Source: (Xinhua, 2016); (Jalal, 2014); (Xinhua, 2016)

Ministerial Meeting

A permanent mechanism which gathers every two years the Secretary General of the AL and the Foreign Ministers of China and all League’s members, rotating the location of the meeting every year between China and an Arab state. These meetings concern regional and international matters of common interest, particularly to address the former Action Plans published by the Forum and the following ones.

Senior Officials Meeting

An annual meeting organized in order to prepare the next Ministerial Meeting; to implement resolutions made by the last one and to call political consultations between China and the AL.

Liaison Group

This group promotes communication between all parties involved and implements resolutions made by the Ministerial Meeting and the Senior Officials Meeting. The Chinese Embassy in Egypt is the liaison group of China while the Arab Envoys Committee to China and the Arab League Representative Office in China form the liaison group of the League.

Main Mechanisms

Source: (China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, 2017)

ENTREPRENEURS CONFERENCE
Focuses on enterprises and aims to improve economic and trade exchanges between China and the Arab world in a global context.

SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND TRADE SEMINAR
A flexible mechanism which provides an opportunity for cooperation projects and enhances the relevance of trade cooperation between involved parties.

ENERGY COOPERATION CONFERENCE
The goal is to strengthen China-Arab energy cooperation and sustainable development.

CHINA-ARAB RELATIONS AND CIVILIZATION DIALOGUE SEMINARS
Promotes equality, solidarity and communication between different cultures with a major aim to accomplish peaceful coexistence.

CULTURAL EXCHANGES
Cultural activities such as art festivals are held in both parts to promote mutual understanding.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION SEMINAR
A seminar to enhance cooperation in the educational and scientific area.

NEWS COOPERATION FORUM
The goal is to cooperate in the mass media field using the press to enhance friendly cooperation.

ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION
Promotes cooperation in environmental protection and sustainable developmental efforts.

HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING
The goal is to promote cooperation through seminars and technical training courses for a diverse group of public officials.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL EXCHANGES
An important auxiliary channel in boosting friendly cooperation between China and the Arab League.

CASCF’S TIMELINE

AL proposes CASCF’s creation
2000

CASCF’s establishment
JAN 2004

1st Ministerial Meeting in Cairo. Declaration of the China-Arab State Cooperation Forum.
SEP 2004

2nd Ministerial Meeting in Beijing. Joint Communiqué on Environmental Protection.
MAY 2006

3rd Ministerial Meeting in Manama
MAY 2008

MAY 2010

5th Ministerial Meeting in Hammamet - objective “deepen the strategic cooperation and promote common development”
MAY 2012

JUN 2014

7th Ministerial Meeting opens in Doha. 60 years of diplomatic relations between China and Arab States.
MAY 2016

This group promotes communication between all parties involved and implements resolutions made by the Ministerial Meeting and the Senior Officials Meeting. The Chinese Embassy in Egypt is the liaison group of China while the Arab Envoys Committee to China and the Arab League Representative Office in China form the liaison group of the League.

Other Mechanisms:
The forum is composed by more than ten other mechanisms aimed to deepen cooperation.
Action Plans

Main chapters:

(I) POLITICAL COOPERATION: China and the AL pursue coordinated positions on regional and international affairs and seek peaceful solutions, sustainable development and cooperation on themes such as organized crime and drug trafficking.

(II) ECONOMIC COOPERATION: the members agreed to focus on areas such as trade, investment, energy, science, technology, agriculture, environment and labor to promote their common development and to create favorable conditions to economic partnerships.

(III) SOCIAL, CULTURE AND NEWS COOPERATION: The Forum promotes different kinds of culture exchanges and cooperation opportunities in human resources, education, health, poverty, rural development and media fields.

Environment


- It established the importance on economic development, social progress and environmental protection, emphasizing the creation of sustainable development and the promotion of cooperation between the two parties. To achieve these mutual goals, both parties have signed the “Joint Communiqué” to guide the deepening of their regional environmental cooperation.

- An Annual Implementation Plan is completed every two years to actively promote and establish cooperation in projects and activities in the areas of policy making, financing, and environmental legislation.

Trade and Investment

Crude Oil’s Participation in the Arab States Exportations to China in 2015 (%) 

Exports from the Arab States to China (2004-2015) (in billions of US$)

- Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Arab States, cooperation and trade has continually increased. The Arab States have become China’s greatest supplier of crude oil and the 7th biggest trading partner. Source: (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, 2016)

- China also has an investment and support policy with the Arab States in the field of petroleum and natural gas; cooperative investments are articulated to optimize oil extraction, transportation, and refining. Source: (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, 2016)
**Imports from China to Arab States (2004-2015) (in billions of US$)**

Source: [OEC, n.d.](https://www.oecd.org)

**Arab-States exportation of crude oil to China (2011-2015) (in millions of USD)**

Source: [OEC, n.d.](https://www.oecd.org)


Source: [The China Global Investment Tracker; n.d.](https://www.oecd.org)

**Amount of imports to each country in the Arab States (2016) (in millions of USD)**

Source: [WITS; n.d.](https://www.oecd.org)

• Since the foundation of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, trade volume has increased. In 2003, the trade volume was USD 25.4 billion and in 2004 the exchange between both parties increased by USD 11.3 billion. In 2008, the trade value rose to USD 132.9 billion, reaching the bilateral trade volume goal.

Source: [Kuwait News Agency; 2010](https://www.kuwaitnewsagency.com)

• The direct Chinese investment in the Arab States in the first semester of 2017 had a volume of USD 630 million, showing an increase of 25.6% compared to earlier investments.

Source: [Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China; 2017](https://www.mofcom.gov.cn)