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National People's Congress of China

**WORKING TOGETHER TO
DELIVER A BRIGHTER
FUTURE FOR BELT AND
ROAD COOPERATION**

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President Xi Jinping chairs and addresses the leaders' roundtable of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation on April 27. Li Tao



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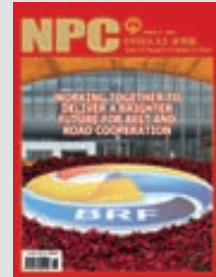
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Working together to deliver a brighter future for Belt and Road cooperation

Keynote speech by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, at the opening ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation Beijing, April 26, 2019

Your excellencies heads of State and government,
Your excellencies high-level representatives,
Your excellencies heads of international organizations,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Friends,

Good morning! As a line of a classical Chinese poem goes, "Spring and autumn are lovely seasons in which friends get together to climb up mountains and write poems." On this beautiful spring day, it gives me great pleasure to have you with us here at the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF). On behalf of the Chinese government and people and in my own name, I extend a very warm welcome to you all!

Two years ago, it was here that we met for the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, where we drew a blueprint of cooperation to enhance policy, infrastructure, trade, financial and people-to-people connectivity. Today, we are once again meeting here with you, friends from across the world. I look forward to scaling new heights with you and enhancing our partnership. Together, we will create an even brighter future for Belt and Road cooperation.

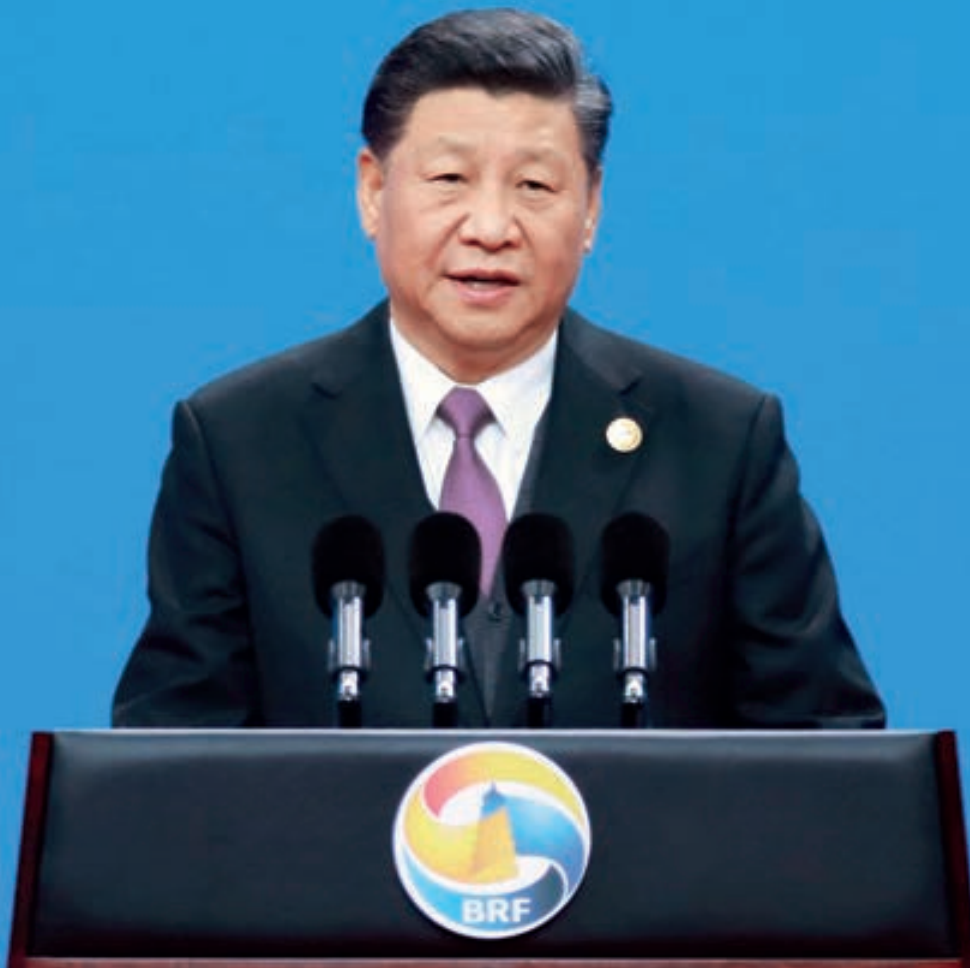
Dear colleagues and friends,

The joint pursuit of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to enhance connectivity and practical cooperation. It is about jointly meeting various challenges and risks confronting mankind and delivering win-win outcomes and common development. Thanks to the joint efforts of all of us involved in this initiative, a general connectivity framework consisting of six corridors, six connectivity routes and multiple countries and ports has been put in place. A large number of cooperation projects have been launched, and the decisions of the first BRF have been smoothly implemented. More than 150 countries and international organizations have signed

agreements on Belt and Road cooperation with China. The complementarity between the BRI and the development plans or cooperation initiatives of international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the Eurasian Economic Union and between the BRI and the development strategies of the participating countries has been enhanced. From the Eurasian continent to Africa, the Americas and Oceania, Belt and Road cooperation has opened up new space for global economic growth, produced new platforms for international trade and investment and offered new ways for improving global economic governance. Indeed, this initiative has helped improve people's lives in countries involved and created more opportunities for common prosperity. What we have achieved amply demonstrates that Belt and Road cooperation has both generated new opportunities for the development of all participating countries and opened up new horizon for China's development and opening-up.

An ancient Chinese philosopher observed that "plants with strong roots grow well, and efforts with the right focus will ensure success." The Belt and Road cooperation embraces the historical trend of economic globalization, responds to the call for improving the global governance system and meets people's longing for a better life. Going ahead, we should focus on priorities and project execution, move forward with results-oriented implementation, just like an architect refining the blueprint, and jointly promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

- We need to be guided by the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. We need to act in the spirit of multilateralism, pursue cooperation through consultation and keep all participants motivated. We may, by engaging in bilateral, trilateral and multilateral



President Xi Jinping delivers a speech at the opening ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on April 26. Pang Xinglei

cooperation, fully tap into the strengths of all participants. Just as a Chinese proverb says, “A tower is built when soil on earth accumulates, and a river is formed when streams come together.”

- We need to pursue open, green and clean cooperation. The Belt and Road is not an exclusive club; it aims to promote green development. We may launch green infrastructure projects, make green investment and provide green financing to protect the Earth which we all call home. In pursuing Belt and Road cooperation, everything should be done in a transparent way, and we should have zero tolerance for corruption. The Beijing Initiative for Clean Silk Road has been launched, which represents our strong commitment to transparency and clean governance in pursuing Belt and Road cooperation.

- We need to pursue high standard cooperation to improve people’s lives and promote sustainable development. We will adopt widely accepted rules and standards and encourage

Going ahead, we should focus on priorities and project execution, move forward with results-oriented implementation.

participating companies to follow general international rules and standards in project development, operation, procurement and tendering and bidding. The laws and regulations of participating countries should also be respected. We need to take a people-centered approach, give priority to poverty alleviation and job creation to see that the joint pursuit of Belt and Road cooperation will deliver true benefits to the people of participating countries and contribute to their social and

economic development. We also need to ensure the commercial and fiscal sustainability of all projects so that they will achieve the intended goals as planned.

Dear colleagues and friends,

Connectivity is vital to advancing Belt and Road cooperation. We need to promote a global partnership of connectivity to achieve common development and prosperity. I am confident that as we work closely together, we will transcend geographical distance and embark on a path of win-win cooperation.

Infrastructure is the bedrock of connectivity, while the lack of infrastructure has held up the development of many countries. High-quality, sustainable, resilient, affordable, inclusive and accessible infrastructure projects can help countries fully leverage their resource endowment, better integrate into the global supply, industrial and value chains, and realize inter-connected development. To this end, China will continue to work with other parties to build a connectivity network centering on economic corridors such as the New Eurasian Land Bridge, supplemented by major transportation routes like the China-Europe Railway Express and the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor and information expressway, and reinforced by major railway, port and pipeline projects. We will continue to make good use of the Belt and Road Special Lending Scheme, the Silk Road Fund, and various special investment funds, develop Silk Road theme bonds, and support the Multilateral Cooperation Center for Development Finance in its operation. We welcome the participation of multilateral and national financial institutions in BRI investment and financing and encourage third-market cooperation. With the involvement of multiple stakeholders, we can surely deliver benefits to all.

The flow of goods, capital, technology and people will power economic growth and create broad space for it. As a Chinese saying goes, “The ceaseless inflow of rivers makes the ocean deep.” However, were such inflow to be cut, the ocean, however big, would eventually dry up. We need to promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, say no to protectionism, and make economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all. To this end, we will enter into negotiation with more countries to conclude high-standard free trade agreements, and strengthen cooperation in customs, taxation and audit oversight by setting up the Belt and Road Initiative Tax Administration Cooperation Mechanism and accelerating international collaboration on the mutual recognition of Authorized Economic Operators. We have also formulated the Guiding Principles on Financing the Development of the Belt and Road and published the Debt Sustainability Framework for Participating Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative to provide guidance for BRI financing cooperation. In addition, the Second China International Import Expo will be held this year to build an even bigger platform for other parties to access the Chinese market.

Innovation boosts productivity; it makes companies competitive and countries strong. We need to keep up with the trend of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, jointly seize opportunities created by digital, networked and smart development, explore new technologies and new forms and models of business, foster new growth drivers and explore new de-



velopment pathways, and build the digital Silk Road and the Silk Road of innovation. China will continue to carry out the Belt and Road Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation Action Plan, and will work with our partners to pursue four major initiatives, namely the Science and Technology People-to-People Exchange Initiative, the Joint Laboratory Initiative, the Science Park Cooperation Initiative, and the Technology Transfer Initiative. We will actively implement the Belt and Road Initiative Talents Exchange Program, and will, in the coming five years, offer 5,000 opportunities for exchange, training and cooperative research for talents from China and other BRI participating countries. We will also support companies of various countries in jointly advancing ICT infrastructure building to upgrade cyber connectivity.

Imbalance in development is the greatest imbalance confronting today's world. In the joint pursuit of the BRI, we must always take a development-oriented approach and see that the vision of sustainable development underpins project selection, implementation and management. We need to strengthen international development cooperation so as to create more opportunities for developing countries, help them eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. In this connection, China and its partners have set up the Belt and Road Sustainable Cities Alliance and the BRI Inter-



Leaders take a group photo at the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on April 27. Yao Dawei

We need to strengthen international development cooperation so as to create more opportunities for developing countries.

national Green Development Coalition, formulated the Green Investment Principles for the Belt and Road Development, and launched the Declaration on Accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals for Children through Shared Development. We have set up the BRI Environmental Big Data Platform. We will continue to implement the Green Silk Road Envoys Program and work with relevant countries to jointly implement the Belt and Road South-South Cooperation Initiative on Climate Change. We will also deepen cooperation in agriculture, health, disaster mitigation and water resources; and we will enhance development cooperation with the United Nations to narrow the gap in development.

We need to build bridges for exchanges and mutual learning among different cultures, deepen cooperation in educa-

tion, science, culture, sports, tourism, health and archaeology, strengthen exchanges between parliaments, political parties and non-governmental organizations and exchanges between women, young people and people with disabilities in order to facilitate multi-faceted people-to-people exchanges. To this end, we will, in the coming five years, invite 10,000 representatives of political parties, think tanks and non-governmental organizations from Belt and Road participating countries to visit China. We will encourage and support extensive cooperation on livelihood projects among social organizations of participating countries, conduct a number of environmental protection and anti-corruption training courses and deepen human resources development cooperation in various areas. We will continue to run the Chinese government scholarship Silk Road Program, host the International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads and the “Chinese Bridge” summer camps. We will also put in place new mechanisms such as the Belt and Road Studies Network and the Belt and Road News Alliance to draw inspiration and pool our strength for greater synergy.

Dear colleagues and friends,

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. Seven decades ago, through

the arduous struggle carried out by several generations of Chinese people and under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, New China was founded. We Chinese have since stood up and held our future in our own hands.

Over the past seven decades, we in China have, based on its realities, constantly explored the way forward through practices, and have succeeded in following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Today, China has reached a new historical starting point. However, we are keenly aware that with all we have achieved, there are still many mountains to scale and many shoals to navigate. We will continue to advance along the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, deepen sweeping reforms, pursue quality development, and expand opening-up. We remain committed to peaceful development and will endeavor to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Going forward, China will take a series of major reform and opening-up measures and make stronger institutional and structural moves to boost higher quality opening-up.

First, we will expand market access for foreign investment in more areas. Fair competition boosts business performance and creates prosperity. China has already adopted a management model based on pre-establishment national treatment

China will take a series of major reform and opening-up measures and make stronger institutional and structural moves to boost higher quality opening-up.

and negative list, and will continue to significantly shorten the negative list. We will work for the all-round opening-up of modern services, manufacturing and agriculture, and will allow the operation of foreign-controlled or wholly foreign-owned businesses in more sectors. We will plan new pilot free trade zones and explore at a faster pace the opening of a free trade port. We will accelerate the adoption of supporting regulations to ensure full implementation of the Foreign Investment Law. We will promote supply-side structural reform through fair competition and open cooperation, and will phase out backward and excessive production capacity in an effective way to improve the quality and efficiency of supply.

