

China's Dream, A Shared Dream

---- Presentation by H.E. Dr. Yue Xiaoyong, Chinese Ambassador to Ireland,
at University College Dublin

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President Andrew Deeks,
Prof. Patrick Paul Walsh,
Professors, Ambassadors, distinguished guests,
Students, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a Chinese saying goes, “A whole year’s harvest depends on a good start in spring.” I am delighted to come to your beautiful campus in vibrant spring when trees are turning green and flowers in full blossom. The University College Dublin, or UCD, is one of the best and most prestigious institutions of higher learning in Ireland. UCD ranks high in the well-respected *QS World University Rankings*. It is a leader in Ireland in terms of its links and partnerships with first-class universities and institutes in China. UCD attracts hundreds of Chinese young people for its best quality of education and for their dreams, with more than 770 students from China studying here for better opportunities. UCD hosts more Chinese students than any other institution in Ireland. It is a great honour and privilege for me indeed to be invited by President Andrew Deeks as well as the School of Politics and International Relations to share my views with you all today.

In China we refer to universities as “Cradles of Success”, “Oceans of Knowledge” and “Temples of Wisdom”. Since its founding 160 years ago, UCD has produced many leaders, including Irish Presidents, Taoiseachs, Cabinet Ministers as well as outstanding entrepreneurs, artists and athletes. More importantly, UCD has nurtured many visionary leaders in various sectors and professions, who have made admirable contributions to the freedom, justice, progress and prosperity of the society at large. Among the honored UCD alumni, the world-renowned, genius Irish writer James Joyce is one of the best examples, as a diligent striver with genuine love for, and deep insight of, humanity. Not many people, though, could confidently decipher the stream of consciousness in *Ulysses*. But James Joyce and his masterpieces have been recognized and admired throughout the world; many Chinese readers love him. James Joyce and all the other successful UCD alumni started their spring right here at UCD with beautiful dreams for future. Like your alumni, the young students present in this auditorium today are best examples of your generation. The brightest future belongs to you for sure.

Today, what I would like to share with you is China’s dream, a dream for which the Chinese people have been striving for over a century, an on-going grand cause that we refer to as “China’s modernization drive”, or simply put, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The moment of hard times when James Joyce was struggling with his works, his dream and his life, China was also struggling with unprecedented hardships, which in many ways were

worse than those crises experienced in industrialized countries in the Western world. The old feudal monarchy in China had collapsed, but the country was trapped in turmoil and chaos by years of tangled warfare among warlords. Compounding the situation were foreign invasions and attempts to carve up the whole territory. People lived in extreme poverty; many parents in despair had to sell their children for survival. Suffering repeated and increasing outside depression, exploitation and bullying, the Chinese were known as “Sick Men of East Asia”. The country and the civilization were on the verge of perishing. As later on a well-known line in China’s national anthem goes, “The Chinese nation faces its greatest peril.”

After generations’ persistent efforts, the People’s Republic of China was at long last established on 1st October 1949. For the first time in over 100 years, we earned historical opportunity to reconstruct our country and to preserve and develop our culture and civilization without foreign interference. The Chinese people were so proud and happy that they affectionately called the newly born People’s Republic of China as “New China”. The growth of New China is indeed a process that our people explore the way to build China into a self-reliant, democratic, free, strong and prosperous nation. Now we call this process “the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics”, or “the great rejuvenation of an old civilization”. We have made tremendous achievements recognized by the world over.

Now, you may ask how we have made all those achievements. Our overarching guiding principle in all our endeavours after New China was established is to join hands with all our friends and partners in the world to build a community of shared future. In so doing, we have been emphasizing peaceful development, win-win cooperation and common prosperity. This is all the more obvious since late 1970’s. Domestically, our key policy goal has been to keep on reforms and opening-up while maintaining a stable growth. Externally, we have been aiming to create conducive environment for reaching domestic goals by devoting to world peace and global development through mutually beneficial cooperation and partnerships with the rest of the world.

