



Song Tao, Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, delivers a keynote speech at a thematic session on people-to-people connectivity of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

B&R Forum features people-to-people connectivity session

By Hou Weili & Ma Xiaowen



Song Tao, Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee

“Only when countries have frequent people-to-people contacts, can their hearts become closer. Only then, will the conditions for pragmatic and friendly cooperation in other areas become ripe,” said Song Tao, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (IDCPC).

Song made the remarks in his keynote speech at a thematic session on people-to-people connectivity of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation moderated by Guo Yezhou, Vice Minister of IDCPC, in Beijing on May 14-15.

Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013 to strengthen China’s relations with participating countries in Asia, Africa and Europe, primarily through extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits.

The initiative includes an overland Silk Road Economic Belt that connects China with Europe through Central Asia, and an ocean-based 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road that links to countries to the south of China and leads all the way to Africa and Southern Europe.

Significance of people-to-people connectivity

“The Belt and Road Initiative is about not only economic advancement, but also innovative exploration in the pursuit of new globalization and better global governance,” Song said.

“To create a better world for people of every nation is the direction of reforming current global governance. With the initiative, we can better learn people’s demands for development, respond timely and find solutions through negotiation and cooperation,” he added. He also stressed that promoting people-to-people connectivity will inject vitality into the efforts to reform and advance the system of global governance.

The forum was the first high-level meeting on the Belt and Road Initiative after President Xi first proposed it in 2013. The two-day meeting showed the international community’s keen interest in the initiative. It was attended by 29 foreign heads of state and government leaders, representatives of international organizations and delegates from over 130 countries.

The initiative provides a platform for exchanges of different civilizations, according to Song. “Participating countries’ different nationalities, histories, cultures and customs present a colorful civilization landscape. Strengthening bonds among the people is indispensable to the success of the initiative,” he said.

Thanks to partnerships between China and other participating countries, people-to-people exchanges are receiving a boost as the Belt and Road Initiative scales up cooperation, whether in education, healthcare, culture or media.

Statistics from the Ministry of Education show there were about 200,000 students from Belt and Road countries studying in China at the end of 2016. China has also reciprocated, with 350,000 of its students studying in these nations since 2012.

In his keynote speech delivered at the opening ceremony of the forum, President Xi pledged that China will invite 2,500 young scientists from Belt and Road countries to conduct short-term research projects in China, train 5,000 scientists, engineers and management personnel, and establish 50 laboratories for joint scientific research in the next five years.

Exchanges of wisdom

The thematic session was a platform for global leaders to share their wisdom on enhancing people-to-people connectivity. After Song’s keynote speech, Irina Bokova, Director General of the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, commented that the silk routes tell a story of human progress driven by mutual learning, and they remind people that no culture has ever flourished in isolation. The Belt and Road Initiative is opening new opportunities for development and prosperity.

Margaret Chan Fung Fu-chun, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), said China has already signed a memorandum of understanding on medical cooperation along the Belt and Road with WHO, which demonstrates China’s commitment to global health.

Massimo D’Alema, President of the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), stressed that the most crucial component of the success of the Belt and Road Initiative is precisely constructing strong people-to-people bonds between communities and societies.

“Connectivity of people, which is indeed foundational to lasting prosperity and peace, is the only winning option,” said Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab Province, Pakistan, after a brief introduction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative.



Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab Province, Pakistan



Margaret Chan Fung Fu-chun, Director General of WHO

“One should not impose on others what it does not desire for itself,” said Dmitry Meyertsev, President of the Russia and China Friendship Association. “Mutual respect among the two peoples is an effective approach for achieving a better future for China and Russia.”

Speakers at this session also included Jose De Venecia, President of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties; Roman Tasmania, Chairman of Ethiopian charity association Maternity; and Dhanin Chearavanont, Chairman and CEO of the Charoen Pokphand Group.

Sharing stories

A session for story sharing and presentation of achievements, presided over by China Central Television (CCTV) host Dong Qing, took place after the speeches.

