When my wife and I arrived here in Beijing last February, the weather was cold, the sky was grey and it was difficult to see buildings that were more than twenty –feet –away. Today, six months later it is warm, there are blue skies and we are beginning to enjoy the ambience of Beijing. Thanks to the staff of the Embassy here our transition from sunny Barbados to China was made relatively smooth and we have settled in a home in the suburbs of the city. My goal as the second resident ambassador here is to strengthen and deepen the relationship between Barbados and China, and during the first months here we have in fact started on that path. I have had the opportunity to present my credentials to President Xi Jinping and to meet with several officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of Education, Culture, Commerce, Agriculture and Sports. I have also met with public and private sector officials in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tianjin, Nantong, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Suzhou, Guiyang and Hunan. These visits have given me an opportunity to experience the enormous economic and social development of this great country and sample its rich historical and cultural diversity.
I also have had the opportunity to meet Barbadians working and studying in China and to express to them the commitment of the Embassy to their welfare.

I have also met with several members of the diplomatic corps, fellow ambassadors from the Caribbean and members of the group of ambassadors from the Latin American Region.

I believe that China and Barbados have great opportunities for strengthening our relationships in areas of culture, business, education, science and technology, investment projects, sports and tourism and during my tenure of office every effort will be made to advance our cooperation in these fields of endeavor.

I look forward to the cooperation of all in this process of strengthening and deepening relationships between Barbados and China. In our efforts to effectively develop these relationships, communication is important and so we have launched this first edition of our newsletter to foster communication and to promote beneficial relationships between Barbados and China. I hope you will find the information presented here useful and informative.

II China - A Strategic Partner

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations 37 years ago, China and Barbados have built a solid relationship based on mutual respect and cooperation in an effort to advance mutual understanding between our people.

Through the years the relationship has been strengthened with the visit of the President of China, XI Jinping to the Caribbean in 2013 in which our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Freundel Stuart participated in a meeting with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and other Caribbean heads of state and government in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

The relationship continues to strengthen as evidenced by the increasing number of commercial and business activities and the visit of high level dignitaries to Barbados and the visit of our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Freundel Stuart to China in 2011. Among the countries of Asia, the People's Republic of China has had more active relations with Barbados, than any other state.

Today, Barbados needs to diversify its international relationships and China must be an important part of that diversification for several reasons.

- China today is the world’s most populated country with a population of 1.34 billion people and therefore the largest national market in the world.
- China is a rising superpower without a colonial or imperialistic history in the Caribbean.
- China, in 2011, leaped past Japan as the world second largest economy with a GDP of $11.3 trillion (the USA was $15.68 trillion in 2012).
- China has achieved specular economic growth in the last 25 years. The GDP doubling between 1997 and 2004 with an annual growth rate of 8.3%.
- China has obtained its spectacular growth without the intervention of the IMF or World Bank prescriptions.
- China has reserves of $1.4 trillion and is investing more than $74 billion around the world; $15 billion is earmarked for investment in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- China has become the number one source market for tourists in the world with almost 100 million tourists in 2013 traveling and spending some $102 billion, globally.
- China has become a leader in technology and innovation and in the use of and generation of energy from renewable sources.

These characteristics, in my view, suggest China as an important strategic partner that can assist Barbados in finding new economic opportunities that support the social and economic development of our country.
III  Doing Business with China

Beginning on March 5, 2014, twenty Barbadian public and private sector representatives attended a three-week seminar on Doing Business with China, organized by the Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO) in Beijing.

Participants from the public & private sector at the Opening Ceremony of the AIBO Seminar

H.E. Dr. The Hon. Chelston Brathwaite, Ambassador of Barbados to the People's Republic of China, speaking during the official opening ceremony held at AIBO, challenged the participants to transform the information and contacts obtained into tangible and mutually beneficial trade and commercial outcomes.

Ambassador Brathwaite noted that meetings held with Barbadian private sector companies prior to his taking up official duties in China, had pointed to some existing challenges in doing business with the country. He expressed the hope therefore, that one of the key outcomes of the seminar would be to come up with solutions that could address these challenges while identifying new opportunities for the expansion of business ties.

