

**Full text of President Xi's speech
at opening of Belt and Road forum**

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BEIJING, May 14 (Xinhua) Following is the full text of the keynote speech given by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation:

Work Together to Build the Silk Road Economic Belt and The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At the Opening Ceremony of
The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation
14 May 2017

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Heads of International Organizations,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

In this lovely season of early Summer when every living thing is full of energy, I wish to welcome all of you, distinguished guests representing over 100 countries, to attend this important forum on the Belt and Road Initiative held in Beijing. This is indeed a gathering of great minds. In the coming two days, I hope that by engaging in full exchanges of views, we will contribute to pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, a project of the century, so that it will benefit people across the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

Over 2,000 years ago, our ancestors, trekking across vast steppes and deserts, opened the transcontinental passage connecting Asia, Europe and Africa, known today as the Silk Road. Our ancestors, navigating rough seas, created sea routes linking the East with the West, namely, the maritime Silk Road. These ancient silk routes opened windows of friendly engagement among nations, adding a splendid chapter to the history of human progress. The thousand-year-old "gilt bronze silkworm" displayed at China's Shaanxi History Museum and the Belitung shipwreck discovered in Indonesia bear witness to this exciting period of history.

Spanning thousands of miles and years, the ancient silk routes embody the spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit. The Silk Road spirit has become a great heritage of human civilization.

Peace and cooperation. In China's Han Dynasty around 140 B.C., Zhang Qian, a royal emissary, left Chang'an, capital of the Han Dynasty. He traveled westward on a mission of peace and opened an overland route linking the East and the West, a daring undertaking which came to be known as Zhang Qian's journey to the Western regions. Centuries later, in the years of Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasties, such silk routes, both over land and at sea, boomed. Great adventurers, including Du Huan of China, Marco Polo of Italy and ibn Batutah of Morocco, left their footprints along these ancient routes. In the early 15th century, Zheng He, the famous Chinese navigator in the Ming Dynasty, made seven voyages to the Western Seas, a feat which still is remembered today. These pioneers won their place in history not as conquerors with warships, guns or swords. Rather, they are remembered as friendly emissaries leading camel caravans and sailing treasure-loaded ships. Generation after generation, the silk routes travelers have built a bridge for peace and East-West cooperation.

Openness and inclusiveness. The ancient silk routes spanned the valleys of the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus and Ganges and the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers. They connected the birthplaces of the Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian and Chinese civilizations as well as the lands of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam and homes of people of different nationalities and races. These routes enabled people of various civilizations, religions and races to interact with and embrace each other with open mind. In the course of exchange, they fostered a spirit of mutual respect and were engaged in a common endeavor to pursue prosperity. Today, ancient cities of Jiuquan, Dunhuang, Tulufan, Kashi, Samarkand, Baghdad and Constantinople as well as ancient ports of Ningbo, Quanzhou, Guangzhou, Beihai, Colombo, Jeddah and Alexandria stand as living monuments to these past interactions. This part of history shows that civilization thrives with openness and nations prosper through exchange.

Mutual learning. The ancient silk routes were not for trade only, they boosted flow of knowledge as well. Through these routes, Chinese silk, porcelain, lacquerwork and ironware were shipped to the West, while pepper, flax, spices, grape and pomegranate entered China. Through these routes, Buddhism, Islam and Arab astronomy, calendar and medicine found their way to China, while China's four great inventions and silkworm breeding spread to other parts of the world. More importantly, the exchange of goods and know-how spurred new ideas. For example, Buddhism originated in India, blossomed in China and was enriched in Southeast Asia. Confucianism, which was born in China, gained appreciation by European thinkers such as Leibniz and Voltaire. Herein lies the appeal of mutual learning.

Mutual benefit. The ancient silk routes witnessed the bustling scenes of visits and trade over land and ships calling at ports. Along these major arteries of interaction, capital, technology and people flowed freely, and goods, resources and benefits were widely shared. The ancient prosperous cities of Alma-Ata, Samarkand and Chang'an and ports of Sur and Guangzhou thrived, so did the Roman Empire as well as Parthia

and Kushan Kingdoms. The Han and Tang Dynasties of China entered the golden age. The ancient silk routes brought prosperity to these regions and boosted their development.

History is our best teacher. The glory of the ancient silk routes shows that geographical distance is not insurmountable. If we take the first courageous step towards each other, we can embark on a path leading to friendship, shared development, peace, harmony and a better future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

From the historical perspective, humankind has reached an age of great progress, great transformation and profound changes. In this increasingly multi-polar, economically globalized, digitized and culturally diversified world, the trend toward peace and development becomes stronger, and reform and innovation are gaining momentum. Never have we seen such close interdependence among countries as today, such fervent desire of people for a better life, and never have we had so many means to prevail over difficulties.

