

## **Investiture Ceremony**

23 October 2020

**Excellencies,**

**Respected officials of**

**National Development & Reform Commission,**

**Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,**

**China Cultural Heritage Foundation,**

**China Chamber of International Commerce,**

**Colleagues of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs,**

**Members of Media**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you at the Embassy of Pakistan for the today's investiture ceremony. Thank you for being with us today to honour two great friends of China-Pakistan relations, Dr. Zhao Baige, the Vice Chairperson of Foreign Affairs Committee of National People's Congress of China and Madam Geng Ying, the President of China Cultural Heritage Foundation.

It was therefore a great honour for me to have conferred, on behalf of the President of Pakistan, Pakistan's Civil Awards on these two distinguished ladies for their services to Pakistan-China friendship.

The conferment of these awards not only reflect our acknowledgement for the services of the two dignitaries for strengthening our bilateral ties, but also serve us an opportunity to celebrate our historic friendship.

**Distinguished Guests,**

Pakistan and China are iron brothers, all-weather strategic partners and close neighbours. Our historic friendship was not developed in a vacuum. It was born in the crucible of time; guided by the vision of our leadership; nurtured by the endeavours of our successive generations, and reinvigorated by the sentiments of affection existing between our two peoples. While describing our ties, President Xi Jinping once remarked that,

***“Only the toughest grass can stand the biting winds, and only the solid gold can withstand the test of fire”***

Indeed, it is due to the selfless efforts of friends like Dr. Zhao Baige and Madam Geng Ying that our relationship has surmounted every trial and tribulation in last seventy years, and now transformed into a broad-based engagement finding expression in new areas of cooperation from CPEC, to ever-expanding people-to-people ties.

## **Distinguished Guests,**

As we celebrate our friendship and pay tribute to our heroes, we need to remind ourselves that our people are the true ambassadors of our respective countries. It is our duty to bequeath to our younger generation this sacred tradition of Pakistan-China friendship. While passing on this legacy, we need to remind them of the untiring efforts of preceding generations for strengthening these ties and their significance in changing global political landscape.

The next year would be a special occasion when Pakistan and China would be celebrating seventy years of establishment of our diplomatic relations. It would be an opportune moment to review our past achievements, pay homage to our heroes for their services and reaffirm our resolve to take our historic engagement to new heights.

I look forward to more robust, inclusive and all-encompassing relations between our two countries, which would not only serve the best interest of our two countries but would also ensure peace, stability and prosperity in the entire region and beyond. And in this journey, I would be counting on the continued support of Dr. Zhao and Madam Geng.

As we forge ahead for building a closer China-Pakistan Community of Shared Destiny in the New Era, may this sacred flame of friendship and fraternity keep glowing with ever-increasing splendour.

**Live Long Pakistan-China Friendship!**

**Thank You!**