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Belt and Road Initiative: a Bright Future

Leaders' Roundtable of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation Issues Joint Communique

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Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation Held >>>

The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was held in Beijing from May 14 to 15 in 2017. Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the opening ceremony and chaired the Leaders' Roundtable Summit. The Forum was attended by 29 heads of state and government, and over 1,500 guests including officials, scholars, entrepreneurs, and delegates from financial institutes and the media from 130 countries as well as representatives from over 70 international organizations.

The theme is "strengthening international cooperation and co-building the 'Belt and Road' for win-win development". The aim is to pool more consensus, identify cooperation directions, push forward the implementation of projects, and improve supporting systems.



President Xi Jinping and participants of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

Background of the Belt and Road Initiative >>>

In the wake of the global financial crisis, trade protectionism, isolationism and terrorism have been on the rise in the absence of fundamental changes in the sluggish global economic growth. Given a precarious basis for global economic recovery, lackluster trade and investment plus unsustainable growth momentum, there is a pressing need to connect and upgrade infrastructures and connectivity between and among different countries and regions. It is necessary to pool wisdom and strength to build a new platform of cooperation, develop new growth driver and blaze a new development trail. To this end, in 2013 Xi Jinping, the President of China proposed to build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which is known as the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Belt and Road Initiative features the spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning, and mutual benefit.

The principle of the Belt and Road Initiative is extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. Specifically, all participating countries are members of a community of shared interests, responsibilities and future.





Background of the Belt and Road Initiative >>>

>>> The Belt and Road Initiative has five priorities.

First, policy coordination.

It is an important aspect to guarantee the success of the Initiative. Inter-governmental cooperation should be strengthened to establish multi-level mechanisms for macro-policy communication, enhance the convergence of interests, build political mutual trust and agree on new areas of cooperation.

Second, facilities connectivity.

This is a priority of the Initiative. On the basis of respecting relevant countries' sovereignty and security concerns, the Belt and Road countries should strengthen coordination in infrastructure projects and technical standards, work together to build international traffic arteries and infrastructure networks to connect different parts of Asia and the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa.

Third, unimpeded trade.

This is a key objective of the Initiative. Efforts should be made to facilitate trade and investment, remove barriers, build favorable business climates and free trade zones across the Belt and Road so as to unleash the potential of cooperation and make the cake bigger.

Fourth, financial integration.

This aspect provides crucial support for the Initiative. It is important to deepen financial cooperation, build systems to enable currency stability, facilitate investment and financing, develop sound systems of credit information, and expand the scope and scale of bilateral currency swap and settlement.

Fifth, people-to-people bond.

This is the social cornerstone of the Initiative. It is important to carry forward the spirit of friendly cooperation originated from the ancient Silk Road by promoting extensive cultural and academic exchanges, personnel exchanges and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women exchanges and volunteer services, so as to win public support for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Important Achievements Made >>>



A number of achievements have been made over the past three years since the Initiative was proposed, strengthening international cooperation and engagement of relevant parties.

The Initiative enables China and the rest of the world to share development opportunities. Many national strategies are building connections with the Initiatives, including Kazakhstan's "Bright Road", Mongolia's "Prairie Road", Vietnam's "Two Corridors and One Economic Circle", Pakistan's "Vision 2025", Azerbaijan's "2020: Outlook for the Future", and Saudi Arabia's "Vision 2030". The enhanced links of these strategies further promote "policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bond", blazing a new trail for win-win outcomes.

Under the Belt and Road initiative, trade cooperation between China and participating countries has proven fruitful in 2016 despite sluggish global demand. China's trade with participating countries rose 0.6% to RMB 6.3 trillion in 2016, with export increased by 0.7% to RMB 3.8 trillion and import up 0.5% to RMB 2.4 trillion. China's direct investment in these countries was USD 14.5 billion, accounting for 8.5% of China's total outbound investment. China has completed negotiations to upgrade the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement. Other similar negotiations have also been completed or progressing well. China has deepened economic integration with Belt and Road countries.

As the Initiative has been implemented at a faster pace, efforts have been made to expedite the construction of high-speed railways linking Jakarta and Bandung, Serbia and Hungary. Now there are more than 3,700 trains running between 25 Chinese cities such as Xi'an, and 11 European countries. China has inked over 130 transport agreements with Belt and Road countries, opening 356 international routes along 73 ports as well as direct flights to 43 countries with 4,200 flights per week.

The top of the page features a decorative header. On the left, a stylized map of the Silk Road routes is shown in white and blue. On the right, a modern city skyline with several skyscrapers is depicted in a golden-brown color. In the center, there are silhouettes of camels and a high-speed train. The title 'Important Achievements Made' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, followed by three white chevrons pointing to the right.