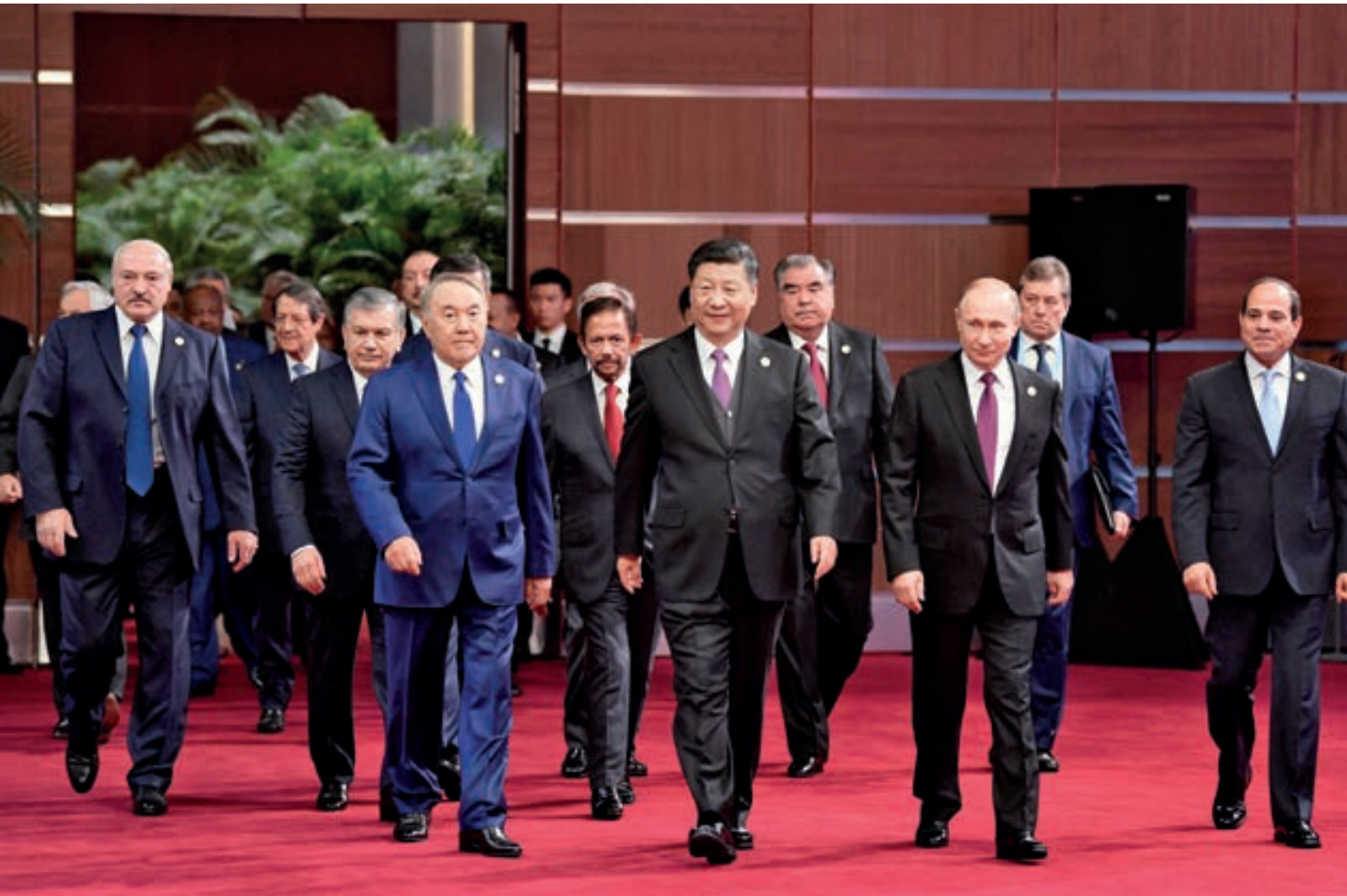
Second, we will intensify efforts to enhance international cooperation in intellectual property protection. Without innovation, there will be no progress. Full intellectual property protection will not only ensure the lawful rights and interests of Chinese and foreign companies; it is also crucial to promoting China's innovation-driven and quality development. China will spare no effort to foster a business environment that respects the value of knowledge. We will fully improve the legal framework for protecting intellectual property, step up law enforcement, enhance protection of the lawful rights and interests of foreign intellectual property owners, stop forced technology transfer, improve protection of trade secrets, and crack down hard on violations of intellectual property in accordance with law. China will strengthen cooperation with other countries in intellectual property protection, create an enabling environment for innovation and promote technological exchanges and cooperation with other countries on the basis of market principles and the rule of law.

Third, we will increase the import of goods and services on an even larger scale. China is both a global factory and a global market. With the world's largest and fastest growing middle-income population, China has a vast potential for increasing consumption. To meet our people's ever-growing material and cultural needs and give our consumers more choices and benefits, we will further lower tariffs and remove various non-tariff barriers. We will steadily open China's market wider to quality products from across the world. China does not seek trade surplus; we want to import more competitive quality agricultural products, manufactured goods and services to promote balanced trade.

Fourth, we will more effectively engage in international macro-economic policy coordination. A globalized economy calls for global governance. China will strengthen macro policy coordination with other major economies to generate a positive spillover and jointly contribute to robust, sustainable, balanced and inclusive global growth. China will not resort to the beggar-thy-neighbor practice of RMB devaluation. On the contrary, we will continue to improve the exchange rate regime, see that the market plays a decisive role in resource allocation and keep the RMB exchange rate basically stable at an adaptive and equilibrium level. These steps will help ensure the steady



The colorful floral decorations are ready for the upcoming Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on April 14. VCG



Leaders step into the meeting hall for the opening ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation on April 26. *Li Xueren*

growth of the global economy. Rules and credibility underpin the effective functioning of the international governance system; they are the prerequisite for growing international economic and trade relations. China is an active supporter and participant of WTO reform and will work with others to develop international economic and trade rules of higher standards.

Fifth, we will work harder to ensure the implementation of opening-up related policies. We Chinese have a saying that honoring a promise carries the weight of gold. We are committed to implementing multilateral and bilateral economic and trade agreements reached with other countries. We will strengthen the building of a government based on the rule of law and good faith. A binding mechanism for honoring international agreements will be put in place. Laws and regulations will be revised and improved in keeping with the need to expand opening-up. We will see that governments at all levels operate in a well-regulated way when it comes to issuing administrative licenses and conducting market oversight. We will overhaul and abolish unjustified regulations, subsidies and practices that impede fair competition and distort the market. We will treat all enterprises and business entities

equally, and foster an enabling business environment based on market operation and governed by law.

These measures to expand opening-up are a choice China has made by itself to advance its reform and development. It will promote high-quality economic development, meet the people's desire for a better life, and contribute to world peace, stability and development. We hope that other countries will also create an enabling environment of investment, treat Chinese enterprises, students and scholars as equals, and provide a fair and friendly environment for them to engage in international exchanges and cooperation. We are convinced that a more open China will further integrate itself into the world and deliver greater progress and prosperity for both China and the world at large.

Dear colleagues and friends,

Let us join hands to sow the seeds of cooperation, harvest the fruits of development, bring greater happiness to our people and make our world a better place for all!

In conclusion, I wish the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation a full success!

Thank you! ■



Colorful floral decorations for the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on April 25. VCG

A new stage

The Belt and Road Initiative advances after years of hard work and development

By Yu Lintao

Despite some governments and people in the West conjuring up arguments of “neocolonialism” or a “debt trap” to smear the Belt and Road Initiative, the China-proposed blueprint for common development of the world is becoming increasingly welcome. The success of the second gathering of world leaders to discuss the development of the initiative in Beijing showed that.

The Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) held on April 25-27 gathered some 5,000 participants from more than 150 countries and 90 international organizations, including heads of state and government and

leaders from the UN and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The number was much more than the participation in the First BRF two years ago.

President Xi Jinping proposed to build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, collectively known as the Belt and Road Initiative, in 2013.

The Belt and Road Initiative is about jointly meeting various challenges and risks confronting mankind and delivering win-win outcomes and common development, Xi said at the opening ceremony of the Second BRF.

“The Belt and Road cooperation embraces the historical

trend of economic globalization, responds to the call for improving the global governance system and meets people's longing for a better life," he added.

In its sixth year of development, more and more people have become familiar with the Belt and Road Initiative and realize they need to engage with it, said Kerry Brown, director of the Lau China Institute at King's College, London. He noted that becoming part of the initiative conforms to the interests of other participating countries, and is a tangible way to engage with China, the second largest economy in the world. Though some countries still don't, they are in the minority.

During the forum, cooperation agreements worth over \$64 billion were signed at a CEO conference. To date, 126 countries and 29 international organizations have signed agreements with China under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, with Italy and Luxembourg the latest signatories.

Expanding partnership

German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said during the Second BRF that EU countries have signaled their willingness to participate in the initiative and are planning to sign a memorandum of understanding as a group. This belies the forecast by naysayers that the initiative will only develop into an alliance of developing nations.

Former French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said the European recognition of the Belt and Road Initiative has improved vastly from questioning to understanding it. The countries that stay outside the initiative may lose a historic opportunity for further development, he added.

Yang Jian, deputy president of the Chinese think tank Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS), called the initiative an engine of development in a world faced with common challenges such as uncertainties and instability.

"The reason why the Belt and Road Initiative is gaining wider and wider recognition is that besides promoting the development of participating countries, it has also contributed to the recovery of the world economy after the global financial crisis, and conforms to the UN Sustainable Development Goals," Yang said.

Also, the third-party market cooperation that the Belt and Road Initiative advocates enables developed countries to play a vital role, he said. With the participation of more Western developed countries, the misunderstanding over the initiative will be dispelled. Effective resource allocation and deep market integration among developed and developing countries in Belt and Road construction will create a win-

win situation, Yang said.

In an interview with the Chinese media before heading to Beijing, Ueli Maurer, president of the Swiss Confederation, said the Belt and Road Initiative is a rare, long-term plan that has created a new dimension for the development of the world economy.

Globalization is the key to global development, and to achieve globalization, infrastructure construction at various levels is indispensable. The Belt and Road Initiative is a future-oriented project that will contribute to globalization. Everyone can benefit from improving and upgrading infrastructure, he said.

According to Patrick Mendis, a visiting professor at Peking University, by its design and nature, the Belt and Road Initiative is the new accelerator for greater cooperation and collaboration among people and nations.

"For European countries, China has already established itself as a reliable partner for mutual benefits," Mendis said.

For a better world

The Belt and Road Initiative was launched to enhance cooperation and connectivity. Under it, a connectivity framework consisting of six corridors, six connectivity routes and multiple countries and ports has been put in place. East Afri-

The Belt and Road cooperation embraces the historical trend of economic globalization.



The Seminar on International Cooperation Projects under the Belt and Road Initiative is held in Zhengzhou, Central China's Henan Province by National Development and Reform Commission on March 14. VCG

ca has its expressway, the Maldives saw its first inter-island bridge come up, Belarus is producing sedans, and the number of freight trains between China and Europe is on the rise.

Tajik President Emomali Rahmon called the Belt and Road Initiative a multi-faceted “bridge” that can help unlock the transit potential of his landlocked country and enable it to access markets worldwide.

“The Belt and Road Initiative implies creating a new model of international cooperation by strengthening the existing mechanisms, as well as seeking and implementing new mechanisms, with the aim of stimulating the economic development of the countries involved,” Rahmon said.

During the Second BRF, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said in today’s world of geopolitical uncertainty, rising inequality and trade barriers, the Belt and Road Initiative offers a model of collaboration, partnership, connectivity and shared prosperity. He called the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor not a transaction but a transformation of Pakistani society.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad told the media that he fully supports the Belt and Road Initiative. “In the promotion of relations between countries, the distance as well as the speed of travel is very important. With this scheme, I am quite sure more ships will be passing near Malaysia and Southeast Asian countries and therefore it will increase trade between Southeast Asia and China,” he said. “I am sure my country, Malaysia, will benefit from the projects.”

Over the past years, Belt and Road cooperation has expanded from the Eurasian continent to Africa, the Americas and Oceania, opening up new space for the world economy with better-than-expected results. China’s development achievements have been shared with other Belt and Road participating countries as its huge demand for imports and increasing outbound investment has generated enormous growth opportunities.

China’s direct foreign investment in other countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative has exceeded \$80 billion. The total trade volume between China and those countries topped \$6 trillion in the 2013-18 period, during which more than 244,000 jobs were created locally.

For instance, in Kenya, the Chinese-funded and built Standard Gauge Railway linking Nairobi and Mombasa, called the “project of the century,” has created 50,000 local jobs and boosted the country’s economic growth by 1.5 percent. According to a World Bank study, the Belt and Road Initiative will increase the GDP of East Asian and Pacific developing countries by 2.6 percent to 3.9 percent on average.

Belt and Road 2.0

In his speech, Xi announced a package of proposals to advance high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative, calling on the international community to join hands to work out a “meticulous painting” of the initiative.

The principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits should be upheld, Xi said, stressing open, green and clean approaches, as well as high-standard goals for improving livelihoods and sustainable development.

Observers said the Belt and Road Initiative is entering a new stage of development.

“The first stage was setting the framework, docking strate-

gies and building partnerships with other participating countries. Now, the new stage of development means implementation with concrete steps and appropriate approaches. That is what we call from blueprint to meticulous painting,” said Zhai Kun, a professor at Peking University.

Since the participants have different levels of development and different infrastructure systems, it is quite natural that the Belt and Road Initiative will evolve from time to time in order to attract different stakeholders, the professor said.

Mendis said the best organizations in the world are the “learning organizations” that adapt and change accordingly. “As the best corporate practice, the governance of the Belt and Road Initiative must then adjust and refine its policies and actions to meet the needs of changing circumstances on the grounds,” he added.

Yang of the SIIS said Xi’s new proposals will dispel misgivings about the initiative. The open, green and clean approaches as well as sustainable development of the Belt and Road construction that Xi stressed will help alleviate fears about the initiative being a debt trap or a form of neocolonialism. It will also improve transparency of Belt and Road projects.

IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde hailed the Chinese Government for taking positive steps with a new debt sustainability framework and green investment principle for Belt and Road projects.

“Debt sustainability and green sustainability will strengthen Belt and Road Initiative sustainability,” Lagarde said.

Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum, who attended the First BRF as well, told the media that when the First BRF took place, the Belt and Road Initiative was “still a child growing up.” But “now the initiative has become an adult, which means that it has become an important factor in the global economy. It has grown up,” he emphasized. (Beijing Review) ■

Infrastructure connectivity Under the Belt and Road Initiative

Six Major Corridors:

- New Eurasian Land Bridge
- China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor
- China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor
- China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor
- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
- Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor

Six Connectivity Routes:

- Railways
- Roads
- Ports
- Air transport
- Energy facilities
- Communication facilities

(Compiled by Beijing Review)



Delegates of participating States on the opening ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation on April 26. *Ju Peng*

Connecting hearts

The Belt and Road Initiative helps promote people-to-people connections

By Lu Yan

During his world exploration voyages in the 14th century, China's Admiral Zheng He led fleets of thousands of ships and tens of thousands of people to the Red Sea, establishing cultural exchanges between China and countries along the route, including Saudi Arabia.