Representatives of the Letpadaung copper mine project in Myanmar, Huawei’s “Seeds for the Future” project and a primary school project in Gwadar, Pakistan, as well as employees of the Colombo City port project in



A session for story sharing and presentation of achievements, presided over by China Central Television (CCTV) host Dong Qing, took place after the speeches

Sri Lanka, China Ocean Shipping Co. and China Startimes Group, shared their stories about advancing people-to-people connectivity under the Belt and Road Initiative.

Leaders from international institutions, officials from China’s ministries, and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and business communities presented to the audience their efforts in pushing forward connectivity.

“The people are the people of the Belt and Road. The objective of development is to improve the life of people,” said Charles Kayonga, Rwandan Ambassador to China.

The thematic session mapped out a three-year action plan to promote people-to-people connectivity throughout the Belt and Road. The plan gives special attention to NGOs through the establishment of the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network. Supported by the China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE), the new network has secured the participation of 160 Chinese and foreign NGOs.

“In the future, CNIE will optimize resources and strengthen contacts with foreign NGOs and think tanks to encourage more talents from non-governmental sectors to contribute to the initiative,” Zhu Rui, Secretary General of CNIE, said at the thematic session.

Members of the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network will regularly share cooperation needs and approaches to deepen exchanges through reciprocal visits, seminars and workshops. The network will also support NGOs in initiating voluntary cooperation programs in education, healthcare and livelihood improvement to deepen understanding and build trust among participating nations.

These efforts will be strengthened by the Chinese Government with additional people-to-people exchange programs.

Ding Wei, Vice Minister of Culture, said before the forum that China’s cultural exchange programs with Belt and Road countries will involve 30,000 people and 1,000 institutions over the next three years. Meanwhile, another 13 Chinese cultural centers will be established abroad. China will also launch a national Silk Road scholarship program to assist 10,000 students to study in China annually.

“It is cross-cultural interaction that brings us to reach a common point and help each other fit in locally,” said Raphael Oni, a Nigerian journalist who covered the forum.

“Knowing the culture, laws and customs before venturing into a foreign country is essential, because if the locals do not welcome your business, your endeavor is doomed to fail,” said Zhao Kejin, an associate professor in international studies at Tsinghua University.

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Hubei steps up supply-side structural reform

By Ma Xiaowen



Song Tao, Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, delivers a keynote speech at the session on May 25

Spicy crayfish has many diehard fans in Beijing. People wait in line for more than two hours or more at Huda Restaurant, renowned for its spicy crayfish. But do you know where all those crayfish come from?

Huang Jianxiong, Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Qianjiang City Committee, told *Beijing Review* at a recent seminar in Beijing that as a result of its successful comprehensive agricultural supply-side reform, Qianjiang in central China's Hubei Province produces over 35 percent of the crayfish in China and exports \$300 million worth of the creature every year.

The seminar, part of a promotional event of Hubei's reform practices, was held on May 25 by the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, together with the CPC Hubei Provincial Committee, to introduce the CPC Hubei Provincial Committee's efforts in supply-side structural reform. During the seminar, the CPC Hubei Provincial Committee introduced its implementation of President Xi Jinping's new governance ideologies, especially on supply-side structural reform.

Song Tao, Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, made a keynote speech at the seminar, while Jiang Chaoliang, Secretary of the CPC Hubei Provincial Committee, delivered the introduction on behalf of the committee to an audience made up of 400 foreign political figures, senior diplomats in China and representatives of international organizations, including visiting delegations from India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Laos, Tunisia and Tanzania.

Song said supply-side structural reform is an important economic theory and a major innovation by President Xi. While aimed at settling the new challenges facing China's economy, it will secure medium-to-high-speed economic growth and push forward industrial upgrading. Multiple provinces and cities have put Xi's idea into practice and reaped positive results.

