Good evening and please allow me to extend a very warm welcome to the University of The West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.

Thank you for your kind introduction Mr. Bulbulia and for this opportunity to address this evening’s distinguished gathering.

The hosting of the Second Confucius Institute’s (CI’s) Lecture this evening, together with the CI Day lecture in September, are significant aspects of a wide ranging and vigorous programme which the CI spearheads on behalf of the entire UWI Cave Hill Campus. It is a clear indication of the steady, ongoing integration of the CI as a valuable institution on the Cave Hill Campus calendar and to academic life in general.
With the expanding role of China in the global economy, the Caribbean must be prepared to make critical decisions about the direction it takes, as a region. The University of the West Indies, and specifically the Cave Hill Campus, is mindful of this and has demonstrable capacity to assist the region with the home grown advice needed to facilitate these decisions.

It was with this in mind, that I presented a proposal to our partner university, the China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL), during our June 2018 Board Meeting, for the Cave Hill Campus to host two activities devoted to the Belt and Road Initiative, China’s flagship foreign policy thrust. This proposal was readily agreed by our partner university, the CUPL, and for this we extend our greatest appreciation.

I am therefore pleased to welcome Professor Hongsheng Ren, Associate Dean, School of Politics and Public Administration, China University of Political Science and Law who will speak on the topic “One Belt One Road and the Development of the Caribbean Region”. His lecture will no doubt afford invaluable insights and key details into China’s global foreign and trade policy. I must add that Professor Ren, at very short notice, has agreed to replace Professor Chunlong Lu, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Academic Affairs Office, CUPL, who has taken ill and could not be with us this evening. I am sure you will join me in extending best wishes for his full recovery.

This evening’s lecture may be seen as the appetizer in what is expected to be a feast of knowledge to be generated on the Belt and Road Initiative. As many of you are aware, tomorrow the Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies
(SALISES) will host a Symposium on the implications of China’s internationalization process for the Caribbean. This will focus on the topic “Navigating Globalisation – China’s Belt and Road Initiatives and Implications for the Caribbean”. The symposium will, in the words of SALISES Director and Senior Fellow, Dr. Don Marshall, critically review the implications of the People’s Republic of China Belt and Road Initiative on Caribbean Development and of the Global South. It will also feature analytical extrapolations of the unfolding dynamics within China-Caribbean relations and those of other developing regions.

We at the Cave Hill Campus are very excited about the scope of these two related events given The UWI’s current research thrusts.

I cannot, however, allow this moment to pass without some words about the Cave Hill Campus CI which has been at the forefront of helping to make all this possible. The CI here at the Cave Hill Campus continues to grow from strength to strength as it approaches the fourth anniversary of its establishment in April this year. We have benefited from the steady leadership of Dr. Qingbao Song, the co-Director from our partner university, the CUPL, who continues to afford us the benefits of his long experience as a veteran of the CI global network. Last year from April, he has been joined by Mr. David Bulbulia, seconded from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade after some thirty-five years as a Foreign Service Officer. The Ministry’s temporary loss of Mr. Bulbulia is the temporary gain of the Cave Hill Campus, even as the Ministry did welcome back Mr. François Jackman, who is here with us this evening and for the symposium tomorrow, as Ambassador of Barbados to China.

The CI continues to expand and consolidate its teaching across the Barbadian landscape. From the start of the last academic year, it has added the Springer
Memorial School and the Charles. F. Broome Primary School to the public schools where it teaches Chinese language and culture, having started (naturally) with the Ellerslie School and the St Stephen’s Primary School. We look to the CI expanding teaching to other schools in the next academic year, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training.

The CI has continued teaching Chinese language and culture courses to students enrolled in the BSc in Software Engineering: Mobile Applications under the UWI – China Institute of Information Technology programme. The first cohort of twenty-seven (27) students comprising nine (9) students from the Cave Hill Campus have started the China component of their programme. This degree programme not only has the potential to promote bicultural and bilingual Caribbean graduates, but it also offers the region highly specialized-skilled graduates in the burgeoning field of mobile technology applications. I visited the first cohort of students at their campus at the Global Institute of Software Technology in December and despite the cold weather, I found them in good spirits in well-appointed teaching and living facilities.

