**Enhancing solidarity and moving forward together**

*Speech by the H E Wei Hongtian, Chinese Ambassador to Grenada, on the celebration of the 74th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, given on Wednesday, 20 September 2023.*

On 1 October 1949, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Chinese people put an end to the century of wars and humiliation after decades of arduous struggles, and founded the People’s Republic of China. We thus secured our national independence, liberated our people, and laid solid foundation for national rejuvenation.

Over the past 74 years, the Chinese nation has achieved a tremendous transformation from standing up, growing prosperous to becoming strong under the leadership of CPC. China has made remarkable achievements in economic and social development, culture, technology, education and many other aspects. From 1952 to 2022, China’s real GDP has grown more than 210.5 times, reaching 121 trillion yuan (US$18 trillion). China’s economy has maintained an average growth rate of 9.1% since its reform and opening-up in December 1978. In just a few decades, China has grown from a poor and underdeveloped country to the world’s second largest economy, the largest industrial country, the largest trading country in goods, and the largest foreign currency reserve country, contributing to more than 30% of the global economic growth for many consecutive years and becoming an important engine of world economy. China has put in place the world’s largest education system, social security system, and medical and health system. It is worth mentioning that we eradicated absolute poverty in 2020, achieved the First Centenary Goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and created two miracles of rapid economic growth and enduring social stability.

Currently, the world is undergoing major changes unseen in a century, with complicated international situation and sluggish global economic recovery in the post-Covid era. Against this backdrop, China’s economy continues to recover, and make solid progress in high-quality development. In the first half of this year, China’s GDP increased by 5.5% year-on-year, ranking among the top in the world. The contribution rate of final consumption expenditure to economic growth reached 77.2%, which significantly drove China’s economic growth. The Chinese economy has strong resilience, tremendous potential and great vitality, and the fundamentals sustaining China’s long-term growth will remain unchanged, and China remains the bellwether and powerhouse of the global economy. There is no doubt that China’s further development brings good opportunities to our partners and the whole international community as well.

While achieving its own development, China has also made tremendous contributions to world peace and development. China has always pursued an independent foreign policy of peace, and treated others with respect and as equals. We take an active part in making global governance and international order more just and reasonable, and economic globalisation more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial for all. China has become a more determined, confident and responsible major country, and has been engaging with other countries to solve problems faced by human society with Chinese wisdom and solution. China solemnly promises to the international community to adopt stronger policies and measures, striving to achieve carbon peak by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060. This is a major declaration of China’s willingness to make new contributions to the development of human society. In recent years, China has successively proposed the vision of a Community With a Shared Future for Mankind, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI), so as to provide development opportunities to the world with our own development, and promote positive interaction between China and the world. The above initiatives have become widely popular global public goods and enjoyed broad support from the international community.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Guided by the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and focused on the 5 priority areas of policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bond, China has signed more than 200 documents on jointly building the BRI with 152 countries and 32 international organisations and has launched over 3,000 cooperation projects, involving close to US$1 trillion of investment and creating 420,000 jobs for participating countries. Now, it has become an initiative featuring open, inclusive, mutually beneficial, and win-win cooperation, bringing concrete benefits to the people of participating countries. China has signed documents on jointly building the BRI with 8 Caribbean countries, and conducted fruitful cooperation in many areas. The third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation will be held in Beijing in October this year. Events during the Forum include the opening ceremony, 3 high-level forums on connectivity, green development and digital economy, and 6 thematic forums on trade connectivity, people-to-people connectivity, think tank exchanges, clean Silk Road, sub-national cooperation and maritime cooperation. A CEO conference is also to be held. As of today, representatives from more than 110 countries have confirmed that they will attend the Forum. China is willing to work with the international community to comprehensively review the achievements and experience of the Belt and Road initiative, and conduct in-depth discussions on ideas and measures for high-quality cooperation with more tangible win-win results.

The Global Development Initiative (GDI) is also widely welcomed by the international community, drawing support from over 100 countries and many international organisations, and about 70 countries in the Group of Friends of the GDI. With concerted efforts from all participating parties, the initiative and its implementation mechanism have been continuously improved, with practical cooperation gradually being implemented, and China has established a US$10 billion special fund for the purpose of implementing the GDI. On 19 September 2023, at the high-level meeting on GDI Cooperation Outcomes, which was hosted by China on the sidelines of this year’s session of the United Nations General Assembly, China made the following four proposals:

First, to continue practicing genuine multilateralism, bring development issues back to the center of the international agenda, and enhance the representation and voice of developing countries in global governance. Second, to synergise the development strategies of all parties and actively promote global, regional, sub-regional and inter-country development cooperation to give play to each other’s complementary advantages. Third, to mobilise all kinds of development resources to help solve the most pressing problems facing developing countries. And fourth, to actively tap growth areas for practical cooperation and jointly explore the path of technology-led, resource-efficient, and eco-friendly development.