Important Achievements Made >>>

To promote infrastructure development, increase jobs and boost economic growth, Belt and Road countries have proposed projects on capacity cooperation in such sectors as steel, cement, machinery and automobiles. To finance infrastructure development and industrialization, China has set up the Silk Road Fund of USD 40 billion and co-founded various construction funds to facilitate the establishment and completion of projects to the benefit of people in these countries. As the port of departure of the New Eurasian Land Bridge, Lianyungang will help liberalize, facilitate and diversify trade among Belt and Road countries.

Under the Belt and Road framework, China has strengthened cooperation with participating countries in many aspects such as infrastructure connectivity, production capacity, trade, investment and finance. Data show that over the past three years, Chinese companies have established 56 economic and trade cooperation zones in more than 20 countries, with a total investment exceeding USD 18.5 billion, generating USD 1.1 billion in tax revenue and 180,000 jobs for these countries. The benefits of the Initiative have gone beyond the Chinese border.

As an important part of people-to-people exchanges under the Initiative, the cooperation on scientific and technological innovation has proven fruitful, especially in talent training. The Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) has organized more than 200 training workshops for other developing countries since 2011, attracting more than 5,000 trainees from most countries and regions covered by the Initiative. Under programs on scientific and technological partnerships between China and other developing countries, in 2013 MOST launched the Talented Young Scientist Program for scholars below the age of 45 from other developing countries to pay short-term working visits of six to twelve months at research institutions, universities or companies in China. In September 2016, MOST, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce jointly released *the Plan on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation under the Belt and Road Initiative*. 2,500 young foreign scientists will be invited for short-term research in China, 5,000 foreign R&D and administrative staff will be trained and 50 joint labs will be built in the coming five years. China will set up big data service platforms for ecological and environmental protection. The country also calls for the establishment of an international alliance for green development under the Belt and Road Initiative and help relevant countries deal with impacts of climate change.



Important Achievements Made >>>

The establishment of national joint labs has further enhanced the long-standing partnerships between research institutions in China and participating countries. Under the auspices of MOST, a number of joint research platforms have been established in recent years, including the China- Mongolia Joint Laboratory of Applied Molecular Technology, China-Egypt Renewable Energy National Joint Laboratory, the China-Cambodia Food Industry Laboratory, the China-Nepal Joint Research Center of Geography, and the China-ASEAN Mariculture Technology Joint Research and Promotion Center. The Ministry has also partnered with Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka to plan for setting up joint labs in such sectors as water resources, biotechnology, high-temperature gas-cooled reactor, and cotton biotechnology. In the next stage, in line with country-specific conditions, the state quo of scientific development and willingness of cooperation, and with an aim to benefit local people, MOST will establish a new batch of joint labs or joint research centers in key fields such as agriculture, energy, transport, telecommunications, resources, environment, ocean, advanced manufacturing, new materials, aerospace, medicine and healthcare, disaster prevention and mitigation.

Cooperation on science parks is in full swing, with the rise of the Zhongguancun Science Park in Beijing, the Zhangjiang High-Tech Park in Shanghai, the East Lake High-Tech Zone in Wuhan, and the Chengdu High-Tech Development Zone, showcasing the strength of scientific and technological innovation to developing countries. The Belt and Road Initiative creates opportunities to share China's experience. Many Asian and African nations along the Belt and Road have expressed interest in cooperating with China to develop science parks, and some of them have signed agreements and will work together with China in terms of planning, construction, management, operation, staff training, incentive making, industrial cooperation, and the introduction of park tenants. So far, MOST has supported the China-ASEAN Technology Transfer Center in Guangxi, the China-South Asia Technology Transfer Center in Yunnan, the China-Arab States Technology Transfer Center in Ningxia, and China-Central Asia Scientific and Technological Cooperation Center in Xinjiang, and the China-CEEC Technology Transfer Center in Jiangsu. The Ministry has also teamed up with these countries and regions to hold annual or biennial conferences on technology transfer and collaborative innovation. In June 2016, MOST continued to build a community of shared innovation by proposing to develop a Belt and Road collaborative network of technology transfer.

The Belt and Road aerospace innovation alliance, initiated by the Northwestern Polytechnical University and the Chinese Society of Astronautics, was established on April 23rd 2017, aiming to provide a platform for international exchanges in aerospace industry, promote in-depth collaboration between members in scientific research, talent training and collaboration among business, academia and research, and facilitate exchanges in culture, education and research. The alliance will help promote the flow of aerospace resources between countries and regions along the Belt and Road, cultivate high-end personnel, and advance the global aerospace industry to the benefit of mankind.

