

**Speech at the ceremony of
the 76th Plenary Session & the 75th anniversary of the founding
of the Swiss-Chinese Association**

By Amb. Wang Shi Ting
(9:30am, 29th Aug 2021, Lucerne)

Mr. Adolf Ogi, former Federal Councilor of Switzerland,
Dr. Thomas Wagner, Honorary President of the Swiss-Chinese Association,
Mr. Andries Diener, President of the Swiss-China Association,
Amb. Raphael Nägeli, Head of the Asia and Pacific Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

I'm very glad to be invited to today's event. First of all, I would like to express my congratulations to the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Swiss-China Association. I also would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the people from all walks of lives in Switzerland who have been committed to the friendship between China and Switzerland.

Since its founding in 1945, the Swiss-China Association has made unremitting efforts to the development of China-Switzerland relations. Especially since the founding the People's Republic of China, the association has made outstanding contribution to deepen mutual understanding between the people from both sides, as well as cooperation in political, economic, cultural and scientific areas. I hereby would like to express my sincere thanks to the association and friends present here for your long-term hard work.

Last year also marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the diplomatic relations between China and Switzerland. Reviewing the last 70 years of China-Switzerland relations, we can see that "equality, innovation and win-win cooperation" has become the most distinctive feature of China-Switzerland relations, which helps our relations always be a model between China and European countries.

China and Switzerland have established Innovative Strategic Partnership. We have signed Free Trade Agreement which is the first in the European continent. China is the third biggest trading partner to Switzerland. Although being confronted with the Covid-19 pandemic, the bilateral trade between China and Switzerland has seen a substantial growth against the downward trend of world trade. China's export to Switzerland has increased by 8%, and Switzerland's export to China has increased by 10%, Switzerland's investment to China has increased by 1.4%.

The above numbers fully explained the great potential and resilience of the economics and trade between China and Switzerland. To further improve the economics and trade cooperation, we have basically agreed on upgrading the Free Trade Agreement between China and Switzerland, which is an encouraging news to the companies from both sides. As a result, we should be confident towards the relations between China and Switzerland.

Meanwhile, some friends have raised some questions about China, which has caught my attention. For example, will China continue its reform and opening-up policy? What would be the future of China's policy?

In China's point of view, the world is diversified. We should get rid of ideological bias, prevent from choosing sides based on ideology, and avoid a new round of Cold War. Countries with different systems should coexist peacefully. As a matter of fact, the Socialist system with Chinese characteristic, led by the Communist Party of China, has helped 800 million people get rid of poverty,

and made China the world's second biggest economy. This is the most suitable system to China. As a saying goes, only the feet know whether the shoes fit or not. The situation in Afghanistan proved that regimes and political systems imposed by external forces are impossible to last long.

In China's point of view, countries with different political system should strengthen cooperation for a win-win result. China is willing to strengthen cooperation with US, EU as well as Switzerland based on fair competitions. China will insist in the common value of all mankind, which are peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom. China would safeguard peace and stability of the world and build an open world economy.

China will continue its reform and opening-up policy. As being noted by President Xi Jinping, being open is the precondition for a country to develop, while being self-isolated will definitely lead to backwardness. The Chinese government has announced a series of policies to open up, including building a free trade port in Hainan province, establishing a new system for higher level open economy, continuing to optimize the business environment which is market-oriented, legalized, and internationalized.

While there are some difficulties and challenges, but at the same time, China has more opportunities and faces broader prospects.

First of all, Chinese market has huge potential. The middle-income class in China now has a population of about 400 million. Some expertise predicted that this number will double and reach 800 million in 15 years. Imagine a middle-income class of 800 million population, how huge the business opportunities are! China is now the second biggest import country in the world with annual import value of 2,000 billion USD. In 2035, which is 15 years later, China will become the biggest import country in the world with a demand for import value of 3,600 billion USD.

The Swiss industry is well-known to the world. "Swiss made" has a good reputation in China and are popular with Chinese consumers. I hope Switzerland can make preparations in advance and seize the opportunity in the Chinese market.

Secondly, the investment climate in China is improving. According to the *Global Investment Trends Monitor*, a report publicized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in this January, China has absorbed more foreign capital than the US in 2020, with a growth rate of 4%, and has become the biggest recipient of foreign investment. During the first half of 2021, about 23,000 foreign invest projects have been approved in China, which is a 28.7% year on year growth. Nowadays there are more than 1 million foreign companies in China. As I have mentioned before, Switzerland's investment to China has increased by 1.4%, which is lower than the 4% of other countries. In this regard, there is still room for growth. I hope Switzerland can catch up with it.

Thirdly, China has optimized and adjusted its economic development structure and policy. China has shifted its develop mode from sheer GDP-driven to a high quality-oriented, and initiated the concept of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development, which is the new development philosophy.

Switzerland has its advantages in sustainable economic development, green and low-carbon technology, and other innovation technologies, which are exactly what China needs during its economical transition. In this regard, China and Switzerland have a broad prospect for cooperation in the above areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Currently, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought many challenges to us and caused many inconveniences to people-to-people exchanges. The pandemic is still spreading, and we should not

take it lightly. China has a high population density. For example, a bus can be loaded with 50 people in Switzerland, but it might need to load 300 people in major cities in China. A residential building can accommodate 100 people in Switzerland, but it might need to accommodate 1000 people in China.

Against this background, China has implemented more severe anti-epidemic policies than other countries. The aim is to curb the spread of the pandemic, protect the people from virus and illness, and make proactive contribution to the global fight against the pandemic. China is committed to building a global community of health for all and has provided over 770 million doses of vaccines to over 100 countries and international organizations. In the course of this year, China will strive to provide 2 billion doses of vaccines to the world. China has decided to donate US\$100 million to the COVAX Facility for distributing vaccines to developing countries.

All the above measures aim for only one purpose, that is to stop the spread of the pandemic as soon as possible. I believe we will win over the battle against the Covid. In this context, the strict quarantine policies are only temporary.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear friends,

The Beijing Winter Olympics is around the corner. China is one of the best countries in controlling the pandemic, although challenged by the pandemic, we are still full of confidence in holding a smooth and successful Winter Olympics. Switzerland is a powerhouse in winter sports, we would warmly welcome Switzerland to send a strong sports team and delegations to the Beijing Winter Olympics, and we wish you a good luck and hope that Swiss athletes can win more gold medals in the competitions.

I believe that Beijing Winter Olympics will make more people become winter sports fans and will bring a boom to winter sports and industries.

Switzerland is a world-famous destination for skiing. Before the Covid-19 pandemic broke-out, there were 1.81 million Chinese tourists come to Switzerland in 2019, many of them are interested in skiing. I believe that after the Beijing Winter Olympics, when the pandemic is over, there would be even more Chinese tourists to come to Switzerland for skiing. In addition, I believe that China and Switzerland have a great potential for cooperation in winter sports exchanges and winter sports industries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear friends,

Let us build up our confidence and joint our hands, make more efforts to improve the mutual understanding and friendship between the people of China and Switzerland. I believe that under the concerted efforts of our both sides, as well as the proactive participation and supports from members of the Swiss-China Association, the cooperation and relations between China and Switzerland will see a even brighter future. I wish the association better and better, wish the China-Switzerland friendship last forever.

Thanks.