How to tackle economic difficulties and restore economic vitality is a hot topic in communication between political parties, according to Song. For political parties worldwide, the key to achieving a successful economic policy hinges on facilitating reforms that cater to national conditions and that have external effects on the development of neighboring countries and the world as a whole, rather than only benefiting the country itself.

"Supply-side structural reform is not simply a stimulus policy or a shortcut to temporary high-speed growth. It was born with a view to finding a path of structural reform to achieve long-term win-win cooperation between China and its neighboring economies," Song said.

He added that the CPC is bold enough to face challenges. It has taken action to break down the institutional barriers which hinder development, transform the economic development mode and optimize the economic structure. The CPC



Jiang Chaoliang, Secretary of the CPC Hubei Provincial Committee, introduces Hubei's efforts in supply-side structural reform

is actively pushing efforts to cut excessive industrial capacity, destock, de-leverage, lower corporate costs and improve weak areas of the economy to cultivate new growth drivers, expand effective demand, liberate productivity and rejuvenate the economy.

The CPC sticks to a mutually beneficial opening-up strategy, according to Song. Through proposing and facilitating the concepts of innovation, coordination, green development, opening up and sharing, China is contributing its solution to the building of an open world economy and a new type of globalization.

Jiang said the CPC Hubei Provincial Committee's accomplishments are the result of thoroughly implementing the policies formulated by the CPC Central Committee with Xi as its core. Hubei took it as an opportunity to upgrade its economic structure and conduct reforms in accordance with its own reality, he noted.

"The CPC's political, ideological and organizational leadership ensures the success of Hubei's supply-side structural reform. The accomplishments are obvious. We have upgraded the economic structure, cultivated new drivers for growth, pushed forward green development, and improved the living standards of urban and rural residents," Jiang said.

Jiang mentioned the case of how Wuhan Iron and Steel (Group) Corp. (WISCO) in China's iron and steel industry was shackled by problems deriving from overcapacity over the past years, triggering a plunge in the price of steel products. WISCO achieved successful transformation through merging with Baosteel in 2017. Some 40,000 workers of WISCO were relocated during the process.

"The accomplishments are obvious. We have upgraded the economic structure, cultivated new drivers for growth, pushed forward green development, and improved the living standards of urban and rural residents," Jiang said.

Tawfiq Tirawi, Palestinian Fatah Central Committee member, Zinaida Greceani, Chairwoman of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, and Bert Hofman, World Bank Country Director for China, also delivered speeches at the seminar. According to them, the CPC is able to face challenges in



Tawfiq Tirawi, Palestinian Fatah Central Committee member, makes a speech



Zinaida Greceani, Chairwoman of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, delivered a speech

development, propose targeted solutions, and carry them out in practice. In this case, the CPC Hubei Provincial Committee has achieved a lot in conducting supply-side structural reform. Advancement of the reform will help China unleash its innovation vitality and transform its economy, as well as promote international cooperation.

The promotional event also consisted of two sub-seminars. At a seminar themed "Hubei's Stories of Green Development in Building the Yangtze River Economic Belt," officials from CPC communities of Wuhan, Huangshi, Qianjiang and Honghu briefed foreign guests about the four cities' efforts to protect the eco-environment of the Yangtze River and achieve green growth. A representative of the CPC Xiantao City Committee introduced his city's supply-side structural reform at another sub-seminar themed "Practices of the CPC Xiantao City Committee."

CPC committees of Hubei province at



A participant interacts with a robot in Hi-tech product show



A foreign guest asks questions to Song Tao and Jiang Chaoliang after their speeches



Participants watch the presentation of a laptop computer product made in Hubei province

First homemade jumbo takes off

By Wang Hairong



The C919 takes off from the Shanghai Pudong International Airport for a 79-minute maiden flight on May 5 (XINHUA)

China's first indigenously made jumbo jet had completed its maiden flight on the afternoon of May 5, adding a milestone to country's aviation history.

The C919, the pioneering plane that took off from the Shanghai Pudong International Airport and flew for 79 minutes, is a single-aisle passenger aircraft with 158 seats. Its standard flight range is 4,075 km and maximum flight range 5,555 km.

