

Annual Gala Commemorating The International Africa Day  
Welcome address by the Chairperson  
May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Fairmont Peace Hotel, Shanghai.

Your Excellences,  
Diplomats from the Consuls General of The Republic of South Africa, The Federal Republic of Nigeria, The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, The Republic of Senegal, The Arab Republic of Egypt, The Republic of France, The Federal Republic of Germany, The Republic of Bulgaria, The Republic of South Korea,  
Distinguished personalities and company executives,  
Valued AFCHAM Partners and Sponsors,  
Friends and well wishers, Ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and patrons of The African Chamber of Commerce (AFCHAM), that I hereby represent, I would like to welcome you all to this very modest Africa Day Gala Dinner. Since the foundation of The Organization for African Unity (OAU) on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1963, this day has been celebrated every year not only in African countries but also among African communities in other countries outside Africa. It has been called “African Freedom Day” and “African Liberation Day” in the past. The OAU has become The African Union (AU) and the day is simply celebrated as Africa Day. It is an annual festival celebrating African history, heritage, cultural diversity and growth. This year we have chosen to celebrate this day under the theme: “Celebrating Africa Rising. Rise with us!” The theme is a reflection on the current developmental projects culminating in speedy economic growth across the entire continent of Africa in the last three decades.

The African Chamber of Commerce (AFCHAM), is a not-for-profit business organization, registered in China and Hong Kong, with its headquarters here in Shanghai. Since its creation in 2015, AFCHAM has worked tirelessly with government as well as non-governmental entities in China and in Africa, facilitating business deals, providing much needed information and laying the groundwork for better trade and commercial relations between China and African countries. AFCHAM is a young and fast growing chamber, nothing compared to older chambers of commerce in

China like The British Chamber of Commerce, The American Chamber of Commerce, The French Chamber of Commerce, The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, The Italian Chamber of Commerce, The Thai Chamber of Commerce all present here tonight and many more absent tonight but working in collaboration with us. In Africa we say, “if a child washes his hands, he can eat at the table with elders.” We thank you all representatives from other chambers of commerce here present tonight to share this moment with us.

Africa today is to the rest of the world what Asia was in the last 3 decades. In the early 90s it was “All roads lead to Asia” in business. Today it is “All roads lead to Africa”. Africa is the future, they say. Hence, The New Scramble for Africa. Yes, we at AFCHAM are helping companies that want to relocate to Africa or enter the African market; we are helping African governments looking for investors and companies to execute multi-million dollar projects, we are encouraging and educating those who are simply curious about Africa. However, the other side of the coin is sweeter. We are empowering our youths and also facilitating the establishment of African businesses in China, thanks to the support of the government of The People’s Republic of China, Municipal governments of various localities in China, State-level Economic Zones and Free Trade Zones, investment promotion agencies and local Chambers of Commerce in China. All these efforts are in line with the fast growing relationship between China and African countries. One Belt, One Road, China’s flagship project is a clear illustration of the necessity for countries and continents to work hand in glove for the betterment of mankind as a whole without paying too much attention to territorial boundaries. In the same light, The African Union’s flagship project Agenda 2063, represents Africa’s goal to achieve meaningful development not only in infrastructure, but also in globalization and the general betterment of mankind. We all want development and quick development. Well you all know the African proverb: “If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” Our problem is that we all want to go quickly and far. We are living in the age of speed.

We invite you to be African at least for tonight as you network, wine, dine and enjoy the music and art pieces we have prepared for you. After all, it’s Africa Day and we being in China, have the privilege

to celebrate the day even before countries in Africa do. We wish we had the resources to offer you a sumptuous banquet. Unfortunately we had to cut our coat according to our size. We look forward to something better next year with your support. I would like to thank all of you who made it here tonight from far and wide and on a tiring last working day of the week. Special thanks to Yingke International for the tremendous support to AFCHAM and all other partner companies to AFCHAM and sponsors present here tonight including those who couldn't send delegates. Without you, AFCHAM could have been stifled at birth. We thank all other companies still observing from a distance but planning on collaborating with AFCHAM in the near future. We have you at heart and look forward to working with you as soon as we both agree on what we want to do together. The right time to get on board the AFCHAM boat is now. The months ahead are pregnant with projects we believe will propel AFCHAM's growing partnerships to a new level. Some investment and partnership opportunities will be presented to you tonight but a lot more await you at our chamber and our office is open to you at all times. A million thanks to Consulates, Embassies, Ministries, and investment agencies of governments of African countries working with AFCHAM currently. Without the information you provide us, we cannot serve you. AFCHAM's coverage of Africa currently stands at 36 countries out of 54. We would like to have 100% coverage of the continent by 2020. Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere thanks to AFCHAM members, the AFCHAM staff, a small team of dynamic, energetic and passionate individuals who work tirelessly to ensure the day-to-day functioning of the Chamber and the successful execution of projects. Sincere thanks go to AFCHAM board members including those who couldn't make it to the event because of other commitments on the field. You are the backbone of AFCHAM. Without you all, we would not be sitting here tonight in this gorgeous room made available for us by Fairmont Peace Hotel. We are forever grateful to you.

That said, I would like to invite everyone to stand for a symbolic African toast to wish you all a happy evening.

D. Nkwetato Tamonkia  
Chairperson, AFCHAM