



**SPEECH BY**

**THE HONOURABLE**

**PEHIN ORANG KAYA PEKERMA LAILA DIRAJA**

**DATO SERI SETIA AWANG HAJI HAZAIR BIN HAJI ABDULLAH,**

**MINISTER OF CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS**

**ON THE OCCASION**

**TO COMMEMORATE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF**

**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

**BETWEEN**

**BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

**AND**

**THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

**THE GRAND MILLENIUM HOTEL**

**BEIJING, 18TH OCTOBER 2011**

Bismillahir Rahman Nirahim

Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, and a very good evening, *wan shanghao*.

Your Excellency Mr. Luo Fuhe, Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC);

Your Excellency, Mr. Feng Zhouku, Vice President of the CPAFFC;

Your Excellency Madam Magdalene Teo, Brunei Darussalam's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China;

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, I am bringing with me very warm greetings and best wishes from the Government and people of Brunei Darussalam to the people of the People's Republic of China on this very auspicious occasion, *the Commemoration of*

*the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations of Brunei Darussalam and the People's Republic of China.*

I am also pleased to be here with a special wish that this warm and cordial relationship will live and augur well for many years to come, bringing peace, prosperity and happiness to the people of both nations.

Although it has only been 20 years since Brunei Darussalam and the People's Republic of China established diplomatic relations, contacts between the two countries have gone as far back as the 6th Century A.D., specially through culture and trade. Such relations are enlivened through surviving royal regalia items such as the *Kuching Emas* (loosely translated as the Golden Cat) and the *Tungkat Ajai*, a support structure for the chin, including shipwreck artifacts from Brunei whose origins can be traced back to China imperial times.

This serves as the living testimony of the exchanges and visits of designated envoys as well as trade links throughout various periods in our history, which have opened the door for

current opportunities in many other areas of cooperation between our two countries.

For the last 20 years, we have built our relations on the premise of building blocks which steadily move from strength to strength. It rests on the strong foundation of mutual trust, understanding and respect, irrespective of our geographical and population sizes.

It is our earnest hope that in the next 20 years, our relations will rise to a higher plain, where China is our important partner in realizing our **“National Vision 2035- Brunei Darussalam, A Developed Nation”**.

At the highest levels, we have visits by our Leaders on a regular basis. Besides that, we have regular exchanges of our officials as well as the business people and tourists from our two countries.

The active role played by our friendship associations - the *Brunei-China Friendship Association* and the *Chinese People Association Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC)* -

means that the good relations we enjoy are also driven and supported by non-governmental associations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a result of our long standing cordial and good relations, today, Brunei Darussalam and the People's Republic of China are indeed very close friends, enjoying good cooperation in many areas, such as in Energy, Agriculture and Tourism, to name a few as well as having common interests on many issues confronting the region and the world.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation in 1999 has strengthened people-to-people relations and understanding. It has brought about very active cultural exchanges, the most recent being our participation in the 12th Asia Arts Festival in Chongqing, as we both share the importance of culture as a uniting factor and in fostering mutual understanding.

The recent performance in May 2011 by the Guangxi Artistic Troupe in Brunei Darussalam, which I had the pleasure of watching, was very well received by the Brunei audiences.

Tonight, it is my wish and hope that our cultural performance as well as the shipwreck exhibition in a small way will reciprocate such a kind gesture.

To conclude, I wish Your Excellency and all our distinguished guests a pleasant evening, that will entice you to visit Brunei Darussalam soon.

Thank you, *Xie Xie* and a very good evening.