Ripple effect

A joint message sent by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council read, "The success of the maiden flight marks a major breakthrough in China's large aircraft project and an important milestone in the development of China's civil aviation industry."

In the process of developing the C919, a civil aircraft industrial chain involving nearly 200,000 persons in 200-plus companies in 22 provinces and municipalities has been formed. The project has also fostered joint ventures between 16 international aviation companies and their Chinese counterparts, spurring the production of avionics, flight control, power, fuel, landing gear and other airborne systems.

The Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China (COMAC), headquartered in Shanghai, was established in 2008 to coordinate the construction of jumbo jets as well as regional jets.

Meeting market needs

Air transportation, once serving the rich and privileged, is now accessible to the general public. In recent years, the number of airline passengers has soared.

Statistics from the Civil Aviation Administration of China show that in 2016, the annual passenger throughput of airports in China exceeded 1.16 billion, an increase of 11.1 percent over the previous year. By the end of 2016, there were 218 airports on the Chinese mainland.

The data also show that most passengers travel on domestic flights. However, the

passenger throughput for international routes in 2016 surpassed 100 million for the first time in China's history, up 19.3 percent over the previous year.

According to Development of China's Transport, a white paper released in December 2016, China has 2,650 registered civil aviation aircraft.

Boeing and Airbus are the two dominant suppliers of jumbos to China. In recent years, Chinese aviation companies have bought these airliners in large numbers. For instance, in 2015, during President Xi Jinping's visit to Seattle, the United States, Chinese aviation companies signed agreements to purchase 300 Boeings.

The Aviation Industry Corp. of China has predicted that from 2015 to 2034, demand for airplanes will grow at high speed. It estimated that during this period, civil aviation companies in China will purchase 5,522 civil aircraft, including 4,580 jumbos. By the end of 2034, civil aviation fleets in China are expected to have 6,360 passenger planes in total, including 5,378 jumbo jets.

So the C919 is going to enter a huge and lucrative market, where it will compete with jumbo jets such as the Boeing 737 and Airbus A320. COMAC has already received orders for 570 C919 planes from 23 customers, including China Eastern Airlines.

Nonetheless, there is still a long way to go before the C919 is put into service. It will undergo years of grueling tests before it can be awarded airworthiness and other certifications. The process may take five to eight years, Kang said.

Cutting-edge technology

Since research to develop the C919 started in 2008, breakthroughs have been achieved in more than 100 core technologies. According to COMAC, the C919 has been designed to face 5 percent less drag, the opposing aerodynamic force that an aircraft has to face while in the air, than similar planes in service. It will also be 10 decibels quieter than the external noise standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Moreover, its designed

Progress of C919

- May 2017: C919 completed its maiden flight.
- Nov 2015: C919 rolled off the production line.
- July 2014: The plane's nose rolled off the production line.
- Sep 2009: A model of the C919 debuted at the Asia Aerospace Expo in Hong Kong. Manufacturing of the plane's nose began.
- 2008: The Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China (COMAC) was inaugurated in Shanghai in May, and the C919 project was launched in November.
- Jan 2006: China listed the jumbo jet program in its mid- and long-term national science and technology plan.

(Source: Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China; designed by Pamela Tobey)

carbon dioxide emission is 12 to 15 percent lower than ICAO standards and nitrogen oxide emission more than 50 percent lower. Last but not least, its direct operation cost is 10 percent less.

To increase the plane's service life and further reduce weight, new materials such as aluminum-lithium alloy, composite and other advanced materials have been used. Composite materials comprise complementary metals, ceramic and polymer to produce better performance, said Kang.

The highly integrated modular avionics system means less weight, lower energy consumption, increased safety and easier maintenance, said Zhang Jiong, a senior engineer with COMAC's Beijing research center.

COMAC has made the best use of domestic and international resources to make the C919, he explained. Some systems such as avionics and flight control were produced in joint ventures with 16 multinational companies, including U.S. General Electric and Honeywell.

