Presentation on the Secret and Enlightenment of China's

Reform and Opening-up

－ by H.E. Ren Yisheng, Chinese Ambassador to Liberia

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Hon. Todd Joseph, Deputy Minister for Administration, Ministry of Public Works,

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Hon. Benedict Kolubah, Assistsnt Minister for Planning, MFDP,

Hon. Yaba Thompson, Assistant Minister for International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Hon. Daniel Thomas, Assistant Minister of Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism,

Hon. Jackie Bernard, Assistant Minister for Rural Development, Ministry of Public Works,

Ambassador Charles M. Wiles, Chairman of Foreign Affairs, Coalition for Democratic Changes,

Representatives of the media and other friendship associations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

Thank you to the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Liberia for inviting me to this dialogue and share views on the secrets and enlightenment of China's successful reform and opening-up, and to exchange ideas on China-Liberia friendly and pragmatic cooperation. I will talk about **three issues**, namely the main course and achievements of China's reform and opening-up, our successful experiences and enlightenment, and last but not least strengthening China-Liberia friendly and win-win cooperation. And I would be delighted to have discussions with you afterwards.

1. **The main course and achievements of China's reform and opening-up**

The reform and opening-up which started in 1978 is the most important reform initiative in Chinese history. More than 40 years of reform and opening-up have made the most populous country in the world a global power in the true sense, and China has entered a new era in which it has grown from standing up to becoming prosperous, and from becoming prosperous to getting strong.

China's reform and opening-up can be roughly divided into four stages. The **first stage** is the initiation and target exploration stage of reform and opening-up, which was from the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1978 to 1991 before the Fourteenth National Congress of the CPC. During this period, reforms first started in **rural areas** and gradually advanced to cities. State-owned enterprises began to carry out pilot projects to expand their autonomy, and the individual economy was gradually restored and developed. The CPC Central Committee proposed the breakthrough concept of a **planned commodity economy**, and at the same time carried out reforms in pricing, taxation, financing, planning and circulation systems. Meanwhile, reforms in the fields of political affairs, science and technology, education, and culture were also gradually launched. Opening to the outside world started with the establishment of special economic zones(**SEC**s), and then gradually expanded to coastal cities, cities along transportation lines, rivers and borders, as well as inland central cities.

The **second stage** is the stage of the initial establishment of the socialist market economic system framework from 1992 to 2002. In 1992, the Fourteenth National Congress of the CPC set the goal of establishing a **socialist market economic system**, which is a major progress in China's reform. By 2002, the basic framework of the socialist market economic system has been initially determined. During this period, the 15th National Congress of the CPC established the basic economic system with public ownership as the main body and the joint development of various economies. The reform of state-owned enterprises was actively promoted by invigorating large enterprises and relaxing control over small ones. The dual-track system of the prices of production means was abolished. The prices of competitive goods and services were further liberalized, and the factor market was gradually formed.

The **third stage** is the stage of further improving the socialist market economic system from 2003 to 2011. The 16th National Congress of the CPC put forward the goal of building a complete socialist market economic system reform by 2020. During this period, market access for the non-public economy was further relaxed, and state-owned commercial banks began to carry out shareholding reform. The investment autonomy of enterprises has been gradually expanded, and other factor markets such as land, labor, technology, property rights, and capital have been further developed. During this period, China **abolished agricultural tax**, animal husbandry tax, special product tax and so on.

The **fourth stage** is a new stage of comprehensively deepening the reform from 2012 till today. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC adopted the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform", which clarified that the overall goal of c**omprehensively deepening the reform** is to improve and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, and to promote the modernization of the **state governance** system and capacity. At this stage, we have evolved from focusing on the reform of the economic system in the past to comprehensively deepening the reform, which is a **multi-faceted reform of the economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological civilization systems**. During this period, a series of major reforms of the party and state institutions, the administrative management system, the rule of law system, the judicial system, the foreign affairs system, the social governance system, the ecological environment supervision system, national security system, national defense and army, the party's leadership and party building system, and the discipline inspection and supervision system have been steadily advanced. Various measures to facilitate and benefit the people have been continuously implemented, and more than **1,600 reform plans** have been launched. As President Xi Jinping said, the reform has shown comprehensive efforts, multiple breakthroughs, rapid and steady progress, and in-depth advancement.

