

**Speech of the Rt. Hon Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth  
at the Opening Ceremony of the DU Benji Painting and Calligraphy  
Exhibition organised in the context of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Celebration of China-Mauritius diplomatic relations**

**Chinese Cultural Centre, Bell Village.**

**Friday 6 January 2017 – 15 h 00**

Honourable Minister, Etienne Sinatambou,  
Excellency Ambassador Li Li of the People's  
Republic of China,

Excellency Ambassador André Lee,

Mr Du Benji,

The Director of the China Cultural Centre,

Distinguished representatives of the Beijing  
Municipal Bureau of Culture and other cultural  
organisations from China,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to join you this afternoon for the opening ceremony of the DU Benji Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition which is being organised in the context of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of China-Mauritius diplomatic relations.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mauritius and China in 1972, the cooperation between the two countries has been constantly strengthened. Indeed, Mauritius shares very close and more than privileged cultural and economic ties with China.

The China-Mauritius relationship is not only historic but has been nurtured ever since the Chinese immigrants first set foot on this land in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The Chinese immigrants have gradually built their home here and the country is today very proud of their contribution and that of their descendants to our nation-building process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

China and Mauritius signed an agreement for cultural cooperation in 1980. Up to now, the two sides have witnessed the mutual visits of several cultural and artistic performance troupes.

We have had, on the one hand, the opportunity over the years to discover the amazing talents of Chinese artists who have visited us, especially on the occasion of the Spring Festival.

On the other hand, Mauritian cultural artists have been performing in China and recently in Beijing and Hunan Province where Sega shows and African dances were very much appreciated.

Distinguished Guests,

It is indeed a great privilege for Mauritius to host the World Harmony Tour DU Benji Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition.

This exhibition has been displayed in major cities across the world, ranging from Los Angeles to London and, today, we are having the opportunity to embark on a journey of contemporary Chinese culture through the masterpieces of DU Benji.

The DU style of calligraphy is powerful, bold, and vigorous and draws on the traditions of the Su, Huang, Mi, Han and Wei styles of handwriting. DU Benji also incorporates Chinese and Western styles in his traditional Chinese paintings.

I would like to congratulate the China Cultural Centre for having taken the initiative to have this prestigious exhibition in Mauritius.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mauritius is looking forward to even closer collaboration for reinforcing artistic and cultural links between our two countries. We will need resource persons from China to conduct workshops in specific areas and training for cultural officers in fields such as dramatic arts, music, dance, martial arts, Chinese cuisine and other performing arts.

As you are aware, my Office is working on the setting up of a National Cultural Troupe and in this respect expertise from China is being sought. Our request has been forwarded to the Chinese Government through the Chinese Embassy in Mauritius.

China and Mauritius share a common vision as far as our respective film industries are concerned. China's box office has already seen 50 percent growth in 2016.

In Mauritius, the film industry is still in its budding phase but there is good potential for future development. To give a boost to the sector, my Government has introduced a new band of 40 per cent rebate for big budget movies, which is in itself a very good incentive for film producers.

In addition, further incentives in terms of duty exemption are being granted to importers of film production equipment.

Mauritius will also be endowed with its first full-fledged film studio which will be located in the south of the island. The project will include post production facilities, as well as a film academy.

Distinguished Guests,

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Kung Shee Fat Choy to our brothers and sisters of the Chinese community and to all Mauritians as the Spring Festival has taken a national dimension.

Long live the strong bonds of friendship between Mauritius and China.

I thank you for your kind attention.



