

《Interview: Belt and Road Initiative to promote inter-cultura》

UNITED NATIONS, May 3 (Xinhua) -- China's Belt and Road initiative will connect many countries and promote exchanges between different cultures, religions, and civilizations, said Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, UN high representative for the Alliance of Civilization.

"It's a great initiative that comes at a time when the world economy is facing big challenges," said Al-Nasser in a recent interview with Chinese media.

Noting that the initiative has the potential to strengthen both regional and international economic relationship, Al-Nasser said it will also promote inter-cultural as well as inter-religious dialogues to ultimately contribute to world peace and stability.

The UN Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC) was established in 2005 and aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures.

Al-Nasser noted that the China's ancient Silk Road created a very "unique" cooperative relationship where countries could benefit not only with the exchange of goods but also the exchange of culture, knowledge and human activities.

"We need something like that today," said Al-Nasser, adding that the world is facing the challenge of migration and refugees since there has been a rise of xenophobia and discrimination against them in many countries.

"So this initiative (Belt and Road Initiative) will bring countries, people, together and work, cooperate and understand each other. And this is what we need today," he added.

Served as former president of the UN General Assembly and former permanent representative of Qatar to the UN, Al-Nasser assumed the position of high representative of UNAOC in 2013. He will attend the upcoming Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation to be held from May 14-15 in Beijing.

Al-Nasser said it is within the mandate of UNAOC to promote people-to-people exchanges, and therefore he will sign a memorandum of understanding with Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Belt and Road initiative.

"So an initiative like that, it would be great for our work, and the benefit will be bigger...when bringing people together and (let them) understand each other..." he added.

China has proposed the Belt and Road initiative to build a trade and infrastructure network along and beyond the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which offers opportunities for cooperation and development for all countries amid a sluggish world economy.

Since 2013, over 100 countries and international organizations have responded to the initiative, and over 40 countries and organizations have signed cooperation agreements with China.

