

Speech at the Mulungushi University of Zambia

H.E. Mr. Li Jie, Chinese Ambassador to Zambia

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Good morning, everybody!

It is my great pleasure and honour to come to Mulungushi University. Please let me extend my sincere thanks for the invitation and hospitality. It is a precious opportunity for me to have this dialogue with you here.

I. China in the New Era

After 40 years of reform and opening up, China has made world-renowned development achievements and has become the world's second largest economy. It has been said that if anyone who can explain China's development in full, then he could win the Nobel Prize. But if anyone here who is familiar with our history, you will find that China has also experienced ups and downs, lows and sufferings. For a very long time in history, China was a big strong power in the world, and the Chinese people created a splendid civilization. But since the Industrial Revolution especially after 1840s, China

has experienced more than a hundred years of downturn. It was bullied by the Western powers for around 100 years. Since then, the Chinese people were actively exploring the right path to achieve rejuvenation. It was not until 1921 when the Communist Party of China was founded and 1949 when the CPC led the Chinese people to establish new China that truly brought about dramatic changes to the country.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially for the past 40 years of Reform and Opening up, China's GDP has grown at an average annual rate of 9.7%, four times the growth rate of the world economy during the same period. China's per capita GDP has increased from about 300 US dollars in 1987 to nearly 10,000 US dollars now, a 30-fold increase. At the same time, China has also alleviated around 800 million people out of poverty. The rural poverty rate has dropped sharply from 97.5% in 1978 to 1.7% in 2018, which is a miracle in the world history. Currently, It has not only become the world's largest trading nation, the second largest foreign investor, but also built the world's largest highway network, high-speed rail

network and mobile broadband network, aggregated the world's most populous middle-income people. It has become the main driving force for world economy that account for more than 30% of contribution to world economic growth. Over the past 70 years, with perseverance and hard efforts, the Chinese people have made development achievements that are very unique in the world. Absolute poverty, which has haunted the Chinese nation for thousands of years, will soon become a thing of the past. This will be a great miracle in human history! By the end of 2018, we had a poverty population of 16.6 million and they will be assisted to get rid of poverty by 2020 with targeted measures.

Then the question might be: what are the reasons for China's achievement?

Two months ago at the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, president Xi Jinping remarked, "Over the past 70 years, under the strong leadership of the CPC, the Chinese people, with great courage and relentless exploration, have successfully opened the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics." I

believe this is the secret of China's rapid development.

In October 2017, the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was held in Beijing. The Congress made a major political decision on the historical position of China's development, that is, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a "New Era." What does it mean? I believe it means a new and higher level of China's development defined by the need to address the existing imbalances and inadequacies of our development as we work to meet the growing aspirations of the people for a better life. For China today, there is more emphasis on the quality rather than quantity of development, more emphasis on what real benefits people can get rather than just aggregate growth rate.

The new era is also an era in which China and the rest of the world share the dividends of China's reform and development. In 2018 and 2019, the first and second China International Import Expo were held in Shanghai. The CIIE is the world's first import expo held at the national level, an innovation in the history of global trade. It is a major measure and

original action of China to proactively open its market, firmly support trade liberalization and economic globalization, and to pursue win-win cooperation for common development with the world. China stands ready to share its development opportunities with the rest of the world.

President Xi Jinping emphasized, “Economic globalization represents the trend of history. Like the world’s great rivers, the Yangtze, the Nile, the Amazon and the Danube — they all surge forward in relentless flow, and nothing can stop their mighty movement, not the current of undertows or hidden shoals or rocks beneath the water. Of the problems confronting the world economy, none can be resolved by a single country alone. We must all put the common good of humanity first rather than place one’s own interest above the common interest of all. We must have a more open mindset and take more open steps, and work together to make the pie of the global market even bigger. We need to strengthen the mechanisms for sharing benefits globally, and explore new ways of international cooperation. The goal is to give more impetus to economic globalization and remove impediments as much as

we could.”

I have strong faith in the bright prospects of China’s economic development. China will reach out its arms and offer countries in the world more opportunities of market, investment and growth. Together, we can achieve development for all.

II. China-Zambia All Weather Friendship

I learned that today's lecture is part of the diplomatic relations series of Mulungushi University opened since 2017 by H.E. Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. Taking this opportunity, I would like to make a review of the China-Zambia traditional friendship.

