



Press Release

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Speaker Gurirab Lauds China for Rapid Economic Growth

Hon. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia and President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was on an official visit to China on a longstanding invitation from his counterpart H.E. Wu Banggou, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC). The National People's Congress (Parliament of China) is the supreme organ of state power in China. Speaker Gurirab was accompanied by Members of Parliament; Hon. Clara Bohitile and Hon. McHenry Venaani.

The meeting with Chairman Banggou was to exchange views in preparation for the 3rd Speakers Conference to be held in Geneva, 2010. Speaker Gurirab appreciated the sustained support of the NPC to the IPU and on his part Chairman Banggou pledged his country's active support for the upcoming Speakers Conference and it is hoped the conference will enhance cooperation and serve as a platform for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. The previous meetings took place in New York in 2000 and 2005 respectively. China joined IPU in 1984.

The Presiding Officers expressed satisfaction with the consolidated bilateral legislative exchanges of the NPC with the Parliament of Namibia and calls for sustained nurturing of the relationship between the two legislatures.

Speaker Gurirab was impressed with China's commitment and achievement for empowering its people economically and it is clearly evidenced by the improved standard of living. He further alluded that despite the current economic downturn, China seemed to be weathering the storm significantly well. The delegation also met with the Premier of China, H.E. Wen Jiabao. Wen said that China is ready to strengthen and expand cooperation ties between the two countries.

One of the highlights of the visit was a familiarisation trip to the Gansu Province of China where the Gansu Research Institute for Water Conservancy shared their success with rainwater harvesting (RWH). The RWH is an effective approach of solving shortage of water resources and achieving sustainable development and alleviation of poverty. Practice has proved that the RWH not only can supply water for domestic use, agriculture irrigation but also feed ecological conservation and recharge groundwater.

Another success story is the China National Children Centre (CNCC); a government-funded extra-curricular and educational institute for mentoring and developing the children's characteristics and potential, cultivate their creativity and enhancing their comprehensive capabilities. In his remarks during the visit to the CNCC, Speaker Gurirab met with the Director of the CNCC, Ms. Chong Zhong Xiao and emphasized that the plight of the children should be a universal priority.

The Namibian delegation also met with the Chairman of the Shanghai World Expo Coordination Bureau, Mr. Yao Cheng Huang and was briefed on the preparation for the Expo. Namibia in this regard has been commended as one of the first countries to confirm its participation in the 2010 Shanghai World Expo.

Calling China a good and longstanding friend of the African people, Speaker Gurirab expressed his appreciation to China for the support accorded to him as IPU President and in particular the political and material support to the people of Namibia. China will celebrate its 60th Independence Anniversary in October 2009.