

Forging deeper, stronger relations with neighbors

Nation's ties with Pakistan highlight the vision and thinking of China's diplomacy in the New Era to forge solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries

By YAO JING

The year 2018 is crucial to China's development. It is the first year for the full implementation of the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the crucial year for securing a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and for implementing the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20). It is also the 40th anniversary of the reform and opening-up policy.

Against this background, the national Two Sessions, the annual sessions of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference held last month, have great significance.

These important political events came under the new situation in which the people of all ethnic groups across the country are studying and implementing Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. The Two Sessions were a complete success with a democratic and united, realistic and progressive approach. They are also windows to show China's confidence in its path, theory, system and culture to the world.

Over the past five years, in the face of a complex environment, at home and abroad, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has rallied and led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to forge ahead. We have moved forward in a coordinated manner with the five-sphere integrated plan and the four-pronged comprehensive strategies, and have laid out a creative new vision and new thinking as well as new strategies for China's diplomacy.

General Secretary Xi Jinping's thought on diplomacy has been formed and established, providing theoretical guidelines for China's diplomacy in the New Era, and contributes China's perspectives and wisdom for reforming and improving the global governance system.

China has embarked on a road of major-country diplomacy with China's distinct vision, style and value, which has contributed its wisdom to the reform and improvement of the international system. The proposal to foster a new type of international relations and build a community with a shared future for mankind put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping has become the strongest voice to promote the development of the times.

Now, China's diplomatic agendas for 2018 have been unfolded. We are forging ahead with the pioneering and innovative spirit on the diplomatic front by launching efforts to implement the decisions of the 19th CPC National Congress.

We are hosting a series of diplomatic events in China such as the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference (April 8-11 in Boao, South China's Hainan province), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in June in Qingdao, East China's Shandong province, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit in Beijing in September, and the first China International Import Expo in November in Shanghai.

We will continue to expand China's network of global partnerships, build a framework for major-country relations of overall stability and balanced development, and forge a new form of international relations. We will continue to deepen relations with our neighbors in line with the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness, and the policy of forging friendship and partnership with these neighbors.

We will, in keeping with the principle of upholding justice while pursuing shared interests and the principle of sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith, wish to strengthen solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries, and advance the building of a community with a shared future



Yao Jing, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan.

for mankind. We will continue to hold high the banner of peace, development and win-win cooperation to comprehensively promote the Belt and Road Initiative. We will play a more constructive role for world stability, and on hot issues actively explore solutions with Chinese characteristics.

In the context of China's diplomacy, the relationship with Pakistan has always been the priority of our neighboring diplomacy. China-Pakistan relations have grown from strength to strength. The friendship between the two countries remains unbreakable.

In April 2015, President Xi Jinping paid a historic state visit to Pakistan. The leaders of the two countries agreed to upgrade the China-Pakistan relationship into an all-weather strategic cooperation partnership and opened a new era for the China-Pakistan relationship.

As an important pioneering project of the Belt and Road Initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has pressed ahead with remarkable results. Of the 43 early harvest projects under the CPEC, 22 projects are under construction or completed with a total investment of around \$19 billion.

In trade and investment and fields such as science and technology, culture, education and defense, the pragmatic cooperation between the two countries is also deepening. It can be said that China-Pakistan relations have become the pioneer and an important demonstration in our drive to forge the new type of international relations and a community with a shared future for neighboring countries.

In the near future, President Mamnoon Hussain of Pakistan will attend the SCO Summit in Qingdao. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi of Pakistan is attending the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference. We will take these opportunities to further strengthen the exchanges between the two countries and promote the construction of the CPEC and cooperation in other fields.

Both countries will devote ourselves to push forward the China-Pakistan relations to new heights. We are confident that the China-Pakistan relationship will continue to take the lead in state-to-state relationships, playing an exemplary role in the practice of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

The author is Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan.

Yao Jing, Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, explains CPEC will benefit the entire region

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the most important and best-performing project under China's Belt and Road Initiative, which promotes infrastructure and the interconnection of continents, Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing said on April 3.

The multibillion-dollar CPEC project has provided jobs to 70,000 Pakistanis over the last five years and will generate 700,000 more employment opportunities in the future, he told the Breakfast with Jang program at a hotel in Islamabad.

Yao said that under the corridor project, the development of four sectors of the economy as well as Gwadar, a port city in southwestern Pakistan, are in full swing. He said that among Gwadar development plans are the establishment of an economic zone and food processing zone, construction of a power plant, installation of a water plant, and development of a vocational training institute.

More than 20 Chinese companies will invest in Gwadar's free economic zone, he said, and all companies are fulfilling their corporate social responsibility in the CPEC project zones.

The CPEC promises energy production, infrastructure development, highway construction, railway network expansion, and the development of special economic zones in Pakistan.

"The CPEC will give Pakistan more than 20 special economic zones," Yao said, adding that the working group has already visited the sites of these zones.

The CPEC project is overseen by the Sino-Pak Joint Coordination Committee, which has so far met seven times. It aims to benefit both China and Pakistan and not only promotes economic development but also increases regional cooperation.

Yao said that dialogue is under way to revise the Sino-Pak free trade agreement to help end the trade imbalance. China is aware of Pakistani businesses' reservations about the bilateral trade imbalance, and it is striving to address them.

"We've offered to end duty on 90 percent of Pakistani exports under the trade agreement to facilitate bilateral trade and give Pakistanis more and more incentives," he said.

At an earlier occasion in Islamabad, the ambassador said that Pakistan should make the CPEC a part of its national strategy as it would contribute to its long-term economic growth as well as the development of the whole region.

Yao said China considers Pakistan a most reliable friend and wants to see it develop economically, because a strong Pakistan is good for China and for the region.

China believes that the CPEC will put Pakistan "on the path of industrialization, jobs creation and regional connectivity," he said, adding that the project will also help Pakistan overcome energy problems and improve its economic growth through the construction of a road and railway network.

Yao said China encourages Pakistan's private sector to capitalize on the CPEC for growth and expansion. He added that Pakistan's business communities should receive benefits from the special economic zones and develop mutually beneficial joint ventures with Chinese counterparts.

The special economic zones under the CPEC project will increase local exports.

The Chinese government encourages and supports the country's companies in fulfilling their social responsibility to benefit the people, while support and cooperation from the local population is required.

Moreover, the CPEC is not meant only for China and Pakistan as it can benefit the entire region, Yao said.

The corridor project has already increased foreign investment in Pakistan, helped increase the country's economic growth rate to the highest level in the last decade, and has spurred massive employment opportunities.

The ambassador said China's Belt and Road Initiative was created to bring about prosperity through economic development and thus improve people's lives.

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