

NEW ZEALANDER HONOURED BY CHINA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

Former race relations conciliator, Hiwi Tauroa was recently conferred with the honorary title of "Friendship Ambassador" by the *Chinese People's Association For Friendship With Foreign Countries* (CPAFFC).

The presentation of this title was made by the CPAFFC Vice President Li Xiaolin, at a special ceremony held for Mr Tauroa and Professor Bill Wilmott in Beijing on 13 September.

The CPAFFC is recognised as the earliest-founded and most influential nongovernmental friendship organisation in China. The diplomacy work of CPAFFC is closely associated with China's governmental diplomacy and is focussed on developing friendship relations, safeguarding peace and promoting development. To date, the CPAFFC has established regular cooperative relations with some 370 nongovernmental organisations in more than 120 countries.

In the past four years, the CPAFFC has received 972 delegations with 11,000 persons from more than 60 countries and it has sent 316 delegations involving 3000 people to 52 countries and regions.

In the presentation speech, Vice President Li Xiaolin said " Friendship Ambassador is an honorary title conferred upon those international friends who not only enjoy high prestige at home, but more importantly are long devoted to the cause of friendship and have worked tirelessly to help their own people correctly understand China, to foster and strengthen the friendship between the two peoples and made significant contributions towards such cause"

Vice President Xiaolin acknowledged Mr Tauroa's achievements in New Zealand in the field of education, health, human rights and sports and especially his long service in personally leading Maori delegations to China and hosting Chinese delegations visiting New Zealand.

Mr Tauroa's diplomacy work in China commenced in 1974 when he visited the late Rewi Alley in Beijing. That meeting led to the establishment of a Maori Chinese friendship association, which was given the name ChinMa by Rewi Alley. Since that time, Mr Tauroa has personally led delegations involving some 100 Maori sector leaders to China and has hosted as many leaders from China.

Over The past 48 years, the CPAFFC has conferred the title of Friendship Ambassador on 40 individuals. Remarkably, four of these have been to New Zealanders. Mr Tauroa is the first Maori to have received this title.

The latest presentation to Mr Tauroa in Beijing, favourably positions New Zealand in the CPAFFC preparations for the setting up of the regional China-Oceania Friendship Association, which is currently underway.

ENDS

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