The CI has also continued its teaching programme at the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity (BIMAP). The work of the CI with BIMAP ranks among its key undertakings. Given BIMAP’s role in preparing persons for the world of business, the Institute is ideally located to assist business persons to connect with China and expand cooperation with China especially in the area of business. We at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus look forward to continuing ongoing collaborations with BIMAP in this joint undertaking.

We should also note that at the beginning of this academic year, the Cave Hill Campus has introduced a minor in Chinese in the Faculty of Humanities and
Education with the help of the CI. We look forward to the consolidation and expansion of this programme, a first step towards the offering of a BA in Chinese and Asian Studies.

Our Confucius Institute remains the first and only official testing site in the Eastern Caribbean for certified proficiency in the Chinese language. The CI has administered six series of HSK and YCT examinations with ninety three (93) students sitting the HSK and forty nine (49) sitting the YCT, with the latter being taken by students from Ellerslie secondary school, the first class of secondary students anywhere in the Eastern Caribbean to do so. Efforts are underway to place the HSK exams on-line, in keeping with the UWI Smart Campus initiative and the emphasis on increasing access to the teaching services offered by the campus.

The CI at the Cave Hill Campus, is also actively engaged in preparing a range of groups, both students and professionals, for their respective programmes in China. Over the years, the CI has held orientation classes for Barbadians receiving scholarships to pursue undergraduate or postgraduate studies in China. This is essential training as the students, many of whom are being taught in Chinese, and must pass rigorous tests in Chinese within a short period of arriving in China. From this year the CI, in cooperation with the Embassy of China, is planning to expand the duration of its orientation for such students to at least three (3) or four (4) months in order to give them a better head start to adapting in their new environment.

The CI also offers, on request, short orientation programmes for delegations visiting China on official business including most recently persons staffing the Barbados exhibits at the China International Import Expo held in Shanghai last November and
delegations on familiarization programmes in a range of areas including culture and renewable energy.

At the regional level, the CI at the Cave Hill Campus has assisted the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) with the development of the curriculum for the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC), the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) certification in Mandarin which is expected to provide access for every school child between the ages of 11-18 in eighteen (18) Caribbean territories to a course of study leading to certification in Chinese. The launch is now expected this year, as the CXC is developing a language framework to guide the development of all foreign languages which resulted in a delay in the presentation of Mandarin and Dutch for teaching in 2018. The CI has continued to assist the CXC in taking forward this initiative which holds such far reaching prospects for the region.

Exciting times are ahead for the CI as it continues to support the efforts of the Cave Hill Campus in broadening the scope of its activities in the teaching of Chinese language and culture. It has become apparent that we must rapidly increase the cadre of local teachers, and by local, I mean Barbadian and Caribbean teachers, of Chinese language and culture. The projected demand for trained teachers in Chinese simply cannot be met only through the assignment of teachers from China. Moreover, if we are to take greater responsibility for our teaching, this cannot be the final option. I am therefore pleased to announce that in the months ahead the Cave Hill Campus will continue to explore options with partners in China for further cooperation in areas such as enrolling more students to study in China, overseas Chinese Teachers’ training programs, teacher certification in the teaching of Chinese, promoting joint
degree programs, facilitating student and teacher exchanges between universities, curriculum development, the local development of teaching materials, cooperation in research and the holding cultural exchange activities and international forums, which are all expected to create many benefits for both sides. I have held very fruitful discussions in this regard with Vice President of the Beijing Language and Culture University, President Zhang Baojun.

In summary, the CI at the Cave Hill Campus continues to play a leading role in promoting intercultural communication, cultural exchange and in expanding the scope of the region’s connection with China.

As we look forward to our next Meeting of the CI Board, together with the International Moot Court, both of which are scheduled to be held here at the Cave Hill Campus this year, I am assured that, together with our partner, the China University of Political Science and Law, we will continue to generate exciting new ideas in pursuit of the interest of the Caribbean region in strong, collaborative relations with the People’s Republic of China.

I thank you.

Professor V. Eudine Barritteau, GCM  
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal

January 28, 2019