Centuries later, a joint China-Saudi Arabia archaeological exploration team from the National Cultural Heritage Administration and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) followed Zheng's footsteps to the Al-Serrian site in Saudi Arabia's Al-Qunfudah to carry out archaeological work to find imprints of ancient maritime trade.

"The Belt and Road Initiative enables such archaeological cooperation projects to bring together the peoples from our two countries, which both have long civilizations and rich cultures," Dr. Abdullah Al-Zahrani, general director of the Archaeological Research Studies at SCTH and a team leader of the China-Saudi Arabia archaeological crew, told the reporter during the Thematic Forum on People-to-People Con-

nectivity of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) held in Beijing on April 25. He noted that he hopes to look for more opportunities for archaeological cooperation between China and Saudi Arabia during his trip to Beijing.

According to Al-Zahrani, under the joint program, Saudi Arabian researchers came to China and exchanged archaeological techniques. Along with promoting historical research, such joint archaeological work also enables the two peoples to gain a better understanding of each other.

In 2016, the Roads of Arabia expo came to the National Museum of China in Beijing, showcasing more than 300 Saudi Arabian antiques, while two years later, the China Treasures exhibition was held at the Riyadh National Museum. The over 250 items on display helped Saudi Arabians to learn about Chinese history and culture.

Promoting people-to-people bonds is one of the focuses of the Belt and Road Initiative. Marked results can be seen since the initiative was proposed in 2013 by President Xi Jinping.

To promote cultural exchanges among Belt and Road participating countries, international alliances and leagues have been established covering museums of the Silk Road, theaters, art festivals, libraries, and art museums and galleries.

According to the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, an affiliation to the Ministry of Commerce, by the end of 2017, China had signed cultural cooperation agreements with 157 countries and nearly 800 action plans on cultural exchanges in total. Thus a cultural exchange and cooperation network covering major countries and regions has taken shape.

Promoting tourism

Cultural tourism cooperation between China and other countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative presents a diversified and brand-building trend. Tourism Year events have been carried out between China and countries like Kazakhstan, Nepal and Laos; in addition, a series of dialogues and activities have been held, including the World Conference on the Development of Tourism, the Tourism Ministerial Meeting of Countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt, the Silk Road International Culture Forum and Belt and Road sessions at international film festivals, among others.

Nearly 30 Chinese international cultural and tourism brands have been established, including Happy Spring Festival, Travel to the Silk Road, the Visiting Program for Young Sinologists, Chinese Culture Talk, Travel to the Grand Canal, Travel to the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau (Sky Way) and the Arabic Arts Festival. In 2018, Happy Spring Festival was held in 53 Belt and Road participating countries.

Moreover, a number of measures have been introduced to facilitate personnel flow. In November 2017, China's State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Public Security jointly issued the Measures for the Implementation of the Foreign Talent Visa System to further increase the scope and duration of talent visas.

Since January 1, five Chinese cities, namely Xiamen, Qingdao, Chengdu, Kunming and Wuhan, have adopted a 144-hour visa-free transit policy for foreigners, which allows air passengers who have an onward ticket with a confirmed seat and date to a third country or region from 53 qualified countries, including Russia, the U.S., the UK, France and Germany, to transit and stay for up to 144 hours without a visa.

In terms of outbound travel, Chinese citizens can now visit over 70 countries and regions without a visa or by obtaining a visa upon arrival. China has established a full reciprocal visa-free policy with 14 countries including the UAE, Serbia, Belarus, Qatar and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while 15 countries and regions provide Chinese citizens with the privilege of visa-free entry and 44 offer visas on arrival. China has also concluded 71 agreements (or made arrangements) to simplify visa procedures with 42 countries.

In 2018, a total of 149.72 million outbound trips were made by Chinese tourists, while foreign travelers made 30.54 million trips to China, according to statistics from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The number of people involved in two-way tourism exchange between China and other Belt and Road partici-

pants is expected to exceed 85 million, as tourism reaches about \$110 billion by 2020, according to a green book on tourism released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in January.

"Tourism can connect people's values in different countries," said Laura Chavarro, senior manager of American Continent, World Tourism Cities Federation. The federation has organized meetings and other activities to promote tourism and tourism-related business between China and Latin America. She said she believes that tourism between China and Latin America will increase with the further development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Educational exchanges

Educational cooperation is another major part of cultural exchanges under the initiative. The Chinese Government has provided scholarships for around 10,000 students from countries along the Belt and Road each year. By November 2018, it had established cultural exchange mechanisms with Russia, the U.S., France, the UK, the European Union, Indonesia, South Africa and Germany; set up educational cooperation and exchange relationships with 188 countries and regions; and conducted educational cooperation and exchange with 46 major international organizations, according to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Learning Chinese and studying in China have gained popularity among young people who are influenced by "Chinese language fever" aroused by the initiative. Vice Minister of Education Tian Xuejun noted during the Second BRF that China has established 154 Confucius Institutes and 149 Confucius Classrooms in 54 Belt and Road participating countries.

Tian said in the future, intergovernmental educational cooperation will be upgraded and exchanges will be deepened, so as to cultivate more professionals to facilitate Belt and Road construction.

Better lives

Pan Xiangbin is a cardiologist at Fu Wai Hospital and an active participant in medical exchanges and assistance programs under the Belt and Road Initiative. In November 2018, during a business trip to Uzbekistan, Pan operated on a local pregnant woman who was suffering from heart failure symptoms, using an advanced percutaneous intervention therapy developed by his team and ultimately saving her life. In March, he heard the good news that the woman had successfully given birth to a healthy baby.

"The Belt and Road Initiative has played an important role in connecting people's hearts in terms of medical and health work," Pan said, adding that he is willing to share what his team has achieved in the medical field with countries that need assistance.

Cooperation on public health has delivered broad benefits to people. From the prevention and control of contagious diseases and health assistance to talent cultivation and promotion of traditional Chinese medicine, China has made consistent efforts to deepen cooperation in the health field with other Belt and Road participants.

The Chinese Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Health Sector Cooperation under the Belt and

Road Initiative with the World Health Organization, while the Brightness Action medical assistance project has benefited a number of cataract patients in Africa and Asia.

In addition, China has cooperated with Central and Eastern European countries in such areas as the prevention and control of contagious and chronic diseases and vaccinations; worked with Southeast Asian countries like Myanmar, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand to launch a joint control

program on resistance to anti-malarial drugs; and furthered cooperation with Central Asian countries on the control of tuberculosis.

Pan said that besides treating patients, doctors like him also help train colleagues in Belt and Road participating countries and introduce them to advanced medical techniques and technologies. "In this way, more people can regain health," he said. (Beijing Review) ■

Belt and Road Initiative makes solid progress, embraces brighter future

Six years on, the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative has delivered tangible benefits to all participating countries and regions, taking shape as a new solution to imbalanced global development and a road toward a brighter future for humanity.

A report published on April 22 elaborated on the progress, contributions and prospects of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The document, compiled by the office of the leading group for promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, came in ahead of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation to be held from April 25 to 27 in Beijing.

Solid progress

The Belt and Road Initiative, proposed by China in 2013, aims at building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient Silk Road trade routes to seek common development and prosperity.

So far several solid steps have been taken.

-- A broad consensus has been reached. Its core concepts have been written into documents from the United Nations, G20 and APEC. By the end of March 2019, China had signed 173 cooperation agreements with 125 countries and 29 international organizations.

-- Infrastructure connectivity has been enhanced. Six major economic corridors connect the Asian economic circle with the European economic circle. The number of China-Europe freight trains surpassed 14,000

by March.

-- Unimpeded trade has been promoted. A network of free trade areas has taken shape, with goods trade between China and other Belt and Road countries reaching 1.3 trillion U.S. dollars in 2018, up 16.4 percent year on year.

-- Financial integration has been strengthened. Financing programs jointly launched by the People's Bank of China and multilateral development institutions has topped 100 and covered over 70 countries and regions. Chinese banks have briskly set up overseas branches, and the renminbi payment systems have expanded.

-- People-to-people ties have become closer. Fruitful results have been achieved in education, tourism and visa exemption, health and medicine, and poverty reduction.

-- New growth drivers have been built. From 2013 to 2018, China's direct investment in the areas surpassed 90 billion U.S. dollars, and the turnover of contracted projects topped 400 billion dollars. It has signed agreements on industrial cooperation with more than 40 countries, including Kazakhstan and Brazil.

Contribution to world

The Belt and Road Initiative has become an initiative for peaceful development and economic cooperation, the report said. "It is a process of open, inclusive and common development, not an exclusionary bloc or a 'China club.'"

It "is not a zero-sum game" and "is meant for mutual benefits and win-win and all-win outcomes," the report said.

Thanks to the Belt and Road Initiative, China's development achievements have been brought to other Belt and Road countries as its huge demand for imports and increasing outbound investment generated enormous growth opportunities.

According to the quantitative trade model of a World Bank study, the Belt and Road Initiative will increase the GDP of East Asian and Pacific developing countries by 2.6 percent to 3.9 percent on average.

"New momentum has been brought to the world economic recovery as efforts have been made to support multilateralism and multilateral trade system and promote free trade and investment in jointly building the Belt and Road," said Xiao Weiming, an official of the office of the leading group for promoting the Belt and Road Initiative. "New contributions were also made to the improvement of global governance."

Road to brighter future

Although China will face many problems and challenges in pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative in the future, there will be unprecedented opportunities for development, the report said.

"The Belt and Road Initiative will become a road of peace, prosperity, opening up, green development, innovation, connected civilizations, and clean government," the report said. "It will make economic globalization

become more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all."

-- Peace and security are the prerequisite and guarantee for building the Belt and Road.

-- With focus on development, the growth potential of participating countries will be unleashed and economic integration and coordinated development will be achieved. Benefits will be shared by all participants.

-- As the principle of inclusive and win-win cooperation will be maintained, efforts will be made to build an open cooperation platform and promote an open world economy.

-- A vision of green development and a way of life and work that is green, low-carbon, circular and sustainable will be pursued.

-- Innovation will be a major driver of the Belt and Road development, with more measures to support technological innovation cooperation and stronger protection of intellectual property.

-- Efforts should also be made to establish a multi-tiered mechanism for cultural and people-to-people exchanges, and build more cooperation platforms and channels.

-- Clean government is the moral principle and the legal red line that should never be crossed in Belt and Road cooperation.

Under the Belt and Road cooperation, ideas have been turned into action and vision into reality. "For the world, the Belt and Road Initiative has offered a public platform of seeking common development and prosperity and an important platform for building a community with a shared future for humanity," Xiao said. (Xinhua)



The Yuxi railway bridge in Southwest China's Yunnan Province, which is the first four-lane railway bridge of China-Laos Railway realizes closure on January 16. *Chen Chang*

Sharing benefits

The Belt and Road Initiative promotes development

Centuries ago, on the backs of camels and by ship, through sun-scorched deserts and turbulent waves, merchants and explorers traveled back and forth along the ancient land and maritime Silk Road and galvanized trade and contact between East and West.

Today, China, inspired by the legacy of this historical commercial route, has proposed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), seeking to pool the efforts of the world to blaze a new

path towards shared development and common prosperity.

Flourishing BRI cooperation has over the years helped nurture faster trade and investment flows, allowed for easier financial access, and created more extensive people-to-people exchanges across Asia, Europe, Africa and beyond.

There are a few reasons behind the BRI's productivity and popularity. First of all, it stems from the spirit of openness, inclusiveness and mutual benefit.

Two years ago, when addressing the opening of the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF), Chinese President Xi Jinping said, "We are ready to share practices of development with other countries, but we have no intention to interfere in other countries' internal affairs, export our own social system and model of development, or impose our own will on others. In pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, we will not resort to outdated geopolitical maneuvering."

Within the BRI cooperation framework, China has advocated and practiced the principle of "extensive consultation, joint development and shared benefits," seeking self-development while at the same time bringing opportunities, experience and capital to its BRI partners and the broader world as well.

As testimony to the BRI's relevance and significance in today's world, its vision has been included in documents of major international institutions and cooperation platforms, including the United Nations, the Group of 20, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Second, the BRI provides a platform for fostering closer ties between countries.

Guided by the Silk Road spirit, the initiative aims to promote cooperation in five major areas -- policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, trade, finance and people-to-people exchanges.

Policy coordination is key to smooth cooperation. Beijing never tries to impose the BRI on others but pays close attention to aligning the initiative with the development strategies of its BRI partners. So far, it has signed policy agreements with other BRI participants on rules and standards, taxation, intellectual property protection and disputes settlement.

Infrastructure development has also made notable headway. In Greece, co-managed by China's COSCO SHIPPING, the Piraeus port has seen its container handling capacity increase fivefold since 2010 to 4.9 million TEUs last year. It now ranks 36th among the top 100 ports worldwide on the Lloyd's List, a major industry parameter, up from the 93rd when COSCO SHIPPING first joined. Other connectivity projects in areas including railways, roads, air transport, energy, and telecommunications have also made visible progress.

These projects have delivered business opportunities not just for Chinese companies, but also for enterprises around the world. For example, in building a wind corridor in Pakistan's Sindh province, U.S. multinational conglomerate General Electric is contracted to work with PowerChina and provide wind turbines. The U.S. company will also provide 10 years of operation and maintenance services.

Thanks to the China Railway Express freight trains shuttling between China and Europe, Chinese companies registered in the western German city of Duisburg have grown from about 40 in 2014 to over 100

now. Freight services there have increased from three trains per week to around 40, stimulating local economic growth and creating over 6,000 jobs.

On financial cooperation, China works with its BRI partners and major global financial institutions to ensure a diversified and strong flow of funds for key BRI-related projects.

Since its launch in 2016, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has become one of the key multilateral platforms for BRI construction, and has won growing global trust and recognition.

As of the end of 2018, the AIIB had 93 members, and had approved loans of 7.5 billion U.S. dollars on 35 projects in 13 countries including Indonesia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Oman, Turkey and Egypt.