A jumbo jet has millions of components. Putting them together and optimizing their function is a challenging task. The C919's nose alone consists of more than 5,000 parts, which were produced by the AVIC Chengdu Aircraft Industrial Group. The aircraft's system integration was carried out by Chinese engineers.



Crew members wave to the welcoming crowd after the C919, China's first indigenous passenger plane, completed its maiden flight and landed at the Shanghai Pudong International Airport on May 5 (XINHUA)

Engineer contributes to progress in Equatorial Guinea

By Cui Xiaoqin



Liu Bao (second right, front row) introduces the Djiploho Hydropower Station to Equatorial Guinean officials (XINHUA)

Before the Djiploho Hydropower Station (DHS) was built, Djiploho was a secluded forest village in Equatorial Guinea. The change has shone a spotlight on the Wele River, now quite literally the center of power.

Liu Bao, chief supervisor of the DHS project, said the power plant satisfies more than 90 percent of the country's electricity demand and has promoted industrial and agricultural growth. Liu is general manager of Sinohydro Bureau Six Co. Ltd., a hydropower engineering company based in Shenyang, northeast China's Liaoning Province.

"Who could have imagined that in the desolate primary forest a group of Chinese friends with a love for Equatorial Guinea are constructing such a grand project?" asked Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of Equatorial Guinea, at the cornerstone-laying ceremony of the power plant in December 2008.

In 2014, the Ministry of Mines, Industry and Energy of Equatorial Guinea signed the certificate of transfer to take over the project. In the process, Equatorial Guinea became one of the first African countries to benefit from the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative by having its infrastructure built.

Djiploho, also known as Oyala, is now being built to serve as the new capital of Equatorial Guinea.

Largest hydropower station

Compared with oil which may become exhausted as a result of excessive exploitation, water has the potential for long-term harnessing and can be used as a clean renewable energy source. "To build hydropower plants by making full use of water resources not only satisfies Equatorial Guinea's demand for electricity but also for exporting electricity to other West African countries," Liu said.

Liu's team paid special attention to environmental protection during the construction of the power plant.

During construction as few trees as possible were cut and all the waste water was treated before being discharged. Garbage classification was also practiced.

The strict environmental protection measures were welcomed by the local government and the local community. DHS is the largest hydropower station in Equatorial Guinea, ending the country's reliance on oil for power generation, heralding the dawn of green energy.



The Djiploho Hydropower Station in Equatorial Guinea (XINHUA)

Social change

The power plant has brought a series of unexpected changes. Although the infrastructure construction of Equatorial Guinea started late, the government is committed to improving education and has established a number of schools nationwide. However, limited access to electricity hampered students' learning progress.

Aware of its social responsibility, since 2007 Liu's company has donated more than \$2 million to build several primary schools and a technical school. It has also donated school materials on a regular basis, and thus developed a good relationship with villagers in the area.

However, it is the hydropower plant and the extension of the electric network of the port city of Bata that completely changed local people's lives. The Bata grid project enabled electricity generated by DHS to be transmitted to urban and rural areas, which has helped transform the way of teaching in schools.

Another area of improvement is in the agricultural sector.

In order to promote local economic growth, the company invited Chinese agricultural experts to help Equatorial Guinea plan its husbandry development with the help of the Chinese Embassy. A production chain of meat, eggs and milk was formed by developing the dairy and poultry industries. Liu also suggested producing canned food and industrial starch by taking advantage of the abundant pineapples and cassavas in the country.

Technological training

To reduce the reliance of locals on foreign expertise, Liu has been a big advocate of technology transfer and strengthening technological training. Given that there was no training school for electric technology in Equatorial Guinea, Liu applied for \$1.3 million from the Power Construction Corp. of China (PowerChina), the parent company of Sinohydro Bureau Six, to build the country's first training school for electricity technology.

