

REMARKS BY THE CHINESE DEPUTY CONSUL
GENERAL REN XIAOXIA AT SPARROW RAINBOW
VILLAGE, JOHANNESBURG, 9 AUGUST 2016

A special welcome to the Programme Director, Managing Director of the Sparrow Rainbow Village, Representatives from the Department of Health and that of Education and members of the media.

Good morning to all my friends, as we gathered here to Women's Day celebrate this special event. It is my great honour to join this special event today in Sparrow Rainbow Village. I would like speak on the topic of women empowerment in the country. Empowering women in South Africa is very necessary to bring women equality or we can say that gender equality is very necessary to empower women and bring gender equality. Welcome to everyone who took their time to celebrate this special event!

In 1995, the fourth World Women's Conference was held in Beijing. South Africa together with 180 other countries attended the Conference which marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality. The conference resulted in the adoption of Beijing Platform for action which was a visionary agenda for the empowerment of women. I was then, a young enthusiastic university student, working as a volunteer to facilitate the guests from abroad to attend that event. And today, 21 years later, I am still overwhelmed a lot by the presence of so many women from so many parts of the world, dressed in various colors and highly confident. Women indeed played an instrumental role in shaping the discussion about the future of women.

Women's development is a lasting theme of mankind's pursuit of equality. There was also consensus at an international level that achieving Women empowerment and their full and effective participation in all spheres of society is fundamental to the achievement of equality, development and peace. As people in South Africa celebrate the Women's Day annually on the 9th of August, we pay tribute to all women that have devoted their lives to

the struggle for the cause of women's emancipation and are still mobilizing for this cause.

Over decades, the subject of Women's Day has evolved and embraced culture and ethnicity as a celebration of appreciation of the respect and adoration towards women.

Over the years, South Africa has been resolute in promoting gender equality, women's rights as human's rights and women empowerment in all spheres of life.

As for China, a developing country with the largest population in the world, women account for about half the country's population and make up one fifth of the world's total female population. As a Chinese proverb goes, "women hold up half the sky!" Along with the continuous growth of China's economy and the overall progress of its society, women are given more guarantees of equal rights and opportunities with men. Better access to health care, education and employment for women and young children are just some of the priorities of the Chinese government. The total number of women employed nationwide accounts for 45 percent of the total employed population. Women's

average years of schooling have increased. The proportion of female students in high schools is nearly 50 percent. Women's participation in decision making and management has markedly improved.

In his speech made which occurred on the 9th August 1996, President Nelson Mandela better known as Madiba cautioned the legacy of oppression weighs heavily on women. He conclude that as long as women are bound by poverty and as long as they are looked down upon, human rights will lack substance. Also as long as outmoded ways of thinking prevent women from making a meaningful contribution to society, progress will be slow. And as long as the nation refuses to acknowledge the equal role of more than a half of itself, it is doomed in failure.

The Sparrow Rainbow Village, as a NGO, is doing its utmost to provide health care and comfort to women and children affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. What impresses me most is that they are so dedicated to empowering the women and children here with the skills for employment, the ability of self-education, and the aspiration for a better life, leading to their sustainable and

self-reliant development.

As you may know, the mandate of our Consulate General is to deepen mutual understanding and friendship between the two parties, and to promote the ties and cooperation between China and local areas. Thus, it is part of our efforts to promote socio-economic development of women with local partners like Sparrow Rainbow Village. With great pleasure, would like to declare that:

The Consulate General will donate a table tennis table to the Sparrow Rainbow Village today to complement the sports facility here in the Ministries.

We will also finance the refurbishment of the library in the Ministries worth of R100,000, to provide women and children with better environment for self-education.

I take this opportunity to urge all present here, especially women, to continue to give their full support to the empowerment of women. I trust that together we could build a better society of equality, peace and friendship.

Before I conclude, I want to acknowledge the presence of two representatives from the women's Club of the

Consulate General, a highly energetic internal association composed of both our female employees and spouses of male employees. I wish to express my great appreciation for its role in joining the Consulate General to meet the challenges facing us and helping the employees of the Consulate General to settle down and work and live smoothly in Johannesburg.

Finally, Happy Women's Day!

Thank you very much!