

**Speech by H. E. Mr. Cheng Wenju, Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China
to the Republic of Sierra Leone
at the Chinese National Day Reception**

(September 28, 2007)

Salutation,

This evening I feel very pleased to gather here with my old and new friends to celebrate the 58th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. First of all, please allow me to express my warm welcome and heartfelt thanks to every friend here for your gracious presence. My special thanks go to Hon. Speaker Mr. Abel Nathaniel Stronge and friends from the government and parliament for gracing this occasion in the midst of pressing affairs of power transition.

October 1st, 1949, the day on which the People's Republic of China was founded, ended the humiliating history of the Chinese people's suffering from foreign powers' oppression, and laid the political foundation for China's development and people's well being. In the past 58 years, led by the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people have explored a path of development with Chinese characteristics, and thereby, created a miracle of China's rapid development. Since 2003, the yearly growth rate of China's GDP has been over 10%. In 2006, China ranked the third and the fourth respectively in the world in terms of the total trade volume and the total amount of economy. In the first half of this year, the Chinese GDP increased by 11.5%. Despite of this, however, compared with developed countries, China's achievements at present are only an initial step on the long way of realizing national prosperity. China is still facing various problems such as large population, lack of resources, unbalanced regional development, increased pressure of environmental protection. The Chinese people have a long way to go to realize the aim of being overall well-off. The National Congress of the Communist Party of China, once in five years, will be held in Beijing this October. More than 2,000 representatives from every corner of China will meet in Beijing to contribute ideas and suggestions for the country's development and plan for the future. In 2008, China will host the 29th Olympic Games. Now

preparations are going on smoothly. The Olympic Games in Beijing will surely be a success, and will by no means let international friends down. Beijing 2008 welcomes you.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

China will continually stick to the independent foreign policy of peace, unswervingly march along the road of peaceful development and play a constructive role in building a harmonious world. China's development and prosperity will pose no threat to any country. On the contrary, a more flourishing and stable China will make more contributions to the world's peace and development and to African friends' realization of the Millennium Development Goal.

My Dear friends,

In the just-ended Presidential and Parliamentary elections, the Sierra Leonean people stood the test of democratic elections. People's strong desire for peace and stability and expectation for change and development provide the basic guarantee for the smooth elections and steady power transition. This is where the hope and strength of Sierra Leone lie in. Since H. E. President Ernest Bai Koroma swore in his office, he has been putting the interests of the country and people in the first place, advocating national reconciliation, appealing to people to abandon previous grudges and unite every force to rebuild the nation. This is a statesman's broadmindedness and farsightedness, which is, to people's gratification, healing the wound caused by the political campaign, and setting up a good base for the country's stability and development. I believe beautiful and well-endowed Sierra Leone, under the leadership of H. E. President Ernest Bai Koroma, will at last get rid of poverty, embark on a road of healthy and sustainable development, and become the pride of this region and even the international community.

During the past 36 years since the establishment of diplomatic ties, our bilateral relations have been developing steadily and healthily. The Chinese Government has been providing assistance within its capacity to Sierra Leone for its economic development and social progress. At the same time, all the previous Governments of Sierra Leone firmly stick to the One China policy and support the reunification of China. Our two countries enjoy a lot of close cooperation in the international affairs

and together safeguard the interests of developing countries. As the founder of China-Sierra Leone friendship, the All People's Congress Party (APC) is an old friend to the Chinese people, and has made indelible contributions to the restoration of China's legal seat in the UN and the establishment of the diplomatic relations with China. The Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) is our good friend as well. During her governance in the past 10 years, the One China policy was strictly pursued and the friendly cooperative relations of our two countries forged desirably ahead. China-Sierra Leone friendship is in line with the fundamental interests of the two peoples. The Chinese Government cherishes our traditional friendship and is ready to make joint efforts with the new government to promote the bilateral relations to a new high within the framework of the follow-up actions of the Beijing Summit. I firmly believe that H. E. President Ernest Bai Koroma, the new government, parliament and friends from all walks of life in Sierra Leone share the same aspiration with me. Let us join hands and work hard together for the well-being of our two peoples and let China-Sierra Leone friendship be carried forward from generation to generation.

Finally, may I propose a toast,
to the prosperity of the People's Republic of China,
to the bright future of the Republic of Sierra Leone,
to the ever-growing friendship between our beloved countries,
and to the health of H. E. President Ernest Bai Koroma and all distinguished
guests!

I thank you!