

TOAST BY H.E. MR. PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL LUNCHEON OFFERED IN HONOUR OF
H.E. MR. JIA QUINGLIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE
CHINESE PEOPLE'S POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE.

**Mr. Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's
Political Consultative Conference,**

It is a great pleasure for me to wish you and the delegation accompanying you a warm welcome and a pleasant stay in Cameroon.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Cameroon in 1971, the cooperation and friendly ties between our two countries have continued to expand and grow stronger.

This is evidenced by regular contacts between top-ranking Chinese leaders and I, particularly during the China-Africa Summit of Heads of State and Government and the recent visit to our country of the President of the People's Republic of China. I have happy memories of these different meetings and the conviction that our cooperation has a bright future.

Permit me, Mr Chairman, to inform you that my compatriots and I are very impressed by the extraordinary progress made by your country in all domains. China is today in the vanguard of major world economic powers. I wish to pay homage here not only to the Chinese people whose dynamism is legendary, but also to their leaders whose choices have turned out to be most judicious.

Cameroon is privileged to figure among the friends of your great nation and we consider ourselves as such.

As you are certainly aware, my country, like most developing countries in Africa, has, after a long period of structural adjustment, begun to recover and has adopted a vast development programme placed under the banner of "greater achievements". Unfortunately, the recent global financial and economic crisis has slowed down the implementation of our projects, without however causing us to abandon our objectives.

An important component of this programme includes the launching of major investment projects in the road, railway, port and telecommunication infrastructure, energy production, agriculture, water supply and mining domains. Accordingly, we have taken steps to create an investment enabling environment. In addition, I want to say that Cameroon has a hardworking and skilful population.

Obviously, to attain our objectives, we have to make our own efforts, but we also count on friendly countries, including the People's Republic of China. What we are proposing is a "win-win" partnership, that is, an association whereby each party is expected to reap due reward.

Mr Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

China is one of Cameroon's major traditional cooperation partners. The list of your country's achievements in the infrastructure, health, sports, agriculture and technology sectors would be too long to enumerate. But be assured that they are unanimously appreciated by my compatriots.

Today marks the beginning of a new chapter in our collaboration ties. Just recently, we signed agreements on several major projects which will enhance our cooperation and, if we succeed – I have no doubt about that – would ultimately raise our country to the status of emerging country. I believe you understand the importance of such a challenge to Cameroon.

A longstanding relationship of trust exists between my country and China with which we share the same views on most major international policy issues. I am convinced that the close relation existing between us will further prove to be efficient and exemplary.

Mr Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference,

I entreat you to convey the assurances of the profound gratitude of the government and people of Cameroon to His Excellency President Hu Jintao, as well as to the friendly people of China.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this juncture, may I invite you to raise your glasses in honour of His Excellency Mr. Jia Qinglin and our Chinese guests.

Long live friendship and cooperation between China and Cameroon.

Thank you for your kind attention.