

Speech by Hon. Mabel Faicky Mentor (Mu Dang/Peony) Mentor

To Global Economic Leaders Forum

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Ladies and Gentlemen, my distinguished hosts;

CEO.....

other leaders:

It is a great pleasure for me to be participating in this Forum and to be afforded the opportunity to address you on the importance of International Cultural Exchange, in order to facilitate Economic opportunities and Business Partnerships between/amongst countries.

I come from Africa, South Africa, and I address you in China; so I will focus on the need to facilitate Cultural Exchanges between Soothern Africa, Africa itself and China. This is very important if we are to create an environment of trust, that is inductive for maximising Economic relations between China, Africa, SADC and South Africa particularly.

I need to tell you about the negative stereotypes that South African people and some in other African countries have about China and her people.

South Africans, Black and White, in their great numbers, to date still have negative and foolish attitudes towards China. Most of these bad impressions and attitudes were formed during Apartheid years, and continue to be perpetuated by the West in our African countries today. The very West that does business with China, and that is so indebted to China, influences government officials who do procurement and sourcing, as well as African business managers and directors that doing business with China is equal to recolonising Africa. They continually tell government and private sector business leaders that its bad to do business with China, because of China's "bad Human Rights Culture". These are the negative things we have to undo in the minds of our people, through exposing our people one another through

culture. This is crucial if we are to forge strong economic ties now and in the future.

I often wonder what me and other enlightened South Africans, and African Leaders can do, together with China to undo these falsehoods, and negative stereotypes.

Our Leaders should just not meet and speak to each other at the highest levels of Governments, without creating a space for people-to-people relations.

Today's leaders will not be there tomorrow; we therefore need to bring our students and youth from South Africa and Africa to China, and from China's youth and students to South Africa and Africa, through Cultural Exchange programs (short ones), so that they forge friendships, learn to understand each other, and become ready to do business with one another, now and in the future. Tomorrow when these young people take over leadership positions in companies, in Governments etc., they need to do so having culturally been acquainted with one another..

I often only see on CCTV, (which I watch daily in South Africa) European Youth, American Youth and Asian Youth embarking on Cultural Exchange Programs in China, why is this the case??

I suggest myself and Asia-Pacific CEO's Leadership, put together, run together, to bring South African and African Youth to China on short visits once or twice a year, to engage with their youth/students Chinese counterparts.

China and Africa are emerging economies, China will be the largest economy in 10-25 years time, and Africa should be assisted to strategically place herself in a ready position to continue to do business with China in a very big way, from now and well into the future.

Let's also have a standing women Cultural Exchange program, especially of Rural Women in South Africa, and Rural Women of China.

There is a lot that my country and continent can learn from China.

- We need to learn lessons of Political and Economic planning from China\
- We have to learn the culture of work-ethic from China
- We have to learn lessons of firm decision making from China
- We need to learn the culture of Analysis, evaluation etc from China
- We need to the culture of building and harnessing the family unit from China
- We need to learn the culture of building and working with Trust from China

All these lessons we can learn when we open opportunities for our people to meet regularly with one another, and learn from each other.

In short, we must plan form, and out into effect, people-to-people relations.

It can't just be young people and women etc of the West that continue to meet with Chinese people. This is not sustainable.

Please help me to formalise structures for people-to-people cultural exchange programs between young people and women of South Africa, Africa and China. It is in the hands of these that tomorrow's economic relations depend.

I look forward to further engagements on this endeavour.

I thank you.