Looking forward, China will continue to put people first, unite and lead people from all ethnic groups to build a modern and powerful socialist country in an all-round way, comprehensively promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with Chinese-style modernisation, and stride towards our Second Centenary goal. In the meantime, China is ready to further enhance practical cooperation with all international partners for the common goal of safeguarding peace and promoting development, and creating a better future for mankind!

As an old Chinese saying goes: “Nothing, not even mountains and oceans, can separate people with shared goals and vision.” Since China and Grenada resumed diplomatic ties on 20 January 2005, our 2 countries have been respecting, trusting and supporting each other. Our political mutual trust has been continuously strengthened, our coordination on international and regional affairs has become closer than ever before, our relationship has been enhanced, and our cooperation has been deepened. China highly appreciates Grenada’s adherence to the One-China principle. China also enjoys support from Grenada in many ways.

China and Grenada have been working and cooperating closely over the years in many sectors, including infrastructure, agriculture, medical and health care, housing, youth, sports, education, human resources training, security and law enforcement. The 2 phases of low-income housing project, the reconstruction and expansion projects of the 2 stadiums and technical cooperation, the consecutive 8 phases of agricultural cooperation and the ongoing upgrade project of Maurice Bishop International Airport, are concrete results of the pragmatic cooperation between our 2 countries. Meanwhile, based on the principles of people-centred philosophy and all-round development of people, small-scale projects at the community level with funds from China have been implemented, sending Chinese people’s goodwill to Grenadian communities, schools and farmlands. Our people-to-people exchanges have more than ever flourished. Six bilateral and dozens of multilateral short-term training programmes for Grenadian officials and professionals have, and will be held by China this year, covering vast areas and benefiting a lot of Grenadian friends. China has been and will continue to provide full government scholarships for Grenadian students. I am also pleased to see that the Confucius Classroom at TAMCC has been upgraded to a Confucius Institute last year. I also would like to congratulate the successful visit to China by Hon. Joseph Andall, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Export Development of Grenada recently. The 2 sides will keep close contact on the follow-up of the visit.

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the independence of Grenada, and it will be the 19th anniversary of China-Grenada’s resumption of diplomatic relations. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Grenadian people on their upcoming Independence Jubilee, and on their achievements in political, economic, and social development over the past 50 years. I take note that Hon. Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell announced that 19 October 2023 will be declared a public holiday, and the day will be used to commence activities for the 50th Independence anniversary celebration, which will be observed on 7 February 2024. We Chinese in Grenada will join the Grenadian people to celebrate the historic event just as we did in the Parade of Bands of Carnival Festival in August this year. And I hope we will take this opportunity as a new starting point to jointly promote more cooperation results between our 2 countries, to bring our bilateral relations to a new high, to realise the goal of common development and to create a better future for our countries and peoples.

No matter how the times and situations change, I am confident that the proud and profound friendship between China and Grenada will never change, and the friendly relations between our 2 countries will keep growing from strength to strength.

I also would like to offer my congratulations on the full success of the just concluded Summit of the Group of 77 and China held in Havana, Cuba. It is highly appreciated that Hon. Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell attended this Summit and contributed his wisdom. The Havana Declaration adopted at the Summit stresses the importance of solidarity and cooperation on the basis of extensive consultations, joint contributions and shared benefits, which can bring huge gains to all countries and all parts of the world in building a community of shared future for humankind. It emphasises equality, justice and the need for a more inclusive and coordinated approach to global financial governance, rejects technological monopolies and other unfair practices that hinder the technological development of developing countries, and calls upon the international community to foster an open, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory environment for scientific and technological development.

China participated in the summit and put forward a 3-point proposal on cooperation between the G77 and China: first, we must stay true to the original aspiration of the G77 for independence and greater collective strength through unity, reject bloc confrontation and the Cold War mentality and join hands to maintain world peace and tranquility; second, we must advocate equity, justice and inclusiveness and strengthen the voice and representation of developing countries; third, we must pursue development, revitalisation and win-win cooperation and work to ensure that no developing country will be left behind or left out in the development of new technologies and industries.

China is the largest developing country in the world and a member of the Global South. We stand ready to work together with G77 members to build a Global South community with a shared future, and usher in a new era of common development.

Strong unity of the global south makes great sense. Just as the national anthem of Grenada sings, “We pledge ourselves to thee, heads, hearts and hands in unity.... May we with faith and courage, aspire, build, advance, as one people, one family”. So let us keep unity, work hand in hand, safeguard our dignity and common interest and together move our two nations and peoples forward.

**END**