Third, the BRI is trying to help lay down a new path to more prosperous global trade, a more open world economy, and more inclusive economic globalization.

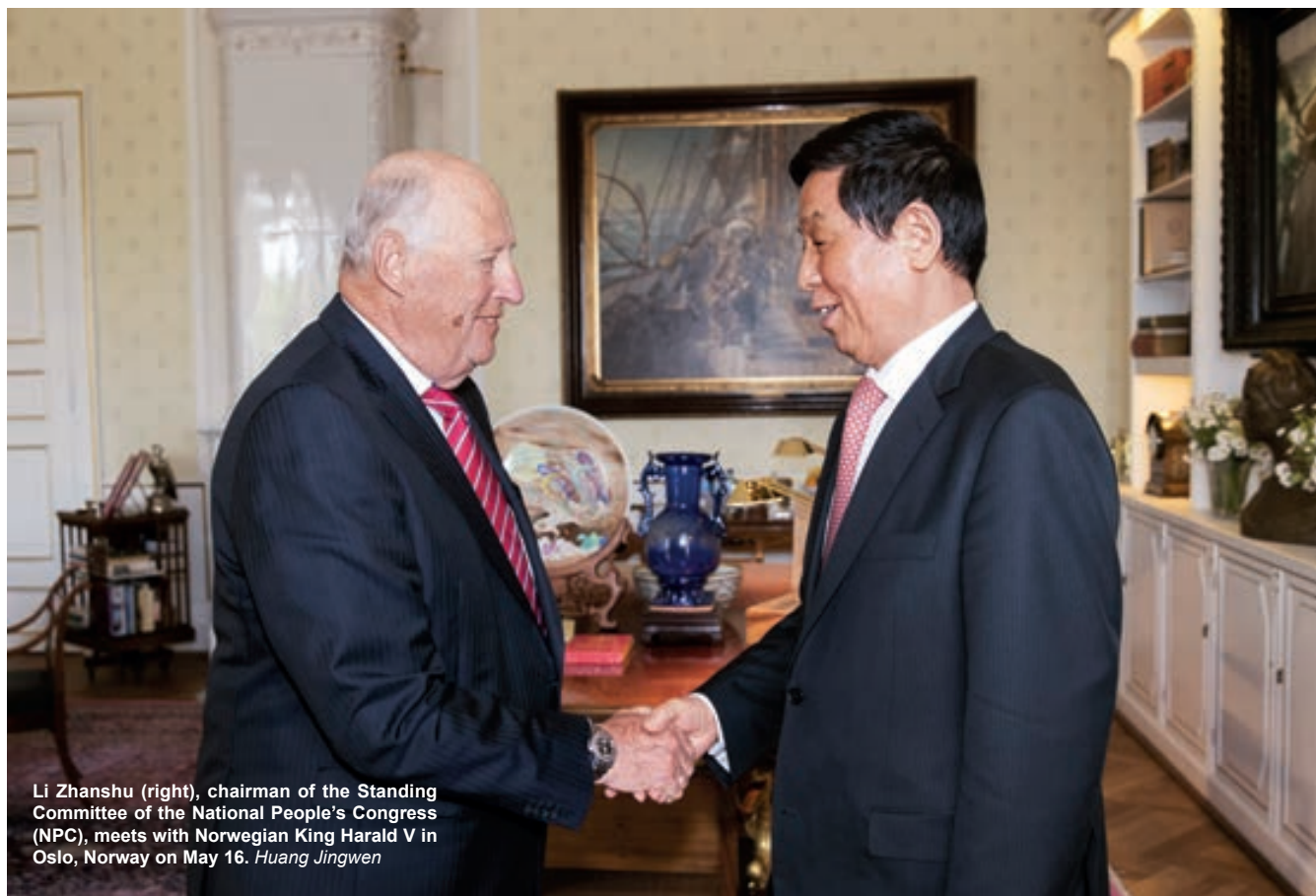
Over the past six years, total trade between China and other countries participating in the BRI has exceeded 6 trillion dollars, and China's investment in these countries has surpassed 80 billion dollars. Also, the latest studies by the World Bank and other international institutions show that BRI cooperation will cut the costs of global trade by 1.1 to 2.2 percent and contribute at least 0.1 percent of global growth in 2019.

Also, the BRI is making a difference that ordinary people can feel. A recent World Bank report shows that BRI-related investments can help lift 8.7 million people from extreme poverty and 34 million from moderate poverty in a variety of countries.

The 82 cooperation parks jointly built by China and 24 participating countries have created more than 2 billion dollars in tax revenue and about 300,000 jobs for host countries. (Xinhua) ■



The newly opened China-Maldives Friendship Bridge is officially named "Sinamale Bridge" on September 18, 2018. VCG



Li Zhanshu (right), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), meets with Norwegian King Harald V in Oslo, Norway on May 16. *Huang Jingwen*

Top legislator visits Norway, Austria and Hungary

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC), paid an official friendly visit to Norway, Austria and Hungary from May 15 to 24 at the invitation of President of the Norwegian parliament Storting Tone Wilhelmsen Troen, Austrian National Council President Wolfgang Sobotka and Federal Council President Ingo Appe, and Hungarian Parliament Speaker Laszlo Kover.

To promote bilateral ties with Norway

Chairman Li Zhanshu visited Norway from May 15 to 18 to promote the development of Sino-Norwegian ties to score more progress.

During the stay in Norway, Li met with Norwegian King Harald V, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg and President of the Norwegian parliament Storting Tone Wil-

helmsen Troen.

When meeting with Norwegian King Harald V, Li conveyed the greetings of President Xi Jinping to the King, and expressed congratulations on the Norwegian National Day, which falls on May 17.

Li said during the King's successful visit to China last year, the two heads of State made strategic plans for the development of bilateral relations in the new era. As this year marks the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Norway, the two sides are expected to seize the opportunity to cement friendship and expand cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and treating each other equally, so as to realize better development of bilateral relations.

Harald V expressed gratitude to China's friendliness to the Norwegian side, saying Norway admires China's tremendous development achievements. He said Norway is

ready to strengthen cooperation with China in such fields as winter sports, and will make efforts to help China successfully host the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

When meeting with Solberg, Li said although Sino-Norwegian relations have experienced ups and downs, friendship and cooperation has always been the main theme of the ties. As both countries share common interests on safeguarding current global mechanism, building an open world economy, the two sides should jointly support multilateralism and free trade. Moreover, the two countries have similar development concepts and share strong economic complementarities, so the outlook of bilateral cooperation is very broad.

Norway is welcome to actively participate in the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative. And bilateral cooperation on economy, trade, environmental protection, science and technology, people-to-people exchanges and tourism is expected to be forged ahead, said China's top legislator.

"China hopes the Norwegian side provides a fair, just and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese enterprises' investment and operation in Norway," said Li.

Solberg said bilateral cooperation has maintained sound momentum since the normalization of bilateral ties, expecting the two sides to push forward talks on inking a free trade deal and deepen cooperation in such areas as maritime affairs, shipping, fishery and environmental protection. She also voiced the will to advance communication and collaboration with China on issues concerning the United Nations, coping with the climate change and Arctic affairs.

When respectively meeting with Troen and members of the parliament's standing committee on foreign affairs and defense, Li introduced China's development path and political system.

"The reasons why China continues to make new development achievements are that we have embarked on a development path that suits our national conditions. This is the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics," said Li, stressing that the Chinese people will unswervingly follow this path.

He said that the NPC of China is willing to work with the Norwegian parliament to implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, strengthen friendly exchanges at all levels, enhance understanding and trust through frank dialogues, and create a favorable environment for pragmatic cooperation.

Troen said that this visit is of great significance as Li's tour marks the first visit of a Chinese leader since the normalization of bilateral relations in 2016. The Norwegian parliament is willing to carry out all-round exchanges and cooperation with the NPC of China, and make positive contributions to the development of State-to-State ties.

The two legislators also exchanged views on jointly safeguarding multilateral trade system, sustainable development and other issues of common concerns.

On May 16, Li attended the economic and trade conference in commemoration of the 65th anniversary of Norway-China diplomatic relations. He said in a speech that President Xi's proposal of the high-quality development of jointly building the Belt and Road and the policy of China's

further expansion of opening up have provided new opportunities for the common development of all countries. The two countries' enterprises are expected to seize the opportunity, tap cooperation potentials, so as to translate the desire for strong cooperation into more practical results.

During the tour, Li visited the Chinese skiers who were training in Norway and encouraged them to train hard and carry out bilateral friendship.

He also visited a local ecological agriculture project, an oil gas processing plant, and met with local officials in Norway's southwestern county of Rogaland and its southern city of Stavanger.

To tap cooperation potentials with Austria

Chairman Li Zhanshu visited Austria from May 18 to 21, where he met with Austrian leaders on promoting bilateral ties and expressed China's stance on upholding multilateralism and free trade.

In meeting with Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen, Li conveyed Chinese President Xi Jinping's greetings.

He said during the Austrian president's State visit to China in April last year, the two countries' heads of State jointly established a new orientation for bilateral ties, which pushed forward the ties to usher in a new stage.

"China is willing to work together with the Austrian side to implement the important consensus of the two heads of State and promote the in-depth development of cooperation in various fields," said Li.

During the meeting, Li and Van der Bellen also exchanged in-depth views on issues of common concerns, including free trade, climate change, and the Iranian nuclear issue.

Li said China always adheres to the principle of mutual respect, equal treatment, mutual benefit and common development in dealing with the relationship between countries.

"Maintaining multilateralism and free trade is the common responsibility of the international community. Unilateralism and trade protectionism are not in line with the world trend," said Li, adding that unilateral withdrawal and unilateral sanctions will not only harm other countries but also harm the interests of the countries which take the moves.

Li said China advocates that economic and trade differences should be resolved through negotiation and consultation. In the meantime, people who conduct negotiations must follow a bottom line and some principles, conform to international trade rules, adhere to equality, mutual benefit, and non-discrimination, and resolutely oppose "long-arm jurisdiction".

China is willing to work with countries including Austria to uphold multilateralism and free trade, work together to address global challenges, and promote the building of a community of shared future for the mankind, said Li.

For his part, Van der Bellen spoke highly of the development of bilateral ties, and highly appreciated China's positive role in global affairs. He said that the Austrian side shares the same or similar position with China on many issues.

The two sides should strengthen communication and coordination in international and regional affairs, support liberalization and facilitation in trade and investment, jointly address climate change, and promote friendly cooperation to yield more results, the president said.

When meeting with Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, Li said jointly building the “Belt and Road” has become a new growth point for bilateral cooperation. The two sides should adhere to the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and continuously explore and tap the potential of cooperation.

Li called on the two countries to deepen cooperation in fields like high-end manufacturing, energy conservation, environmental protection, ecological agriculture, tourism, and finance. And the two sides are expected to actively explore innovative cooperation in such area as the Internet, big data, artificial intelligence and 5G technology.

Noting China is preparing for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games, Li said China will learn from Austria’s experience, and carry out cooperation in athlete training, winter sports education and research, and winter sports equipment.

“China always regards Europe as a comprehensive strategic partner and an important global power which is indispensable,” said Li, adding that China is happy to see Europe maintain unity, stability, openness and prosperity, and supports the integration process in Europe.

Kurz said that the Belt and Road Initiative has set up a new platform for equal cooperation among the countries in the world. China is Austria’s largest trading partner in Asia, and the two countries have strong economic complementarities.

Noting the two sides share strong aspiration of deepening cooperation, Kurz said the cooperation potential is huge, and more investment from Chinese companies as well as more Chinese tourists are welcome to Austria.

In his respective talks with Austrian National Council President Wolfgang Sobotka and Federal Council President Ingo Appe, Li said the cooperation between the two countries’ legislative bodies should “closely follow the pace of development of State-to-State relations,” through cementing mutual understanding and exchanging experience on such areas as legislative supervision in regular visits, so as to create a good law environment for pragmatic cooperation.

Noting that people-to-people and cultural exchanges have always been the most active part of China-Austria relations, Li called on the legislative bodies to “respond to the voices of the people” by promoting cooperation in art, music, sports, and local areas, and advancing exchanges among young people.

The two leaders of the Austrian parliament expressed the willingness to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the National People’s Congress of China, saying the Austrian side highly values the development of ties between the two countries. They will promote the implementation of



Li Zhanshu (left), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC), meets with Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen in Vienna, Austria on May 20. Shen Hong

the bilateral cooperation agreement, and forge ahead personnel and culture exchanges between the two countries.

During his stay in Austria, Li also met with regional officials from Salzburg to discuss cooperation between local areas of the two countries. Li and Van der Bellen also attended a ceremony in which a giant panda from China was officially handed over to the Austrian side.

To inject impetus into ties with Hungary

As this year marks the 70th anniversary of Sino-Hungarian diplomatic ties, the latest visit to Hungary by Chairman Li Zhanshu injected an impetus into the traditional friendship between two countries.

When meeting with Hungarian President Janos Ader on May 22, Li firstly conveyed Chinese President Xi Jinping’s greetings.

Li said after China and Hungary lifted bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2017, the relationship entered a new stage featuring a “speeding-up” development. It is hoped that the two sides will take the opportunity of 70th anniversary of ties to implement the important consensus reached by the two leaders, deepen political mutual trust and expand pragmatic cooperation in various fields.

During the meeting, the two sides also exchanged in-depth views on environmental and resource protection. Li said that protecting the ecological environment and coping with climate change requires countries to work together, as no country can stand aloof.

China and Hungary should closely communicate and coordinate, strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the fields of eco-environmental protection and green development, in efforts to contribute to the building of a clean and



Li Zhanshu (left), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), meets with Hungarian President Janos Ader in Budapest, Hungary on May 22. *Huang Jingwen*

beautiful world, said Li.

Ader said that Hungary regards China as an important strategic partner and the relationship is developing with good momentum and broad prospects.

Both Hungary and China attach great importance to environmental and resource protection, and they can deepen cooperation in such areas as water pollution prevention and management, water resources development and utilization, said Ader.

When meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on May 23, Li said since the establishment of diplomatic ties 70 years ago, relations between the two countries have maintained a smooth and healthy development.

Hungary is the first European country to sign an inter-governmental cooperation agreement with China over the Belt and Road Initiative.

