

Xi attends opening of China-financed school seen as symbol of healthy ties with PNG and one of the fruits of regional cooperation

By MO JINGXI

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President Xi Jinping on Nov 16 encouraged young people in China and Papua New Guinea to pass along and practice the friendship between the two countries as he attended the opening ceremony of Butuka Academy, a China-aid school project.

The academy, established in 1984, is once again glowing with vitality after its reconstruction, financed by PNG capital Port Moresby's sister city, Shenzhen.

"Teaching one to fish is better than giving him a fish. The reason China helped to construct Butuka is to help cultivate talented people for PNG," Xi said.

In recent years, exchanges between China and PNG in culture and education have been increasingly frequent and regional cooperation is booming, Xi said, and Butuka Academy is a fruit of such cooperation.

The new school, 10 times bigger than the old one, has a total land area of more than 50,000 square meters and is now equipped with three buildings, for elementary, primary and secondary schools. It also has staff apartments, a multifunction hall, a large flag-raising platform and courts for basketball and volleyball.

Now it can accept more than 3,000 students from local villages.

Xi said China is willing to make



President Xi Jinping talks to table tennis coach Shi Zhihao while watching a training session on Nov 16 with Peter O'Neill (second from Xi's right), prime minister of Papua New Guinea. The session between Zhang Yining, four-time Olympic gold medalist, and an athlete from PNG was at the new Butuka Academy. Xi and O'Neill attended the opening of the project financed and built by China. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Build friendship, youths told

joint efforts with PNG to deepen the profound friendship rooted in the people of the two countries and lay a more solid foundation for bilateral ties to move forward.

"We believe that cultivating talented people from generation to generation will certainly provide strong support for PNG to realize sustainable development," he said.

PNG Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, who also attended the ceremony, said Butuka Academy is another example of the strong relationship between PNG and China. His coun-

try thanked China for the school and also for providing opportunities for PNG's young people to study in China, he said.

Ma Shuai, managing director of China State Construction Engineering Corporation Steel (PNG), the contractor on the Butuka project, said, "The local government and villagers have been very supportive of the construction work."

The head of Kila Kila, the village where the school is located, invited the workers to join their celebrations for the New Year, he said.

"The school is an excellent thing compared with the past one. When the villagers see the buildings and the facilities, they all want (their children) to study here," said Eret Someone, a 38-year-old who teaches fourth-grade students at Butuka.

"We really appreciated it. We thank the Chinese government for doing this very much," she said.

Sheryl Thomson, 12, a fourth-grader who lives nearby, is one of the 1,429 students currently studying at the school.

"The old school was quite bro-

ken, with rubbish all over, and we didn't have enough classrooms. I'm so proud of the new one," she said.

Mathematics is Sheryl's favorite subject, and she wants to be a bank clerk when she grows up.

"Our sweat and efforts will be worthy if any graduate from Butuka one day becomes the cultural transmitter and envoy of friendship between China and Papua New Guinea," said Li Pu, managing director of the PNG branch of Shenzhen SEZ Construction & Development Group, which also participated in the project.

Independence Boulevard a path to prosperity

By MO JINGXI

President Xi Jinping said on Nov 16 that China is willing to jointly plan for the path toward prosperity, openness and friendship with Papua New Guinea (PNG) as he attended the handover ceremony of a road project financed and built by China.

Independence Boulevard is 1,060 meters long and six lanes wide, linking Parliament House in Port Moresby to the capital city's main road.

The handover was celebrated with PNG national flags and red Chinese knots swinging from streetlight poles, while Chinese national flags fluttered in the wind.

"What Independence Boulevard connects is the profound sentiments of friendship that Chinese people

have for people in PNG, and it bears Chinese people's good wishes for PNG people," Xi said.

The 26th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting is a great event for PNG and the whole Pacific island region, Xi said. China, as a good friend and partner of PNG, has been, within its ability, offering support and assistance to the country to host the meeting.

"We believe the boulevard will bring more convenience and prosperity for local people," Xi said.

He also praised Chinese companies for finishing the road construction on time with the highest standards and fastest speed.

PNG's Prime Minister Peter O'Neill said as a symbol of friendship, the opening of the road will be a mile-

stone in the bilateral relationship between China and PNG.

Tang Qiaoliang, general manager of China Harbor Engineering Co, said the project created over 800 jobs for local people during its implementation and trained many people to become skilled workers.

Gabriel Kol, a delivery driver in Port Moresby, looked forward to the opening of Independence Boulevard with great excitement.

"It is wide and enables more vehicles to go at the same time. It's great because I can shorten my route from point A to point B," he said.

The road officially opened after the handover ceremony and was ready to welcome guests and leaders from around the world attending the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting on Nov 17 and 18.



The Independence Boulevard symbolizes China-Papua New Guinea friendship. WEN ZONGDUO / CHINA DAILY