

**By : DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK
PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA**

Venue : The Grand Ballroom, Level 1, China World Hotel, Beijing, China

Date : 31/05/2014

Title : THE MALAYSIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP DINNER

Her Excellency Gu Xiulian;

Former Vice Chairperson of the National People's Congress,
and President of the China-ASEAN Association,

His Excellency Dato' Abdul Majid Khan;

President of the Malaysia-China Friendship Association,

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am delighted to be here this evening to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between our two countries.
2. Five years ago, at this very venue, I had the privilege of attending the 35th Anniversary Dinner, with the then Vice-Premier Li Keqiang.
3. I was only a month into my own premiership. And I remember the responsibility I felt to ensure Malaysia and China continued to grow together, rather than growing apart.

4. I need not have worried. As we celebrate our 40th Anniversary, China remains one of Malaysia's most important friends: an invaluable partner for prosperity and peace.

5. This friendship starts at the very top. Last year, we were honoured to welcome President Xi Jinping to Malaysia, where we agreed on a Five Year Development Programme for Economic and Trade Cooperation.

6. My return visit, for the 40th Anniversary of diplomatic relations, shows our commitment to strengthening the partnership which has been built over the last four decades.

7. It has also given me a chance to broaden my own experience of China.

8. I have had the privilege of visiting the city of Xian, one of China's ancient capitals, where I was struck by the richness and sophistication of the relics at the Terracotta Museum.

9. And I was reminded that with such a strong cultural heritage, and so many impressive buildings, China has become a major attraction for visitors from all over the world.

10. Such attention will only increase as Asia comes to greater global prominence. That includes tourism, but also more cultural and youth exchanges, which are so important for strengthening bilateral ties.

11. On that note, I am pleased to see that more Malaysian students are choosing to study in China, and that the Beijing Foreign Studies University continues to promote the study of the Malay language – and teach Mandarin to Malaysian students under the Special Exchange Programme. This

cooperation will be further boosted by the proposed Xiamen International University in Malaysia, which is expected to start construction soon.

12. Speaking of exchanges, I wish to thank the Chinese Government for the two giant pandas which arrived in Malaysia recently. They have, of course, become instant celebrities; I am sure they will remain a popular attraction, one that reminds us of the enduring friendship between our two countries.

13. This friendship is grounded in shared ambitions. In our development goals, Malaysia and China share a similar vision. The 'Chinese Dream' is of economic prosperity, peace and happiness; a dream of opportunity not instability. Malaysia's 'Vision 2020' sees us become a developed and high income country, and one which plays a greater role in the promotion of global peace.

14. These similarities mean we enjoy a healthy relationship based on mutual trust and respect. It is a friendship strong enough to withstand even the most tragic tests.

15. The shocking disappearance of MH370 was one such event. Malaysia is grateful for the strong support from the Chinese Government during this difficult time; and for their commitment of resources and expertise to help with the search. With a strong foundation based on cooperation and mutual trust, I believe our partnership will be strengthened in the face of adversity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. Forty years ago, my father, Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak, came to Beijing to establish diplomatic relations. He described his trip as a 'journey of goodwill, to sow the seeds of mutual understanding and trust'.

17. Today, those seeds have blossomed into a productive and valued relationship. Over the next forty years, founded on further understanding and trust, our bilateral ties will continue to grow; so too will the friendship between our peoples.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

18. I would like to thank the China People's Association with Foreign Countries and the Malaysia-China Friendship Association for inviting me again to celebrate this auspicious occasion.

19. I also want to take this opportunity to wish the Government and People of China, continued peace, progress and prosperity.

20. And I want to conclude by repeating my toast from five years ago: may the friendship between the peoples of China and Malaysia remain forever bright.

Thank you.