

SPEECH DELIVERED BY

HIS EXCELLENCY
AMBASSADOR AMINU BASHIR WALI , mni

ON THE OCCASION OF THE
51ST ANNIVERSARY OF NIGERIA'S INDEPENDENCE

Beijing, China

11 October, 2011



SPEECH DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR AMINU
BASHIR WALI, mni, HEAD OF MISSION, ON 11
OCTOBER 2011 TO MARK THE 51ST ANNIVERSARY OF
NIGERIA'S INDEPENDENCE HELD AT WESTIN HOTEL,
BEIJING, CHINA

H. E. Mr. Song Tao, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of
the People's Republic of China,

Your Excellencies, Fellow Ambassadors,

Respected Chinese and Nigerian Invitees,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to welcome you to this celebration marking the 51st
Anniversary of Nigeria's Independence. Like my host
country, the People's Republic of China celebrates her
National Day on 1st October, Nigeria also attained
nationhood on 1st October 1960. May I therefore extend the
best wishes of the Government and Peoples of Federal
Republic of Nigeria to the Government and Peoples of the
People's Republic of China on these celebrations.



I was in Nigeria and joined the Nation in the celebration of this auspicious occasion on 1st October. Therefore it gives me immense pleasure to return back to China and to play host to you all today in our moment of celebrations.

While this occasion does not call for any lengthen speech on my part, however, having listened to the Address of my President, His Excellency, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, GCFR on our Independence Day, I feel compelled to share some of his thoughts with you on why we have to celebrate Nigeria. He said, and I quote:

Nigeria is a young entity in the comity of nations and yet in her 51 years, she has made significant strides in making her presence felt all over the world. Our diplomatic and peacekeeping efforts in various parts of the continent have helped to end conflicts and avert crises. In sustaining global security, our intervention has been crucial to peace, progress and democracy for the citizens of the affected countries.

The journey to nationhood always has its own challenges. Nigeria has had her own share. Our growing pains as a nation have included the civil war, the June 12 election crisis and restlessness in the Niger Delta. But Nigeria has always overcome each of these challenges. We overcame before. We will overcome yet again.

Today, as a nation, there is much for us to celebrate. We celebrate our diversity. We celebrate our entrepreneurial spirit. We celebrate our resilience and ability to turn adversity into hope. We celebrate our culture. For the labours of our heroes past, shall never be in vain.



During the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China on 25th February 2011, I highlighted the steady growth in Sino-Nigeria economic relations, which has shown remarkable achievements. As a measure of our commitment to further enhance these relations, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria had on 5th September 2011 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Governor of the People's Bank of China to maintain about 10% of our national reserves in Yuan. With the growth of the Nigerian economy maintaining a steady rate of 7.8%, our GDP is today, one of the fastest growing in Africa, and maintaining a single digit inflation rate.

And given the increasing volume of Chinese investment in Nigeria, we hope to sustain the growth rate at 8% in the coming years. By Christmas Eve this year, the China Great Wall Industry Corporation will be launching into orbit our national communication satellite. This will certainly unleash greater investment in ICT and related services in Nigeria.

As I salute the dynamic entrepreneurship partnership established by the various Chinese companies currently



operating in Nigeria, I would like to see greater diversification of investment into some of the priority areas of Government, especially in the non-oil sector, agriculture, solid minerals, ICT, and transfer of technologies of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. For the companies already operating in Nigeria, they would attest that we currently have the highest rate of return on investment in Africa: ranging from 35% - 45% generally, and in some sectors, from 70% - 100%.

The Guangdong Province has established a thriving free trade zone in Ogun State, and that Province alone accounts for over 60% of all the trading and investments flow between Nigeria and China. I also want to commend other Chinese companies such as Huawei, ZTE, SPECO III, China Railway, CCECC, CGGC, CMEC, CNOOC, CNPC, Potevio, Star Times, EXIM Bank, which are steadily making their marks in investment and infrastructure development in my country. I look forward to greater participation from other enterprises in various sectors.

I strongly believe that the next decade really belongs to Africa. Our engagements in cooperative endeavours under



the auspices of the Forum on China-African Cooperation (FOCAC) give greater confidence to the growth of the continent. Given the strategic partnership in Sino-Nigeria relations and our commitment to uplift the relationships to greater heights, Nigeria has steadily begun towards attainment of her development aspirations as one of the leading developing countries.

Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate today, may I invite you to 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

God bless us all.

Thank you for your attention.