Nearly 40 years have passed since China’s nation-wide Reform and Opening Up drive was initiated in 1978. Brilliant achievements have been there for all to see. China has been transforming itself from a closed, poor and backward country into an open and stronger one that is not only able to work with the tide of economic globalization, but also ready to work with international and regional partners to the benefits of all.

China’s Reform and Opening Up drive is a phased-in and gradual revolution. I will give you a sketchy account of the major steps that we experienced.

- In the early 1980s, five “*special economics zones*” were established in our southeast coastal region -- Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Shantou in Guangdong Province, Xiamen in Fujian Province and the entire Hainan Province.
- In 1984, we decided to open 14 more cities (大连、秦皇岛、天津、烟台、青岛、连云港、南通、上海、宁波、温州、福州、广州、湛江、北海), which were designated as “Open Coast Cities”, covering China’s 18,000-kilometre coastal areas.

- After 1985, seven bigger regions including Yangtze River Delta and Pearl River Delta were designated as “Economic Development Zones”. Those zones, together with the 14 coastal cities, constituted a coastal economic belt.
- In 1990, the Yangtze River Open Belt was established and Pudong New Area in Shanghai was set up.
- After 1992, a number of border-region cities, and the capital cities of all inland provinces were opened up.
- The year of 2001 witnessed a big turning point. China joined the World Trade Organization in November, kicking off what we call all-round, multi-level and wide-ranging open arrangements for the whole country.
- What is remarkable is that China has learned from the successful experience of peoples all over the world including the great and smart creative Irish people. We adopted a lot of wonderful ideas and successful practice from Shannon Free Zone in Ireland in designing our Special Economic Zones.

Up to now, China has attracted 1.7 trillion U.S. dollars of foreign investment; and at the same time, China has made more than 1.2 trillion U.S. dollars of direct investment in other countries and regions. While making strides towards its modernization goals, China has made tremendous contributions to the world's economic development.

A rising tide lifts all boats. Four decades of China’s success raised Chinese people’s living standard by a dramatic margin. I’ll give you some figures.

- ◆ China’s GDP grew from 218.5 billion U.S. dollars in 1978 to 11.2 trillion U.S. dollars in 2016 – an increase of more than 50 times in 38 years;
- ◆ China’s annual trade grew from 20.6 billion U.S. dollars to 3.69 trillion U.S. dollars – nearly 180 times;
- ◆ Gross National Income per capita grew from about 200 dollars to nearly 8,000 dollars, up 40 times;
- ◆ China has managed to provide food, clothing and housing for more than 1.3 billion people while lifting over 700 million people out of poverty.

Looking ahead, we have full confidence for the realization of our two “Centenary Goals”.

- ✓ The first goal aims at 2021 when the Communist Party of China celebrates its 100th birthday, China’s GDP and per-capita income will be doubled on the basis of 2010;
- ✓ The second goal sets for 2049 when the “New China” gets her 100th anniversary, a strong, democratic, civilized, harmonious, modern socialist country will be completed.

At present, important restructuring for the economy is underway:

- Growth is shifting from double-digit high-speed to medium-to-high speed, single-digit expansion.
- More effectiveness and efficiency are called for.

- The driving force is being transformed from relying mainly on the quantity input of land, capital, labour to quality input of better innovation, management, institutions, policies and systems. Domestic demands are to play a bigger role.

Under the guidance and leadership of President Xi Jinping, China is implementing its Thirteenth Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plan from 2016 to 2020 emphasizing five new concepts ---- Innovation, Coordination, Greenness, Openness and Sharing. This year, we have projected China's GDP growth at 6.5%. The first quarter recorded a 6.9% expansion. On the basis of 11 trillion dollars economic scale, this 6.5% growth would help create over 11 million jobs. China has been, and will continue to be, a major driver for global economy.

During that five-year period, China will import 8 trillion U.S. dollars of goods, take in 600 billion U.S. dollars of inward investment, and our investment abroad will amount to 750 billion U.S. dollars, and outbound tourists will reach 700 million in total. Opportunities are indeed enormous.