Noting that the Hungarian government's "Opening to the East" policy accords with the Belt and Road Initiative, Li called on the two sides to strengthen synergy of development strategies, deepen the cooperation potential in such fields as economy, trade, investment, science and technology, agriculture and interconnection.

Li also expected the two countries to actively promote major projects cooperation, such as Hungary-Serbia railway, to create more high-quality cooperation results.

"China is willing to work with the Hungarian side to continuously promote the cooperation between China and the Central and Eastern Europe, and the development of China-Europe relations," Li said.

Also on May 23, Li attended the opening ceremony of a seminar to celebrate the 70th anniversary of bilateral ties, stressing that the two countries should adhere to sincere treatment with each other, mutual respect, mutual benefit and people-to-people friendship, and jointly write a new

chapter of China-Hungary friendship in the new era.

In the meeting with Orban, Li pointed out that maintaining multilateralism and free trade is the consensus of most countries in the world.

"China does not deliberately pursue a trade surplus, and is willing to resolve trade differences between countries through negotiation on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit," Li said, stressing that China upholds to protect each other's interests and in the meantime to demonstrate the principle of non-discrimination under the premise of international trade rules, and advocates to conduct overall considerations and balance all parties' concerns.

"Despite the impact of some external factors, the Chinese economy has still maintained a healthy and stable development, and we are full of confidence in the Chinese economy," said Li.

Orban said that the Hungarian side firmly supports and actively participates in the Belt and Road Initiative and is willing to work with China to jointly safeguard the free trade system and promote the economic develop-

ment in the Eurasian area.

The cooperation between the two sides in various fields has been very successful, and it is necessary to further expand and enhance bilateral cooperation, Orban said.

During the talks with Hungarian Parliament Speaker Laszlo Kover on May 22, Li said that the National People's Congress of China will maintain friendly relations with the Hungarian parliament and draw on experience on legislation and supervision, to forge ahead mutual understanding and trust, and optimize the rule of law environment for bilateral cooperation.

Li also called on the two legislative bodies to actively promote culture, education, tourism and sports exchanges and cooperation.

"To estimate whether the path and the system chosen by a country is good or not, people should consider if it can achieve sustainable and stable development, improve people's livelihood, be supported by the people, and promote human civilization and social progress," said Li.

"We firmly adhere to the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, while respecting and supporting all countries' development paths chosen independently by themselves that suit their national conditions," said Li.

Kover said that Hungary-China relations are in the best period of history and still have great potential for development. He expected the two legislative bodies to conduct close exchanges at all levels, continuously enrich the contents of cooperation, and better facilitate the countries' development.

During Li's three-day visit to Hungary, he also visited a Hungarian-Chinese bilingual school, the European logistics center of information and communications technology giant Huawei, and a China-Europe logistics cooperation park for trade and business. (Xinhua) ■

Li Zhanshu inspects enforcement of water pollution control law

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) sent four teams of lawmakers to inspect enforcement of the water pollution control law in eight provincial-level regions across the country from late March to June.

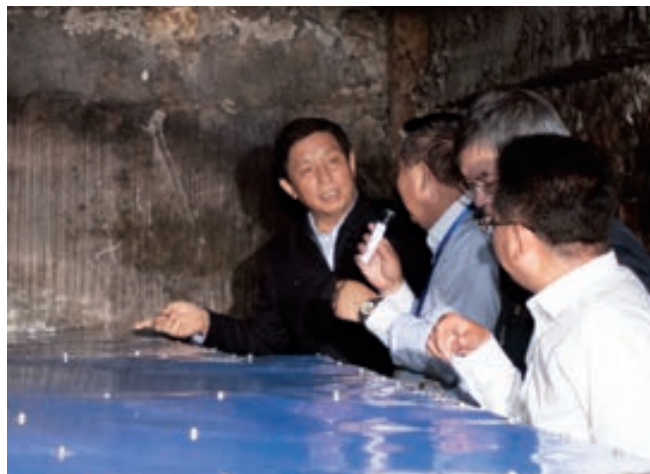
In addition to sending inspection teams, the NPC Standing Committee also entrusted standing committees of the remaining provincial-level people's congresses to inspect the enforcement of the law within their jurisdictions.



Li Zhanshu (1st R, front), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, inspects the treatment of urban domestic sewage at a sewage treatment plant in East China's Jiangsu Province on June 3. *Huang Jingwen*



Li Zhanshu (2nd R), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, hosts and delivers at the first plenary meeting on the enforcement of water pollution control law on March 25. *Yan Yan*



Li Zhanshu (1st L), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, inspects sewage discharge at a liquor-making enterprise in Southwest China's Sichuan Province on April 10. Yan Yan

First plenary meeting on the enforcement of water pollution control law

The inspectors convened their first plenary meeting on March 25.

The inspection is a concrete action taken by the NPC Standing Committee to implement decisions and plans of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and to assist in the fight against pollution, said Li Zhanshu, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, while presiding over the meeting.

The inspection would be led by Li himself, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

Li instructed lawmakers to rigorously perform their duties in accordance with the law and identify the prominent environmental problems that obstruct the implementation of the law and harm the interests of the public.

He also required lawmakers to explore effective working

methods and listen to voices from the grassroots, so as to improve the quality and efficiency of the inspection.

Inspection tour in Sichuan

Chairman Li Zhanshu has called for treating water pollution, protecting water ecology and strengthening the ecological barrier for the upper Yangtze River.

Li made the remarks when he led a team to inspect enforcement of the water pollution control law in southwest China's Sichuan Province from April 8 to 11.

The inspection was strictly based on the provision of the water pollution control law, with a focus on the fulfillment of legal responsibility by government at all levels and by supervision, enforcement and legislation authorities as well as enterprises.

The inspection team visited Sichuan's department of ecology and environment upon arrival, hearing about the operation of a monitoring and command platform and water quality monitoring conditions, and inquired about prevention and emergency disposal of water pollution incidents.

Li stressed applying modern monitoring techniques, discovering problems timely and supervising rectification earnestly.

At a workshop that Li presided over, he asked law-enforcement and legislation authorities to severely investigate and punish illegal and criminal activities that damage ecology and the environment.

After the team visited a sewage treatment plant, Li said enterprises are the main key to preventing industrial water pollution and should shoulder more social responsibility.

"Information should be released in a timely manner and publicity and education should be enhanced," Li said, adding protecting clear water and green banks should become a conscious action of society as a whole.

When meeting with representatives from national and lo-



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress presides over and delivers at the meeting where reports on the enforcement of the water pollution control law were heard on June 30. Gao Jie

cal legislatures, Li urged legislators to learn about and reflect the will and voice of the public and to actively offer advice for pollution prevention and treatment.

Inspection tour in Jiangsu

Chairman Li Zhanshu has emphasized the need for treating water pollution and protecting water environment according to law.

Li led a team to inspect enforcement of the water pollution control law in east China's Jiangsu Province from June 3 to 6, calling for strengthened analysis and control of pollution to ensure a better water environment.

The inspection team visited the cities of Nanjing, Yangzhou and Suzhou in Jiangsu, and inspected the provincial bureau of ecology and environment, enterprises, villages, a sewage treatment plant, more than 10 riverways, as well as the east bank of Taihu Lake.

When inspecting the water sources at the Yangtze River for the south-to-north water diversion project, Li led the team to check water quality and asked local officials to protect the water sources well to ensure clean water is transferred to the arid north.

Li also said that the river chiefs, or stewards assigned for each waterway to treat water pollution, should not only protect the waters but have the responsibility of increasing public awareness of the laws.

Having visited two villages in Suzhou to get a first-hand information about sewage treatment in rural areas, Li stressed that great efforts should be made to ensure that water pollution treatment is a well-done job so that people are satisfied with the work.

When meeting with representatives from local legislatures and governments, Li called for full implementation of laws

and urged the governments to lead green development. He also said enterprises should be more ecological friendly and low-carbon life should be promoted in the public.

Legislature's role in enforcing water pollution control law stressed

Chairman Li reiterated the role of people's congresses and their standing committees in implementing water pollution control law on June 30.

Li presided over and delivered a speech at a meeting where reports on the enforcement of the water pollution control law were heard.

From late March to June, four teams of lawmakers inspected the enforcement of the water pollution control law in eight provincial-level regions across the country.

Li acknowledged the good effect the inspection has had in those regions, saying that according to the inspection, the regions with solid progress in water pollution control are those where the law had been better enforced.

"As people's congresses and their standing committees shoulder important responsibilities in water pollution prevention and control, it's necessary for them to well perform the power of enacting laws and supervising enforcement of the laws," said Li, who also stressed the importance of making great efforts to step up local legislation so that a sound law system would be in place for water pollution prevention and control, and for protection of ecology and environment.

While saying greater supervision over enforcement of related laws is imperative, Li called for further participation of delegates of people's congresses at all levels and stressed a synergy in the work between the NPC and local people's congresses, so as to improve the overall effect of the work of people's congresses in this regard. (Xinhua) ■

Top legislature holds joint inquiry meeting on SME development

China's top legislature on June 28 held a joint inquiry into a report on the enforcement of the Law on Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

Li Zhanshu, chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, attended the meeting and delivered a speech.

During the inquiry, legislators asked questions about measures to help SMEs improve innovation and professional capabilities, measures to help them cope with difficulties and high costs of financing and how to facilitate the building of SME credit system, among others.

State Councilor Wang Yong and officials from multiple ministries and government agencies including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance answered the questions.

During his speech, Li called for strengthening supervision to ensure thorough implementation of the law and improved policies and measures.

Li also stressed protecting legal rights and interests of SMEs and improving related laws and regulations to better define legal responsibilities.

Wang, on behalf of the State Council and related government agencies, vowed to push for the implementation of the law.

He promised more efforts to help SMEs reduce costs and cope with difficulties and high costs of financing, as well as protect their legal rights and interests.

The report was submitted on June 26 to the NPC Standing Committee for review. (Xinhua) ■



Li Zhanshu, chairman of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress (NPC), attends a joint inquiry into a report on the enforcement of the Law on Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises held by China's top legislature in Beijing on June 28. *Ding Lin*

2nd China International Import Expo to attract SMEs, private enterprises

The 2nd China International Import Expo (CIIE) will invite purchasers nationwide, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and private companies, to share the fruits of the exposition.

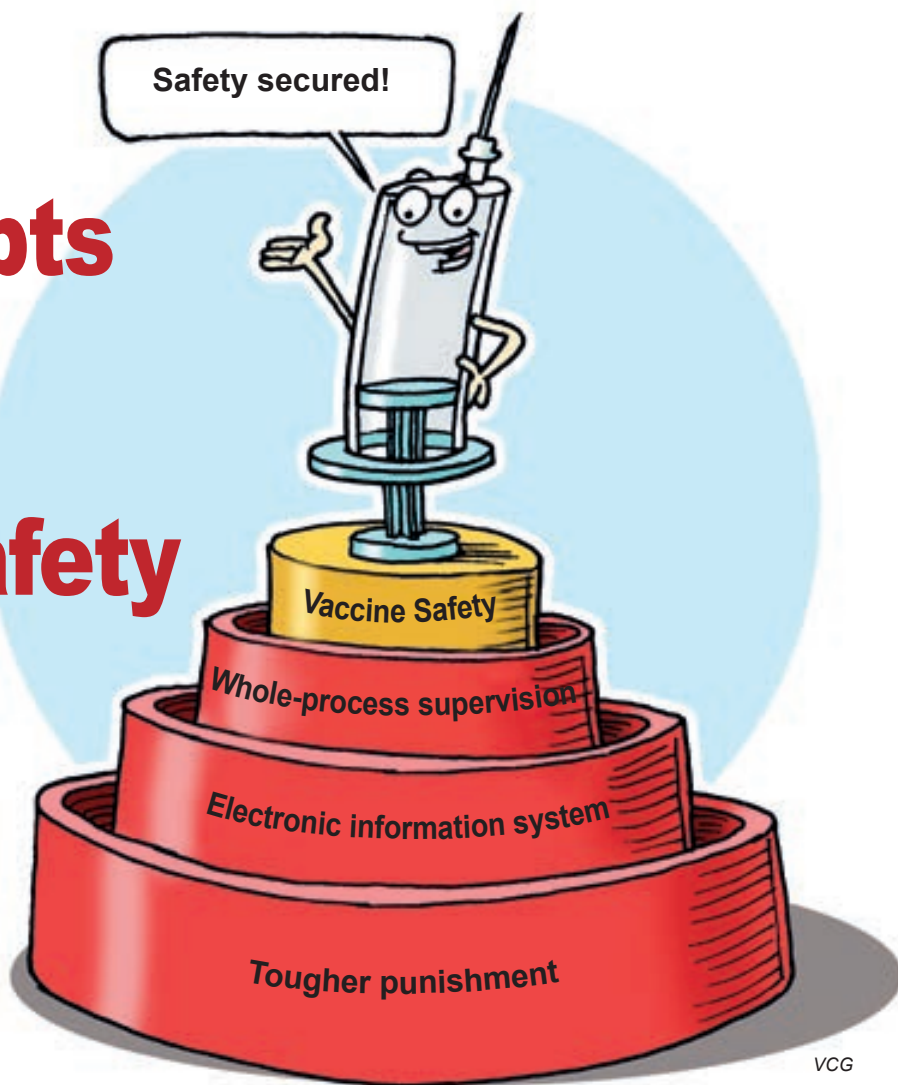
A road show launched in the evening of May 30 will help SMEs and private enterprises become familiar with advanced

technologies and better understand overseas markets, said Sun Chenghai, vice director of the CIIE Bureau.

The second CIIE will be held in Shanghai in November.

A total of 172 countries, regions and international organizations and more than 3,600 enterprises participated in the first CIIE in November last year. (Xinhua)

China adopts tough law to ensure vaccine safety



VCG

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed a law on vaccine administration on June 29, which stipulates the "strictest" management by requiring a whole-process supervision system and toughening penalties on producing and selling fake or substandard vaccines.

The law was adopted after the third reading at the 11th session of the Standing Committee.

As the country's first legislation dedicated to vaccine management, the new law will go into effect on December 1, 2019.

All-round supervision

According to the law, supervision of vaccines will cover the whole process, from vaccine development, production and distribution, to vaccination.

