



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Address by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the High-Level Dialogue on the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), held in Pretoria**

**27 October 2022**

Programme Directors

The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to South Africa, His Excellency Mr CHEN Xiaodong

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Distinguished representatives of the South African Parliament,

Comrades from the Tripartite Alliance ANC, COSATU, the SACP

Fraternal organisations

Representatives from Academia and sister government departments

Distinguished guests

I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders as I get this rare opportunity to speak at this special event, the High-Level Dialogue, on occasion to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

It is indeed a historical moment that we meet to pay tribute to the Communist Party of China, founded in 1921.

In his report to the 20<sup>th</sup> National Congress held last month, His Excellency Xi Jinping re-emphasised the central role of the Communists Party.

He said: “It is imperative that all of us in the Party never forget our original aspiration and founding mission, that we always stay modest, prudent, and hard-working, and that we have the courage and ability to carry on our fight [for socialism with Chinese characteristics].

The Party has continued its vanguard role as the true and reliable repository of the dreams and aspirations of the working class at home and abroad.

The Party has dedicated itself to “achieving lasting greatness for the Chinese nation and committed itself to the noble cause of peace and development for humanity.”

Your Excellency, history tells us that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1949, Chinese Communist leader the legendary Mao Zedong declared the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The announcement ended the costly full-scale civil war between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Nationalist Party.

The war had broken out immediately following World War II and had been preceded by the on-and-off conflict between the two sides since the 1920s.

The creation of the People's Republic of China also completed the long process of governmental upheaval in China that began with the Chinese Revolution of 1911.

Your Excellency, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the People's Republic of China in recognition of the successful 20<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

The modern State of China, founded in 1949, has been a friend of South Africa for a longest time.

For many years during the anti-apartheid struggle, the Communist Party of China supported our struggle for freedom in words and deeds.

The politico-military relations between the People's Republic of China and the ANC-led MK (military wing) would be over 61 this year, dating back to October 1961.

This was after the then Apartheid cruel minority regime had unleashed brutal repression and banned all forms of protests after the Sharpeville Massacre.

Thus, some of our finest revolutionaries, such as Cde Andrew Mlangeni and Comrade Raymond Mhlaba, were trained militarily and in the strategy and tactics of the revolution in China.

To this day, China and her people have warm friendships and solidarity with the people of South Africa.

Your Excellency, it is recorded in history that in October 1992, our reverend statesman former President Nelson Mandela paid his first visit to China as the ANC President and was accorded the same high-level reception as head of state.

The Chinese Government donated \$10 million in cash and goods to South Africa, and Peking University awarded Mandela an honorary doctorate.

In May 1999, just before the end of his presidency, former President Mandela paid a second visit to China, this time as the head of state.

As we both know, the Republic of South Africa signed full diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1998.

Our diplomatic relations transcend the officialdom as we have extended it to people-to-people.

Upon President Mandela's passing, Chinese President Xi Jinping, in his letter of condolence, hailed our Nobel Peace Prize laureate as "a world-renowned statesman."

His Excellency Xi Jinping said the Chinese people will never forget President Mandela's exceptional contributions to the development of China-South Africa relations and the progress of mankind.

It is a testament to these strong friendship roots that trade volumes between our countries have grown manifold since 1998.

During the last 25 years, the exports of China to South Africa have increased at an annualised rate of 13.4%, from \$640 Million in 1995 to \$14.7 Billion in 2020.

During the last 25 years, the exports of South Africa to China have increased at an annualised rate of 14.4%, from \$408 Million in 1995 to \$11.9 Billion in 2020.

In 2020, South Africa exported \$11.9 Billion to China amidst COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions.

The main products South Africa exported to China were Diamonds, Manganese Ore and Iron Ore, amongst others.

At the people-to-people level, we can do more, as only 100,000 Chinese tourists visit our shores yearly.

According to tourism authorities, Chinese tourists usually travel in groups and stay longer during their stay in our country.

We appreciate these numbers and invite more Chinese people to come and sample our hospitality, warm people and stunning landscapes and be part of the Chinese Government's contribution to our homeland.

Our tourism industry is vibrant and contributes significantly to the GDP, and in fighting poverty, inequality and reducing unemployment.

The Department of Tourism trains local tour guides in Mandarin to cater to Chinese tourists effectively.

As part of our friendship, we agreed to work together towards introducing Mandarin teaching in South African public schools.

As we speak, our schooling system offers Mandarin as a second additional language.

I have witnessed first-hand the commitment of the People of China to the advancement of the development goals of this country as Minister of Basic Education.

This has been more pronounced since China was declared South Africa's strategic partner in 2010 through the Beijing Declaration and the establishment of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

In response to the strategic mandate, South Africa and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the Field of Basic Education in 2013 in Pretoria.

This was followed by the signing of an Implementation Plan on the MoU in 2014 in Beijing.

Through the cooperation agreement, we committed to forging mutual technical cooperation in the field of basic education, particularly in critical areas such as Mathematics, Science and Technology.

This is done through different exchanges.

Furthermore, the cooperation is evolving to include new technical and vocational education areas.

Through the Embassy of China in South Africa, the relationship between Basic Education and the Ministry of Education in China has been steady and growing strong.

Through this partnership, several South African schools have engaged in twinning programmes with Chinese schools, using the Confucius institutes that are in South Africa.

Further to this, South Africa now has Confucius institutes situated at Durban University of Technology (DUT), Rhodes University, University



of Johannesburg (UJ), University of Cape Town (UCT) and Stellenbosch University.

In addition, three Confucius classrooms are located in the Cape Academy, the Westford High School and the Chinese Culture and International Education Exchange Centre (CCIEEC).

We have also witnessed China's significantly heightened and intentional contribution to the South African basic education sector; including:

- China's investment in the promotion of access to the Mandarin language teaching in public schools;
- Provision of various training opportunities to different education personnel; including teachers, school managers, and other officials;
- Donation of computers and smartboards to various schools over the years.
- And planetarium to our flagship science centre – the Scibono; and
- The Chinese Ambassador's Mathematics, Science and Technology Award was presented at the South African National Teaching Awards in 2021.

Recently, we benefited from the generosity of the Chinese people during the height of COVID-19 and recent floods in the KwaZulu-Natal province.

The support provided to our people and learners is highly appreciated.

These are just a few initiatives of a much broader and more impactful partnership.

The initiatives have brought to life our High-Level People-to-People Exchange Mechanism (PPEM), aimed at deepening mutual understanding between the peoples of South Africa and China.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my sincere gratitude to you, Ambassador, for sharing this special moment with us.

On behalf of our people, we extend our very best wishes to the Communist Party of China in its journey to be the voice and conscience of the working class at home and abroad.

May we never forget what Mao Zedong taught us: “The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in making world history.”

I thank you.