

First Minister visiting China

The First Minister, the Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon, is in China from tomorrow 9 April until 13 April.

The purpose of her visit is to promote economic, cultural and educational links between Scotland and China which is the world's second largest economy.

Ms Sturgeon will visit Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong and will have a series of high level and government meetings. There will also be an opportunity for her to see some education showcases and cultural events.

Ms Sturgeon was last in China in 2015 and is an effort to strengthen ties between the two countries. Our exports to China are increasing faster than to any of our other top five export partners. Last year our exports to China rose more than 40%.

With a direct flight from Edinburgh Airport to Hainan it is clear that tourism and perhaps business are expected to grow.



Hong Kong street

When she announced her visit, the First Minister said: "I am

delighted to be visiting China to promote the long-standing friendship between our two countries.

“Since my last visit three years ago, the economic and cultural links between Scotland and China have gone from strength to strength, underlined by the recent strong export figures and the new direct Edinburgh-Beijing flight route announced last week.

“As the world’s second largest economy, there are huge opportunities for Scottish companies to work with China. I will be travelling with the message that Scotland is a fantastic place to invest, to do business, to study and to visit on holiday.

“During my visit I will meet with senior Chinese Government representatives and I look forward to exploring new ways that our two countries can work together for the mutual benefit of all our people. As with my previous meetings, we will continue to talk about the importance of equality of opportunity and respect for human rights.”



Liz Cameron OBE, Director and Chief Executive of Scottish Chambers of Commerce, said: “This visit is a great example of how business and government can mobilise our respective

strengths to do what's best for the Scottish economy and forge new international business alliances. Our highest priority is to make sure that Scotland remains open for business to the rest of the world. That means being able to trade and invest easily with international markets, and Scotland remaining an attractive destination for inward investment.

"The Chamber Network's Business Mission to China will see Scottish companies meet directly with Chinese suppliers, investors and buyers, providing commercial business opportunities and partnership exchanges. With our dedicated Scottish Trade Office in Yantai, coupled with Scotland's entrepreneurial business diaspora and the unparalleled reach of the Scottish Chamber Network, I am confident we will deepen the business to business relationships between Scotland and China and grow our economy."

Karen Betts, Chief Executive at the Scotch Whisky Association, said: "We're very pleased that the First Minister is going to China, where there are many exciting exporting opportunities for Scottish businesses, including, for Scotch Whisky. This visit is a chance to forge even closer ties with the world's largest spirits market, both now and into the future.

"As Scotland's largest food and drink export, accounting for £4.36bn in trade and supporting thousands of jobs in Scotland, China represents a huge opportunity for growth for Scotch Whisky. Exports to China increased by 47% last year along as more Chinese consumers start appreciating the heritage, craft and quality of Scotch."