

Address by H.E. Qi Zhenhong
Ambassador of China to Sri Lanka
at the Award Ceremony of the Chinese Ambassador Scholarship
(Keppitipola Maha Vidiyalaya, November 1st, 2024)

Mr. R. M. S. B. Rathnayaka, the Principal,

Mr. G. M. R. D. Aponsu, Senior Additional Secretary to the President,

Mr. A. H. R. Amaradasa, the Provincial Director of Education,

Dear teachers, students and alumni of Keppitipola Maha Vidiyalaya,

Good afternoon!

I am very pleased and honored to be here today at this school named after the Sri Lankan national hero Keppitipola. It is a place that embodies the spirit of heroism. I am particularly touched by the presence of your outstanding alumnus, Mr. G. M. R. D. Aponsu, Senior Additional Secretary to the President. Although my last visit was brief, your warmth, kindness, and simplicity left a deep and beautiful impression on me. Since then, I have been thinking about how to support you and help these lovely children realize their dreams.

We have traveled six hours to be here today to present the Chinese Ambassador Scholarship to you. While the scholarship amount may be limited, we hope it will be of some help to your studies. The Chinese Ambassador Scholarship was established in 2016 and has benefited

thousands of students from over 20 schools in Sri Lanka. In the future, this scholarship will be expanded to cover more students and more schools. Educational exchange and cooperation are important components of the friendly interactions between our two peoples. To support the development of education in Sri Lanka, the Chinese government has been providing full scholarships, one-time scholarships, and short-term training opportunities in China to Sri Lankan students every year since 1975. In recent years, this number has reached over 1,000 annually. After the crisis in 2022, China donated 10,000 tons of rice to Sri Lanka, specifically to provide half a year's lunch for 1.1 million students in 7,900 schools across nine provinces in Sri Lanka. In 2023 and 2024, the Chinese government also donated 70% and 80% of the fabric for school uniforms to all public school students island-wide, respectively. In the 2025 academic year, we will donate 100% of the fabric for school uniforms, totaling 11.82 million meters, worth approximately 5.2 billion rupees, which will be shipped to Colombo in three batches before the end of this year. In addition, the Chinese government, local governments, and non-governmental organizations have donated schoolbags, stationery, and other learning materials to thousands of students in remote areas, and plan to build 900 smart classrooms in 500 schools across Sri Lanka in the next few years, benefiting over 1 million students.

Dear students and teachers, although our two countries are

geographically distant, the friendship between China and Sri Lanka spans over 2,000 years. No matter how the international situation changes, China will always stand with the people of Sri Lanka and be a true friend and good partner that Sri Lanka can rely on. Recently, several regions of Sri Lanka have been hit by floods, and the Chinese government has provided timely assistance, offering approximately 30 million rupees in emergency humanitarian aid funds and 420 million rupees worth of materials to help over 100,000 affected people overcome difficulties and rebuild their homes.

Dear students and teachers, Sri Lanka has entered a new era. Under the strong leadership of your new president, a new chapter of history is being written. I believe that the Sri Lankan government and people will be able to overcome all risks and challenges, quickly emerge from difficulties, revitalize the economy, and achieve prosperity and strength. You are the future of the country and the hope of the nation. With a glorious mission on your shoulders, I believe that you will be able to inherit and carry forward the fearless spirit of Keppitipola and countless other heroes, study hard, and strive to build a more beautiful homeland for Sri Lanka. I am confident that the Sri Lankan people will be able to stand on their own two feet and achieve prosperity and strength.

Here I would like to pay tribute to all the Sri Lankan people who have fought for independence and progress, and express my gratitude to

all the Sri Lankan people who have contributed to the cause of education in Sri Lanka and the friendship between China and Sri Lanka. I wish you all students academic success and hope that you will create a brighter future for yourselves, for your country, and make greater contributions to the continuity of China-Sri Lanka friendship.

Thank you!