

Staying True to Original Aspirations and Forging Ahead to Promote Further Progress in China-Eritrea Relations



By: H.E. Mr. Li Xiang,

New Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Eritrea,

In 2007, I paid a short visit to Eritrea, and at that time the people, culture and scenery of Asmara, this city of clouds, left a deep impression on me. 17 years have gone since then, and now I come back as the 11th Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Eritrea, shouldering the great responsibility of ushering in a new chapter of China-Eritrea friendship. Although my arrival was less than a month ago, those good old memories of Eritrea keeps coming back to me. Eritrea recently celebrated its 33rd anniversary of Independence Day, and I was honored to be invited to the celebration, where I listened to H.E. President Isaias's speech reflecting his deep insight into international situation and profound thought on the future of people in the Horn of Africa and the African continent as a whole. I also watched the performances on the Liberation Avenue and celebrated together with Eritrean people. I am deeply impressed by the peace and safety of Eritrea, as well as the hospitality, manner, composure and happiness of the Eritrean people.

China and Eritrea enjoys profound traditional friendship and solid political mutual trust. Last year we held many events celebrating the 30th anniversary of China-Eritrea diplomatic relations. The peak of the celebration was President Isaias's visit to China, where he met and talked with H.E. President Xi Jinping

and H.E. Premier Li Qiang. The two Heads of State reached a series of important consensus, promoting China-Eritrea relations to a new level. As new Ambassador of China to Eritrea, together with different walks of life of Eritrea, I will faithfully follow up on the consensus of the two Presidents and make China-Eritrea strategic partnership go deeper and more practical. Although distant from each other by geography, China and Eritrea have always been close by heart. Our strategic partnership roots in our traditional friendship. In 1960s, President Isaias studied in China, which laid a solid foundation of China-Eritrea friendship. On May 24, 1993, the very day the State of Eritrea was founded, China and Eritrea established the ambassadorial level of diplomatic relations, a full testament to our profound affinity.

Our strategic partnership stems from our similar ideas. China and Eritrea share similar experiences in fighting against colonialism, imperialism, and hegemony. We both cherish the principles of independence and non-interference, and both pursue a development path that fit our own national conditions. All of this have bonded our two countries together.

Our strategic partnership bases on mutual political trust. Under the leadership of our two Heads of State, we continue to deepen our mutual political trust, firmly support each other in international arenas, together safeguard international fairness and justice, and have become good partners featuring mutual trust and assistance.

Our strategic partnership manifests in our mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields. China-Eritrea economic and trade cooperation grows steadily, with China being Eritrea's largest trading partner several years in a row. We signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Jointly Building the "Belt and Road". Our practical cooperation in health, agriculture, education, culture and other areas continue to deepen. Chinese Medical Team, the Confucius Institute, and agricultural experts actively engaged in their respective cooperative programs with the Eritrean side, benefiting our two countries and two peoples. Our strategic partnership builds on people-to-people exchanges and friendship. Amity between peoples holds the key to the relationship between countries. China and Eritrea enjoys longstanding friendship that has a profound public basis. Since I come to Eritrea, I have always heard Eritrean kids shout enthusiastically "China, China" every time I went to street. I was deeply touched by such affinity coming from the bottom of their hearts, and thus have full faith to China-Eritrea friendship.

To serve as China's Ambassador to Eritrea is a lofty mission and a mission with heavy responsibility. In my tenure, I will work with dedication to promote further accomplishments in China-Eritrea relations. I am ready to be a sincere listener. I am ready to engage and communicate extensively with the government and people of Eritrea, seeking your opinions on the development of China-Eritrea relations, and understanding your concerns, so as to jointly promote China-Eritrea relations to a new level. I am ready to be a bridge between our two countries. I am ready to serve as a solid bridge of communication between the governments, different sectors and the peoples of our two countries, and to introduce China's policy, current development, culture, and business opportunities to the Eritrean government and people, so as to promote common development through mutual learning and exchanges.

I am ready to take pragmatic action to enhance our mutual interests and promote reciprocal cooperation. I will bear in mind the details, fully implement the major bilateral programs, and do more practical things, so as to attain still further progress in China-Eritrea Strategic partnership and our practical cooperation. An old Chinese saying goes like this, "even mountains and seas cannot separate people with common aspirations". Eritrea also has proverb saying, "Hand in hand, we can bring down the elephant". The friendship between China and Eritrea endures the test of times and is now even stronger, and our strategic partnership is solid as iron. I believe as long as we move forward hand in hand and in one mind, we will surely be able to promote China-Eritrea strategic partnership to a new level and together create a beautiful future.