

《Belt and Road Initiative making solid progress, demonstrating》

SINGAPORE, Aug. 16 (Xinhua) -- The Belt and Road Initiative is making solid progress and demonstrating bright prospects, President of the China Public Diplomacy Association Li Zhaoxing said here on Tuesday.

In a keynote speech at Singapore Regional Business Forum 2016 on Tuesday, Li Zhaoxing, former foreign minister of China, stressed that the Belt and Road Initiative is not a solo for China itself, but a chorus performed by all countries along the routes.

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, it has got off to a good start, producing important early-harvest in various fields.

It's estimated that China has signed government agreements on jointly building the Belt and Road with 34 countries and international organizations and concluded production capacity cooperation agreements with 20 countries.

With joint efforts, China has built 46 cooperation zones in 17 countries along the routes. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese enterprises have made a total investment of over 14 billion U.S. dollars and created 60,000 local jobs.

"In a word, the Belt and Road Initiative is making solid progress and demonstrating bright prospects," said Li Zhaoxing, "Asian countries are the main participants and beneficiaries of Belt and Road cooperation."

Responding to concerns over maritime disputes, the South China Sea issue in particular, Li stressed that China's policy for the South China Sea is all about safeguarding its own legitimate rights and interests and upholding regional peace and stability.

"China has no geostrategic intention of seeking the so-called sphere of influence," the former foreign minister added.

Li noted that the Belt and Road Initiative is no narrow path in someone's backyard, but a broad road shared by all, noting China is ready to work with all countries to seek win-win outcomes.

"The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is about trade, commerce and cultural interaction, which leads to thriving business, free flow of people and cultural integration," said Li.

During the forum on Tuesday, Chinese Ambassador to Singapore Chen Xiaodong underlined Singapore's role in building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and expressed China's willingness to work with Singapore as well as other ASEAN countries.

"China and Singapore have much more to achieve under the Belt and Road Initiative. Our Chongqing Connectivity Initiative (CCI) is a pace-setting project, and we are also seeking a new model of trilateral or multilateral cooperation with Singapore. With all these efforts, we hope to forge an anchor for jointly building the Maritime Silk Road between China and ASEAN," said Chen.

Singapore Business Federation Chairman Teo Siong Seng echoed with Chen's words. The chairman said the CCI will be a demonstration project for the "Belt and Road Initiative" under the theme of "modern connectivity and modern services," enabling synergistic flow in goods, capital and people.

"The benefits from the Belt and Road Initiative can be multiplied if ASEAN countries integrate and cooperate further," added Teo.

Singapore's Minister in Prime Minister's Office Chan Chun Sing also shared his insights on CCI and China-Singapore relations during the lunch talk. Chan noted that China's development will not only benefit China itself, but also the region and the world. That's the basis of how Singapore and China have established cooperation in various areas.

Organized by Singapore Business Federation, Singapore Regional Business Forum 2016 has come in the second edition this year with about 500 representatives from 35 countries and regions participating in.

The theme of the forum is "21st century Maritime Silk Road", which enables business leaders and industry experts from the region to share insights on regional connectivity, infrastructure, finance, ICT and people-to-people linkages in the 21st century Maritime Silk Road.