

**Remarks by Senator the Honourable Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of
Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, on the Unveiling of the Chinatown
Project, February 10, 2021**
(Checked Against Delivery)

Your Worship Alderman Joel Martinez, Mayor of Port of Spain;

Senator the Honourable Randall Mitchell, Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts;

Senator the Honourable Kazim Hosein, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government;

Your Excellency Fang Qiu, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China;

Mr. Keith Scotland M.P., Member of Parliament for Port-of-Spain South;

Councillor Hillan Morean, Deputy Mayor of Port of Spain;

Mr. Gregory Aboud, President, Downtown Owners and Merchants Association;

Mr. Yung Gen Siu, President, China Society of Trinidad and Tobago;

Mr. Michael Zhang, Managing Director, SCG Caribbean Group;

Members of the Media;

People of Port of Spain;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good afternoon. Ni hao ma?

It is a pleasure to bear witness to today's unveiling of the Chinatown project, which has now been completed after first being announced almost two years ago.

On the cusp of the Spring Festival, this event provides further reason for celebration as the local and international Chinese community soon usher in the Year of the Ox.

The statuesque arches, regal lions and illuminating lanterns before us are indeed sights to behold, not only because they are aesthetically pleasing, but also because they are strikingly symbolic of the ties binding Trinidad and Tobago and China.

This project was completed with the assistance of Chinese companies which have already made their mark on the local landscape through their involvement in Government-to-Government arrangements between our two countries. The location of the project, downtown Port of Spain, is already home to many Chinese-owned businesses and associations working on behalf of the Chinese diaspora.

The impetus for the project, in part, was the Official Visit to China by Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in May 2018. On that occasion, the Honourable Prime Minister gave support to the proposed twinning of the cities of Port of Spain and Shanghai, with Chinatown being one of the planned fruits of that partnership.

These collaborations are mere illustrations of the warm and enduring friendship between our two countries, which started in earnest when the first Chinese migrants set foot on what was then a foreign land. In the centuries that have since passed, the Chinese community has placed their unique stamp in almost all spheres of life within our multi-cultural twin-island nation.

Our Governments have also collaborated, particularly after the establishment of official ties over forty-five (45) years ago, to seek our mutual interest in bilateral, regional and international affairs. In this regard, the Government of the People's Republic of China is counted as one of our Government's valued partners in the achievement of developmental and societal goals.

That continued to be proven over the last year, when Trinidad and Tobago, China and the world saw unprecedented challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, on the basis of our existing relationship, Trinidad and Tobago, though small in size, donated personal protective equipment to China in its time of need and China was quick to reciprocate in later months.

I am even more pleased that even in the face of challenging times, our two countries have continued to emphasise the advancement of our relationship and have sought to bring to fruition this beautiful project. To those directly involved in the design and completion of this Port of Spain Chinatown, I applaud you.

And to the people of downtown Port of Spain. How are you going today? I see you and I love you. This city/Chinatown is as much yours as it is anyone else's. Enjoy it, cherish it, take care of it.

Take care of each other. Wear a mask. Distance. Look out for each other.

As I conclude, I wish to publicly express the hope that Trinidad and Tobago and China can continue to build upon the current trajectory of our relationship which, based on what we see today, is on the right path. May Chinatown be a source of pride not only for the Chinese community, but for all of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.