The top of the page features a decorative header. On the left, there is a stylized map of the Silk Road routes in shades of blue and purple. On the right, a modern city skyline with several skyscrapers is shown against a sunset sky. A white train is depicted in the foreground, moving from left to right. Above the skyline, a map highlights the Silk Road routes with various city names in Chinese and Arabic, including Xi'an, Kashgar, Urumqi, Kunming, Yunnan, Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh City. The text 'Important Achievements Made' is written in a white, bold font with a decorative arrow pointing to the right.

Important Achievements Made >>>

To promote the cooperation on fisheries science and education under the “Maritime Silk Road” and the action plan on education under the Belt and Road Initiative, the China-ASEAN FEN President Forum and Workshop on Marine and Aquatic Technology was held in Qingdao on April 12th 2017, attracting over 120 experts and scholars from 20 plus science and education institutions in ASEAN countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Cambodia, international organizations and Chinese universities. The conference focused on Joint Consultation, Construction and Sharing of the Innovation on China-ASEAN Fisheries Science and Education. Attendees exchanged views on such issues as the mechanisms and proposals for EU-China and EU-ASEAN fisheries cooperation; strategies, collaborative efforts and roles of the ASEAN Fisheries Network (ASEAN FEN) in the EU-ASEAN aquatic science and technology innovation platform, the Horizon 2020; and intercollegiate alliance on protecting aquatic biodiversity. Discussions were held on the possibility of setting up a China-ASEAN mariculture collaboration network, and agreement was reached on the initiative of conducting China-ASEAN high-end personnel training for fisheries and joint development of science and technology.

The Silk Road Book Translation Project initiated by China aims to exchange translated versions of selected classic and contemporary books between China and Belt and Road countries. The innovative program has attracted engagement of many countries, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, and Morocco. Mechanisms have been set up between these countries and China for the exchange of fine books.

Belt and Road Initiative: a Bright Future >>>



Since President Xi Jinping proposed in 2013 to build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the Belt and Road Initiative has achieved a successful transition from blueprint to practical innovation, made substantial progress and produced meaningful results beyond expectations. So far more than 100 countries and international institutions have participated in the Initiative, and China has inked agreements with more than 40 of them to jointly develop Belt and Road projects. More and more countries are embarking on the path to cooperation and mutual prosperity, and substantial headway has been made in infrastructure connectivity.

The Belt and Road Initiative was included for the first time in a resolution of the 71st United Nations General Assembly in 2016. Earlier this year the notion of "a community of shared future for mankind" was incorporated into the No. 2344 resolution ratified by the UN Security Council, which called for the Initiative to play its role in strengthening regional economic cooperation. This suggested increasing global recognition of the Belt and Road Initiative.

China will provide assistance worth RMB 60 billion in the coming three years to developing countries and international organizations participating in the Initiative to improve people's well-being. China will provide emergency food aid worth RMB 2 billion to developing countries along the Belt and Road and make an additional contribution of USD 1 billion to the South-South cooperation assistance fund. In addition, China will launch 100 "happy home" projects, 100 poverty alleviation projects and 100 health care and rehabilitation projects in countries along the Belt and Road. China will provide relevant international organizations with USD 1 billion to implement cooperation projects that will benefit the countries along the Belt and Road.

As President Xi Jinping said at his keynote speech during the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, "we should work together" to build the Belt and Road into a road for peace, and of prosperity, opening up and innovation, as well as a road connecting different civilizations.

(Source: www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn, Xinhua News Agency, Science and Technology Daily, People's Daily Overseas Edition, Guangming Daily, Economic Daily, May 15, 2017)

Leaders Roundtable of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation Issues Joint Communique



President Xi Jinping with guests and heads of foreign delegations at the Yanqi Lake International Convention Center

The Leaders Roundtable of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was held on May 15th 2017 in Beijing. Leaders from 30 countries and heads of major international organizations such as the UN, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund attended the Roundtable which featured the theme of "strengthening international cooperation and co-building the 'Belt and Road' for win-win development". Leaders exchanged ideas on an extensive range of issues such as building synergies in development strategies, pursuing connectivity and promoting people-to-people exchanges, and ratified the Joint Communique. The Communique expounded on the Belt and Road Initiative's general context, cooperation objectives, principles, measures, as well as the vision for the future of participating countries. "Our joint endeavor on the Belt and Road Initiative and seeking complementarities with other connectivity Initiatives provide new opportunities and impetus for international cooperation. It helps to work for a globalization that is open, inclusive and beneficial to all. ...creating a prosperous and peaceful community with shared future for mankind is our common aspiration."

(Source: Xinhua News Agency, May 15, 2017)