55 years ago, 5 days after Zambia’s independence, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda announced the establishment of diplomatic relations with China. Since then, the two countries have always been good brothers, good friends and good partners. When it comes to the relationship between China and Zambia, it is absolutely necessary to mention the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, the TAZARA, a monument in the history of China-Africa and China-Zambia relations. In the 1970s, Zambia was eager to open up a new transport route in order to

open up the sea passage and get rid of the dependence on the southern sea passages that were subject to the white racist regimes of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Tanzania and Zambia first sought the help of Western powers to build the railway, but they all rejected. The answers are mostly the same. The railway is economically not feasible.

In February 1965, the Tanzanian President Nyerere visited China for the first time. During the meeting with the Chinese leaders, he expressed the desire to request China to build the TAZARA. The Chinese leaders agreed on the basis of supporting the African countries in striving for and safeguarding national independence, developing the national economy, and actively developing the strategic relationship between China and the third world countries. During the visit of Dr. Kenneth Kaunda to China in June 1967, he also inquired about the Chinese government's opinion on the construction of the TAZARA. The Chinese side clearly stated that once Tanzania and Zambia make up their minds, China is willing to undertake investment and construction of the railway, and stresses that this is

support for the struggle of the African people for anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle for national independence, and also for helping African countries develop their national economies and consolidate their national independence.

The friendship between the Chinese and Zambian peoples has a deep emotional foundation, which can be traced back to that period jointly building the TAZARA. In order to build this railway, China had dispatched 56,000 engineers and technicians. During the peak period, 16,000 Chinese people were on site, 69 of them sacrificed their lives and 18 of the Chinese heroes were lost in Zambia. The Chinese workers and the people of Tanzania and Zambia worked together, lived together and formed a profound friendship. A few weeks ago, I met Mr. Edward Bovalia, a 75-year-old Zambian who once worked in the railway construction. He still keeps correspondence with his Chinese workmate until today.

To build the TAZARA, China had provided nearly 1 billion RMB financial support for the construction at very difficult circumstances of its own economy. The amount of this loan is at least equivalent to more

than 10 billion US dollars today. However, the average GDP per person in China at that time is less than 200 dollars, even lower than that of Zambia. The resources of construction were generously contributed by the Chinese government and people. The TAZARA is by far the largest foreign aid project in China. After the completion of the TAZARA, it became a major transportation link connecting Tanzania and Zambia. It provided a new and reliable passage for Zambia to export copper, breaking the blockade of the racist regime in South Africa and enabling Zambia's important source of national income. According to President Nyerere "foreigners in the history of the construction of railways in Africa, are plundering the wealth of Africa, and the Chinese are the opposite. They are helping us develop the national economy." Dr. Kenneth Kaunda remarked: "A friend in need is a friend indeed. When we face the most difficult moment, China came to assist us." The assistance is of course mutual and reciprocal. For many years, China has received very precious assistance from African countries. In 1971, along with other African countries, Zambia firmly supported the restoration of China's legitimate seat in the United Nations. When the proposal was

passed, the Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations and other African brothers shouted and jumped for joy for China.

Why does China become so close to Africa? Like African countries, China has a painful history of foreign colonization and being exploited and oppressed by foreign powers. China and Africa's leaders of the old generation including Chairman Mao Zedong and Dr. Kenneth Kaunda initiated China-Zambia and China-Africa friendship based on the common colonial encounters, development tasks and political demands, and created many historical monuments highlighting our friendship. We have closely combined Africa's economic independence with China's own development to create a model of south-south cooperation on the basis of equality, mutual respect and supporting each other's concerns. When President Edgar Lungu visited China in 2015, he said: China-Zambia is a "neighbor in heart", which is a true portrayal of the profound friendship between the two countries for 55 years.

III. China and Zambia in the new era

Nothing, not even mountains and oceans, can separate people with shared goals and vision. This year marks the 55th anniversary of the national independence of Zambia, as well as the establishment of China-Zambia diplomatic relations.

In the past 55 years, no matter how the international situation has changed, China and Zambia have always stood firm together to support each other's core interests and development demands. Today's China-Zambia all-weather friendship has gradually become more profound on the new basis, fruitful and showing political mutual trust and economic complementarity, as well as cultural mutual learning and people's friendship.

First, political mutual trust has been significantly enhanced. Both China and Zambia have always insisted on developing the relationship in the long run, and have always understood and supported each other in the process of exploring a development path that is in line with our own conditions. In September last year, H.E. President Lungu led a delegation to attend the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Chinese President Xi Jinping met with President

Lungu. The two heads of state jointly witnessed the signing of bilateral cooperation documents such as the Memorandum of Understanding on the joint construction of the Belt and Road.

