

STATEMENT OF THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO SIERRA LEONE AT EMBASSY PRESS CONF

ON THE PREVENTION & CONTROL OF COVID-19

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USPA NEWS - « Dear friends, ladies and gentlemen, Welcome to today's briefing. First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to the Government and people of Sierra Leone for showing strong concern and solidarity with the Chinese side in fighting against the Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia (NCP). H.E. President Maada Bio sent a letter to H.E. President Xi Jinping expressing sympathy and support. Hon. Vice President Dr. Juldeh Jalloh, many ministers, party leadership of SLPP and APC, members of the diplomatic corps as well as friends from all walks of life in Sierra Leone including media friends also expressed their strong support to China. On behalf of the Chinese government and people, I say THANK YOU. » Chinese Ambassador to Sierra Leone at Embassy's Press conference on February 24th, stated, in solidarity with the Chinese side.

The COVID-19 caused pneumonia epidemic is serious. However, it is controllable, treatable and curable. Up to February 19, a total of 74,576 confirmed cases and 4922 existing suspected cases were reported in China, unfortunately, among which there were 2,118 deaths. But fortunately, by now 16,155 patients have been cured and discharged from hospitals. Most of the cases (83%, 62,031) and deaths (95%, 2029) were reported from Hubei Province, the epicentre of the epidemic.-----

Up to now, the total number of confirmed cases in 25 countries or regions outside China is 929, accounting for only 1% of the global total and only 3 deaths were reported. China's rapid, rigorous and thorough measures are paying off.

Currently, the number of newly confirmed cases in China is declining. The case mortality rate has been kept at around 2.7 percent nationwide, and 0.8 percent outside Hubei province. The people's war against the COVID-19 is now at a decisive stage in China. We are expecting the turning point to come at an early date. We will win the battle as soon as possible with our continued firm efforts. Although vigilance and preparedness is needed everywhere as we are in a globalized era and virus knows no borders, panic and rumors are totally undesirable.

THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE ARE UNITED AS ONE IN COMBATING THE EPIDEMIC-----

Under the strong leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with H.E. President Xi Jinping at the core, the Chinese government and people have taken unconventional resolute and comprehensive measures in dealing with the situation. President Xi has taken very strong leadership in commanding the war. At the very beginning, he directed the party and government to put people's lives and health in the first place. He personally chaired four CPC political bureau standing committee meetings to coordinate and guide the nationwide response. He also personally went to inspect the community prevention work in Beijing and conveyed greetings and encouragement to the medical workers at the forefront.

The Chinese government especially the branch in charge of epidemic prevention, medical institutions and medical researchers have joined hands in optimizing the epidemic control strategy and patient treatment plans. Other government organs, numerous party officials, local residents and ten of thousands of volunteers have been working around the clock to provide the much needed logistic and material support. Over 20,000 health workers from all over China as well as thousands of People's Liberation Army Medical personnel formed more than 100 medical teams to assist Hubei, the hardest hit province in epidemic control. The Chinese scientists and researchers succeeded in isolating the first virus strain and developed the test reagent in less than seven days. Two specialized hospitals equipped with 2,500 beds were built in less than 15 days. 19 provinces and municipalities in China have been requested to partner with 16 cities in Hubei Province and provide targeted support. Many medical workers sacrificed their precious lives or lost their dear ones during the fight. The advantageous ability of China and the Chinese system to "concentrate resources to solve major problems" [?] has been fully displayed.

Many leaders from across the world including WHO Director General spoke highly of China's swift, assertive and effective response to the outbreak. Dr. Tedros said, "it is encouraging that the steps China has taken to contain the outbreak at its source appear to have bought the world time, even though those steps have come at greater cost to China itself." Dr. Tedros and many other world leaders affirmed that China deserves tribute and respect for what has been done.-----

In combating the epidemic, China attaches great importance to international health cooperation and the international community has given China valuable moral and material support. In a spirit of openness and transparency, China promptly notified the world about the outbreak and shared the genetic sequence of the virus immediately after it was identified. China has been working closely with WHO,

invited international experts to join the ranks, and provided timely assistance to foreign nationals in China. It is an unfortunate thing that China was stricken by this virus just as it was unfortunate that some West African countries were stricken by the Ebola virus in 2014. China, while containing the epidemic and preventing its further spread within the best of its ability, has been contributing immensely to safeguard the global public health security. In this process, many friendly countries including those in Africa have provided support to China in several ways, to which we are grateful.

However, disappointingly, some western countries have overreacted by not only restricting flights, visas and trade, but also embarking on a smear campaign to attack China's political system. Their actions are against the WHO proposal and the International Health Regulation. In certain western countries, there are even signs of discrimination and xenophobia against China and Chinese. Some western media have published irresponsible articles that distort facts and confuse the public. These are of low moral standards. And we are firmly against it.-----

Here, I would like to quote WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros' words at the Munich Security Conference very recently, "This is a time for facts, not fear. This is a time for rationality, not rumors. This is a time for solidarity, not stigma." [?] End of quote.

Dear friends, Ladies and gentleman,-----

The Chinese nation never succumbs to any difficulty or challenge. China has leveraged its institutional strengths and started a people's war against the epidemic. The Chinese government has taken the most thorough and rigorous measures, which are producing results. China has the capacity, confidence and determination to not only win a full victory against the epidemic but also meet its economic and social development goals. China will prevail over this epidemic and emerge stronger and more prosperous. Thank you." Source : APO Group on behalf of Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Sierra Leone.

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