

Xi pledges support for island countries in developing their economies, notes huge potential for partnership

By CAO DESHENG

China welcomes Pacific island countries to take a ride on the express train of its development by promoting all-around cooperation, President Xi Jinping said on Nov 16.

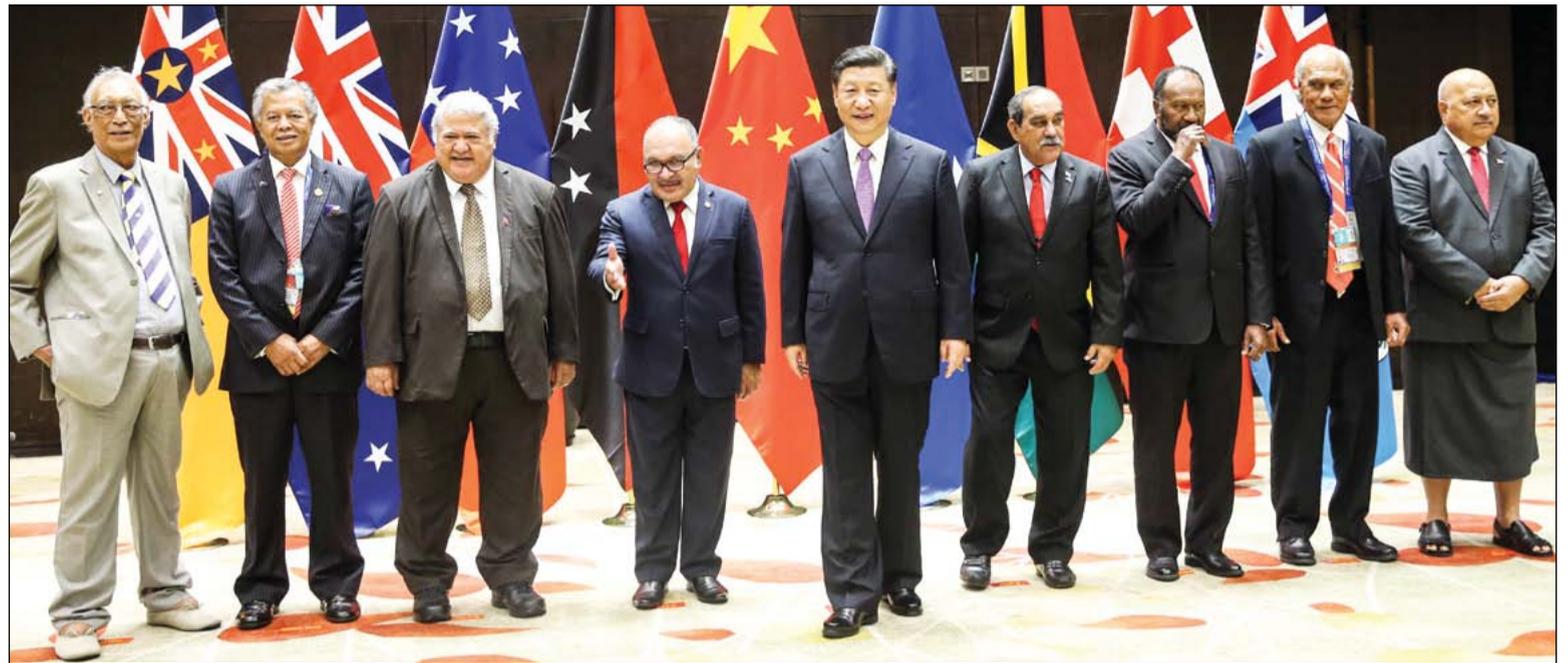
In a keynote speech during a meeting with leaders of Pacific island countries, in Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, Xi said China supports the countries in developing their economies, improving people's livelihoods and increasing the capacity for independent development.

China and Pacific island countries have strong economic complementarities, and there is tremendous potential for partnership, Xi said.

He added that the common interests between them have increased under new global circumstances, and the foundation for cooperation has expanded rather than narrowed.