In terms of reality, we find ourselves in a world fraught with challenges. Global growth requires new drivers, development needs to be more inclusive and balanced, and the gap between the rich and the poor needs to be narrowed. Hotspots in some regions are causing instability and terrorism is rampant. Deficit in peace, development and governance poses a daunting challenge to mankind. This is the issue that has always been on my mind.

In the autumn of 2013, respectively in Kazakhstan and Indonesia, I proposed the building of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which I call the Belt and Road Initiative. As a Chinese saying goes, "Peaches and plums do not speak, but they are so attractive that a path is formed below the trees." Four years on, over 100 countries and international organizations have supported and got involved in this initiative. Important resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly and Security Council contain reference to it. Thanks to our efforts, the vision of the Belt and Road Initiative is becoming a reality and bearing rich fruit.

These four years have seen deepened policy connectivity. I have said on many occasions that the pursuit of the Belt and Road Initiative is not meant to reinvent the wheel. Rather, it aims to complement the development strategies of countries involved by leveraging their comparative strengths. We have enhanced coordination with the policy initiatives of relevant countries, such as the Eurasian Economic Union of Russia, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, the Bright Road initiative of Kazakhstan, the Middle Corridor initiative of Turkey, the Development Road initiative of Mongolia, the Two Corridors, One Economic Circle initiative of Viet Nam, the Northern Powerhouse initiative of the UK and the Amber Road initiative of Poland. We are also promoting complementarity between China's development plan and those of

Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Hungary and other countries. China has signed cooperation agreements with over 40 countries and international organizations and carried out framework cooperation on production capacity with more than 30 countries. During the forum, a number of cooperation agreements on policy connectivity and action plans will be signed. We will also launch Belt and Road cooperation initiative on trade connectivity together with some 60 countries and international organizations. Such policy connectivity will produce a multiplying effect on cooperation among the parties involved.

These four years have seen enhanced infrastructure connectivity. Building roads and railways creates prosperity in all sectors. We have accelerated the building of Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway, China-Laos railway, Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway and Hungary-Serbia railway, and upgraded Gwadar and Piraeus ports in cooperation with relevant countries. A large number of connectivity projects are also in the pipeline. Today, a multi-dimensional infrastructure network is taking shape, one that is underpinned by economic corridors such as China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor and the New Eurasian Continental Bridge, featuring land-sea-air transportation routes and information expressway and supported by major railway, port and pipeline projects.

These four years have seen increased trade connectivity. China has worked with other countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative to promote trade and investment facilitation and improve business environment. I was told that for Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries alone, customs clearance time for agricultural produce exporting to China is cut by 90%. Total trade between China and other Belt and Road countries in 2014-2016 has exceeded US\$3 trillion, and China's investment in these countries has surpassed US\$50 billion. Chinese companies have set up 56 economic cooperation zones in over 20 countries, generating some US\$1.1 billion of tax revenue and 180,000 jobs for them.

These four years have seen expanded financial connectivity. Financing bottleneck is a key challenge to realizing connectivity. China has engaged in multiple forms of financial cooperation with countries and organizations involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has provided US\$1.7 billion of loans for 9 projects in Belt and Road participating countries. The Silk Road Fund has made US\$4 billion of investment, and the 16+1 financial holding company between China and Central and Eastern European countries has been inaugurated. With distinctive focus, these new financial mechanisms and traditional multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank complement each other. A multi-tiered Belt and Road financial cooperation network has taken an initial shape.

These four years have seen strengthened people-to-people connectivity. Friendship, which derives from close contact between the people, holds the key to sound state-to-state relations. Guided by the Silk Road spirit, we the Belt and Road Initiative

participating countries have pulled our efforts to build the educational Silk Road and the health Silk Road, and carried out cooperation in science, education, culture, health and people-to-people exchange. Such cooperation has helped lay a solid popular and social foundation for pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative. Every year, the Chinese government provides 10,000 government scholarships to the relevant countries. China's local governments have also set up special Silk Road scholarships to encourage international cultural and educational exchanges. Projects of people-to-people cooperation such as Silk Road culture year, tourism year, art festival, film and TV project, seminar and think tank dialogue are flourishing. These interactions have brought our people increasingly closer.

These fruitful outcomes show that the Belt and Road Initiative responds to the trend of the times, conforms to the law of development, and meets the people's interests. It surely has broad prospects.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

As we often say in China, "The beginning is the most difficult part." A solid first step has been taken in pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative. We should build on the sound momentum generated to steer the Belt and Road Initiative toward greater success. In pursuing this endeavor, we should be guided by the following principles:

First, we should build the Belt and Road into a road for peace. The ancient silk routes thrived in times of peace, but lost vigor in times of war. The pursuit of the Belt and Road Initiative requires a peaceful and stable environment. We should foster a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation; and we should forge partnerships of dialogue with no confrontation and of friendship rather than alliance. All countries should respect each other's sovereignty, dignity and territorial integrity, each other's development paths and social systems, and each other's core interests and major concerns.