Over the past 40 years of reform and opening-up, great achievements have been made, and China has undergone earth-shaking changes. We can summarize it into **five aspects** which are rapid economic development, rapid changes in urban and rural areas, great improvement in people's livelihood, increasing national comprehensive strength, and unprecedented improvement of international status.

Over the past 40 years of China's reform and opening-up, China's economic aggregate has grown by 33.5 times, with an average growth rate of 9.5%. As the world's second largest economy, China currently contributes 18% of global GDP. The contribution rate of China's economy to the world economy has increased from 2.3% in 1978 to more than 30% in the past decade.

After more than 40 years of reform and opening-up, China's comprehensive economic strength has increased significantly. In 1978, China's total GDP was about 150 billion US dollars, ranking 11th in the world. In 2021, the total GDP was 17.7 trillion US dollars, ranking second in the world. The per capita GDP was only over US$150 in 1978, ranking 121st in the world, and it reached US$12,600 in 2021, exceeding the world average and ranking 68th in the world. China's added value of the manufacturing industry ranks first in the world. In 1978, the added value of China's manufacturing industry was 60 billion US dollars, and it was nearly 5 trillion US dollars in 2021. Yet it is still not very strong, although the total amount is already relatively large. China's total merchandise trade volume ranks first in the world. In 1978, the total value of China's trade in goods was only 21 billion US dollars, ranking 24th in the world. In 2021, the total value of trade in goods reached 6 trillion, ranking first in the world's trade in goods for five consecutive years. China's foreign exchange reserves are the largest in the world. In 1978, China's foreign exchange reserves were only US$170 million, ranking 83rd in the world. In 2021, China's foreign exchange reserves exceeded US$3.25 trillion, ranking first in the world. China's food security is guaranteed. In the early days of reform and opening-up, China's total grain output was only a little over 300 million tons, with an average per capita of about 300 kilograms of grain. In 2021, the total amount of grain in China has exceeded 680 million tons, or about 600 kilograms per capita, and food security is basically guaranteed. China has won the campaign against poverty in 2020. Over the past 40 years of reform and opening-up, nearly **800 million people** have been lifted out of extreme poverty, and the UN Sustainable Development Agenda (SDG) poverty reduction goal has been achieved 10 years ahead of schedule. China's urbanization level has been continuously improved, jumping from 18% in 1978 to 65% by the end of 2021. Rapid progress has been made in the level and capacity of urban public services, urban energy utilization efficiency, urban social governance capabilities, urban low-carbon development, and green development. Our people lead happy lives today. China is one of the safest countries in the world. According to a global government trust survey, the Chinese people's trust in their government is as high as 91%, ranking first in the world.

China successfully achieved the **first centenary goal** on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC in 2021, and has started the journey towards the second centenary goal, that is, on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 2049, to build China into a prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally civilized, harmonious and beautiful modern socialist country. We have full confidence in realizing the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

1. **The successful experience and enlightenment of China's reform and opening-up**

The **first** is to adhere to the centralized and unified leadership of the Party over reform. The fundamental reason for the success of reform and opening-up lies in the leadership of the Party. **Firstly**, party leaders have been determined to reform. From Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping, party leaders have all talked about reforms with a clear-cut stand, elaborated deployment for reforms, and worked on reforms with their own hands. **Secondly**, we have adhered to the correct direction of reform. General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized that our direction is to **improve and develop the socialist system with Chinese characteristics**. This grasps the fundamental direction of reform. **Thirdly**, we have followed and gone with the world trend. Over the past 40 years, China's reforms have adhered to the general trend and rules, actively integrated into the trend of globalization, and developed rapidly. **Fourthly**, we have cultivated and forged party members and cadres with a spirit of reform. It is precisely because we have trained a large number of cadres with a spirit of reform that our reform has a strong political organization guarantee.

