

## **Cross-Party Group on China**

### **Minutes of Meeting**

**Date: 12th March 2021**

#### **Attendance**

##### **MSP Members**

Dean Lockhart MSP – Convener

Colin Smyth MSP – Deputy Convener

##### **Special Guests**

Consul General Ma Qiang

##### **Members**

Siyi Chen

Lesley-Anne Campbell

Yvette Jelfs

Colin Mitchell

Simon Macaulay

Jessica Guo

Mike Johnstone

Edward Tsang

Enze Yin

Andy Creamer

Chris Mcfadzean

Donald Morris

Ian Baxter

Jane Grant

Jim Galloway

Victoria Paterson

Wilson Barrie

Lola Nicolas

## **1 Welcome and Apologies**

Dean Lockhart MSP opened the meeting welcoming members and guests to the latest meeting of the Cross-Party Group on China. He continued by welcoming the special guests who were addressing the group this evening, including his Excellency Consul General Ma Qiang. Dean Lockhart MSP said this is the final meeting of the cross-party group for this parliamentary term. He thanked Consul General and his team for supporting the group and driving the agenda forward. He also thanked Secretary Siyi Chen for all her assistance in supporting the CPG.

## **2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed to.

## **3 Consul General Ma Qiang**

Consul General Ma Qiang provided a summary of recent important events in China including the following:

The fourth session of the 13th National People's Congress and the fourth session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, together known as the "two sessions" have just ended. The annual two sessions are major political events in China. They provide the world with an important window to learn about China directly, not least China's domestic politics and foreign policies. This year marks the 100th anniversary of Communist Party of China and the start of China's 14th Five Year Plan, therefore, the just concluded two sessions are well exceptional and fruitful. I would like to share my take on that with you. Last year was an extraordinary year in the history of the humankind. Facing the combined adverse and severe impact of a sudden coronavirus epidemic and a deep global economic recession, the Chinese people responded with tremendous tenacity. Our achievements, which have won the approval of our people and global recognition, will be remembered in history.

In 2021, Chinese people are pushing forward in concerted effort to make a good start for the 14th Five Year Plan and celebrate the centenary of the CPC with outstanding achievements. China will adopt the concept of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development for a high-quality economic performance. The main economy targets for China this year includes the GDP growth of over 6 percent and more than 11 million new urban jobs. The government will do the following to hit the targets:

---ensure the continuity, consistency and sustainability of macro policies,

---implement and improve tax reduction policies to serve the real economy,

---expand domestic demand as a strategic move and fully tap the potential of the domestic market,  
---follow the rural revitalization strategy across the board and bolster development of agriculture and growth in rural incomes.

China will remain committed to reform and innovation as well as continue to optimize its opening-up structure, major tasks to this end including:

- to deepen reforms to streamline administration and delegate power, improve regulation and upgrade services,
- to pilot a comprehensive reform on the market-based allocation of production factors in a bid to further energizing market entities,
- to raise our capacity for scientific and technological innovation and ensure the stable operation of industrial and supply chains and improve them along with fostering new growth drivers,
- to pursue high-standard opening up and promote stable and improved performance in foreign trade and investment,
- to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and deepen multilateral, bilateral and regional economic cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen. China's development at the new stage brings ample opportunities to China-Scotland engagement. Enhancing the mutually-beneficial cooperation between the two sides is in the fundamental and long-term interests of both our peoples. I believe our cooperation in the new year faces three opportunities. First, the opportunities of China's open market. China is actively working on the new development paradigm with domestic circulation as the mainstay and domestic and international circulations reinforcing each other, opening up more sectors of the economy in a more thorough fashion. China's huge and accessible market with enormous domestic need will bring Scottish businesses opportunities for cooperation and development. Second, the opportunities of China's innovation development. Innovation is hailed as a central concept in the 14th Five Year Plan. China was the biggest source of applications for international patents in the world in 2020, according to the World Intellectual Property Organization, making a 16.1 percent hike over 2019. The Chinese economy, driven by innovation, would give further impetus to global economic recovery and growth. Businesses in China and Scotland could seize these opportunities, leverage our respective strengths, and enhance cooperation on innovation in new business models and new driving forces, so as to foster more growth points. Third, the opportunities of China's green development. We are on course to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. It is estimated that the output value of the China's green sector will rise to 12 trillion yuan by 2025, equivalent to 8% of GDP. Ten years on

from that, its share will lift to 10%. A greener China is helping foster new drivers for both world economy and the global sustainable development. The year 2021 is an important year for joint global response to climate change. China and Scotland will host COP15 and COP26 respectively. I expect members of the CPG China to continue playing a positive role to make our planet a better home for all. I also look forward to your thoughts and ideas on hosting successful COP15 and COP26.