Dr. Leroy McClean, CEO of the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (BIDC) and head of the Barbadian delegation, said the three-week visit presented a remarkable opportunity for participants to capture first-hand insights on doing business with China. He described the specialized Seminar, the first of its kind hosted for Barbadian economic and trade officials, as “a significant plank to strengthening trade relations between Barbados and China.”

In expressing his appreciation to AIBO and the People’s Republic of China, for hosting the Barbadian contingent, he noted the rapid growth in the volume of trade between Barbados and China within the last decade and pointed out that there is scope for enhanced relations in sectors such as culture, education, tourism, agriculture, water resource management and renewable energy.

The 20-member Barbadian delegation included representatives from the BIDC, the Ministry of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Invest Barbados, the Customs and Excise Department, the Central Bank of Barbados, the Barbados National Standards Institution, the Barbados Tourism Authority, the Barbados Coalition of Services Industries, the Barbados Institute of Management & Productivity, the Barbados Private Sector Trade Team and four of Barbados’ leading manufacturing firms: Lenstec, Roberts Manufacturing, Armstrong Agencies and Jays Enterprises.
During the seminar, the delegates met with senior representatives from the Chinese public and private sector, visited sites in Fujian province and participated in networking sessions with potential Chinese commercial partners.

IV  Strengthening Cultural Relations

From 29 April to May 5, 2014 a delegation, led by the Honourable Stephen Lashley, M.P., Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, visited China.

On April 30, 2014 Minister Lashley met with the Vice Minister, General Administration of Sports of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Mr. YANG Shu’An when he discussed cooperation in Sports between Barbados and China. The Minister emphasized the importance of Sports for a healthy, active nation and the role of Sports in the development of the youth of Barbados.

Also Minister Lashley met with the Minister of Culture of the People’s Republic of China, Mr. CAI Wu and signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in Culture between Barbados and China. The Minister also discussed cultural visits by Barbadians to China and Chinese cultural groups to Barbados, an invitation for participants of the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA) to participate in the Chinese New Year celebrations and the integration of Chinese drums into Barbadian pan and tuk-band experiences.

V  Barbadian Artists thrilled crowds of Chinese in Beijing

A group of Barbadian artists headed by Cultural Ambassador Anthony “Gabby” Carter and including singer Nikita Browne, keyboard player Stephan Walcott, percussionist and pianist Andre Forde, dancer/choreographer Gene Carson, filmmaker Lisa Harewood and jeweler Angela Went, thrilled crowds of Chinese at Chaoyang Park in Beijing recently.
The group was participating in the second Latin American and Caribbean Music Festival which was held from May 1-3, 2014 in Beijing. The audience of more than 9,000 persons heard the sweet music of Barbados (and the songs of Gabby and Nikita thrilled everyone). After the performance, the crowds gathered around the Barbadian artists seeking autographs and information on Barbados and its music.

Barbados’ Ambassador to China Dr. Chelston Brathwaite said that the group’s performance made Barbados proud and he encouraged the performers to continue to improve their skills. The group met with a local promoter to explore possibilities for long-term contracts in China. In addition, jeweler Angela Went’s stall proved a popular attraction. For her part, filmmaker Lisa Harewood was able to have her film shown. She also oversaw the filming of the Barbadian performance to be produced in a documentary.

VI Visit to Hong Kong

Meeting with Honorary Consul Mr. Victor Li

Barbados’ Honorary Consul in Hong Kong is Victor Li, the Managing Director and Vice Chairman of Cheung Kong Holdings limited, a Hong Kong-based multinational company employing more than two hundred and fifty thousand persons worldwide and valued by Forbes magazine at more than 25 billion US dollars.
Meeting with Barbadians

In our visit to Hong Kong we met with Dionne Lashley and Yohance Young, an English teacher and software engineer, respectively. They gave us some insights into living in Hong Kong as Barbadians and the challenges they face. They indicated that Hong Kong offers great possibilities for Barbadians who are qualified especially in Information Technology. There are few Barbadians in Hong Kong. The challenges and opportunities of living in Hong Kong was the subject of our discussions. During our visit we met with two nationals of The Bahamas who are importing Barbados rum into Hong Kong.
VII  Visit to the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM)

On April 16, 2014, I met with Mr. FANG Quichen, Deputy Director General, Americas and Oceania, Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM). MOFCOM is also the umbrella institution for the Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO) which in March 2014 organized and hosted a delegation from Barbados public and private sector representatives for a three-week seminar on “Doing Business with China” in Beijing, as well as in Fujian Province.
Mr. Fang expressed pleasure in meeting with the new Ambassador from Barbados, as he had the opportunity to visit Barbados in 2013 as part of the delegation led by Vice Minister of Commerce Mr. ZHONG Shen and remembered participating in a meeting with the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Freundel Stuart, Q.C., M.P., and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator The Honourable Maxine McClean on April 15, 2013.