Some regions along the ancient Silk Road used to be a land of milk and honey. Yet today, these places are often associated with conflict, turbulence, crisis and challenge. Such state of affairs should not be allowed to continue. We should foster the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and create a security environment built and shared by all. We should work to resolve hotspot issues through political means, and promote mediation in the spirit of justice. We should intensify counter-terrorism efforts, address both its symptoms and root causes, and strive to eradicate poverty, backwardness and social injustice.

Second, we should build the Belt and Road into a road of prosperity. Development holds the master key to solving all problems. In pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, we should focus on the fundamental issue of development, release the growth potential of various countries and achieve economic integration and interconnected development and deliver benefits to all.

Industries are the foundation of economy. We should deepen industrial cooperation so that industrial development plans of different countries will complement and reinforce each other. Focus should be put on launching major projects. We should strengthen international cooperation on production capacity and equipment manufacturing, and seize new development opportunities presented by the new industrial revolution to foster new businesses and maintain dynamic growth.

Finance is the lifeblood of modern economy. Only when the blood circulates smoothly can one grow. We should establish a stable and sustainable financial safeguard system that keeps risks under control, create new models of investment and financing, encourage greater cooperation between government and private capital and build a diversified financing system and a multi-tiered capital market. We should also develop inclusive finance and improve financial services networks.

Infrastructure connectivity is the foundation of development through cooperation. We should promote land, maritime, air and cyberspace connectivity, concentrate our efforts on key passageways, cities and projects and connect networks of highways, railways and sea ports. The goal of building six major economic corridors under the Belt and Road Initiative has been set, and we should endeavor to meet it. We need to seize opportunities presented by the new round of change in energy mix and the revolution in energy technologies to develop global energy interconnection and achieve green and low-carbon development. We should improve trans-regional logistics network and promote connectivity of policies, rules and standards so as to provide institutional safeguards for enhancing connectivity.

Third, we should build the Belt and Road into a road of opening up. Opening up brings progress while isolation results in backwardness. For a country, opening up is like the struggle of a chrysalis breaking free from its cocoon. There will be short-term pains, but such pains will create a new life. The Belt and Road Initiative should be an open one that will achieve both economic growth and balanced development.

We should build an open platform of cooperation and uphold and grow an open world economy. We should jointly create an environment that will facilitate opening up and development, establish a fair, equitable and transparent system of international trade and investment rules and boost the orderly flow of production factors, efficient resources allocation and full market integration. We welcome efforts made by other countries to grow open economies based on their national conditions, participate in global governance and provide public goods. Together, we can build a broad community of shared interests.

Trade is an important engine driving growth. We should embrace the outside world with an open mind, uphold the multilateral trading regime, advance the building of free trade areas and promote liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment. Of course, we should also focus on resolving issues such as imbalances in development,

difficulties in governance, digital divide and income disparity and make economic globalization open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all.

Fourth, we should build the Belt and Road into a road of innovation. Innovation is an important force powering development. The Belt and Road Initiative is new by nature and we need to encourage innovation in pursuing this initiative.

We should pursue innovation-driven development and intensify cooperation in frontier areas such as digital economy, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology and quantum computing, and advance the development of big data, cloud computing and smart cities so as to turn them into a digital silk road of the 21st century. We should spur the full integration of science and technology into industries and finance, improve the environment for innovation and pool resources for innovation. We should create space and build workshops for young people of various countries to cultivate entrepreneurship in this age of the internet and help realize their dreams.

We should pursue the new vision of green development and a way of life and work that is green, low-carbon, circular and sustainable. Efforts should be made to strengthen cooperation in ecological and environmental protection and build a sound ecosystem so as to realize the goals set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Fifth, we should build the Belt and Road into a road connecting different civilizations. In pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, we should ensure that when it comes to different civilizations, exchange will replace estrangement, mutual learning will replace clashes, and coexistence will replace a sense of superiority. This will boost mutual understanding, mutual respect and mutual trust among different countries.

We should establish a multi-tiered mechanism for cultural and people-to-people exchanges, build more cooperation platforms and open more cooperation channels. Educational cooperation should be boosted, more exchange students should be encouraged and the performance of cooperatively run schools should be enhanced. Think tanks should play a better role and efforts should be made to establish think tank networks and partnerships. In the cultural, sports and health sectors, new cooperation models should be created to facilitate projects with concrete benefits. Historical and cultural heritage should be fully tapped to jointly develop tourist products and protect heritage in ways that preserve the distinctive features of the Silk Road. We should strengthen exchanges between parliaments, political parties and non-governmental organizations of different countries as well as between women, youths and people with disabilities with a view to achieving inclusive development. We should also strengthen international counter-corruption cooperation so that the Belt and Road will be a road with high ethical standards.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

China has reached a new starting point in its development endeavors. Guided by the vision of innovative, coordinated, green, open and inclusive development, we will adapt to and steer the new normal of economic development and seize opportunities it presents. We will actively promote supply-side structural reform to achieve sustainable development, inject strong impetus into the Belt and Road Initiative and create new opportunities for global development.