Obviously, as President Xi Jinping pointed out in Davos this year, China is both a beneficiary of and a significant contributor to economic globalization. As China's Reform and Opening Up drive presses on, it will provide continuous impetus for the world economy.

Our development is and will always be inclusive; no one is to be left behind. In his key-note speech at the Global Poverty Reduction and Development Forum in Beijing in October 2015, our President Xi Jinping stressed that the Chinese government would double its efforts to lift the country's remaining 70 million poor people out of poverty by 2020. This is a huge and serious endeavour to fight against poverty, and we have the confidence and ability to accomplish it.

Meanwhile, China is taking new initiatives for international cooperation in a large scale. Those initiatives aim to facilitate not only China's development but also its collaboration with its international partners. The most eye-catching and note-worthy one is "One Belt One Road". In September and October of 2013, President Xi Jinping put forward the **initiative of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road**. That opened a new chapter of China's Opening Up drive. The basic approach for the Initiative is to work together on an equal footing through consultation to achieve shared benefits. This is indeed an ambitious initiative and has been embraced positively by over 100 countries. Nearly 50 inter-governmental agreements and more than 70 inter-ministerial cooperation documents are signed already.

I am delighted to note that Ireland has also become a participant in the initiative. Mr. Eoghan Murphy, Minister of State of the Department of Finance will attend the "Belt and Road Forum on International Cooperation" in Beijing in mid May this year.

Another Chinese grand initiative is the AIIB, Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank. It is a good addition to what we had. Enjoying an authorized capital of 100 billion U.S. dollars, the bank is a world-class multilateral development lending agency specializing in financing infrastructure projects in Asia. About a month ago, Ireland's application for AIIB membership was officially approved, and now the expanded AIIB family has 70 members. The creation of AIIB is groundbreaking and refreshing. It is the first multilateral development financial institution proposed by a developing country, and widely accepted by the international community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now let me say a few words about China's foreign policy. The guiding principle for China's foreign policy is to strive for lasting peace and common development through cooperation and partnership based on equality and mutual respect.

China has always been a responsible member of the international community. As a major country with important commitments and responsibilities, China will always be a firm and resolute force for maintaining world peace and stability, and for promoting common development and shared prosperity. We clearly hold that countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international society. They all shall have equal rights to participate in international affairs. We are opposed to power politics, and imposing one's will onto others by force. We advocate peaceful solution to international or regional disputes through dialogue. China has never imposed its own social system and ideology on others. It should be fully respected that the people of each and every country have the right to choose their own social systems and development modes that suit their own internal situation.

China will always be a constructive participant, builder and contributor for the international system. China firmly upholds the international order with the United Nations at the core. We have consistently advocated that the United Nations should be allowed to play its due role in international affairs. We have called upon countries all over the world to join hands to build a community of shared future, in which all peoples enjoy together lasting peace, sustainable development and common prosperity. This is what we advocate a new type of international relations with mutual respect and of no conflicts or confrontation. It would undoubtedly lead mankind into a brighter future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The current world is indeed fraught with poverty, disasters, conflicts, killings and uncertainties. Challenges are daunting, and crises mounting. On the whole, however, we still believe opportunities are bigger than challenges. As long as the members of the international community are ready to work together, the overall peace and development of the world can be maintained. Having said that, we should not at all overlook the challenges before us. Those challenges should really be dealt with effectively by our joint wisdom and action.

Europe is a case in point. This region is undergoing profound and complex changes. We believe in European integration and we will continue to support it. A prosperous and stable Europe is conducive to world peace and development. The European peoples surely have the wisdom and capability to surmount challenges, and they can always count on China's support.

Both China and the EU have important roles to play in the world affairs. Our comprehensive strategic partnership is deepening and maturing, and our partnerships for peace, growth, reform and civilization are advancing. As China and European countries are concurrently pursuing structural reforms for greater economic and social development, it is of vital importance for both sides to synergize our development strategies and expand our common interests. Indeed, we have a shared responsibility to uphold openness and inclusiveness and make new contributions to global peace and prosperity.