Mr. Fang indicated that he looks forward to strengthening the relationship between Barbados and China and that there was a need for more effective implementation of existing agreements.

**VIII Visit to Shanghai**

The Honourable Stephen Lashley, Permanent Secretary Ruth Blackman and CEO National Cultural Foundation Cranston Browne, along with the Embassy visited Shanghai, the commercial capital of China from Saturday May 3 to Monday May 5, 2014. The Ministerial delegation visited the Power Station of Art and China Museum. At the Art Museum, they held discussions with Mr. Li Xu, Deputy Director on cooperation between the Barbados Museum and the Power Station of art Museum. At the China Museum discussions were held on museum management and the possibility of Barbados obtaining training in this area from the Museum.

**Mount Gay Rum in China**

On May 4, 2014, Ambassador Brathwaite met with Mabel Wong McCormick, Remy Cointreau (RC) Marketing Director for Greater China and Carol Cheng, Marketing Manager who are responsible for the promotion and distribution of Mount Gay rum in China. Ms. Wong indicated that the market for rum in China presently stood at 110,000 standard cases with low-priced white rum making up 70% of that market. Mount Gay, for its part, was aiming for the premium segment of the rum market in China. To achieve this goal, RC is placing Mount Gay in exclusive bars in Beijing and Shanghai, in top end retail shops and in T-mall, the premium brands area of the online sales platform, Taobao. Ms. Wong highlighted the vast potential of the Chinese market for Barbados rum.
Meeting with the Caribbean Association in China

On May 6, I met with Ms. Virginia Hunt, President of the Caribbean Association in China (CAC) and Ms. Christal Oliver, Vice President.

Ms. Hunt said the Association counted approximately 70 members. She gave an overview of the Association’s activities, which included biannual gala dinners and activities aimed at supporting a number of Chinese charities. She also indicated that the Association wanted to focus more on the Caribbean community in China, notably students. She said that a scholarship fund for Caribbean students in China was in the works. Ms. Hunt underlined the CAC’s interest in working more closely with Caribbean embassies in Beijing with a view to developing collaborative activities.

Ms. Hunt also indicated that a Caribbean-themed restaurant had recently opened in Shanghai. Although no Caribbean nationals were involved in its ownership or management, the proprietors were keen to be involved in the Association’s activities and were open to participate in other Caribbean-sponsored events. I subsequently invited Ms. Hunt and Ms. Oliver to lunch at the restaurant, named “Limbo”.

Meeting with AMICORP

Also on May 6, H.E. Chelston Brathwaite met with Mr. Leo GUAN, Managing Director, and Ms. Kelly SU marketing manager at the AMICORP offices.

Mr. Guan indicated that he had recently met AMICORP’s Barbados representative during a global AMICORP meeting in Uruguay. He said it was clear that Barbados could offer his mainland China clients an interesting solution compatible with recent trends in global tax transparency and compliance regimes. He indicated his company was interested in co-promoting Barbados along with the Embassy and other Barbados authorities. Mr. Guan said that AMICORP participated in major investment promotion events and would be prepared, once it had the right type of information, to provide its clients with information regarding Barbados.
On Friday, May 10, 2014, H.E. Chelston Brathwaite met with Mr. XIE Yuan, Vice President of CPAFFC and we discussed cooperation between Barbados and China. The discussions centered on the importance of cultural cooperation for development and the twinning of Bridgetown with one or several Chinese cities. The Vice President expressed great pleasure in receiving the Ambassador of Barbados and committed to continue efforts to strengthen cooperation and friendship between Barbados and China.

The Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) is a national people’s organization engaged in people-to-people diplomacy of the People’s Republic of China. The aims of the Association are to enhance people’s friendship, further international cooperation, safeguard world peace and promote common development.