China will enhance friendship and cooperation with all countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. We are ready to share practices of development with other countries, but we have no intention to interfere in other countries' internal affairs, export our own social system and model of development, or impose our own will on others. In pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, we will not resort to outdated geopolitical maneuvering. What we hope to achieve is a new model of win-win cooperation. We have no intention to form a small group detrimental to stability, what we hope to create is a big family of harmonious co-existence.

China has reached practical cooperation agreements with many countries on pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative. These agreements cover not only projects of hardware connectivity, like transport, infrastructure and energy, but also software connectivity, involving telecommunications, customs and quarantine inspection. The agreements also include plans and projects for cooperation in economy and trade, industry, e-commerce, marine and green economy. The Chinese railway authorities will sign agreements with their counterparts of related countries to deepen cooperation on China-Europe regular railway cargo service. We will work to launch these cooperation projects at an early date and see that they deliver early benefits.

China will scale up financing support for the Belt and Road Initiative by contributing an additional RMB 100 billion to the Silk Road Fund, and we encourage financial institutions to conduct overseas RMB fund business with an estimated amount of about RMB 300 billion. The China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China will set up special lending schemes respectively worth RMB 250 billion equivalent and RMB 130 billion equivalent to support Belt and Road cooperation on infrastructure, industrial capacity and financing. We will also work with the AIIB, the BRICS New Development Bank, the World Bank and other multilateral development institutions to support Belt and Road related projects. We will work with other parties concerned to jointly formulate guidelines for financing the Belt and Road related development projects.

China will endeavor to build a win-win business partnership with other countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, enhance trade and investment facilitation with them, and build a Belt and Road free trade network. These efforts are designed to promote growth both in our respective regions and globally. During this forum, China will sign business and trade cooperation agreements with over 30 countries and enter

into consultation on free trade agreements with related countries. China will host the China International Import Expo starting from 2018.

China will enhance cooperation on innovation with other countries. We will launch the Belt and Road Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation Action Plan, which consists of the Science and Technology People-to-People Exchange Initiative, the Joint Laboratory Initiative, the Science Park Cooperation Initiative and the Technology Transfer Initiative. In the coming five years, we will offer 2,500 short-term research visits to China for young foreign scientists, train 5,000 foreign scientists, engineers and managers, and set up 50 joint laboratories. We will set up a big data service platform on ecological and environmental protection. We propose the establishment of an international coalition for green development on the Belt and Road, and we will provide support to related countries in adapting to climate change.

In the coming three years, China will provide assistance worth RMB 60 billion to developing countries and international organizations participating in the Belt and Road Initiative to launch more projects to improve people's well-being. We will provide emergency food aid worth RMB 2 billion to developing countries along the Belt and Road and make an additional contribution of US\$1 billion to the Assistance Fund for South-South Cooperation. China will launch 100 "happy home" projects, 100 poverty alleviation projects and 100 health care and rehabilitation projects in countries along the Belt and Road. China will provide relevant international organizations with US\$1 billion to implement cooperation projects that will benefit the countries along the Belt and Road.

China will put in place the following mechanisms to boost Belt and Road cooperation: a liaison office for the Forum's follow-up activities, the Research Center for the Belt and Road Financial and Economic Development, the Facilitating Center for Building the Belt and Road, the Multilateral Development Financial Cooperation Center in cooperation with multilateral development banks, and an IMF-China Capacity Building Center. We will also develop a network for cooperation among the NGOs in countries along the Belt and Road as well as new people-to-people exchange platforms such as a Belt and Road news alliance and a music education alliance.

The Belt and Road Initiative is rooted in the ancient Silk Road. It focuses on the Asian, European and African continents, but is also open to all other countries. All countries, from either Asia, Europe, Africa or the Americas, can be international cooperation partners of the Belt and Road Initiative. The pursuit of this initiative is based on extensive consultation and its benefits will be shared by us all.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

An ancient Chinese saying goes, "A long journey can be covered only by taking one step at a time". Similarly, there is an Arab proverb which says that the Pyramid was built by piling one stone on another. In Europe, there is also the saying that "Rome

wasn't built in a day." The Belt and Road Initiative is a great undertaking which requires dedicated efforts. Let us pursue this initiative step by step and deliver outcome one by one. By doing so, we will bring true benefit to both the world and all our people!

In conclusion, I wish the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation a full success!

Thank you!