To deepen relations, China is ready to hold the third China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development & Cooperation Forum in the second half of next year, he said, and the country will promote activities related to the China-Pacific Island Countries Year of Tourism 2019.

Calling Pacific island countries good friends, partners and brothers, Xi said China has treated the countries as equals and respected their choice of development paths



President Xi Jinping (center) appears in a group photo with leaders of Pacific island countries which have all established diplomatic relations with China, on Nov 16 in Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

## China's growth to lift Pacific nations

that suit their particular national conditions.

China is willing to open its market to Pacific island countries, expand investment and increase imports from them, Xi said, adding that peace, development and win-win cooperation are the right choice.

Xi highlighted Pacific island countries' special concerns over climate change, saying China attaches great importance to this issue and will

provide assistance to them within its capacity.

Echoing Xi, the leaders said they consider China an important partner in realizing their development vision, enhancing people's well-being and coping with global challenges, and they cherish the relationship with China and firmly uphold the one-China policy.

The leaders said they appreciated China's long-term assistance, which

has been provided with no political strings attached. They also expressed hope for strengthened cooperation with China in such fields as trade, investment, fisheries, tourism and infrastructure.

Xu Xiujun, a senior researcher at the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the meeting was conducive to building an even stronger bond between China and

Pacific island countries.

The Pacific island countries have great synergy in their development strategy with China, which creates opportunities for a mutually beneficial partnership, Xu said.

In addition, China and Pacific island countries have tremendous cooperation potential in such fields as infrastructure and production capacity under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, he added.

## Xi urges stronger and pragmatic cooperation

President says the Belt and Road and a comprehensive strategic partnership will boost win-win development

By AN BAIJIE

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China and Papua New Guinea (PNG) should strengthen the connection of development strategies under the Belt and Road Initiative framework and enhance cooperation in such areas as economy, trade, investment and finance, President Xi Jinping said on Nov 16.

Xi made the remark while meeting with Peter O'Neill, prime minister of PNG, during his visit to the nation.

Noting that PNG is the first Pacific island nation to sign a Belt and Road cooperation agreement with China, Xi called on the two sides to promote pragmatic cooperation to achieve

win-win development.

The two countries should make joint efforts to promote the initiation of negotiations on a free trade agreement as early as possible, Xi said.

The president pointed out that China firmly supports PNG to choose a development path that fits its own national situation, and China highly appreciates the PNG government's firm stance on supporting the one-China policy.

The two countries decided to build a comprehensive strategic partnership featuring mutual respect and common development, which will inject great power into the bilateral cooperation, Xi said.

China would like to enhance strategic mutual trust with PNG and

promote political party, parliament, local and people-to-people exchanges, he said.

Xi expressed gratitude for PNG's enthusiastic and grand reception for his visit, saying he could feel the friendship from the sincere smiles on the faces of the local people.

Prime Minister O'Neill said it was a historic moment for his country to welcome the Chinese president's visit.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1976, the two countries have maintained great development, he said, adding that PNG will firmly uphold the one-China policy.

The prime minister said he appreciated China's long-term support for PNG's economic development, a Chinese medical team's efforts to

prevent malaria in the remote areas of PNG, China's aid to help PNG people rebuild their homes after an earthquake, and China's support for PNG to host the weekend's informal meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders.

Hailing the Belt and Road as a great initiative that could boost interconnectivity among Pacific island countries, he said PNG will proactively take part in the Belt and Road.

The two leaders witnessed the signing of a number of cooperation documents between China and PNG after the meeting.

On the morning of Nov 16, Bob Dadae, governor-general of PNG, hosted a grand ceremony to welcome Xi.

Xi, noting that it is his first visit to PNG and also the first visit by a Chinese head of state to the Pacific nation, told Dadae that China attaches great importance to the development of China-PNG ties.

It is hoped that the visit will promote bilateral relations, expand exchanges at all levels between the two sides and promote practical cooperation to get more outcomes, Xi said.

Dadae said Xi's state visit is a great event for PNG and has set a milestone for the development of PNG-China ties.

Dadae expressed gratitude for China's help in such areas as PNG's infrastructure, education and health-care.