X  China Nantong Jianghai Expo

At the invitation of the Academy for International Business Officials (AIBO), H.E. Chelston Brathwaite visited Nantong from May 27-29, to participate in the 2014 China Nantong Jianghai Expo. Nantong is located in the North Bank of the Yangtze River standing opposite Shanghai and is the most important industrial base and the closest city to Shanghai’s Pilot Foreign Trade Zone. It is one of China’s “third tier” cities with a population of some 7.5 million people. The city boasts a GDP of 81 billion US dollars in 2013. Nantong’s Economic and Technological Development Area was established in 1984. Today, the area has 700 foreign invested enterprises from over 40 countries among which they are 70 “Fortune 500” companies. They produce electronics, textiles, precision machinery, pharmaceuticals, and food products.
Ambassador in front of the backdrop of Nantong Expo

The visit to Nantong was useful in that it provided the opportunity to see the economic development of one of China’s lesser known cities but one that has a population that is rising and greater than all CARICOM countries (excepting Haiti) combined. The economic and social development of these areas, have been driven by technology, education, investment and adequate infrastructure.

XI Barbados-China Visa Waiver

Barbados and China concluded an agreement abolishing the need for visas for persons holding diplomatic and official passports who are visiting either Barbados or China. The ceremony for signature of the Agreement was held in Bridgetown on May 27, 2014.

XII Relations with Barbadian Students in China

During this period, Ambassador Brathwaite met with several Barbadian students who are studying in China and he recently prepared a letter welcoming new students enrolled in Chinese universities. Letter given below.

Dear Student

I send you greetings from the Barbados Embassy in Beijing and I wish you the very best in your studies.

As you begin a new academic year in China, I am sure that you are looking forward with enthusiasm to moving forward to the completion of a university degree in this interesting country. The challenges which you face in my view are just stepping stones to the realization of a unique goal of obtaining a degree from a Chinese university. In achieving that goal you will be joining a small group of Barbadians who have had this opportunity. This communication is to encourage you to stay
focused, stay committed and stay engaged in the studies in which you are involved and the fruits of your labour will be achieved.

Here at the Embassy, we are committed to protecting the security of Barbadians in China and will do all that we can within our very limited human and financial resources to support your efforts.

We are developing a new communication strategy for the Embassy within which we hope to maintain contact with all students in China primarily through an electronic newsletter and other electronic communication media.

I wish to encourage you to participate in this communication exercise, so that we can develop a true network of Barbadians in China and share experiences.

I attach for your information a list each of Barbadian students who are studying/are enrolled to study, in China, and we hope that it will be useful to you in maintaining contact with your colleagues.

I wish to remind you that you should be aware that it is a requirement to obtain a high grade in your Chinese language examination as a prerequisite for advancing to the study of your major.


Sincerely

Chelston W.D. Brathwaite
Visit to Xitang and Suzhou

On June 12-14, 2014, I visited along with Mr. Francois Jackman, Counsellor, the cities of Xitang and Suzhou in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, respectively. These visits were made at the invitation of Dr. Ché Corbin, a Barbadian doctor who lives in Suzhou. We visited Xitang Government facilities, the Hengtian Real Estate Company, and the China HiTech Group Corporation. The purpose of the visit was to observe initiatives to develop a green sustainable city that combines modern building concepts with sustainable livelihoods. This project, called the Lotus Ascension Project, will incorporate traditional Chinese values with nature in developing a green, sustainable smart city.

Interview with China Daily

I was invited some time ago to be interviewed by the China Daily, China’s leading English-language daily newspaper. Taking this as an opportunity to promote Barbados and the relationship we enjoy with China, I agreed and was interviewed on Friday, July 18, 2014. The video version of the interview is available at http://video.chinadaily.com.cn/2014/0730/3580.shtml.
This interview is part of a series run by China Daily called “Big Talk” which features discussions with representatives of foreign countries and international organizations. It is designed to broaden the awareness of the Chinese public regarding, inter alia, international issues and tourism. The website receives in excess of 3 million monthly “hits” and so enjoys considerable exposure both inside and outside of China.

In this regard, I have been developing a communications strategy for this Embassy of which I have annexed a draft for your attention. I believe that this sets out the principles and actions that should be pursued in communicating what Barbados has to offer in the context of its relationship with China and will go a long way in deepening our relationship.

