

**HUMANITARIAN AID DONATED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

COVID-19

SPEAKING NOTES FOR MINISTER GNM PANDOR

14 APRIL 2020

OR TAMBO INTERNATIONAL

Good afternoon,

Dear Chargé d' Affaires, Mr Nan, from the Chinese Embassy, the Honorable Minister of Health, Dr Mkhize, fellow South Africans and members of the media.

We are gathered here today due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has reached all corners of the world, and, specifically, to show our deep appreciation to the Chinese Government for the medical supplies which have been donated to the Republic of South Africa.

South Africa and the People's Republic of China (PRC) established diplomatic relations on 1 January 1998. In 2018, South Africa and China reached a historic milestone as the two countries celebrated the 20th Anniversary our establishment of diplomatic relations. This culminated in two State Visits between the two countries in 2018. This is reflective of the depth of the relations that exist between our two countries, at the key level of Heads of State.

One of South Africa's foreign policy objectives is to promote the objectives of Agenda 2063, of the African Union, in the promotion of the economic development of the African continent. China has declared its support for Agenda 2063, through its African initiative, the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). This deep commitment to Africa was reflected in assistance that was provided in addressing another medical emergency, namely the deadly Ebola outbreak in West Africa, in 2014. China took decisive action and initiated multiple rounds of aid, which led to the largest and longest humanitarian and health aid initiative in China's history. By the first half of 2015, China's fight against Ebola in Africa had manifested itself in the principles of "sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith" that guide China's policy on Africa and China's view on global responsibility and security. China continues with its humanitarian efforts in Africa by donating medical supplies to various African countries to fight COVID-19. The efforts of the Chinese Government are complemented by Mr Jack Ma, the CEO of the Chinese company, Alibaba, who has donated medical supplies through the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to its Member States.

China has made remarkable efforts to bring the outbreak of the virus under control, something that would not have been possible in any other country. The methods undertaken by China to control the virus have been welcomed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), as it "recognised the leadership and political commitment of the very highest levels of the Chinese government, their commitment to transparency, and the efforts made to investigate and contain the current outbreak." South Africa

continues to support China's efforts in sharing its experiences in the fight against the virus with other scientific bodies and governments all over the world. Only together can this virus be stopped.

Please bear with me as I take you back to 02 February this year, when the Acting Director- General of the Department of Health, Dr Anban Pillay, and the former Chinese Ambassador, Lin Songtian, together presided over the handing-over ceremony of South African manufacturer, U-Mask's donation of 20 000 masks to support China in its fight against the COVID-19 virus. Much has changed over these two-and-a-half months! The virus spread remarkably quickly, and, now, with South Africa gratefully accepting medical supplies, the "donation shoe" is on the other foot.

Today, the South African Government, accepts the donation from the People's Republic of China with sincere appreciation. This donation comprises of the following items: 11 000 N95 masks, 50 000 surgical disposable masks, 2000 medical protective gowns, 500 infrared thermometers, 3000 medical goggles, 10 000 disposable surgical gloves, 11 000 medical shoe covers, 3000 medical protective goggles, 11 000 disposable gloves and 500 infrared thermometers. These items will assist not only the South African medical staff who are at the forefront of the fight against the virus, but, also, those support staff, such as security personnel, drivers, communication workers, etc.

It would be amiss if I also did not take the opportunity to further thank other Chinese institutions and companies which have also contributed medical supplies to South Africa and they are:

- The Bank of China Limited, Johannesburg Branch;
- Alibaba, a multinational technology company;
- The Chinese Community in South Africa;
- Telecommunications giant, Huawei;
- Industrial Commercial Bank of China Limited, African Representative Office
- China Construction Bank Johannesburg Branch; and
- LandPac, the earth compaction company.

Most of these medical supplies are currently being assembled in Shanghai for collection by a chartered South African aircraft. The South African Government, once more, is thankful for the high degree of cooperation from the Chinese authorities in facilitating the various procedures for the successful chartered flight and it is estimated that the flight, with these medical supplies, will arrive in South Africa during the course of the week.

In closing, in emphasising the strong and solid relations with the People's Republic of China, I once more wish to thank the Chinese Government for the large numbers of medical supplies being donated to South Africa today.

I thank you.