Specialized inspection teams of pharmaceutical professionals will be established at the central and provincial levels to conduct the supervision work.

An electronic information system will be set up to make

all information of vaccines trackable, such as production and package information of vaccines, period of validity, date of vaccination, and medical workers who conduct the vaccination and the recipients. The records must be retained for at least five years after the expiry of the vaccine, according to the law.

To increase the transparency of the industry, vaccine license holders are required to publish vaccine information on their websites in a timely manner, including product instructions and labels, official approval, recall information, inspections and punishment received and compulsory insurances covered.

Tougher punishment

Aside from strengthening the whole-process supervision, the new law also toughens penalties on the production and sale of fake or substandard vaccines.

It stipulates that people whose violations constitute a crime shall bear heavier criminal responsibility in accordance

with the law.

Meanwhile, the law imposes heavier fines on producers and sellers of defective vaccines. Those producing or selling fake vaccines shall face a fine of 15 to 50 times the value of the illicit products, while substandard vaccine makers or sellers face a fine of 10 to 30 times the value.

It also raises the threshold for fines, by stipulating that fake or substandard vaccines worth less than 500,000 yuan (about \$72,908) shall be calculated as 500,000 yuan.

Production and business operation will be suspended for rectification, and drug registration certificates or even pharmaceutical production licenses can be revoked, it said.

The tough punishments will exert positive impacts on the whole-process supervision of vaccines, said Jiao Hong, head of the National Medical Products Administration.

It will further enhance the quality of the country's vaccines and boost the public's confidence on vaccine safety, Jiao said at a press conference held after the five-day legislative session closed.

Compensation for adverse events

Although vaccines are the most effective guard against vaccine-preventable diseases, in rare cases serious side effects are reported.

The law introduces a compensation system for people who suffer adverse events linked to vaccinations.

It stipulates that compensation shall be provided in cases of adverse events leading to death, serious disability or organ



The 13th NPC Standing Committee starts the bimonthly session on June 25. Cong Bin, deputy chairman of the Constitution and Law Committee of the National People's Congress, reports on the review results of the draft of Vaccine Administration Law. *Ma Zengke*

damage during or after vaccination, or when the possibility of an adverse event cannot be excluded.

For mandatory vaccination, the compensation must be paid through local fiscal budgets, while for voluntary vaccination, the vaccine license-holder must shoulder the responsibility. Commercial insurance is encouraged to be included in the compensation mechanism. (Xinhua) ■



Chinese lawmakers review the draft of Vaccine Administration Law at the panel discussion at the ongoing bimonthly session of the NPC Standing Committee in Beijing on June 25. *Tao Honglin*

Law on vaccine supervision includes penalties for producing fakes

By Wang Xiaodong

The newly passed vaccine administration law demands the “strictest” management by requiring a more effective whole-process supervision system and toughening penalties on producing and selling fake or substandard vaccines.

The country’s first legislation dedicated to vaccine management, it will go into effect on December 1, 2019.

According to the law, supervision of vaccines will cover the whole process, from vaccine development, production and distribution, to vaccination.

An electronic information system will be set up to make sure all information about vaccines can be tracked, including production and packaging information, the period of validity, the date of vaccination, and the identities of the medical workers who conduct vaccinations and the recipients. The records must be retained for at least five years after the expiration of the vaccine, according to the law.

To increase the transparency of the industry, vaccine license holders will be required to publish vaccine information on their websites in a timely manner, including product instructions and labels, official approval, recall information, inspections, punishment received and compulsory insurance coverage.

Aside from strengthening whole-process supervision, the new law also toughens penalties on the production and sale of fake or substandard vaccines. Those producing or selling fake vaccines will face fines of up to 50 times the value of the illicit products, while substandard vaccine makers or sellers will face fines of up to 30 times the value. Production and business operations will be suspended for rectification, and drug registration certificates and pharmaceutical production licenses could be revoked.

Meanwhile, criminal suspects involved in the production and sale of problematic vaccines will receive heavier penalties, the law said.

Jiao Hong, head of the National Medical Products Administration, said vaccines are different from other drugs because they concern public health and national security, and the purpose of the law is to guarantee the safety, effectiveness and accessibility of vaccines to ensure public health.

“The law is a special law made on the basis of the general principles of the existing Drug Administration Law and specifies the strictest supervision over vaccines,” she said.

The law specifies harsher punishment for illegal producers and sellers of vaccines than for other drugs, she said, and it will help improve the quality of Chinese-made vaccines and enhance public faith in the safety of vaccines.



Yuan Jie, director for administrative law at the NPC Standing Committee’s Legislative Affairs Commission, said the standing committee widely solicited public opinion over the past half year - including from vaccine producers, research institutes, prevention and control centers and health and drug authorities - and reviewed three drafts of the law before passing it.

Commission members visited six provinces and municipalities for site inspections and gathered opinions and suggestions from various sectors to ensure the quality of the law while pushing the legislation forward as quickly as possible, she said.

The law was drafted and submitted for a first review in last December following a major vaccine scandal involving Changchun Changsheng Bio-tech, a major vaccine producer in Jilin province. An investigation team organized by the State Council revealed that the company had violated the law in the production of rabies vaccines for four years, including fabricating production records and using expired materials.

The top drug regulator later ordered the company to pay fines of 9.1 billion yuan (\$1.3 billion), and its senior executives are under detention and are facing criminal punishment.

Following the incident, the authorities vowed to establish the strictest supervision of vaccines, including deterrent legislation, to ensure public health. (China Daily) ■

The vaccine tracking system well in place.

All vaccine products in China will be tracked and supervised throughout their product lifecycle according to a newly passed law on vaccine administration, officials said at a press conference Saturday.

The law will take effect on December 1. Experts say that the move could be a milestone in vaccine safety, while bringing back market confidence in the regulatory system.

The law requires "strictest" management by setting up a supervision system over the entire process and tougher penalties for producing and selling fake or substandard vaccines.

The full product lifecycle within the e-tracking system includes vaccine production, distribution and vaccination, the press briefing said.

"The National Medical Products Administration (NMPA) is working with the National Health Commission to build a nationwide vaccine tracking platform for supervision and regulation of enterprises," Yuan Lin, head of the drug supervision and management department under the administration, told the press conference.

Liu Junhai, a business law professor at Renmin University of China, told the Global Times that the tracking system is definitely an innovative move.

"Once the platform is in place, each vaccine will be traceable under the product profile. It will take just one scan to trace the producer, quality check and distribution process. Thus, consumers will regain their confidence and regulation efficiency will be improved too," Liu elaborated.

Technical standards and specifications for drugs, including vaccine traceability have been published by the NMPA since last year.

For the vaccine tracking system, the law requires vaccination data, including a vaccine's information, expiry date and use date, while medical workers who issue the vaccines and their recipients should be recorded and retained for at least five years after its expiry.

The new law on vaccine management integrates all regulations. With top-down authority, the law will help facilitate the operation of all subjects, said Yuan.

There are 45 vaccine producers in China that produce more than 60 types of vaccines to prevent 34 kinds of diseases, with an annual capacity of more than 1 billion doses, Jiao Hong, head of the NMPA, said at the press conference.

"China is one of the few countries in the world that can become self-sufficient with all planned immunization vaccines according to their own abilities," Jiao noted.

Some of these vaccine producers have been listed in the international procurement list and export to countries in the Belt and Road Initiative.

"We are encouraging high-quality medical producers from China to enter the international market and effectively improve China's participation in the global healthcare cause," she said.

The new law will enable the regulators to close loopholes and rein in risks in vaccine management, Liu said. (Global Times)



Set up an electronic information system

1

To make all information of vaccines trackable, such as production and package information, period of validity, date of vaccination and medical workers who conduct the vaccination and the recipients.

2

To implement vaccine inoculation, information including the varieties of the vaccine, producers, vaccine recipients, should be recorded and kept at least for 5 years.

VCG

Tibet marks 60th anniversary of democratic reform



A ceremony celebrating the 60th anniversary of the democratic reform in Tibet is held in Lhasa on March 28. *Jogor*



Representatives from various ethnic groups and walks of life gathered in the Potala Palace square in Lhasa on March 28 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the campaign of democratic reform in Tibet.

At 10 a.m., Losang Jamcan, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Regional People's Congress, declared the opening of the celebration meeting in both Tibetan and Mandarin, which was followed by a solemn ceremony of raising the national flag and singing the national anthem.

In March 1959, the Central Government dissolved the aristocratic local government of Tibet and freed more than 1 million serfs, making them the masters of the nation and society.

Tibet has made historic achievements and undergone tremendous changes since the democratic reform that started 60 years ago, said Wu Yingjie, Party Secretary of the region, when addressing the meeting.

The democratic reform completely obliterated the feudal serfdom of theocracy, changed the production relations of the old Tibet, smashed the shackles of feudal spirit and culture and freed local people from feudal political oppression.

Tibet has made historic achievements and undergone tremendous changes since the democratic reform that started 60 years ago.

The democratic reform is a major historic event in Tibet's development and human rights advancement, Wu said.

Over the past 60 years, Tibet's GDP has grown from 174 million yuan (\$25.9 million) in 1959 to 147.76 billion yuan last year, marking an average annual increase of 9.5 percent, according to Wu.

Decisive progress has been made in poverty alleviation. More than 70 percent of poverty-stricken counties and 80 percent of the poverty-stricken population have been lifted out of poverty, Wu noted.

Furthermore, Tibet was the first region in China to provide free education for 15 years, and the illiteracy rate among young and middle-aged people has dropped to 0.52 percent.

Medical insurance has covered the whole population in Tibet, and Tibetan people's life expectancy has increased from 35.5 to 68.2 years, Wu said.

Penpa, a villager from Gurum Township in Tohlung Dechen District of Lhasa, attended the meeting as a grassroots representative.

"My mum used to work for a lord. She had no shoes and not enough clothes to wear. Now, we are living in a house of 400 square meters. What a great change," he said.

Penpa used to work in construction sites. Last year, he started to work as an administrator at an express delivery point of JD.com where he earns 4,500 yuan each month. "I feel that we lead a good life," he said.

The democratic reform is a major historic event in Tibet's development and human rights advancement.

Jamyang Sherab, an officer of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), said at the meeting, "My family witnessed the democratic reform. As a descendant of the serfs in old Tibet, I became a PLA officer and was elected Deputy to the National People's Congress and a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference successively."

In Beijing, a forum was held on March 28 to commemorate the historic event in Tibet's history.

You Quan, a member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee and head of the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee, hailed the democratic reform in Tibet at the forum as a major move that followed the tide of the times, a great achievement of the CPC in resolving the Tibet issue and a tremendous force propelling the economic and social development in Tibet.

He called for greater efforts to comprehensively implement the CPC's policies for governing Tibet, strengthen the CPC's leadership over Tibet work, strive for the people's well-being, and realize enduring peace and stability and greater development in the region.

Six kilometers to east of the Potala Palace in Lhasa, a



Students celebrate the 60th anniversary of the democratic reform in Tibet in the Potala Palace square in Lhasa on March 28. *Jigme Dorji*

memorial hall marking the emancipation of the serfs was opened to the public on Thursday.

The memorial hall, with an exhibition area of 3,500 square meters, displays 165 historical documents, 299 items, 331 pictures and four large settings related to the democratic reform in the region, reflecting the darkness, backwardness and barbarity of the old Tibet, as well as the great changes that have taken place in the socialist new Tibet.

In 2009, the regional legislature established March 28 as a day to commemorate the emancipation of the 1 million serfs, which represented 90 percent of the region's population at that time.

On Thursday, various celebrations were held across Tibet.

In Lhasa, over 1,500 people attended a gala at the Lhasa



A gala to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the democratic reform in Tibet is held in Lhasa on March 28. *Lixin*

Public Cultural and Sports Center on Thursday evening to commemorate the democratic reform and the great changes that have taken place in Tibet in the following 60 years.

“People in Tibet supported the democratic reform,” Phutsering, who joined the PLA in 1959 and took part in the emancipation of serfs in Xigaze City, said at the gala. “From the peaceful liberation of Tibet in 1951 to the democratic reform in 1959, people in Tibet made their own decisions.”

A grand celebration, including raising the national flag, singing the national anthem and watching performances, was held at Kesum Village in Shannan city .

After watching a drama titled “Tears of Serfs,” directed and performed by the villagers, a senior villager Dawa said, “Before the democratic reform, serf owners beat us up at will and did not give us food. What a good life we have now.”

In Lhozhag County, more than 500 Tibetan people in traditional Tibetan costumes holding national flags attended a celebration ceremony.

“Sixty years ago, the PLA rescued us from the oppression of the serf owners and sent us food and tea,” said Chojor, 68. “From then on, we had hope for our lives.”

Now, Chojor leads a happy life, and his family's total income reached 80,000 yuan last year.

“China is boosting the construction of well-off villages along the country's border. We are building a new house, and we will move into it in September,” said Chojor. (Xinhua) ■



A new lease on life

By Lu Yan

Tibet embraces a course toward prosperity since democratic reform began 60 years ago

Representatives from various ethnic groups gather in the Potala Palace square in Lhasa to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the democratic reform in Tibet on March 28. *Li Xin*

Sonam Dorjee and his family run a furniture cooperative in Khesum Village in Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. With an annual income of more than 600,000 yuan (\$89,300) from the cooperative, he is now living a well-off life.

But such a comfortable life would have been unheard of only 60 years ago when the village, along with all of Tibet, stood under the dark cloud of feudal serfdom. At that time, people like Sonam Dorjee, now 72, were exploited by local administrative officials, nobles and upper-ranking lamas known as the three major estate-holders.

But it all changed in 1959 when the Central Government dissolved the aristocratic government of Tibet, the feudal theocracy was completely abolished and more than 1 million serfs were liberated.

To mark the freeing of such a large number of serfs from feudal serfdom, March 28 was designated as Serfs' Emancipation Day in 2009. This year, on March 28, representatives from various ethnic groups and walks of life in Tibet gathered at the Potala Palace square in Lhasa, capital city of the autonomous region, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the historic democratic reform.

Dark days

Before democratic reform in 1959, Khesum was one of six manors belonging to Suokang Wangqing Geli in the Lhoka Prefecture, located at the southern bank of the Yarlung Zangbo River, one of the richest regions in Tibet.