Ladies and Gentlemen. I understand that this is the final CPG China meeting of this Parliament. This group undoubtedly keeps going from strength to strength with remarkable contributions to overall China-Scotland relationship. I've been a witness to this fantastic development since I joined you one and a half years ago. This would not have been possible without the support and input from Mr. Lockhart, Ms. Siyi Chen and all other members. May I take this opportunity to say a huge thank you and that I hope you can keep up the good work and I stand ready to forge ahead with everyone to boost our ties across sectors in future. Thank you.

#### **4 Dean Lockhart MSP**

Consul General, thank you very much for the update.

Let's hope that 2021 is a more prosperous and stable year than 2020 with all the challenges that last year brought. You highlighted a number of areas where we can use the already strong connections between China and Scotland but take them to the next level across trade and business innovation. I think there's a lot we can work on in that area.

You mentioned climate change. We have COP26 being hosted in Scotland later this year - a very important meeting, global meeting taking place in Glasgow in November and I know that there are a very large number of Chinese delegates and companies who will be attending that conference and joint cooperation in that area is going to be very significant going forward and also in education and cultural ties.

There's so much we can work together on as well. And I am delighted we have on the agenda item today. The question of mandarin language in Scotland which is continuing to be a priority of this group. So many positive things to work together on.

#### **5 Business: Trade and Business Opportunities**

Mike Johnstone – AACCEE

Good afternoon everyone. I am going to talk about this a conference taking place in the 29<sup>th</sup> April. The event will bring together organisations which are both commercial and educational. We are also bringing together some new development areas as well. We are bringing together people who have also knowledge of what we do here, but also knowledge of what and how it's done in China. In addition to that, we are going to bring in some smaller companies which are very much part of

the network of Scottish industry. Now market leaders and market producers in the Chinese community of the particular products both fell together. We are going to have between about 10 to 12 different presentations, which will all be done or stay over soon. According to all in the chambers of commerce, other organisations that can actually advertise and we should remember to invite them to take part in this. We ought to make this very much not just a showcase of Scotland but showcase of the relationships and what has been done already with China and building on those bridges with the cost of general talked about. So that's coming up on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April.

## **6 Cross-Border E-Commerce and Live Stream Economy**

Yvette Jelfs

Yvette Jelfs provided an excellent presentation on how Scottish firms can access the E-commerce market in China and provided valuable tips on how to sell online in China.

## **7 Education: Mandarin Language**

Colin Mitchell – SCEN

Since last CPG meeting, SCEN has been working with the general teaching council of Scotland and organised a webinar taking forward mandarin in Scottish schools - which was really well attended by all stakeholders. Colin updated the CPG on a series of new initiatives being taken to promote Mandarin in Scotland.

Andy Creamer – Grove Academy

Andy Creamer provided an update on the various events taking place at Grove Academy and through his work to promote Mandarin in Scotland.

Professor Ian Baxter – Heriot-Watt University

Professor Ian Baxter leads the Confucius Institute at Heriot-Watt University which has a business focus and it's one of five Confucius Institute across Scotland. Professor Ian Baxter provided an update on a number of opportunities in relation to the broader promotion and supporting of mandarin.

## **8 Concluding remarks**

Consul General Ma Qiang

Thank you very much for the very interesting presentations made today - helping to build bridges between Scotland and China across areas of culture, educational, business cooperation.

We are ready to do our best to promote. And also I am very interested in Mrs Yvette Jelfs's presentation about the China E-commerce and I hope that both the Chinese and the Scottish businesses would see opportunities to cooperate on this, because I think there's a great space for innovation in terms of the E-commerce. So I hope that Chinese and British businesses include

technology opportunities to relate on this platform and to bring benefits to both sides. Also we are also attach great importance to the educational cooperation between China and Scotland. We will do everything for the good cooperation and relationship between the two sides.

Dean Lockhart MSP

Thank you Consul General. Thank you very much for those remarks. And thank you to everyone for joining today for our contributors. Thanks again for Colin Smyth MSP joining us today. I hope to see you in a few months' time. Have a good weekend!

Date of Next Meeting: To be confirmed