

《Yangtze, Volga help ties bloom》

The Yangtze-Volga mechanism that links areas along the two major rivers in China and Russia, respectively, is working effectively, State Councilor Yang Jiechi said on Friday. It plays a positive role in promoting ties and cooperation between the nations, Yang said.

Yang made the remarks when serving as co-chair of the second meeting of the council of cooperation between areas along the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River and the Volga Federal District.

The second meeting, held this year in Hefei, capital of Anhui province, was part of an exchange created in 2013 to boost collaboration between the two riverside regions.

Yang noted that the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination "is maintaining a high-level operation under the strategic guidance of the two countries' leaders".

The Yangtze-Volga relationship has yielded great outcomes through cooperation and achieved expanding influence, Yang said.

It is hoped that the two sides will grasp the opportunities introduced by the building of the Belt and Road, meet local demand, further implement priority cooperative programs and explore new areas for cooperation to promote development and prosperity in the two regions and benefit both peoples, Yang added.

Mikhail Babich, representative of Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Volga Federal District and the co-host of the meeting, spoke highly of the progress made in cooperation between the two regions.

Russia is ready to work with China to further translate the leaders' consensus into actions, and achieve new progress in cooperation by localities in areas like economy and trade, transportation, tourism, culture, education and youth, Babich said.

At the first meeting, held last year in Ulyanovsk, Russia, both sides decided to elevate the Local Leader Symposium to a council of cooperation between the two regions.

On Friday, Yang and Babich jointly inaugurated the official website of the Yangtze-Volga cooperation council and witnessed the signing of many cooperative documents by local governments from the two sides.

The upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze River comprises five provinces and one municipality?Anhui, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan and Sichuan provinces and Chongqing.

It accounts for around 20 percent of China's total GDP and it plays a key role in the country's agricultural and manufacturing sectors, according to Xinhua News Agency.

The Volga Federal District accounts for 6.1 percent of Russia's land, and around 15 percent of the Russian GDP.

Similarly, the district is a key region of Russia's agriculture and industrial production.

Diplomats noted that the local-level cooperation is taking off at a time when the two sides are gearing up efforts in promoting trade, mutual investment, connectivity, infrastructure, major projects and business start-ups.

Chinese Ambassador to Russia Li Hui noted earlier this year that invigorating cooperation among the localities is one of the ways the two sides will promote further joint development.