Khesum means three fortunes in the Tibetan language. Some people used to say that it represented the three holy mountains which could be seen from the main manor, but more people agreed that it meant the three benefits manor owners gained from forcing the serfs to work for them: land, labor and goods.

In the village, 302 serfs from 59 households worked for and were exploited by the manor owner. They did farm work, built houses and ran errands for "their owner." They had to turn over their grain and livestock and pay heavy taxes and usury rates.

This was life for the majority of people all over Tibet; for centuries it was ruled by a feudal theocracy, where serfs, who made up over 90 percent of the population, struggled hope-

lessly on the very bottom rung of society. Their basic rights were denied by the three major estate-holders, who controlled Tibet's government and monopolized land, pastures and other means of production.

To survive, serfs had to borrow money from the rich, who used this debt to keep the people even more impoverished. More than 90 percent of Tibetan serfs were in debt, according to a white paper on democratic reform issued by China's State Council Information Office in March.

"The debts of the grandpa of my grandpa could not be paid off by the father of my father, and the son of my son will not be able to repay even the interest," went a popular ballad.

Serfs, who were considered property by the rich, were even used as wagers for gambling and mortgages, as well as trade commodities and gifts. Any serf who attempted to flee and was caught would receive a lashing or have his/her feet chopped off. The three major estate-holders could torture or even kill serfs at will.

Sonam Dorjee, who was born a serf, remembers his family of nine always huddled in a small and draughty mud shed which smelled of livestock manure. His family didn't have enough food or warm clothes, and instead had endless work and debts.

"When the spring plowing or autumn harvest came, our tough times would begin. In spite of a whole day's hard work, we would still suffer the cruel beatings from serf owners," he told Xinhua News Agency.

The democratic reform is a major historic event in Tibet's development and human rights advancement.

To reinforce their rule, the Tibetan theocracy promoted superstition and opposed any scientific thought. They brainwashed serfs into accepting their fate in the hope of finding happiness in the afterlife or the next life.

"It is safe to say that feudal serfdom was the root of all kinds of wickedness in Tibet," said Liang Junyan, a researcher at the Institute for History Studies of the China Tibetology Research Center.

End of the tunnel

Throughout human history, slavery and feudal serfdom have existed in most parts of the world, and their abolition has always come to the forefront. In Tibet, it started in the 1950s.

On May 23, 1951, the Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (17-Article Agreement) was signed, officially proclaiming the peaceful liberation of Tibet. This came on the heels of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

The peaceful liberation ended Tibet's long-lasting chaos, conflict, strangulation and stagnation. With it came new economic and social development. "It enabled local people to be

like the people in the rest of the country who were heading toward a bright socialist future," said Hu Yan, a professor specializing in studies on ethnic groups and religions with the Party School of the CPC Central Committee. The CPC Tibet working committee was established along with branches in Lhasa and other areas.

But the old social system was not abolished. It was still a feudal serfdom, a theocracy which was "even darker and more backward than that of the Dark Ages in medieval Europe," according to An Qiyi, deputy director-general of the China Tibetology Research Center.

After the peaceful liberation of Tibet, fearing that their interests would be damaged, a small number of high-level leaders in local governments used ethnic and religious issues to scheme and start an insurgency. Wherever they went, they looted and raped, damaged temples and attacked monks, laymen and patriotic progressives. Conditions in Tibet worsened, especially after 1958 with the expansion of their relentless rebellion.

In March 1959, with the support of foreign reactionary forces, they launched a full-scale armed rebellion in an attempt to permanently retain their privileged rule under the feudal system of serfdom.

In the same month, the State Council issued a decree which dissolved the local Tibetan government and designated a preparatory committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region to exercise the duties of local government. In essence, it meant that a people's democratic government was formed.

As a result of the victory over the feudal rulers under the leadership of the CPC, 1 million serfs were completely freed from the oppressive reign of the three major estate-holders and a magnificent democratic reform movement was launched. The feudal land ownership system and the serfs' attachment to their owners were eliminated and the serfs were liberated in terms of politics, economics, and intellectual, cultural and ideological matters.

The productive forces were greatly liberated and the Tibetan people began to enjoy all the rights stipulated in the provisions of the Chinese Constitution and laws.

The serfs became masters of their own country and their own destiny, with all the ethnic groups in Tibet making the historic leap from feudal serfdom to the new road of socialist modernization.

Reborn

Since democratic reform, Tibet has experienced transformation in all aspects. Politically, Tibetan people began to enjoy the right to participation in the administration of State and local affairs through the people's congresses at various levels.

Based on ethnic regional characteristics and the local reality, a number of local laws and regulations were introduced, such as the supplemental provisions of the Marriage Law and regulations on the learning, application and development of the Tibetan language.

Economically, the region entered a fast development period. In 1959, Tibet's GDP was merely 174 million yuan (\$25.9 million), while the figure exceeded 147 billion yuan (\$21.9 billion) in 2018, marking more than an 800-time increase.

The old Tibet had little industrial development, but now,

based on the premise of strictly protecting the ecology, modern industry flourishes with the region's unique features. This includes the agricultural and animal product processing industry, the superior mineral industry, the hydroelectric energy industry, the traditional and ethnic minority handicraft industry, and the Tibetan medicine industry.

There are many striking examples of the changes that have occurred over the past 60 years. For instance, there was only one small power station in Tibet exclusively for the use of the upper nobility, but by the end of 2018, the power grid covered 60 counties, as well as 2.72 million people. Local people also shook off the destitute and debt-ridden past and gradually worked their way out of poverty. The aim now is to eliminate absolute poverty by the end of this year.

The principles of political unity, freedom of religious belief and separation of government from religion are all strongly pursued. The Central Government and local governments invested both time and money in maintaining and restoring temples and protecting Tibetan Buddhism classics.

People's health has improved fundamentally with the upgrading of medical and health facilities and services. Government-subsidized housing projects have ensured that farmers

and herdsmen have comfortable accommodations. The modern socialist system entitled people to receive education. In turn, a number of high-caliber personnel have been cultivated who are making contributions to the country's modernization drive. Tibetan people are working hard toward a prosperous life, which can be seen in the upgrading of consumption and an increasingly diversified consumption structure.

As the country's crucial eco-barrier, and with ecological conservation lifted to a national strategy, Tibet has received substantial capital and energy to enlarge nature and ecological reserves and restore biodiversity. In 2018 alone, 10.7 billion yuan (\$1.59 billion) was invested to protect and build the eco-barrier in Tibet.

Forging ahead

Liang commented that the CPC and the government's support, along with help from the rest of the country, are the fundamental reasons for the achievements in Tibet over the past six decades.

The diligence of the local people is the driving force behind its success. In addition, regional autonomy for minorities is the institutional guarantee of the transformation, according to An.

The State Council's white paper pointed out that there is still room for improvement in terms of addressing economic and social problems and imbalanced and insufficient development. In the new era, Tibet will continue to be committed to innovative, coordinated, sustainable, green, open and shared development, so as to build a beautiful Tibet and enhance the happiness of the people, the document said. (Beijing Review) ■

The CPC and the government's support, along with help from the rest of the country, are the fundamental reasons for the achievements in Tibet over the past six decades.



Deputies vote at the Second Session of the 11th People's Congress of Tibet on January 14. Champa Deche

Keynote speech by Ambassador Liu Xiaoming at the APPCG Q&A with Ambassador on the ‘Two Sessions’:

Understand the ‘Two Sessions’, build up consensus and create a bright future

Embassy of the PRC in the UK

Lord Clement-Jones,
My Lords and MPs,
Ladies and gentlemen:
Good afternoon!

March 2019 was an unprecedentedly busy month for British MPs, as you focus on a matter of paramount importance in British politics - Brexit.

It is also a very busy month for China, as the very important political event was held – the annual “Two Sessions”.

The “Two Sessions” refer to the annual meetings of the National People’s Congress, or NPC and the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, known as CPPCC. Close to 3,000 NPC deputies and more than 2,000 CPPCC members gathered in Beijing to discuss major issues and make plans for the future of the country.

Chairman Graham and Lord Clement-Jones asked me to give a briefing on the “Two Sessions”. So let me share with you my views on the “Two Sessions”, especially on China’s future development by answering three questions.

First, how is China’s economic prospect?

This is a hot topic. Some people think China’s economy is slowing down and blame this for problems elsewhere; Others believe that China’s economy remains an opportunity.

At the press conference of the “Two Sessions”, Premier Li Keqiang aired his confidence that “China’s economy will remain an anchor of stability for the global economy”. I think there are three reasons behind his confidence:

First, China’s economy continues to perform strongly.

China’s medium-to-high speed growth rate in recent years is on top of a very large base figure. In 2018, China continued to be the world’s second largest economy, with its total GDP reaching 13.6 trillion US dollars. Its growth rate of 6.6% continued to be the fastest among the world’s top five economies and its GDP increment was roughly the total GDP of Australia.

China continues to be the world’s largest trader in goods. In 2018, China’s total trade in goods exceeded 30 trillion RMB yuan for the first time (that is the equivalent of 4.6 trillion US dollars). It also represented an increase of 12.6% over the previous year. The net increment was over 510 billion US dollars, larger than China’s trade total of 2001, the first year of China’s membership in the WTO.

China remains the most attractive FDI destination among

Close to 3,000 NPC deputies and more than 2,000 CPPCC members gathered in Beijing to discuss major issues and make plans for the future of the country.

developing economies. Despite a steep drop in global FDI in 2018, foreign investment flowing into China totaled 135 billion US dollars, increasing by 3%.

At the “Two Sessions” this year, China set its growth target at 6% to 6.5%, which would probably remain the fastest among major economies in the world.

Second, China’s growth continues to demonstrate higher efficiency.

This is reflected in the following three aspects:

First, growth model is optimised. Consumption is playing a bigger role in driving economic growth. In 2018, consumption expenditure contributed 76.2% to economic growth, increasing by 18.6 percentage points over the previous year.

Second, economic structure keeps upgrading. With the tertiary industry accounting for 52.2% of GDP, service sector is increasingly becoming a stabiliser in economic growth.

Third, new driving forces are gaining momentum rapidly. The “internet plus” strategy has boosted the development of emerging industries and accelerated the transformation of traditional industries. On-line retail sales increased by over 20%. On November 11th, 2018 - the on-line shopping festival known as “Double Eleven” - the total sale hit a record of over 30 billion US dollars in a single day. That was equivalent to the total GDP of Latvia in 2018.

With economic growth comes better life for the Chinese people, and greater sense of individual achievement and happiness.

In 2018,

- More than 10 million people were lifted out of poverty;
- Per capita disposable income grew at 6.5% in real terms, higher than the per capita GDP growth;
- Energy consumption per unit GDP fell by 3.1%. “Clean

water, green mountains, blue sky and white cloud” are no longer a luxury.

Third, China continues to increase its contribution to global economy.

In 2018, China’s economy contributed close to 30% of world economic growth and continued to be the “main engine” of world economic growth after more than ten years in a row.

At the same time, China’s foreign trade is more balanced. The surplus has been dropping by 18.3% year on year. Take China-UK trade for example. In 2018, China reports 6.9% increase of import from the UK, while the British statistics is even higher, at 30%.

According to WTO statistics of the first three quarters of 2018, China’s share of global import grew by 0.7 percentage points to 10.9%, and China’s contribution to the growth of global import was 16.8%.

China is also a main contributor to global poverty alleviation. According to the statistics of the World Bank, for every 10 people lifted out of poverty, 7 are in China.

China plans to eradicate absolute poverty by 2020. That would be ten years ahead of the scheduled goal set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations. How China manages to accomplish this will provide useful experience to other countries as they strive to reduce poverty.

Now let me come to the second question: Where is China’s reform and opening-up going?

The year 2018 marked the 40th anniversary of China’s reform and opening-up. This great cause is now faced with increasingly severe challenges. Against these challenges, the “Two Sessions” sends a clear message again that China will stay committed to the basic policy of reform and opening up.

In my view, in China’s endeavour to deepen reform and open up wider to the world, there will be three focal points:

First, China will take on the most difficult issues in key areas of reform.

China will press ahead with supply-side reform. In this process, we will not shy away from key issues or major problems, and we will seek breakthroughs in key areas.

We will continue to streamline administration, delegate power to lower government levels, strengthen regulation and improve services.

We will continue to build better “hardware”, namely the infrastructure. At the same time, we will make greater efforts to improve our “software”, such as shortening the negative list for market access.

We will also accelerate reform relating to State owned assets and enterprises, and we will foster a private sector-friendly environment and make every effort to ease the bottlenecks facing private companies.

Moreover, we will deepen reform in the fiscal, taxation and financial system in order to

- regulate local government financing,
- serve the real economy better,



The second session of the 13th National People’s Congress holds its closing meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 15. Some deputies to the 13th NPC take a group photo in front of the Great Hall of the People. Yang Zongyou

- improve the structure of the financial system,
- and promote the sound and steady development of the multi-tiered capital markets.

Second, China will tackle external challenges by improving its opening-up layout.

Against the headwind of unilateralism and protectionism, China is keeping its door open to the world. We have provided access to more sectors, optimised the opening-up layout and sought to advance domestic reform and development through opening-up.

Going forward, China will further increase market access, open up more sectors to wholly foreign-owned companies and provide a level playing field for domestic and foreign companies alike.

The Belt and Road Initiative is the master plan for China’s opening-up. At the end of this month, the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation will be held in Beijing. We look forward to working with friends from all countries to make sure that BRI projects are of high quality. In particular, we wish to see strong participation from the UK, and we stand ready to engage the UK in deeper and more substantial cooperation on BRI.

China will also work hard to increase import. Later this year, we will host the Second China International Import Expo. British entrepreneurs are welcomed to take part in the Expo and bring their products and services to the Chinese market.

Third, China will make vigorous efforts to increase the level of opening-up.

In 2018, China took the initiative to cut tariffs a number of times. As a result, average tariff was brought down from 9.8% to 7.5%.

The “Two Sessions” in March adopted the new Foreign Investment Law. This is of historic significance. The adoption of the new law means China’s opening-up is no longer limited to ensuring the free flow of production factors such as goods, capital and technology. It means that China will focus more

on the systematic aspect of opening-up, including

- stronger legal safeguards,
- better alignment with international practice and
- greater ease for doing business in China.