China and Zambia also firmly support each other on issues involving core interests and major concerns. At this year's UN Human Rights conferences, Zambia and other 53 countries fully affirmed China's great achievements in promoting and protecting human rights, and giving China firm support on its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Second, our economic complementarity has continued to deepen and mutually beneficial cooperation has reached a new level. Since the beginning of the new century, under the framework of the FOCAC, China and Zambia have taken all-round, wide-area and high-level cooperation which is at the forefront of China Africa cooperation. The practical cooperation with fruitful achievements in areas such as infrastructure, ICT, energy, agriculture, processing and manufacturing has brought tangible benefits to our two peoples. Zambia is an important partner of China in promoting the Belt and Road Initiative and building

an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future. In 2018, the China-Zambia bilateral trade volume has reached 5 billion US dollars for the first time with a year-on-year growth of 33.9%. Zambia has a surplus of more than 4 billion US dollars. China's direct investment to Zambia in 2018 maintained a constant growth with an increase of 327 million US dollars, ranking second among African countries. A number of key projects including CMCC South-East Ore Body, Zambia-Jiangxi Multi facility Economic Zone, Kafulafuta Dam and Water Supply, Village Satellite TV, Smart Zambia and Levy Mwanawasa Hospital have been making remarkable progress, which provides strong support for Zambia to accelerate its industrialization process and implementation of the 7NDP.

As the Chinese ambassador to Zambia, I deeply feel that Zambia has great development potentials. The country has the tradition for stability, as oasis of peace, its economy is growing fast, its society is full of vitality, and people's livelihood continues to improve.

Third, cultural exchanges and mutual learning have been continuously enriched and expanded. China

has established the Confucius Institute in Zambia and one of the Chinese language teaching points is located here at Mulungushi University. The Chinese volunteers of Confucius Institute are very young. They come across many difficulties in their work and life, experiencing water and power shortages, but they are dedicated to contribute to the cultural exchange between China and Zambia. Since its establishment in 2010, the Confucius Institute has taught the Chinese language to 50,000 local students. So far China has provided governmental scholarships to 1014 Zambian students to study in China, and the number of Zambian students in China now has reached 4300. The Chinese government has been providing scholarships to students through various channels, including Chinese Ambassadors scholarships. More than 70 students have received scholarships to study in China this year.

The year of 2019 is the "China-Zambia Culture Year" agreed by the heads of state of China and Zambia. Since the beginning of this year, the Zambia-China Friendship Association has officially launched. The founding President H.E. Dr. Kaunda

and the Fourth Republican President H.E. Mr. Rupiah Banda serves as honorary president and executive president respectively, providing an important platform for the two peoples to enhance exchanges and deepen understanding.

IV. A better future for China-Zambia relationship

This year marks the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Zambia. It is an important year to build on past achievements and forge ahead. At present, China and Zambia are actively implementing the consensus reached by the two heads of state and promoting the implementation of the outcomes of the FOCAC Beijing Summit.

The FOCAC Beijing Summit has achieved fruitful results. The most notable outcome is that President Xi Jinping announced the "Eight Major Initiatives" of China-Africa cooperation at the meeting, which has set the direction for the future development of China-Africa relations. China will provide another 60 billion U.S. dollars in support for the Initiatives, including: US\$15 billion of grants, interest-free loans and concessional loans, US\$20 billion of credit lines, the setting up of a US\$10

billion special fund for development financing and a US\$5 billion of special fund for financing imports from Africa. We encourage Chinese companies to make at least US\$10 billion of investment in Africa in the next three years. In addition, for those of Africa's least developed countries, heavily indebted and poor countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing countries that have diplomatic relations with China, the debt they have incurred in the form of interest-free Chinese government loans due to mature by the end of 2018 will be exempted. For this Eight Initiatives, Zambia has great potential and advantages to get a bigger share of the cake, chiefly in the following areas:

1. Industrial promotion programs. China will encourage its enterprises to expand their investment, build and upgrade a number of economic and trade cooperation zones, and support food security of Africa. In this area, Zambia is already ahead of African countries. The China-Zambia Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone is the earliest industrial parks established by China in Africa. Two weeks ago, Mr. Qin Yi, vice governor of Jiangxi Province of China, and Hon. Sydney Mushanga, Minister of the

Central Province, jointly unveiled the Jiangxi-Zambia Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone. This multi-facility economic zone is located right here in the Central Province, not far from Mulungushi University. China and Zambia will continue to take advantage of the cooperation zone to strengthen production capacity cooperation and industrial connection, encourage more Chinese enterprises to invest in Zambia, build industrial bases such as modern agriculture, mining, processing and manufacturing, so as to help Zambia create more jobs and increase export and foreign exchange earnings.

