

Alwyn Jordan: The Fish and Dragon Festival - a symbol of friendship

Remarks by Mr Alwyn Jordan, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, at the 11th Fish and Dragon Festival Gala, Bridgetown, 20 January 2025.

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For almost 50 years, the People's Republic of China and Barbados have enjoyed a warm relationship. It is one that has seen us collaborate in many areas, such as construction and medicine. In education, we witnessed the establishment of the Confucius Institute at the UWI, Cave Hill Campus in April 2015, as well as the granting of scholarships and other opportunities that allow our citizens to visit and study in China.

Indeed, in 2016, a group of the Central Bank of Barbados' staff, along with representatives from different government agencies, took part in a two-week course on aspects of financial regulation in Shanghai that was sponsored by the People's Republic of China. More recently, several of our officers benefited from online training in FinTech facilitated by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Barbados.

We expect the relationship forged between our two countries to grow ever stronger in the future, as we seek to partner in utilising technologies in which China has emerged as a global leader, including artificial intelligence, telecommunications, alternative energy, and electric vehicles.

Ladies and gentlemen, over a decade ago, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China and the Bank decided that just as our nations enjoy a strong friendship, so too should our citizens. It was from this idea, that the Fish and Dragon Festival was born: fish for Barbados, and the dragon for China.

Since then, this exchange of cultures has grown, becoming a highlight of many Barbadians' calendar of activities. In this vein, we saw the enthusiasm with which Barbadians and Chinese of all ages and walks of life embraced its return to an in-person event after three years of hosting the festival virtually. Indeed, just yesterday evening, thousands filled the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium to witness the best of Barbadian and Chinese talent, sample Barbadian and Chinese fare, and immerse themselves in the rich Chinese culture.

Tonight, as we prepare to be entertained by the Zhejiang Wu Opera Troupe, let me first express my heartfelt thanks to former Ambassador Yan Xiusheng, who I met on several occasions from 2019, as we participated in the opening of a number of Fish and Dragon Festivals together. He demitted office in October of last year, but rest assured, he will always remain a friend of the Bank.

I also appreciate the presence of Huang Xinhua, the Chargé d'Affaires and other senior members of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Barbados at this gala. We look forward to their continued support for this festival and for recognising, as we do, the importance of this long-standing relationship.

Let me also use this opportunity to wish you and everyone here tonight a Happy Chinese New Year.

I thank you!