

# China State Visit begins today

✘ First Minister Alex Salmond is today welcoming Vice Premier Li Keqiang and six Chinese Ministers to Scotland as the delegation starts their four-day UK state visit in Edinburgh. The Chinese delegation are being closely guarded by Lothian & Borders Police who surrounded the fleet of chauffeur driven cars at The Sheraton earlier today.

The capital will be first stop in a four-day visit with discussions focusing on Scotland's renewables and low carbon energy industry. The delegation will visit Pelamis Wave Power, based in Leith, and attend a presentation on Scotland's rapidly growing offshore wind, wave and tidal energy industry.

The delegation will undertake a series of meetings and visits with Scottish Government Ministers while in Scotland, including a meeting between the Vice Premier and the First Minister at Bute House, and a state dinner at Edinburgh Castle.

The delegation will travel to London on Monday for engagements with Prime Minister David Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg.

First Minister Alex Salmond said:-“The Scottish Government recognises the importance of strengthening Sino-Scottish links. Over the past two years I have led trade missions to China in our continuing work to increase the economic, educational and cultural bonds between our two countries.

“It is important that the Scottish Government, our agencies, businesses and educational organisations continue to do all they can to advance our relationship with China, particularly as we pursue every opportunity to build sustainable economic growth across Scotland.

“I am delighted that the Vice Premier will begin his state visit in Edinburgh and will learn more about Scotland’s rapidly growing renewable energy sector. Scotland has unrivalled natural resources and established expertise in energy engineering, particularly offshore and the Scottish Government is committed to working with China in this sector.

“China already has the largest deployment of on-shore renewable technology , and Scotland is a world-leader in pioneering the technology and application of clean, green off-shore energy. Therefore, the economic opportunities for Scotland are enormous in terms of wind and marine energy technology developers and manufacturers, and for potential investors across the world. Many Scottish energy companies such as the Glasgow based Sgurr Energy have already entered the Chinese market and this visit will help to showcase the innovation and skills that Scotland’s green energy sector offers.

“I look forward to welcoming this high-powered delegation to Scotland and leading discussions to advance our relationship with China.”

✘ Chief executive of Scottish Development International Anne MacColl said:-” Scotland is strong in many of China’s key strategic growth sectors such as renewable energy, life sciences and financial services and increasing trade between Scotland and China as well as expanding business and academia connections between our two countries is recognised as key to the future growth of the Scottish economy. This state visit will signal an encouraging start to 2011 for further developing and strengthening Sino-Scottish links.”

✘ Accompanying the Vice Premier in Edinburgh will be:

Vice Minister of Commerce and China International Trade Representative Gao Hucheng

Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Fu Ying

Vice Minister of Railways Wang Zhiguo

Deputy Secretary-General of the State Council You Quan

Vice Chairman, National Development and Reform Commission Xu Xianping

Deputy Head of the State Council Research Office Ning Jizhe

Vice Governor of the People's Bank of China Yi Gang.

The delegation will also be accompanied by the Chinese Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Liu Xiaoming, and the Scottish Consul General, Madam Tan.

Last year, the First Minister led three high-level trade missions (VisitScotland, 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.

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.

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.