

Past 40 years put dream within reach

China is now more confident and capable than at any time in history to realize national rejuvenation

The English philosopher Francis Bacon said: "Histories make men wise." In the case of China, history has always been a source of wisdom and strength for this oriental civilization with a time-honored history of 5,000 years.

The year 2018 is a memorable year and a good time to draw on historical achievements. Forty years ago, the third plenary session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) started the courageous endeavor and still ongoing process of reform and opening-up in China.



Liu Xiaoming

I was doing my MA in the United States in the early 1980s shortly after my first overseas posting in Africa. China was only a couple of years into reform and opening-up, and I could never forget the shock at seeing the huge gap between China and the US then.

The ensuing four decades painted a completely different picture. China maintained an average annual growth rate of more than 9 percent and became the world's second-largest economy; China's share in the world economy increased from 2.7 to 16 percent; its per capita GDP rocketed from around \$100 to over \$8,000; 800 million Chinese were lifted out of poverty.

The fact that China has accomplished in 40 years what had taken the Western industrialized countries several hundreds of years to

achieve is truly a miracle in human history.

The 40 years of reform and opening-up is a great new revolution. The CPC has led the Chinese people to take on difficult issues and navigate treacherous rapids, "cutting a path through the mountain rocks and building a bridge across the rapid currents". With these courageous efforts, China has continuously released and developed the productive forces, and succeeded in blazing a path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

From the rural household contract responsibility system to the urban economic system reform, from the establishment of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone to the accession to the World Trade Organization, from opening the coastal and border areas to developing the western inland region, and from pilot free trade zones to the Belt and Road Initiative, China has continued to remove institutional barriers to development.

These vigorous measures of reform and opening-up have helped release and boost social vitality and invigorate the Chinese nation. China is now more confident and capable than at any time in history to realize national rejuvenation.

Reform and opening-up marked a great and successful historical turning point in China — from a closed and semi-closed society to all-round opening-up. China is on the way toward greater integration in the world and has put its foot firmly on the accelerator.

Take China-UK relations as an example. Over 40 years ago, bilateral trade between China and the United Kingdom was \$300 million,

only 200 Chinese visited Britain and only 100 Chinese students studied there. In 2017, two-way trade was in the region of \$80 billion, mutual visits topped 4,000 per day, and the number of Chinese students in the UK soared to 170,000.

In early February, British Prime Minister Theresa May paid a successful visit to China. During the visit, the leaders of the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to building the China-UK "Golden Era" and agreed to strengthen a "strategic, practical, global and inclusive" relationship, promising historic opportunities and broad prospects for China-UK cooperation.

The leaps and bounds in China-UK relations is clear proof of the interdependence and mutually beneficial relationship between China and the world.

China has gained from, and at the same time contributed to, economic globalization. In the past 40 years, China remained committed to opening-up, regarding it as a basic national policy and making it a win-win strategy in China's cooperation with other countries.

Our conviction is that an open China is in a better position to share the fruits of its reform and development with other countries and people so that the countries of the world can work together to achieve common development.

Since adopting the reform and opening-up policy, China has opened up a market of over \$1.7 trillion to foreign investment, and invested over \$1.2 trillion overseas. In the past decade, with its strength in capital, market, technology and labor force, China on average con-

tributed 30 percent of the world economic growth annually, sharing the benefits of China's development with more countries.

As we pride ourselves on this great endeavor and the splendid achievements of the past 40 years, we have a great deal to expect from China's continued development and bright prospects.

With China's economy moving from high-speed growth to high-quality growth, reforms have entered the deep-water zone and require more strenuous efforts. The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China set out a clear and strategic plan on deepening reform on all fronts and opening up wider to the world in the new era.

Going forward, China will introduce more reform measures in more areas with greater intensity. The central task will be supply-side structural reform, reflecting our determination to give the market the decisive role in resources allocation. The priority areas of this reform will include State-owned enterprises, State assets, monopoly industries, rural vitalization, social security, opening-up and eco-conservation.

The business community will be given a major role in this round of reforms, as the government encourages grassroots innovation, creative spirits and pioneering efforts in order to provide a more vigorous and enabling environment for innovative reform.

At the same time, China will open its door wider to the world and increase alignment of domestic practices with international economic and trade rules. Market access will

be greatly improved and there will be greater openness in the services sector, especially the financial sector. The goal is to engineer a more open, inclusive, institutionalized system that facilitates the free and orderly flow of economic factors.

A key effort of China's continued opening-up is the Belt and Road Initiative. This initiative encourages two-way trade and mutual investment between all countries, and aims to build an open world economy.

Another demonstration of China continuing to open up on all fronts is the first-ever China International Import Expo to be held in Shanghai this November. Companies from over 100 countries are expected to take part in this event, which will testify to the sincerity and determination of China in opening up its market to the world.

President Xi Jinping once said: "History looks kindly on those with resolve, with drive and ambition, and with plenty of guts; it won't wait for the hesitant, the apathetic, or those who shy away from challenges."

There is every reason to believe that the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation will be realized as China presses ahead on the journey of reform and opening-up anew. A China that is approaching the center of the world stage will create more development opportunities for countries around the world, including the UK, and will make new and greater contribution to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

The author is China's ambassador to the United Kingdom.

Winter Games to boost economy

By ZHANG ZHOUXIANG

Goodbye, Pyeongchang! Hello, Beijing! At the end of the 2018 Winter Olympic Games' closing ceremony in Pyeongchang, the Republic of Korea, on Feb 25, Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee, handed the Olympic flag to Chen Jining, mayor of Beijing, marking the start of a new Winter Olympic cycle.

Beijing and Zhangjiakou, in North China's Hebei province, will co-host the 2022 Winter Games, for which both cities have already started preparations.

One of the biggest advantages

of Beijing is that it has a number of stadiums that played host to the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics.

The 2022 Winter Olympics will make optimum use of taxpayers' money, with the host cities and venues serving the spectators and athletes equally well.

Moreover, the 2022 Winter Games have the potential to become a new economic growth point for the whole of northern China, as it will make people more enthusiastic about playing and watching winter sports. Data show that on average every winter sports event increases the number of fans by 5 percent.

Reports on the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics were read 1.41 billion times on domestic social

media and micro blogs, indicating Chinese people's interest in winter sports. After Wu Dajing, a member of China's short-track speed-skating team, won the gold in the men's 500-meter event in Pyeongchang, he became a celebrity overnight, with many children posting comments on his micro blog that Wu's success inspired them to learn ice skating.

Experts estimate the number of China's winter sports fans will rise by 20 percent a year in the years leading up to the 2022 Winter Games. The number is expected to reach 340 million in 2022.

Ice and snow tourism will benefit, too. According to China Ice Tourism Consumption Big Data Report, co-issued by the China Tourism

Academy and travel agency tuniu.com on Jan 3, China had 170 million winter tourists from 2016 to 2017, and the ice and snow tourism market income is about 270 billion yuan (\$42.8 billion).

Several winter sports stadiums and artificial ice resorts in China's eastern and southwestern provinces, such as Zhejiang and Sichuan, rose to the top 10 domestic list. That means China's ice and snow tourism and winter sports have crossed natural boundaries and reached provinces that receive relatively less snowfall.

In other words, the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics will be a major step forward in China's winter sports, and ice and snow tourism

sectors. However, to develop the winter sports industry in Beijing, some factors need to be taken into consideration, such as the fact that Beijing and the rest of northern China have been relatively dry this winter.

The preparatory committee for the 2022 Winter Olympics said it has already evaluated the use of water and energy as well as the environmental impact of the sports gala, which it said is a positive development and sets a good example for others to follow.

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