

## Speech

### INTERNATIONAL DINNER WITH THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO THE UK - SPEECH

#### Introduction

Da jia hao [DA GEE-A HOW] (Good evening everybody)

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour for me to speak at this special international business dinner, at which we are honoured to have the presence of China's Ambassador to the UK, Mr Liu Xiaoming [LEEYOO SHAO-MING]

Tim, I would like to thank you for inviting me to attend this dinner, alongside so many distinguished guests. It is fantastic to see so many people here tonight.

The Scottish Chambers is an important voice for business priorities and concerns at a national level. But you are also doing important work – in collaboration with the Scottish Government - to promote international trade, through better connections between Scottish and overseas Chambers and their members.

Liz Cameron accompanied me on my trade visit to Berlin in March and, of course, a delegation from the Chambers visited China in April. Following that visit, the Chambers announced the official opening of a new International Trade Office in the city of Yantai, and I know you are

continuing to explore new ways to foster co-operation between our two countries. I want to thank you for that.

## **Scotland China relations – highlights**

2017 has proved to be yet another very busy and successful year of collaboration between China and Scotland. Of course, it is also a very special year in itself for Sino-Scottish relations – marking the 20th anniversary of the Chinese Consulate in Scotland.

I'd like to talk about some of that collaboration tonight – firstly by touching on our political, educational, and cultural links, and finishing with some thoughts on our crucial trade and investment relationship.

### **High Level Bi-lateral Meetings**

This year, we have been delighted to welcome several high level Chinese Government visits to Scotland.

In June, I had the pleasure of meeting with the Party Secretary of Guangdong, Mr Hu Chunhua [HOO CHOON WAH] at Edinburgh Castle.

Also in June, the Minister for International Development and Europe, Dr Alasdair Allan, met with the Party Secretary of Jinan, Mr Wang Wentao [WANG WEN-TOW].

These meetings are great examples of the importance of People-to-People links between our two countries.

## **Education**

In Education, Scotland continues to be successful in attracting increasing numbers of international students from China.

In 2015-16 there were 8,650 students from China studying at Higher Education Institutions and Colleges in Scotland.

And Scotland's flagship Saltire Scholarships have been awarded to over 200 Chinese undergraduate and post-graduate students since 2011.

## **Cultural Collaborations**

In 2016, we were honoured that 40 Chinese troupes took part in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This included traditional dance, ballet and Peking Opera.

This year, there was an even stronger representation from China, as a wide array of artists, performers, and shows from China bringing music, theatre, dance, puppetry, spoken word, and the circus took to the stage.

As part of the Momentum festivals relationship, Festivals Edinburgh, Creative Scotland and the British Council worked with Shanghai to bring a mini-China focus to the Fringe in 2017. Some of the activity included:

- *From Shanghai with Love*, a combined exhibition and fashion show at the Playfair library;

- *Stories From China*, a music and dance children’s show bringing the essence of China: Beijing Opera, chorus, string orchestra, drama, traditional folk music and dance. Presented by talented Chinese teenagers, the show included traditional costumes, musical instruments, hairstyles, and even an oriental dragon!
- *Divine Melody from Chinese Fiddlers*, combining classic melody and innovative performance to show the charms of traditional Chinese music and dance.

There has also been much Scottish cultural activity in China, for example:

- *Romantic Scotland – Castles, Land and Sea* is a partnership project between Historic Environment Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland, Nomad Exhibitions, and Nanjing Museum in China. They created a beautiful exhibition recently on display in Nanjing Museum
- Scottish Opera’s education team is taking the “*Warriors! The Emperor’s Incredible Army*” performance to China, working with 900 Chinese school children.

## **Trade and Investment**

Scotland and China are doing more trade with one another than ever before in an increasing number of sectors.

The overall rate of inward investment from China to Scotland has increased rapidly in recent years. According to the 2017 EY

Attractiveness Survey which tracks global FDI trends, China has now become a top 5 source of inward investment to Scotland.

But, whilst our trade and investment relationship is healthy and developing rapidly, there is more we can do.

The Scottish Government - principally through Scottish Development International - is continuing to work with its partners in the private and university sectors to identify and unlock new opportunities.

As well as requiring more Scottish companies to be 'China ready', this will involve us identifying new investment opportunities in Scotland and overcoming issues that can sometimes restrict access to Chinese markets - for example, regulation, complexity, cultural and language barriers, and IP protection.

Scotland has also recently welcomed new investment from leading Chinese technology companies, Huawei and Tencent. Leading Chinese travel company Ctrip invested 1.4 Billion GBP in Scottish technology company Skyscanner in 2016 and only last week announced it was creating 200 new jobs in Edinburgh. This is a clear demonstration of how Scotland can benefit from being open to investment from China.

More generally, we are stepping up our work to raise Scotland's profile overseas.

In doing this, we are building on successes that many of you have helped to achieve. Scotland already has internationally renowned businesses, and a global reputation in sectors such as tourism, food and drink, life sciences, the creative industries, financial services and technology. The value of our international exports has grown by 41% in the most recent eight years on record – from 2007 to 2015.

We also want to encourage businesses to internationalise and export. We know from evidence that companies which do that are more likely to innovate and improve their productivity.

But our exporting base is still narrower than we would like. For example, right now half our exports come from just 70 companies across Scotland. That is both a challenge, but more importantly that is an enormous opportunity for growth and expansion. So we're determined to encourage more businesses to internationalise.

That's why, as I touched on at the start of my speech, we are doing more at a local level through the Chambers of Commerce network to encourage small and medium sized businesses to export. And China, as the world's second largest economy, will be key to helping us achieve those goals.

## **Conclusion**

So, I am delighted to be here to enjoy this wonderful event, kindly hosted by the Scottish Chambers of Commerce.

Ambassador, I wish you and everyone else present an enjoyable evening and I look forward to Scotland-China co-operation continuing to flourish in the years to come.

**END – 1136 words, approx. 9 mins**