In addition he has looked ahead and established a joint training program between China and Equatorial Guinea for hydropower plant operation and management. Under the program, PowerChina donated more than \$1.5 million to fund 53 young people from Equatorial Guinea to have two to five years' training in hydropower plant management in universities and training centers in China. In May 2013, the first batch of 35 students graduated and began working.

"We focused on promoting localized management of the hydropower project and hired local people to take part in the construction," said Liu. By participating in the construction, local employees mastered technical skills such as equipment operation, electrical engineering, welding, drilling, concrete pouring, and steel bar making and installation. The project created jobs for locals and improved their lives.

For his dedication, Liu has received the country's highest civilian honor and has become a celebrated figure.

Getting to Know CHINA through KEYWORDS

Policy Coordination

In order to expand shared interests, enhance mutual trust, and build consensus on further cooperation, it is important for the countries along the Belt and Road to seek common ground while shelving differences, and increase intergovernmental communication on macroeconomic policy and development strategies so as to better align their national priorities with regional planning needs and common goals. [More>>](#)

Connectivity

The new notion of connectivity is understood to cover such areas as power supplies, telecommunications, postal services, border controls, customs, quality controls, and integrated planning as well. [More>>](#)

Major events in May

May 3: Xi stresses rule of law, cultivating legal talent

Keywords: Xi Jinping, rule of law

President Xi Jinping on May 3 called for more efforts in promoting rule of law and cultivating talent for the cause. Xi made the remarks on a visit to China University of Political Science and Law ahead of Youth Day on May 4.

May 9: Xi congratulates Emmanuel Macron on election as French president over phone

Keywords: Xi Jinping, Emmanuel Macron

Chinese President Xi Jinping on May 9 congratulated Emmanuel Macron on his election as French president. In a telephone conversation, Xi said that China-France relations, with a profound historical foundation, hold an important position in China's diplomacy.

May 15: Xi says Belt and Road forum fruitful

Keywords: Xi Jinping, Belt and Road forum

Chinese President Xi Jinping on May 15 said the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation has achieved positive outcomes over the past two days.

China eyes closer ties with UN to advance global agenda

Keywords: China, the United Nations, cooperation

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang called for heightened cooperation with the United Nations (UN) to promote world peace, stability and prosperity.

May 19: Xi calls for China-ROK relations to return to normal track

Keywords: China, the Republic of Korea

President Xi Jinping said on May 19 that China was ready to work with the Republic of Korea (ROK) to return bilateral ties to the normal track. Xi made the remarks during a meeting with Lee Hae-chan, who is visiting China from May 18 to 20 as ROK President Moon Jae-in's special envoy.

May 25: China completes construction of first Hualong One nuclear project

Keywords: China, nuclear project

China successfully installed the containment dome for its first demonstration nuclear power project using Hualong One technology, a domestically developed third-generation reactor design, in east China's Fujian Province on May 25.

May 27: Xi stresses green development

Keywords: Xi Jinping, green development

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, has called for more efforts to push green development and green lifestyles as the country seeks to better balance economic growth and environmental protection.

May 30: Chinese state councilor calls for moving forward China-Japan ties in positive direction

Keywords: China, Japan, ties

Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi met with Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida in Beijing on May 30, calling for joint efforts to develop bilateral ties in positive direction.



The Belt and Road Is How

The Belt and Road Is How, present by Fuxing Road Studio, performed by children from participating nations of the Belt and Road Initiative, vividly depicts people's hope for a better future. The song has simple lyrics, a folk-music rhythm, and a living theatre performance style. In the song, children expressed their wish for nations reach out to its neighbors and the world.

Fuxing Road Studio is a Chinese film studio that produces online videos focused on political, economic and diplomatic issues related to China and its Communist Party leadership. The studio also created a video to explain the "Chinese Dream" and the party's support of it, a cartoon about becoming president in China and why the process leads to better politicians than in the US or the UK, and a video to explain China's 13th five-year plan. All the videos are available in Chinese and English, showing the studio's attempt to target at an international audience.