The friendly and cooperative ties between Ireland and China provide an exemplary model for the relations between China and the EU. We are happy to see that Sino-Irish ties are strong and growing. Our two countries had very similar historical experiences. From mid 19th century up to the establishment of New China in 1949, the Chinese people struggled courageously for independence and freedom. We very much appreciate the Irish people's understanding and support for New China's reconstruction and our restoration of China's legitimate seat in the United Nations. We are also warmly appreciative of Ireland's adherence to the One-China principle.

China and Ireland established diplomatic relations on the 22nd of June 1979. During the past 38 years, strong friendship has been forged between our two peoples. In March 2012, the Prime Ministers of both countries agreed to jointly build a Strategic Partnership for Mutually Beneficial Cooperation. With frequent high-level exchanges and increasing mutual trust, fruitful cooperation and useful exchanges have been conducted between China and Ireland at all levels. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang visited Ireland in 2012 and 2015. Taoiseach Enda Kenny and President Michael D. Higgins visited China in March 2012 and December 2014. Last year, more than a dozen ministerial-level visits have taken place between China and Ireland, which has helped to enhance understanding and cooperation between our two countries in various fields.

Our economic relations are dynamic. The bilateral trade grew in 2016 by 13.75% to 8.1 billion U.S. dollars. As one of the only three EU countries maintaining trade surplus with China, Ireland outperformed almost all the other EU member states in terms of its trade growth with China -- Ireland was one of the Top Three. China has become the third largest market for Irish food and beverages, and the second for Irish dairy and pork products. Chinese investment in Ireland has created over 2000 jobs and I believe this figure will continue to grow in future.

Our education exchanges have enjoyed a good momentum. A joint working group has been established between the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Irish Department for Education and Skills. In October 2016, Mr. Richard Bruton, Minister for Education and Skills, led a delegation comprising 19 presidents of Irish universities and institutes to the China Education Expo 2016. In this leading international education Expo, Ireland played a leading role as the Country of Honour. During the visit, the Irish delegates established contacts with many Chinese universities, and 28 MOUs were signed including my alma mater -- Wuhan University.

Sino-Irish joint education programmes have now reached 32 with 11 Irish universities and institutes participating. UCD has started a series of collaborative programmes with some most prestigious Chinese universities, including Peking University, Tsinghua University, Fudan University, etc. The international institute in Beijing jointly created and run by UCD and Beijing University of Technology was one of the fruitful achievements of the twin-city relationship between Beijing and Dublin. In addition, UCD has not only set up a Confucius Institute but also a Centre for China Studies. Both are wonderful platforms for Irish students to learn about China without having to travel there.

The high-quality education resources in Ireland have attracted many Chinese young people. Nearly 10 thousand Chinese students are studying in Ireland at present, about 50% of them are attending higher education institutions, including Ph.D. candidates and post-doctoral researchers. Chinese students have become the second largest group of international students in Ireland, second only to the U.S. If you consider the population of Ireland, the number of Chinese students in Ireland is remarkable, and in terms of the student-population ratio, Ireland is next to none.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since my arrival in Ireland in June last year, I have been to over a dozen counties and almost all major cities. What has impressed me most is Irish people's growing keenness on China. They genuinely want to make more Chinese friends and do more business with China. I feel really great with such a warm situation. It reminds me of famous lines of a Tang Dynasty poem. “沉舟侧畔千帆过，病树前头万木春。” **Sunken vessels can hardly stop hundreds of shining boats sailing by / Withering plants cannot hold spring coming with thousands of trees thriving high.**

Those lines reflect a very optimistic and energetic spirit. Chinese people love them. I love them myself. They show that as long as we persevere and go along with the historical trends, join hands and work hard, we will surely be able to overcome hardships and challenges, and usher in a bright future. The Chinese people are striding forward with full confidence to make the Chinese dream come true. We are keen to work with the peoples of the world, to learn from each other, and to create a shared future – a shared dream that features peace, prosperity, and win-win cooperation. Let's work together and seize the moment.

Thank you.