XV  Meeting with the Ministry of Education

On June 19, 2014, I met with Mr. CEN Jianjun, Director General, Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges, Ministry of Education. Also in attendance were: Mr. GUSN Xin, Senior Program Officer, Division of American & Oceanian Affairs, Ms. ZHAO Lingshuang, Program Officer, Division of American & Oceanian Affairs, and Ms. MAO Dongmin, Deputy Director, Division for International Studies.

We discussed the following:

1. China’s international educational program for the Caribbean and the Barbados situation;

2. The Chinese team indicated that some 12 students are currently enrolled in Chinese universities from Barbados;

3. They would like to see more students from Barbados enrolled in Chinese universities;

4. I mentioned the need to explore training opportunities in sustainable energy, food production and processing and environmental issues. The Chinese team indicated their interest in supporting these areas if appropriate applications were made;

5. The team expressed an interest in Chinese students going to Barbados for training in English;

6. The team also stressed the importance of exploring the university-to-university arrangements with respect to studying in China. They promised to send the embassy more information on this aspect.
Meeting with the Director General, Department of International Cooperation

Ministry of Agriculture

On June 19, 2014, I met with Mr. WANG Ying, Director General, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, People’s Republic of China and his assistant who welcomed me and expressed his interest to discuss cooperation in agriculture between China and Barbados. He indicated that we met during the Agriculture Ministers’ Forum in 2013 with the Minister of Agriculture of China and the Minister of Agriculture in Barbados here in Beijing.

We discussed the history of cooperation between China and Barbados and he indicated that agriculture is critical to China’s development and economic progress. I indicated the critical role of agriculture in the development of Barbados especially as it relates to food security and food for tourism.

Meeting with the China Scholarship Council

On June 26, 2014, I met with Mr. CAO Shihai, Deputy Director General, China Scholarship Council (CSC). Also in attendance were: Ms. CHEN Lin, Deputy Director, Division of International Students Affairs, and Ms. WANG Yucui, Program Officer, Division of International Students Affairs.

Mr. Cao welcomed me to CSC on my first visit and gave a brief introduction of the work of the Council.

Mr. Cao stated that persons can apply directly to universities since they also offer scholarships to prospective students unrelated to the CSC program. He also stated that to study and understand China is very important and that partnerships can be strengthened through:
(i) university-to-university cooperation;
(ii) visits to Chinese universities; and
(iii) providing the CSC with information on the University of the West Indies (UWI).

I remarked that a Confucius institute is scheduled to start later this year at the UWI in Barbados. This will make the learning experience more comfortable and more rewarding.

Additional information on the CSC can be obtained on their website www.chinascholarshipcouncil.
I gave the feature address at the graduation ceremony of the Communication University of China (CUC) on June 25, 2014. At this ceremony, a Barbadian, Ms. Ruth Jordan obtained her Masters’ degree in communication. I told the audience that communication was vital in building a world that is more peaceful, more just and where there is greater understanding between different cultures.
XIX Conference marking the 60th Anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: President XI Jinping Delivers Keynote Speech

On June 28, 2014, I attended the captioned conference together with several members of the Diplomatic Corps of Beijing, including Ambassadors Chandradath Singh and David Dabydeen of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, respectively.

The address by President XI Jinping presented significant elements of the foreign policy of China.

XX Participation in the Annual Conference on Eco-Civilization held in Guiyang Guizhon Province

At the invitation of the organisers, with fellow ambassadors Ralph Thomas of Jamaica and Karl Hood of Grenada, I participated in the 6th Eco-Civilization Conference in the city of Guiyang from July 10-13, 2014. The conference was organized to address issues such as climate change, green development and environmental sustainability.

The meeting received a message from Premier LI Keqiang and a presentation by LI Yuanchao, State Vice President on China’s efforts to balance economic development and environmental protection.

XXI Promotion of the Caribbean Association of China (CAC) in Beijing

Ambassador Brathwaite invited Ms. Virginia Hunt and Crystal of the CAC to Beijing. While in the city the president addressed the Caucus of Caribbean Ambassadors and she proposed the establishment of a branch of the Association in Beijing. Caribbean Caucus members will work with the Association to achieve this goal. The Caucus is a monthly meeting of the Caribbean Ambassadors in Beijing from The Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.