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Message from
The Rt Hon David Cameron MP,
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

I am delighted to welcome President Xi Jinping and his wife Madame Peng Liyuan on a State Visit to the United Kingdom – the first by a Chinese leader for ten years. It will help to pave the way to a new golden era for UK-China relations, as we build a global partnership fit to tackle the challenges of the 21st Century.

This visit follows my own visit to China in 2013 and will continue what has been an extremely important and constructive year for our relationship with China. His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge made his first visit to China in March, the most senior member of the Royal Family to visit since Her Majesty The Queen in 1986. This has been followed by a series of high-level meetings, including a visit to the UK by Vice Premier Madame Liu Yandong to build our people-to-people links, and visits to China by the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The State Visit will showcase the best of the UK-China relationship, building our global partnership, increasing our trade and investment links and strengthening our economies for the future.

We have made great progress since the last State Visit, by President Hu Jintao, in 2005. The value of UK exports has quadrupled and we are now the second largest European exporter to China, as well as the second largest European investor in China. In the last five years, Chinese investment in the UK has grown by an astonishing 85 per cent per

year, and the UK has become the leading major European destination for investment from China, with almost 30 per cent of the total last year.

Our people-to-people ties have grown rapidly. We have 135,000 Chinese students studying in Britain; and last year, more than half a million Chinese visitors came to the UK. We have also expanded our diplomatic networks, with new Consulates General in Wuhan and Belfast and boosted our regional links, most recently when civic leaders from the North of the UK took part in the Chancellor's trip to China.

Globally, China and the UK have worked together with other partners on urgent and important shared challenges. Following the outbreak of the Ebola virus, the UK and China were among key countries leading the response in Sierra Leone. The UK was the first major European country to become a prospective founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. And as members of the P5, we helped to broker the Iran nuclear deal.

I look forward to discussions with President Xi to build on these successes, and to welcome him and Madame Peng to Chequers as well as accompanying him on a visit to Manchester. During the visit the President will see, first-hand, some of our cooperation in action. I hope that, as well as being the highlight of a special year, this visit will mark the beginning of an even stronger partnership of constructive engagement between our two countries. **E**

Rt Hon David Cameron MP,
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland