

Urban League China Trip Could be Beneficial for All

If there is one city that doesn't gain enough fame for its grand historical sights and fast economic growth, Beijing is that city. From Tianjin's high-speed Railway Station, to the Forbidden City and the world famous Great Wall of China – it's no wonder China's capitol receives over a million tourists each year, and 2010 will be no different.

I, along with approximately 39 other African American delegates representing the best in business, entrepreneurship, education, media and political thought were hand picked by The People's Republic of China to attend the China Cultural and Trade summit. The delegation of African American leaders were selected by the convener - the National Urban League – and sent to Beijing to build cultural and socioeconomic bridges to the world's third-largest economy. The group, representing the largest African-American delegation ever to visit China, embarked on a five-day journey of Chinese culture and cuisine, while both business and community leaders sought to explore business opportunities and cultural partnerships with American urban centers.

China extended its welcome with site visits to the Great Wall of China, Drum-tower Culture Street, the environmental protection agency at Tianjin University, and the Tianjin Urban Planning Exhibition Center. The goal was to build a firm relationship through cultural exchanges between African-Americans and Chinese communities. Both parties are looking to explore potential business opportunities that may increase participation in international markets, and Chinese partnerships in urban U.S. communities.

Excitingly, the Chinese Department of Education agreed to open a Confucius Institute at Xavier University, a historically black college in New Orleans. Chinese officials will also create a student and teacher exchange between China and the Los Angeles Public School System. Confucius Institutes are non-profit public institutions that promote the Chinese language and culture. Chinese officials also discussed a strategy for small and medium enterprises wanting to do business in China.

In addition, Chinese officials talked about hosting a cultural and trade exhibit at this year's National Urban League Centennial Conference in Washington, DC on July 29 – 31, 2010. It is important to note that the Chinese have extensively studied African-American culture and know our history better than we do although they have limited contact with us. They were also very curious to learn how a minority race comprising a mere 13 percent of the U.S. population, managed to elect an African-American president!

In conclusion, the China Cultural and Trade Summit was mutually beneficial for all parties concerned. I believe that the Chinese government is interested in developing a comprehensive partnership with all aspects of the United States and American culture, but it is imperative for us to be prepared. In the very near future China will become the largest economic superpower in the world.