2. Facility connectivity programs. China will support enterprises to participate in infrastructure construction in Africa through investment and construction integration. The infrastructure construction is the traditional cooperation area between China and Zambia, and will achieve more results in the future. When it comes to China-Zambia infrastructure cooperation, there have been some recent accusations that China is pulling Zambia into a “debt trap”, which is extremely irresponsible. The experience of China's

development demonstrate the importance of sustained capital investment and the necessity to improve the level of infrastructure. The debt issue is a problem that arises in the development process, and the fundamental solution still depends on further development. In our own experience, we also borrowed a lot in the development process, but we did not fall into the "debt trap." Instead of setting a debt trap for Zambia, China has been helping African countries, including Zambia, to strengthen their own economic capacity. To achieve sustainable development, we require Chinese enterprises and financial institutions to conduct cooperation with Zambia in a responsible manner. We have always treated the matter from an overall perspective of friendship with Zambia and insisted on finding a solution acceptable to both sides through friendly consultations.

3. Trade facilitation programs. China has decided to expand imports of African goods, especially non-resource products. At the first China International Import Expo, the honey product of Zambia was popular among Chinese consumers. Some Chinese companies signed 10 million RMB

purchase contracts with the producers on the spot. This honey company is located in Kabwe, the Central Province, with a brand named Mpundu Wild Honey. At the 2nd China International Import Expo, the Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry Hon. Christopher Yaluma represented the Zambian government as the sole Guest of Honour country in the African region to participate in the Expo. 40 Zambia companies participated in the exhibition, involving honey, Moringa seeds, jewelry, crops, handicrafts and other products.

4. Capacity building programs. China has decided to strengthen exchanges of experience with Africa and provide more scholarships and opportunities for training professionals for Africa. As I mentioned earlier, China has provided a large number of scholarships and short-term training opportunities to Zambia. Under the framework of the FOCAC Beijing Summit, this scale will only increase. We are expecting more applicants from Mulungushi University have the opportunity to study in China in the future.

5. Health and sanitation programs. The cooperation between China and Zambia in the medical field has

also been one of the important areas of cooperation between the two countries. For 41 consecutive years since 1978, China has sent 546 medical doctors to Zambia to treat 3 million local patients and have carried out more than 20,000 surgeries. China will continue to make efforts to improve the medical and health status of Zambia.

6. People-to-people exchange programs. Zambia is endowed with very rich tourism resources. I believe that with the joint efforts of both sides, the tourism infrastructure of Zambia will continue to be improved, more and more Chinese tourists will come to enjoy the beauty of Zambia.

In addition, China and Zambia also have broad prospects for cooperation in the fields of green development and peace and security. It is believed that with the joint efforts of both governments and peoples, the relations between the two countries will usher in a brighter future.

V. Let us make common efforts for the development of our bilateral relations

The prospect of a country's prosperity lies in the youth, and so as to the future of China-Zambia

relationship. It is my sincere expectation that all of us here will work together to promote this great relationship.

First, we must look positively at the development of China-Zambia relations in the new era. The world is facing a great change that hasn't happened in a century. The China-Zambia relationship has stood at a new historical starting point. All of us here are shouldering the sacred mission of inheriting the existing friendship. In President Xi Jinping's words "Never forget why you started, and you can accomplish your mission." We should not forget the initial purpose of the China-Zambia relationship, which are sincerity and friendship formulated through time. There is no conflict or fundamental interest disagreement between our two countries. Instead, there are numerous reasons and urgent desires for us to support each other and deepen cooperation. China and Zambia are natural friends and development partners. We must consolidate and carry forward the traditional friendship, deepen mutual understanding and trust, let our friendship pass from generation to generation, and continue to renew its glory.

Second, we must work hard and be a practitioner and promoter of the development of China-Zambia relations. Looking forward into the future, the China-Zambia relations have broad prospects for development. I firmly believe that all of you here will make good use of your knowledge to contribute to Zambia's national development and China-Zambia friendship.

Third, let us work as bridges to better connect our two peoples. With the continuous expansion of cooperation between China and Zambia, more and more Zambian youths will go to China to study and work, and more and more Chinese people will come to Zambia. Let us carry on the spirit of our ancestors who build the TAZARA, and be good ambassadors to contribute to our two peoples in the new era.