China's opening-up will reach a higher level, and this will in turn promote higher-quality domestic development.

By adopting the new Foreign Investment Law to protect the legitimate rights and interests of foreign investment, China displays its resolve and confidence in deeper reform and greater market access for more foreign investment.

Last but not least: Where is China's foreign policy going?

Here in the UK, the recent topical issue regarding China is this:

- Is China's development a challenge or opportunity?
- Is China a partner or a competitor?

I think the answer lies in Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy. Understanding this Thought is the key to seeing the direction of China's foreign policy.

This year's "Two Sessions" reaffirmed that Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy offers the basic principles and guideline for China's foreign affairs in the new era.

Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy is profound and substantial. To understand this Thought, I think it is crucial to grasp the following three basic elements:

First, in the interest of the common good for all, China will work to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

This is not an empty slogan. It is a principle that guides the concrete actions of China's diplomacy.

At the end of last February, I attended a panel discussion in London hosted by the Concordia Africa Initiative, and had an in-depth exchange of views with the other panelists on international cooperation in Africa.

Debate shed light on truth. The panel discussion has strengthened my conviction that China-Africa cooperation is the best example of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

In its relations with Africa, China follows a "five-no" approach, namely,

- no interference in African countries' pursuit of development paths that fit their national conditions;
- no interference in African countries' internal affairs;
- no imposition of our will on African countries;
- no attachment of political strings to assistance to Africa;
- and no selfish political gain from the investment and financing cooperation with Africa.

Moreover, China-Africa cooperation has been aimed at meeting the needs of African countries, improving their capability of independent development and providing a better life to African people. Such cooperation is open to all countries in the world.

This fully reflects the values of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

This ideal is based on the pursuit of the common good for all. It meets the aspiration of people all over the world for a better future. It will gain the recognition of more and more countries and people.

Second, China will pursue peaceful development through win-win cooperation.

As China grows, the question of whether China and the US can avoid the "Thucydides Trap" becomes a hot topic.

As someone who had worked on China-US relations for

many years, I know all too well that in this relationship, both countries stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation.

I know that you have followed closely the China-US trade frictions. On this issue, China has followed the principles of mutual respect and equality. We have sought to address the differences through dialogues and consultation. And we have worked to expand consensus for cooperation. Our goal is to promote the steady development of China-US relations based on coordination and cooperation, so as to deliver more benefits to the people of the two countries and the rest of the world.

China is committed to the path of peaceful development. This means:

- We do not create trouble, but we are not afraid of trouble.
- We do not undermine other countries' interests or seek sphere of influence.
- We will not go down the beaten path of Western powers to let China's development lead to hegemony.

With the wisdom and hard work of our people, China is capable of blazing a new path of peaceful development – one that features mutual respect and win-win cooperation.

Third, China will uphold fairness and justice, and take the lead in the reform of the global governance system.

The world is undergoing rapid development, profound transformation and deep adjustments. Reform of the global governance system represents the trend of the times and the aspiration of the people.

In particular, reform of the WTO is the focus of global attention. As a participant, beneficiary and contributor of international trade, China supports necessary reform of the WTO.

But unlike certain country, we do not advocate "China first" or seek to reinvent the wheel. In the interest of fairness and justice, China opposes protectionism and unilateralism categorically, upholds the rule-based multi-lateral trade system and supports the reasonable appeals of developing countries.

Going forward, China will continue to shoulder its responsibilities and work for greater effectiveness and democracy in the global governance system.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The Chinese people believe that lessons from the past could show the direction for the future.

This year is of special significance to both China and the UK.

- It is the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

- It is also the 65th anniversary of the establishment of China-UK diplomatic relationship at the level of *chargé d'affaires*.

In the past, China and the UK had supported each other in our respective development. In the future, the interests of our nations will remain deeply intertwined and our development goals interconnected.

In face of the profound changes in the world unseen in a century, China stands ready to work with the UK to build up consensus, enhance mutual trust and expand cooperation.

Together we will create a brighter future for the China-UK "Golden Era"!

Thank you! ■

Road out of poverty

By Yuan Yuan



China has set the goal to eliminate poverty by 2020. Across the country, particularly in the vast rural areas, many people are contributing to this arduous drive. Among them, Yang Ying from south China's Hainan Province and Long Xianwen from central China's Hunan Province have championed programs to lift impoverished populations out of destitute situations. During this year's session of the National People's Congress, the two deputies shared their stories.

Local farmers drive reaping machines to harvest rice at Hai'an Farm in Nantong, East China's Jiangsu Province on October 24, 2018. VCG

Rosy future

Yang Ying brought seasoned suggestions to the annual legislative session held in Beijing on March 5-15.

As the founder of Hainan Rose Valley Industrial Development, Yang has several ideas on how to develop tourism in rural areas and help more rural people out of poverty. For more than a decade, she has devoted herself to planting roses and developing a rose valley in villages in Sanya City of tropical island Hainan Province, which has made the lives of people in these villages better.

The development of the rose valley is a typical example of Chinese people's efforts to alleviate poverty. Figures from the National Bureau of Statistics show that by the end of 2018, the number of rural people in poverty stood at 16.6 million. With China's pledged goal of lifting 10 million people out of poverty each year, it expects to eradicate poverty nationwide by 2020. China lifted 13.86 million more people out of poverty in 2018 alone.

When Yang went to Sanya in 2006 for the first time, she already ran a big flower business in Shanghai and simply



Yang Ying, a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress, also chairperson of Hainan Rose Valley Industrial Development, attends the second session of the 13th National People's Congress in Beijing. Wang Kai

wanted to grow roses there since the warm weather was perfect for growing all year round, unlike Shanghai where the rose season ended in November.

Her initial plan changed when she saw a little girl carrying an even younger boy working in the fields. Yang asked why the girl didn't go to school and the locals told her that the girl's family was too poor to afford it.

"It was at that moment that I made up my mind to stay and do something for them," Yang told the reporter. As a rose dealer, Yang began with a rose plantation project.

After two years of repeated failures of trying to tame the rose to the local temperature, Yang's team finally saw roses take root in Sanya. In 2009, Yang's company rented 184 hectares of farmland from local villagers to grow roses and hired more than 500 village workers.

"Bohou was a rather needy village back then," Yang recalled. "The farmers only planted vegetables in the fields and could hardly make ends meet." Yang's plan didn't get much support from the local farmers in the very beginning, however. "We did a lot of explaining and negotiations," Yang said. "Rising incomes of farmers finally proved that our project could bring solid benefits."

In April 2013, President Xi Jinping visited Yang's rose valley and made a remark that got widespread coverage in China: "Only when ordinary locals begin to lead a moderately prosperous life can we call it a true moderately prosperous society."

Encouraged by his remark, Yang endeavored to branch out her business to a tertiary industry of rose products like rose jam, rose cake, rose tea and rose oil; in 2014, tourism was added to the list of ventures. In 2018, there were 1.5 million visitors to the rose valley, which now boasts more than 300 varieties of roses.

Last year, as a newly elected NPC deputy from Hainan, Yang visited almost all the villages engaged in tourism development in the province and made suggestions based on her research.

"Many of the villages are more or less alike without distinct features," Yang said. "Many have put more effort into looking pretty rather than developing their own unique attractions, resulting in low tourism revenue."

Yang also suggested involving more of the local people in boosting the vitality of their villages by setting up a regular organic market for both locals and tourists.

"Roses are a lovely business and I hope more rural people in the rose valley can make a good living from it," Yang added.

Linked in

Long Xianwen, the 52-year-old secretary of the Communist Party of China Niujaoshan Village Branch in Guzhang County of Hunan Province, submitted his suggestion at this year's NPC annual session to explore more ways of implementing policies on rural vitalization in remote and mountainous villages, where transportation and infrastructure conditions are quite limited.

"President Xi stressed many times that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets," Long said. "We have lush mountains in our village and we need to figure out ways



Long Xianwen (right), a deputy to the 13th National People's Congress, also secretary of the Communist Party of China Niujaoshan Village Branch in Guzhang County of Hunan Province, speaks to villagers on April 7. *Xinhua*

to turn them into 'gold mountains' for the villagers."

Niujaoshan enjoys natural advantages for tea plantation, with a history of its tea being served to ancient Chinese royalty. But the locals ignored the tea industry and left the village to work in bigger cities, and Long was among them. "We were sitting on a gold mountain but didn't know it," he said.

In 2008, Long founded the first tea plantation cooperative in the village. At the time, there were 1,360 registered residents in the village and the average annual income per person was less than 800 yuan (\$119). The village didn't even have access to tap water. However, Long's idea of planting tea trees in the village didn't get much support from many villagers who preferred to grow "real food."

Long plowed almost all his savings into the cooperative and spared no effort in persuading the villagers to join. In 2014, the cooperative finally started to make profits. By 2016, the whole village was lifted out of poverty and by 2018, the average annual income per person increased to 13,618 yuan (\$2,029). Now, the tea grown in the village is exported to many countries and regions, especially those taking part in the Belt and Road Initiative. The tea from the village has once again returned to its glory days.

In 2018, Long visited many enterprises in Hunan's rural areas and some tea growing areas in Zhejiang Province. He brought a type of white tea seed from Zhejiang and promoted it in his village.

He also brought his suggestions of sustainable development of the tea industry to the 13th NPC and advocated for improved local tourism and better local traffic conditions.

"The Internet has been an important impetus for the development of our village, which is located in a remote area with limited transportation," Long said. "Without the Internet, our tea wouldn't be widely known or get a chance to travel the world." (Beijing Review) ■

China's remarkable progress in poverty reduction



Villagers and members of poverty alleviation team build plastic greenhouses in Dangjiu village, South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on July 7. *Huang Xiaobang*

As the deadline to eradicate absolute poverty approaches, the country is gathering strength to focus on the nation's poorest people, who mainly dwell in deep mountains with adverse natural environments and backward infrastructure, or have special needs.

It was China's solemn promise to let poor people and poor areas enter the moderately prosperous society together with the rest of the country, President Xi Jinping said in a letter to the International Forum on Reform and Opening-Up and Poverty Reduction in China, which was held in Beijing last November.

The country's poverty-reduction drive has been widely recognized as the largest such campaign in history, with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pointing out that China had contributed the most to world poverty alleviation in the past decade.

Here are some facts on poverty reduction in China.

People first

With the world's largest population, China has been boosting its economic development on one major theme: improving people's livelihoods. This has become a fundamental goal and a consistent priority in policy-making. A typical example is the development blueprint for building a moderately prosperous society.

-- Under that blueprint, China will eradicate absolute pov-

erty by 2020 and double per capita income from 2010 level.

-- More than 700 million Chinese people have been lifted out of poverty over the past 40 years. The country's proportion of people living below the Chinese poverty line fell from 97.5 percent in 1978 to 3.1 percent among the rural population at the end of 2017.

--In the past six years, China lifted 82.39 million rural poor out of poverty, with the rural poor population down from 98.99 million in 2012 to 16.6 million in 2018.

-- By the end of 2018, more than half of the 832 poverty-stricken counties had escaped poverty.

-- Per capita income of Chinese people increased by nearly 25 times from 1978 to 2018. In 2018, per capita disposable income of rural residents in poverty-stricken areas stood at 10,371 yuan, a 10.6-percent year-on-year rise.

Strong role of government

With President Xi Jinping in charge, China's poverty-relief battle has made decisive progress and provided global poverty relief with Chinese solutions.

The country's poverty-reduction drive has been widely recognized as the largest such campaign in history.



An employee feeds cows at a dairy farm in Liu'an, East China's Anhui Province on November 17, 2018. The Huahao Dairy Co. Ltd has helped lift more than 600 families out of poverty. VCG



Farmers plant experimental varieties of mung bean in Meizhuang, East China's Shandong Province, which is a key village of poverty alleviation programme at provincial level on June 25. VCG

With President Xi Jinping in charge, China's poverty-relief battle has made decisive progress and provided global poverty relief with Chinese solutions.

-- Last June, Xi presided over a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee to review a plan on efforts in poverty alleviation, stressing that the battle against poverty was one of the "three tough battles" that the country must win to build a moderately prosperous society.

-- Last October, the CPC Central Committee arranged a new round of disciplinary inspections targeting poverty alleviation, the first of its kind, to intensify local governments' poverty-reduction efforts.

-- To wipe out absolute poverty, governments at all levels have established anti-poverty special departments or leading groups, increased poverty-reduction budgets and ensured eastern economically developed regions to help underdeveloped regions in central and western China.

-- State-owned enterprises (SOEs) have taken the lead to support the country's poverty relief campaign. Ninety-six centrally-administered SOEs have offered targeted support to 246 poverty-stricken counties, or 41.6 percent of the key counties under the national poverty-relief program. They have also set up poverty alleviation funds of 18.18 billion

yuan (about \$2.7 billion) and invested 14 billion yuan in nearly 100 aid projects.

Targeted approach

China has adopted a targeted approach, which requires officials to identify actual impoverished people and the factors that caused their poverty.

-- A large legion of capable officials have been selected to guide poverty relief work. For example, officials with business savvy were sent to poverty-stricken villages, while officials with specialized industrial knowledge were sent to villages with an industrial base. As a result, each household or even family member has been given a bespoke poverty relief plan.

-- Apart from setting a multi-year timetable, China also targeted different policies to different regions, including developing business, relocating the poor, compensating farmers in ecologically fragile areas, encouraging education and improving social security.

-- The independent development of needy residents has been enhanced using areas including e-commerce, financing, tourism and infrastructure improvements.

-- During an inspection tour to southwest China's Chongqing Municipality in the middle of April, Xi called for greater efforts to win the battle against poverty and realize the goal of building "a moderately prosperous society in all respects" as scheduled. Xi said that people who still live under the poverty line or slip back into poverty due to illness should be the priority of poverty alleviation projects, and should receive support such as minimum-living allowances, medical insurance and medical aid. (Xinhua) ■



Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government hold a flag-raising ceremony to celebrate 22nd anniversary of return to motherland at Golden Bauhinia Square on July 1. Zhang Wei

DAYU



A Picturesque City

