

China VP Visit to Scotland 07 Jan 2011

Background Information

Last year, the First Minister led three high-level trade missions (Visit Scotland, SCDI and SDI textiles delegation) to China to pursue Sino-Scottish business opportunities in key sectors including renewable energy, tourism, education and textiles. These companies will have the opportunity to meet the Chinese delegation.

Mr Salmond's programme in Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin followed on from his successful visit to China in Easter 2009, which secured valuable partnerships for Scottish businesses.

In November, China announced that Scotch Whisky would be given legal protection with a Geographical Indication of Origin (GI) status. The deal means that any product labelled as 'Scotch Whisky' in China must be made in Scotland. Direct shipments of Scotch Whisky to China in 2009 were valued at #44 million pounds.

In July the First Minister helped leading tour operator China Holidays launch their first ever dedicated Scottish golf brochure, which will make booking a holiday in Scotland easier than ever for Chinese golfers. China has been identified as one of Scotland's most important emerging tourism markets, with an increase in visitors from 7,000 in 2005 to approximately 11,000 a year over the past three years - worth on average #7 million a year to the Scottish economy.

China's leading cashmere company, Ningxia Zhongyin, invested #6.1m in Scottish luxury cashmere yarn business Todd & Duncan in 2009, securing the future of the Kinross-based firm.

The Scottish Government is leading a sustained programme of engagement with China for the mutual benefit of both nations. On 7 May 2008 the Scottish Government published its refreshed China Plan

In line with both the Government Economic Strategy and the International Framework, the China Plan sets out the Government's aims and aspirations for Scotland's engagement with China. The Plan was developed in consultation with a number of key stakeholders across Scotland.

The Plan identifies key areas of collaboration through existing and potential links between Scotland and China in the fields of business, education, science, culture and tourism. The Plan also details a set of targets for engagement with China with which the Government, its agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies can measure progress.