

# China, PNG relations at 'all-time high'

Beijing ready to help Pacific island nations learn from its experience in poverty alleviation

By XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

China stands ready to work with Papua New Guinea (PNG) to inject impetus into the overall development of relations between China and the Pacific island countries, according to top diplomats and leaders.

And China and PNG are on a solid path to further develop bilateral relations and strengthen cooperation under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative.

When meeting with visiting Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, on Oct 31, PNG Prime Minister Peter O'Neill expressed firm support for the BRI. O'Neill hoped that cooperation under the initiative could promote PNG's economy as well as common development of the Pacific island nations.

The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, proposed in 2013 under the BRI, aim to build a trade and infrastruc-

ture network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient trade routes of the Silk Road.

Bilateral relations have reached an all-time high since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries, O'Neill said, noting that PNG is a key and close friend of China among the Pacific island nations.

China was among the first countries which supported PNG in hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' meeting this year and rendered PNG assistance in this regard, according to the prime minister. Wang said China has provided assistance to PNG within its capacity.

Wang said the APEC meeting in the capital Port Moresby from Nov 17 to 18 is a major event for the Pacific island nation, and China wishes the meeting all success and will continue to offer help to PNG.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and PNG, the two countries have always sup-



A staff member at the Papua New Guinea booth at the China International Import Expo in Shanghai introduces the country's products to a visitor on Nov 6. China seeks to expand trade ties with the Pacific island nation. XINHUA

ported and helped each other, and forged profound friendship and strong mutual trust, he said.

Leaders of the two countries announced the establishment of a strategic partnership between their two countries in 2014.

Wang said China-PNG relations have now become an exemplary model for the ties between China and the Pacific island countries as well as South-South cooperation.

Both China and PNG are developing countries, and China is willing to enhance strategic coordination with

PNG and jointly support multilateralism and free trade at the APEC and other international arenas in order to safeguard the common interests of developing countries and other countries as well.

Noting that PNG was the first among the Pacific island nations to sign cooperation agreements with China under the BRI, Wang said China welcomes the attendance of Prime Minister O'Neill at the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation to be held next year in China.

China is willing to expand cooperation with PNG in trade, investment, industrial capacity and education under the BRI, so as to help the country achieve sustainable development and the common development of the Pacific island nations, he added.

In a separate meeting with PNG Foreign Minister Rimbink Pato, Wang underscored the important position of PNG in China's neighborhood diplomacy, saying China is willing to become a lasting and trustworthy friend and partner of PNG.

## Joint effort to eradicate malaria

China-backed center starts operations in Papua New Guinea to train doctors, staff tackle a major public health issue in the Pacific nation

By CHAI HUA in Shenzhen  
grace@chinadailyhk.com

A new anti-malaria center, backed by the government of Shenzhen, in South China's Guangdong province, officially started operations in Papua New Guinea (PNG) this month.

The five-story building includes an epidemiology area, parasite laboratories, offices, a section for physiological studies and a consulting room for traditional Chinese medicine.

Located in the capital Port Moresby, a sister city of Shenzhen, the Sino-PNG center focuses on providing quick malaria diagnosis and treatment services, as well as training local doctors to deal with the disease.

Ma Hanwu, senior advisor of China's Shenzhen Centre for Disease

Control and Prevention, said at the anti-malaria center's opening ceremony in August that he expects the new facility to train 300-500 doctors and technicians every year.

He also mentioned that the two countries aim to eradicate malaria in PNG. As part of this exercise, the Chinese government has carried out a "Mass Drug Administration" project on Kiriwina Island, in Milne Bay province, which has achieved remarkable results.

Malaria is regarded as one of the most challenging public health issues in the world. In 2016, there were an estimated 216 million cases of malaria and deaths reached 445,000, according to the World Health Organization.

In PNG, there were 432,000 cases

last year, an eight-fold increase from 2014.

A team of experts in Guangdong provided an anti-malaria solution with artemisinin, discovered by Chinese scientist Tu Youyou. Because of the discovery, she won the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine jointly with two other scientists.

The Guangdong medical team has conducted the treatment in many countries of Africa and Southeast Asia.

Zhang Zhenyan, a Chinese doctor who has worked in PNG for six months, spent most of his time at Kiriwina Island. According to a *Nanfeng Daily* report, it usually takes 12 hours of sailing to reach the remote island which has neither electricity nor internet access.



The five-story Sino-PNG Anti-Malaria Center started operations this month. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY ASIA WEEKLY

However, Dr Zhang said that, despite all the hardships, within six months of implementing their project his team successfully decreased the malaria parasite's carrying rate — in a population of more than

45,000 residents — from 4 percent to 0.31 percent.

In addition, his team also introduced to the local people Chinese-style *tuina* massage therapy as well as acupuncture treatment.