

Zhang Weidong, sendiherra Kínverska alþýðulýðveldisins flutti eftirfarandi ræðu á aðalfundi Kínversk-íslenska menningarfélagsins 17. október 2017. Hann varð sendiherra á Íslandi 2014 en lætur núna af störfum hérlendis vegna þess að hann hefur gegnt embættinu í þrjú ár sem er hámarkstími. Honum var þakkað einstaklega ánægjulegt samstarf.

**Remarks by Ambassador Zhang Weidong
at the Annual General Meeting of ICCS
2017-10-17**

Distinguished Chairperson,
Dear friends, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening!

Thank you very much for inviting me and my colleague to the Annual General Meeting of Icelandic Chinese Cultural Society (ICCS or KIM). First of all I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mrs. Gudrun Margret Thrastardottir for being elected as the new chairperson of ICCS.

This is my fourth time to participate and speak at your meeting. I remember my first time to be with you and make a speech was on Oct. 14, 2014, only 20 days after I came to Iceland to assume my post. At my first speech, I recalled some aspects of the relations between our two nations and peoples. Today, I would like to say that our friendship has become even deeper. The ICCS (KIM) has made great contributions to our relations.

Amity between peoples holds the key to the sound relations between states. People-to-people friendship forms an important part of bilateral relations. Since its foundation in 1953, 64 years ago, the Icelandic Chinese Cultural Society has been making continuous efforts to promote the two countries' people-to-people exchanges and friendship. The bilateral relations especially in cultural field have developed in an all-round way. ICCS is one of the earliest foreign Associations which established relations with the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and has a long history of cooperation with the Chinese Embassy. Over the past six decades, members of ICCS have visited China many times, held various cultural events and united numerous friends to work together to promote mutual understanding and exchanges. In the past three years since I took my duty here as the Ambassador, a bunch of new activities were held or organized by the ICCS. Your contributions are fully recognized and unforgettable.

Mr. Arnthor Helgason joined the ICCS when he was 17 years old. He became the chairman of ICCS in 1977, and was elected as chairman for many times.

He has made extremely great and constructive contributions to the work of ICCS. I shall express my sincere thanks to him. Thank you very much, Arnthor. Due to his hard work, he has been given many honors, including the Chinese-Icelandic Friendship Ambassador, by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in 2009. Elin, his wife, is called the “中国永远的情人” (eternal fiancé of China). She has also done a lot for our friendship. We highly appreciate your efforts and cherish your friendship with China. I am sure you will continue to give your insights and support to the work of the ICCS in the future. I wish you all the best.

Mrs. Gudrun Margret Thrastardottir is the first female chairperson of ICCS. But she is not new to us at all. She has been very active in doing a lot to help the work in the ICCS, making contributions to deepen our friendship. I wish her a great success. The Chinese embassy will closely cooperate with her.

Ladies and gentlemen,

China values its friendship with Iceland and deems Iceland a reliable, good friend and partner in Europe. In the past three years, China-Iceland relations have been stable and move forward step by step. The high level exchanges have been closer, political trust has been deepened and personnel exchanges in all aspects have been enhanced. Our cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, culture and Arctic affairs are productive, which have brought tangible benefits to our two peoples.

The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) will convene in Beijing tomorrow. The Congress is convened when China enters the decisive stage in accomplishing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects and the crucial period of the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The Congress will review the Party's work over the past five years and draw the blue-print for development of the CPC and China in coming five years and beyond. It will also lay out China's plan for its future international cooperation, which will have a major bearing on China-Iceland relations.

Dear friends,

I will finish my tenure as Chinese Ambassador and leave Iceland early next month. This is the last time for me to come to your annual general meeting. The past more than 1,100 days have left me with many sweet memories. I am blessed to have made so many friends from different walks of life including all the members of ICCS. You have all contributed so much to our bilateral relations. From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank you for supporting our embassy and myself. I will never forget the many days and nights when we worked together, the inspiring conversations we had, and the happy moments we shared. We have a Chinese saying which goes "True friends walk this life

together". Although my tenure will soon complete but our friendship will last forever. I wish all the members of the ICCS will make consistent efforts and work together with all sides to advance China-Iceland relations to a new stage. My colleagues in the embassy and my successor, no matter who, will render supports to you as usual. I also hope you will provide as much help as you have been kindly providing me to my successor when he arrives, and during the transition, to my good friend, the Charge d'affaires and Councilor, Mr. Zhong Xuhui.

Thank you.