

## **Promoting the Building of the Belt and Road, Accelerating the Regional Connectivity**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, on behalf H.E. Mr. Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, I would like to express congratulations on the successful convening of the 6<sup>th</sup> Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA-VI) and appreciation to the enormous efforts made by the Afghan side.

The theme of RECCA-VI is “the Silk Road Through Afghanistan”. More than two thousand years ago the diligent and courageous people of Eurasia explored and opened up several routes of trade and cultural exchanges that linked the major civilizations of Asia, Europe and Africa, collectively called the Silk Road by later generations. Since then, the Silk Road Spirit - “peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, learning from each other and mutual benefit”- has been passed from generation to generation, promoted the progress of human civilization, and contributed greatly to the prosperity and development of the countries along the Silk Road. Symbolizing communication and cooperation between the East and the West, the Silk Road Spirit is a historic and cultural heritage shared by all countries around the world.

In September and October of 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the initiatives of jointly building a Silk Road Economic Belt and a 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. Up to now, more than 60 countries including Afghanistan along the routes and international organizations have shown great interest in taking part in the development of the Belt and Road.

The Belt and Road is designed to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, thus realizing diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries. It will help align the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road. Strengthening policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bond are major contents of the Belt and Road. In promoting this initiative, China will follow the principle of wide consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. It will be a real chorus comprising all countries along the routes, not a solo for China itself. To develop the Belt and Road is not to replace existing mechanisms or initiatives for regional cooperation. Much to the contrary, we will build on the existing basis to help countries align their development strategies and form complementarities.

Afghanistan is one of the important countries along the ancient Silk Road. Afghanistan used to be the traffic hub connecting central Asia, south Asia and west Asia, and has tremendous geographical potentiality. China wishes to take the opportunity to work together with Afghanistan, to inherit and carry forward the Silk Road Spirit, to write a new chapter of the Silk Road and

build the China-Afghanistan community of common destiny, so as to create a happy life for the people.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are both close and friendly neighbors of China, and the stability and development of the two countries are closely related to that of China. As a major project of the “Belt and Road” initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is located in where the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road meet, which will not only offer new opportunities for the promotion of the connectivity of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan, but also have great significance for economic development and export of energy and mineral resources of Afghanistan. China is willing to display the radiation effect of CPEC, jointly build the community of common interest and destiny with Afghanistan and Pakistan, and work together for the regional development and prosperity.

Since the inception of the first RECCA in 2005, it has played a positive role on advancing Afghan peace reconstruction, strengthening the economic and trade relations with neighboring countries, and enhancing the connectivity level of this region. The peace and prosperity of Afghanistan serves the common interests of the regional countries and need the joint support and participation of the regional countries and international community. As a friendly neighbor, China hopes to see a united, stable and developing Afghanistan which lives in harmony with its neighbors, and supports the Afghan side to strengthen cooperation with regional countries in the fields of commerce,

energy and connectivity by taking advantages of the geographic position and rich natural resources. China is willing to play a greater constructive role in Afghanistan, continue to support the effective administration of the Afghan National Unity Government, support the reconciliation between the Afghan Government and various political factions including the Taliban, support the economic and social reconstruction of Afghanistan, support Afghanistan's integration in regional cooperation, and work with the international community to make unremitting efforts to realize the successful transition of Afghanistan.

Thank you.