

## **DeLisle Worrell: The growing relationship between China and Barbados**

Welcome remarks by Dr DeLisle Worrell, Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, at the Press Launch of the Fish and Dragon Festival, Bridgetown, 29 January 2015.

\* \* \*

Ambassador Wang Ke of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Barbados other representatives of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Barbados, Mr. David Bulbulia, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kirk Ottley, President of the BCFA and other representatives, Festival Director, Ms. Tonika Sealy, ladies and gentleman, members of the media and press good morning.

They say that the world's centre of gravity has shifted to the east, suddenly and dramatically. Even someone like myself, with more than a passing knowledge of Chinese history, culture and policy, has been astounded by the transformation. The images I see on TV daily are of an utterly different country to the one I visited in 1980. The very fact that CCTV America is available in Barbados, and that its global coverage is among the most dispassionate, informative and sympathetic to my sensibilities, of any international broadcaster, is something that was inconceivable back then.

Most Barbadians are only dimly aware of the magnitude of the change that the emergence of China implies, and the myriad ways our lives might be touched by that change. We do know of Chinese interest in direct investment in the Caribbean; it is substantial, and it is to be welcomed, because it benefits both sides. Barbados and the Caribbean benefit from the increase of our capacity to produce goods and services, and the associated employment. China, for its part, is in search of opportunities to diversify foreign investment portfolios. I have only recently been sensitized to the extent of online commerce with China, and the in-built features that facilitate this commerce. The Chinese embassy, the ANNU Institute, the Barbados-China Friendship Association and other groups and individuals have provided us with glimpses into China's rich, ancient, and modernizing culture. We see more of it on CCTV. The Confucius Institute is about to get going. We see reports of missions to China, and articles on the experiences of Barbadians living there.

What all this makes us realise is that a whole new world has emerged, with China as its hub, and we are feeling the swells reaching us, at this far distance. This has whetted the appetite of many, and there is growing interest and curiosity about the possibilities for networking, exchanges, travel, culture, entertainment, sports, commerce, conferences and all the many ways our societies might interact.

The Barbados-China Friendship Association (BCFA) intends to provide a central node for a multifaceted network covering all areas that might be of interest to members and the general public. There is an opportunity for all those who might have an interest in the China-Barbados relationship to join the association and help us shape its agenda. The BCFA is a sponsor with the Chinese Embassy and the Central Bank of the Fish and Dragon Festival, which we are introducing to the public today. The association will have a booth at the festival, with information on membership, the association's actual and future activities, information on resources for Mandarin language training, information on training and travel opportunities. If you already have an interest in interacting with China and the Chinese we need to hear from you. And if you are merely curious there will be plenty to pique your interest and give ideas and inspiration for a deepening of your involvement with the BCFA and with China. We invite you to visit and like the Festival's Facebook Page entitled Fish & Dragon Festival.

We plan an exciting, entertaining and informational festival, which is sure to be enjoyed by all. And after the festival the BCFA will keep things going, with the assistance and engagement of all those who share our passion for an intensification of the China-Barbados relationship.