PRESS RELEASE

The People’s Republic of China has established a relationship with Sierra Leone for more than 40 years. China is an important development partner with Sierra Leone especially in Agriculture and Fisheries sectors. China is ready to make more cooperation with Sierra Leone in the particular areas of the fish harbor construction, fisheries surveys for fish stock assessment, aquaculture development etc.

It should be noted that when China embarked on long distance fishing, Sierra Leone was the first country the Chinese vessels were sent to and currently seventy-five (75%) of the industrialized vessels fishing in Sierra Leone come from China, which is currently 68 vessels and carrier. Thus investing millions of dollars and creating lots of jobs. China is ready to do more in the fisheries sector to further strengthen the cooperation between the two countries. Fishing as it is done now is just the first phase and it is expected that the following is on schedule in the coming year:

1. Construction of fishing harbor with facilities done by Chinese investors
2. Cooperation on fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance.
4. Cooperation in aquaculture
5. Capacity building on official staff and fish farmers.

The general public is therefore informed that the Chinese Government is ready to support the New Direction Agenda of the Government of Sierra Leone, especially in the fisheries sector. The Chinese fishing fleet contributes heavily to the revenue generation drive of the Government of Sierra Leone in the form of license fees around 7 million USD and export fees between 2 to 3 million USD annually. With the cooperation of their local partners in Sierra Leone they are repatriating up to 20 million USD annually from their export sales. The Chinese fleet also provides direct and indirect jobs to Sierra Leoneans.

It is also worth to note that with regards to the food security, the Chinese fishing fleet
supplies about 80,000 MT of fish to the local market throughout the year ensuring that in spite of the increase in fuel price to the international market, the fish price has been stable over the years compared to the neighboring countries. The fish price in Sierra Leone is therefore the cheapest in the sub-region.

In the light of international concerns by multilateral agencies and the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources on over fishing and the sustainable management of the fisheries resources to be able to maintain the stock levels, the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China has decided not to allow any new fishing vessels operate in the Sierra Leonean waters since 2016. The Chinese Government has also put in place strict and stringent measures in terms of their regulations in order to crack down on any IUU activities of any registered Chinese companies.

The Chinese Government considers the fishing industry as very important to the country’s economic growth and has been actively engaging the Government of Sierra Leone in order to develop the fishery sector. After several years of close cooperation and discussions, the Ministry of Agriculture of China has signed a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Fisheries of Sierra Leone to cooperate with the Government of Sierra Leone on fisheries monitoring control and surveillance, aquaculture and so on. The Chinese Government is also committed to the management and development of the fisheries sector and will make sure that they fulfill their own aspect of the MOU action points signed in June 2018.