

热烈庆祝中华人民共和国成立六十八周年

Celebrating the 68th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China



ECONOMY: Traditional dancers perform during the 68th National Day of the People's Republic of China celebrations at the Chinese embassy in Pretoria yesterday.

PICTURE: JACQUES NAUDE / ANA

Driving economic freedom and poverty removal

SHANNON EBRAHIM
Group Foreign Editor

THERE is no other country in the world today that can say it has lifted 700 million of its citizens out of poverty – other than China.

South Africans were reminded of China's unparalleled success in development and poverty eradication on the occasion of the 68th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China yesterday.

China's new ambassador to South Africa, Lin Songtian, attributes much of China's success to its commitment since 1978 to reform, and China's opening up to the rest of the world.

"China has made remarkable achievements in our development never before recorded. China's GDP has

soared from \$18.9 billion in 1949 to \$11.2 trillion in 2016," ambassador Lin told a massive audience at the Chinese embassy in Pretoria yesterday.

Ambassador Lin stated that China had been a victim of seclusion and isolation. "After the founding of the New China, due to the foreign blockade and a highly planned economy, China was cut off from the rest of the world and her economic and social development stagnated and lagged behind."

But China's opening up brought about huge dividends. China has now become the world's second largest economy, second largest overseas investor, the world's largest manufacturer, largest trading power, largest tourism market and the country with the biggest foreign exchange reserves.



Ambassador Lin Songtian

In essence, China has become a major engine to drive economic growth, contributing 31.6% to world economic growth, which exceeds the contribution of all the developed countries combined.

What is truly inspirational for developing countries is the fact that China has committed itself to the ambitious goal of eradicating poverty by 2020. The Communist Party of China will chart a new course for China's future

development at its upcoming 19th National Congress to be held in Beijing in a few weeks' time.

What makes China and South Africa such like-minded partners is that both countries have remained committed to an independent foreign policy of peace, and a path of peaceful development.

"China contributes more troops to UN peacekeeping missions than any other permanent member of the UN Security Council," Ambassador Lin said.

"Currently, over 2500 Chinese troops are carrying out peacekeeping operations in 10 UN missions across the world. In 2016, China contributed \$844m to UN peacekeeping costs, just second to the US, accounting for 10.2% of the total budget."

China's positive

contribution to global affairs is all the more evident given President Xi Jinping's proposals for greater multilateral co-operation – where nations plan and build together in a new era of international relations that is based on win-win co-operation. This unifying spirit is all the more critical in the face of rising conservatism and isolationism worldwide.

Minister of Public Works Nkosinathi Nhleko spoke at the National Day celebrations on behalf of the South African government, saying: "South Africa commends China's leadership and vision at the recent 9th Brics Summit in Xiamen."

He reminded guests of an ancient Chinese proverb, which says, "If people are of one heart, even yellow earth can become gold."