

REMARKS BY

HIS EXCELLENCY
AMBASSADOR AMINU B. WALI , mni

ON THE OCCASION OF THE
40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
NIGERIA – CHINA DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Beijing, China

25 February, 2011



SPEECH DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BASHIR
A. WALI, mni, HEAD OF MISSION, ON 25 FEBRUARY
2011 TO MARK THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF NIGERIA – CHINA DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS HELD AT CPAFFC AUDITORIUM, BEIJING,
CHINA

H. E. Mr. Abdul’ahat Abdulrixit, Vice Chairman of the CPPCC and President of Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC)

H. E. Mr. Zhai Jun, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China,

H. E. Mr Feng Zuoku, Vice President of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC)

Mr. Wang Yunze, Vice President of the Chinese-African People’s Friendship Association (CAPFA),

Your Excellencies, Fellow Ambassadors,

Respected Chinese and Nigerian Invitees,



Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me pleasure to welcome you to this celebration marking the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the People's Republic of China. The setting for this auspicious occasion began on February 10, 1971. At that time too, Nigeria had come out of a fratricidal civil war and was building friendship across continents. Thus, she actively supported China to assume its rightful place as the true representative of the Chinese people on the United Nations Security Council.

Nine months after the establishment of bilateral relations, as a young man then, I recalled, with deep fondness, the eloquent speech of the Leader of the Chinese Delegation to the UN, Mr. Qiao Guanhua, on 15 November 1971, when he said:

“China is opposed to imperialism, colonialism, hegemonism and racism, and opposed to big nations bullying small ones or strong nations bullying weak ones. All countries, big and small, should be equal



and the five principles of peaceful co-existence should be taken as the principles guiding relations between countries.”

In fundamental terms, these are the core values the Nigerian nation had always espoused at the United Nations since we joined the world body in 1960 and in other multilateral fora. Nigeria has been the voice of the oppressed, fought against colonialism in its shores and the liberation of the black man from the obnoxious apartheid system

So it was therefore natural that from 1971, both Nigeria and China have had warm bilateral ties, which is exemplary and borne out of the shared values and aspirations of our leaders. Besides these, there are other glaring similarities between the two: as the People’s Republic of China is the most populous country in Asia, nay the world, so is Nigeria in Africa. Both countries share 1st October as their National Day – October 1, 1949 for China and 1960 for Nigeria. We have therefore naturally intertwined relations that blossom over the years! It is on this basis that we have always reaffirmed our support for One-China policy, a prosperous China that would be of great benefit to the whole world.



The Journey So far

Sino-Nigeria economic relations continued to experience steady growth and witnessed a large leap forward at the turn of the century. While waiting for official figures of trade volume as at the end of December 2010, I am certain, we have surpassed records hitherto achieved in 2008. With total Chinese investment in Nigeria nearly 8 billion dollars, there has been increasing participation of many Chinese companies doing good businesses in Nigeria in various areas, such as manufacturing, ICT, construction, electronics, etc. I wish to take this opportunity to salute the friendship, entrepreneurship, dynamic cooperation and partnership of companies and organisations such as: Huawei, ZTE, SPECO III, China Railway, CCECC, CGC, CMEC, CNOOC, CNPC, Potevio, Star Times, EXIM Bank, to mention a few. In addition, I wish to commend the existing collaboration with China Great Wall Corporation, which is handling Nigerian Communication Satellite. Of great significance is our



commercial relation with Guangdong Province, which alone accounts for over 60% of all the trading and investments flow between Nigeria and China. I also wish to encourage you to continue to do more to increase your participation in all sectors of the Nigerian economy and especially in the non-oil sector, solid minerals and in the transfer of technologies of the small and medium scale industries, amongst others.

The Nigerian economy is on a strong footing with an average growth rate of 6.9%, a single digit inflation rate, growing external reserves, and a currency that is steadily appreciating against major currencies. Nigeria currently has the highest rate of return on investment in Africa: ranging from 35% - 45% generally and in some sectors, from 70% - 100%. These are consequences of Government policies aimed at maintaining relative stability and predictability in Nigeria's macro-economic environment.

The rapid growth in the economic sector has also encouraged people-to-people contacts between our two countries over the years to the extent that Nigerians now constitute the largest migrant population from Africa living in



China and Chinese now favourably compared to India as Asian migrant population in Nigeria. I am also proud to say that the increasing contacts has been equally encouraged by the direct air link between China and Nigeria with the operation of China Southern Airlines, which recently suspended its flights. Last but not the least, the people-to-people contacts has been boosted by the designation of Nigeria as a tourist destination by the People's Republic of China as well as the establishment of Cultural Centres at both Capitals, the Memorandum of Understanding is technically ready for signature.

May I congratulate China for its monumental rise to the second place in world economy as at today. It is an aspiration that Nigeria has expected for sometime now. To underscore the importance of China to our economy, the Central Bank of Nigeria had recently added the Chinese currency, the Yuan, to the basket of convertible currencies to the Naira. This development was greeted with great enthusiasm and fanfare by the Chinese business community in Nigeria. I recall the remarks by my counterpart in Nigeria, Ambassador Deng Boqing, who described it as the best New



Year gift to entrepreneurs and businessmen of both countries.

Political Relations

As a demonstration of these warm relations between our two countries, there have been exchanges of official visits by leaders of both countries. During the visit of former President Olusegun Obasanjo to China in April 2005, both countries declared the establishment of strategic partnership and have continued to promote the relations to greater heights. The latest high profile official visit was by the late Nigerian President, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, which took place in commemoration of the 37th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, from 27 February – 03 March 2008. President Hu Jintao also made a similar State Visit to Nigeria in 2006.

On the basis of our political relations, our leaders have re-affirmed that the basic principles guiding Sino-Nigerian relations in the 21st Century are anchored on the following premise: sincere friendship and mutual trust, mutual benefit and common development, enhanced consultation and mutual support, and commitment to a long term prospective



and future-oriented relationship. The attainment of these objectives will serve as a catalyst towards ushering greater opportunities for both countries and strengthening the win-win engagement that is the hallmark of our relations.

Against this background however, it is disheartening to observe that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China in 1971, Nigeria has not had any plot of land in Beijing for the construction of its Chancery or Residence, even though the Nigerian Government has given three plots of land (one in Lagos and two in Abuja) to China for which the Chanceries and Residence have been built. We have made series of requests for a corresponding reciprocal offer from the Chinese without success. I hope that as we deepen existing relations in trade, commerce and people-to-people contacts, the Chinese Government would reconsider its position on this matter based on diplomatic principle of reciprocity and shared mutual relations.

In conclusion, Sino-Nigeria relations have been built on shared values, sound principles of mutually beneficial partnership, which have been reinforced by our commitments to strengthen South-South cooperation and



promote the cause of universal peace and prosperity. As the relations have continued to grow in strength in the last 40 years, I believe the next decades will witness greater strategic partnership, not only in Sino-Nigeria relations, but indeed Sino-Africa relationships. We shall continue to engage ourselves in uplifting the Forum on China-African Cooperation (FOCAC) for our mutual benefits.

Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I therefore want to propose a toast to the good health, peace and prosperity of the Peoples and Governments of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the People's Republic of China. Cheers!

God bless Nigeria

God bless China

Thank you for your attention.