The **second** is to adhere to the people-centered philosophy. The great course of 40 years of reform and opening-up has always revolved around seeking happiness for the people, which is mainly reflected in strategic arrangements. Take the example of the "three-step" development strategy formulated at the 13th National Congress of the CPC in 1987, each step is concerned with the improvement of people's living standards. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, General Secretary Xi Jinping has put forward the basic strategy of adhering to the people-centered philosophy. He clearly pointed out that the people-centered philosophy of development should be embodied in all aspects of economic and social development, so that what the reform should grasp and promote is what the people care about and expect, and bring more benefits to the people through reform. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, the party has upheld the primacy of the people, always put the people in the highest position in its heart, and implemented a series of reform measures with considerable value, which has effectively enhanced the people's sense of gain and won the heartfelt support of the people.

The **third** is to mobilize all positive factors. This is the valuable experience accumulated over 100 years of Chinese revolution, construction and reform. Especially since the reform and opening-up, we have mobilized the enthusiasm of farmers through the **household contract responsibility system**, mobilized the enthusiasm of many enterprises through deepening the enterprise reform and implementing the shareholding system, and mobilized the enthusiasm of all strata through the implementation of the market economy. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, we have focused on mobilizing the enthusiasm of cadres and officials to devote themselves to reform, and promote the reform to continue to deepen.

The **fourth** is to firmly seize the focus of reform. Over the past 40 years, China's reform has always been focusing on the reform of the economic system. So far, China's reform has gone through four stages as mentioned above. The first stage was from 1978 to 1992, clarifying the reform goal of establishing a socialist market economic system. The second stage was from the 14th National Congress of the CPC in 1992 to the 16th National Congress of the CPC in 2002, initially establishing the socialist market economic system framework. The third stage was from the 16th National Congress of the CPC in 2002 to the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, deepening the reform of the economic system and continuously improving the socialist market economic system. The fourth stage is since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, China's reform has entered a new stage, and the overall goal of comprehensively deepening the reform has been proposed, but the focus is still on the reform of the economic system. It is precisely because we firmly seize the key points of reform that we have played a driving role in the overall development and enabled China to develop steadily and make progress.

The **fifth** is to emancipate the mind and encourage exploration. A history of reform and opening-up is a history of constant emancipation of the mind and innovation. Whether a policy is good or not, effective or not, it should be tested first in a certain area, and then implemented and promoted nationwide if it is effective, so as to take into account the specific conditions of each region and adapt measures to local conditions, and avoid reform resistance or excessive error correction costs. "**Crossing the river by feeling the stones**" means that it will be piloted in a few areas in an experimental way, and then it will be promoted after successful practice. It has become China's unique economic reform model.

1. **Strengthen the exchange of experience in state governance, and carry out win-win and friendly cooperation between China and Liberia**

Ladies and gentlemen,

China firmly supports and practices multilateralism, and the fraternal friendship and pragmatic cooperation between China and Africa and China and Liberia have a long history. China has been and will continue to be Liberia's good friend. Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping and President George Manneh Weah, China and Liberia have steadily advanced pragmatic cooperation in the fields of economy and trade, infrastructure construction, agriculture, education, people-to-people exchanges, and public health, with fruitful results, by docking the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Pro-Poverty Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). In November last year, at the opening ceremony of the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Dakar, President Xi made four proposals for building a China-Africa community with a shared future in the new era, which include fighting COVID-19 with solidarity, deepening practical cooperation, promoting green development and upholding equity and justice. He also announced that China will work closely with African countries to implement Nine Programs which include medical and health, poverty reduction and agricultural development, trade promotion, investment promotion, digital innovation, green development, capacity building, cultural and people-to-people exchange, and peace and security. This is a new milestone in China-Africa and China-Liberia relations.

At the recent launching meeting of the "PAPD" National Steering Committee chaired by President Weah and attended by all sectors of the community and the diplomatic corps in Liberia, the Liberian government stated that it will promote the smooth realization of PAPD through reforms. We are willing to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with Liberia in the field of state governance, and share the successful experience of China's reform and opening-up. We will continue to uphold the principles of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith and the principles of pursuing the greater good and shared interests, and actively promote the development of China-Africa and China-Liberia comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. We hope that we will continue to inherit and carry forward the brotherhood between the two peoples and contribute to the friendly cooperation between China and Liberia. I believe that with our joint efforts and contributions, the friendship and cooperation between China and Liberia will be further strengthened and developed in the future with broad prospects.

Thank you! Now my colleagues and I would like to answer your questions.