

Government of China's Response to Sir Ronald Sanders commentary "Chinese Take Away"

The following statement was posted on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on 2nd December 2010 as a response to the Commentary by Sir Ronald Sanders entitled, "Chinese take Away?"

<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zwjg/zwbd/t773670.htm>

For a Win-Win China-Caribbean Cooperation

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In his attempt to be part of the local public discourse on the China-Caribbean economic and commercial relations, Chinese Ambassador Wei Qiang wrote the article "For a Win-Win China-Caribbean Cooperation", which was published in the Barbados Advocate on December 1, 2010.

The commentary article entitled "Chinese take away?" by Sir Ronald Sanders, in the Sunday, 21 of November, Barbados Advocate, was, like his many other articles, thought-provoking, causing this reader to think of the following:

1. The economic and technical cooperation between China and the Caribbean countries have made, over the long years of their relations, a quite steady, smooth and clearly ascendant progress. It is to be recognized that this has been so because that cooperation is fundamentally a mutually beneficial one, serving well in contribution to our respective national development, both in the economic and social dimension.

Once into the new century, in keeping with the strong economic growth in China, the said cooperation appears to become more and more dynamic, stepping up in ever larger strides, a trend that is generally welcomed by the Caribbean countries. Now, it is only natural that with its rapid expansion and enrichment in a relatively short space of time, this cooperation is not trouble-free and there are a whole lot of things worth learning and improving on the part of Chinese enterprises. The Chinese government stands ready and keen to support and promote the economic cooperation with the Caribbean region, and is determined to do so on the basis of our traditional friendship with the region, upholding the spirit and principles of the South-South cooperation and, most importantly, always seeking win-win results for all parties involved. For we are all conscious that no cooperation can be sustainable if conducted in such a manner that only one-sided benefits are produced. This is and will always be the Chinese government's firm stance and policy orientation regarding Chinese economic activities and operations overseas. Having been China itself a victim of colonialism, this has never formed and will never form part of China's philosophy and agenda for its economic cooperation or trade relationship with fellow developing nations. This kind of concerns

from anybody is only to be dismissed as unfounded. If anything, China's economic and technical cooperation with foreign nations is famously characterized by being forged on an equal footing and through friendly consultations, without strings of conditions, let alone "rankling" ones or any other "bitter pill" type of thing.

I'm pretty sure that the Baha Mar deal in Bahamas has been a purely economic reason-based commercial agreement reached by both sides, as all commercial deals are supposed to be. Not that it can not be further adjusted or fine-tuned, of course, as long as it redounds to the interests and benefits of the two sides.

2. Another point of Sir. Ronald Sanders' article with which I tend to disagree is that "the Chinese will work for less and trade union conditions, and rights, would not apply in their case thus reducing the cost of the project". For whoever are not catching up sufficiently with the current state of affairs in China in relation to the labour situation, I'd like to refer them to cases like the labour conflict between Honda (in the Chinese Province of Guangdong) and its Chinese workers-you can Google or Baidu the case on line-, a good example of the cost and rights-rising trend that can be appreciated throughout the country. The once famous Chinese cheap labour-based competitiveness, judging by a good number of relevant surveys among both national and international firms operating in China, seems to be increasingly an outdated misconception. And this is certainly a welcome trend, for China doesn't want to remain competitive at the expense of its labour force-another unsustainable way of development for any nation- but by enhancing its technological and innovative capability and by doing real quality job. We are not there yet but we'll always be trying our best.

3. I do agree with Mr. Sanders in the necessity of China and the CARICOM countries deepening their ties of friendship and cooperation via a long-term and comprehensive framework treaty or the like. In fact, the Chinese-initiated China-Caribbean Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum, which started off in 2005 and got already two summits successfully held in Jamaica and China, respectively, looking forward to the third one to be held in the near future, is set to be a platform upon which to foster that kind of collective-multilateral actions aimed at upgrading our relationship in general and practical cooperation in particular.