

Seeking a bigger Belt and Road role

Boao Forum for Asia serves as a key platform for ramping up Hainan's engagement with the region and beyond

By MA ZHIPING and LIU XIAOLI

South China's Hainan province will accelerate its opening-up by involving itself more closely in the Belt and Road Initiative, enlarging its circle of international friends, and establishing a pan-South China Sea tourism economy cooperation rim, according to senior officials with the provincial government.

"During the Boao Forum for Asia 2018 annual conference — to be held from April 8 to 11, with the theme of An Open and Innovative Asia for a World of Greater Prosperity — Hainan will arrange eight Hainan-themed events to further explore opportunities and insights for cooperation," Wang Sheng, director of Hainan's foreign affairs office, said on April 2.

They include the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and Island Economy sub-forum, the ASEAN-China governors' and mayors' dialogue (involving member countries

of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), as well as the Belt and Road Initiative: Healthcare Industries and Roundtable of Overseas Chinese CEOs Dialogue with Think Tanks.

The Boao Forum for Asia, launched in 2001, has become a key international platform for Hainan to showcase itself.

Hainan, which marks its 30th anniversary as the country's youngest province on April 13, is looking forward to welcoming global political and business leaders at Boao, which is known as the oriental Davos — a nod to the town in the Swiss Alps that hosts the World Economic Forum annual meeting each January.

Established as a province and the country's only provincial special economic zone in 1988, Hainan has been a pioneer nationally for reform and opening-up.

More than 200 important domestic and international conferences are

held there every year, attracting large numbers of political and business leaders, officials and experts from all sectors, according to statistics from the local government.

Shen Xiaoming, the provincial governor, said Hainan will continue to use the Boao Forum for Asia and other exchange platforms, such as the Roundtable Meeting on China-Africa Cooperation, to promote the development of the island province and to serve the nation's diplomacy.

Hainan will create greater opportunities for both Chinese and overseas firms in its pillar industries, which include tropical high-efficiency agriculture, tourism, Internet and marine sectors. Each industry aims to generate more than 100 billion yuan (\$15.9 billion) in annual output value by 2020, according to a provincial government report.

"A more vibrant mechanism and more favorable business environment for international enterprises will be created," said Shen. He added

that Hainan will also attract more multinational companies, operation centers and accounting centers to the island.

So far, Hainan has established sister relationships with 56 overseas provinces and cities worldwide, including Hawaii in the United States, South Korea's Jeju Special Autonomous Province, and Finland's Oulu Province.

A total of 56 air routes now connect Hainan with Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and international destinations including Russia, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Germany. International flight routes are expected to increase to 100 by 2020.

Cruise routes to the province have expanded to 17, covering more of Southeast Asia, according to officials with the provincial government.

Tourists from 26 countries including Austria, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, the US, South Korea and Russia enjoy a visa-free

policy, which will be extended to more than 50 countries.

Meanwhile, Hainan's advanced technology in agriculture has entered the international market. The Agricultural Technology Demonstration Center in Congo was built with support from Hainan University in 2007.

Hainan has also made efforts to bring more benefits to people in the region.

The province has sent doctors to Cambodia to provide medical services. A total of 543 cataract patients have regained their sight in the past two years, thanks to the Hainan Cambodia Brightness Action campaign.

The province has also organized international training workshops on the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of major diseases in ASEAN countries.

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High-end medical services on offer for tourists

Hainan launches Boao Lecheng pilot zone to develop the healthcare segment as a pillar industry

By MA ZHIPING and LIU XIAOLI
in Haikou

Every year, tens of thousands of Chinese women travel overseas — as far as the United States — for an injection of 9-valent human papillomavirus (HPV) cervical cancer vaccine. But that large number of special travelers from the Chinese mainland may be reduced as the vaccine will soon be made available at Boao Lecheng International Medical Tourism Pilot Zone, in South China's Hainan province.

Shen Xiaoming, governor of Hainan, told the media recently that 9-valent HPV cervical cancer vaccine will be available sometime soon at Boao Super Hospital, which opened on March 31 at the international medical tourism pilot zone, the only one in China.

This means that Hainan will be the first place to offer 9-valent HPV cervical cancer vaccine in the Chinese mainland.

"Hainan, as China's only provincial special economic zone, should fully take advantage of the special policies granted by the State to the zone to develop the healthcare industry as a pillar industry," said Shen. He hopes that Hainan will develop a high-end medical services industry, with Boao Lecheng pilot zone playing a leading role.



Boao Yiling Life Care Center, the first of its kind in China that provides comprehensive life care services, opened in Boao early last year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY ASIA WEEKLY

"It should not just be a medical services provider, but also a driving sector for Hainan," said Shen.

Official statistics show more than 600,000 Chinese went abroad as medical tourists last year.

Being a demonstration project launched to pilot the nation's healthcare reform in 2013 and a platform for international medical tourism cooperation and communication, the Boao Lecheng pilot zone enjoys nine special preferential policies such as special permission for importing medical technology, medical equipment and medicine, under which foreign companies will be able to set up medical organizations in

the zone and foreign medicines can enjoy special import tariffs.

It is allowed to import 9-valent HPV cervical cancer vaccine and other drugs without asking permission from the central authorities, as other provinces and regions have to, for the time being.

The pilot zone, 6 kilometers from the site of the Boao Forum for Asia, covers an area of 20 square kilometers and is expected to be completed in five years. To date, 27 projects have been completed or are under construction.

Five of them have opened, offering high-end medical services. And the latest one, Boao Super Hospital, is a

sharing platform for clinical centers supported by latest state-of-the-art equipment and served by leading doctors from all over the country.

Unlike most domestic hospitals that are run by the government, Boao Super Hospital adopts a marketwise operation and accepts investments of either private or foreign nature, according to He Pengfei, deputy director of the administration committee for the Boao Lecheng pilot zone.

He said the government owns the sharing platform, providing essential services including imaging diagnosis, surgery, pharmacy and sterilization for the clinics. But the operation

mode will be brand new. Each clinic is allowed to set up its own company and has its own legal person.

"The hospital will provide high-end international medical services for domestic patients, and also plans to build an international clinical medical innovation center for wealthy medical travelers from all over the world, by taking the geographical advantage of Hainan and the increasing influence of the Boao Forum for Asia," He added.

So far, leading veteran doctors in 10 medical subjects, including departments of infectious diseases, urology, plastic and medical beauty, have confirmed they will settle at the hospital.

Boao Yiling Life Care Center, the first of its kind in China that provides comprehensive life care services, is a high-end medical tourism service institution which has been operating in Boao since early last year.

With an investment of 60 million yuan (\$9.5 million), and covering an area of 3.7 hectares in its first phase, the center now has more than 220,000 members all over the world.

Beyond advanced Western medical technologies, the members can also receive traditional Chinese medicine treatments at the center.

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