

**Remarks by Ambassador at Flag-Raising Ceremony for Pakistan's
Membership at International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation**

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Professor Jiang Zehui,

Co-Chair, INBAR Board of Trustees,

Ambassador Martin Mpana,

Chair of the INBAR Council of Member States

Mr. Ali Mchumo,

Director General, INBAR

D.G. Mr. Huang

Dy. Administrator Mr. Peng

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me and my colleagues to participate today in the flag-raising ceremony to mark Pakistan's membership of International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR).

At this auspicious occasion, I would like to extend my profound gratitude to the INBAR's Board of Trustees, INBAR Secretariat, member states, Chinese MFA and National Forestry and Grassland Administration of China for facilitating Pakistan's membership to this prestigious international organization. I would like to specially thank INBAR Council of Member States under the chairmanship of Cameroon for formally approving Pakistan's application for membership.

I would also like to thank China, the host country of INBAR for spearheading global biodiversity efforts. China would remain a source of inspiration for Pakistan and all member states.

As a new member and country with rich diversity of bamboo trees, Pakistan looks forward to working with INBAR for meeting our common objectives and to learn the best practices to develop our local bamboo industry.

Distinguished Guests,

At the beginning, I must confess my ignorance about the significance of bamboo and rattan in different walks of life. It was only after meeting Professor Jiang Zehui and visiting INBAR Headquarters last year that I came to realise the importance of this unique tree. [It was indeed a surprise to know that bamboo occupies a massive 49 billion dollar in China's economy.]

I was enriched and enlightened by Prof. Jiang's wisdom and thoughts.

The more I learnt about this unique tree, the more fascinated I became about its importance. I was therefore convinced that our full membership of INBAR was essential to benefit from this organisation's success in transforming millions of lives, maintaining ecological balance and meeting United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. So today I am awash with feeling of joy and pride in standing here today to become 48th member on its 24th anniversary and 70th anniversary of establishment of Pakistan-China diplomatic ties.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mother Nature has blessed our planet with various forms of life which are the foundation of human civilisation. Forests, called the lungs of planet earth, in particular, are vital to humanity's economic and social development and a valuable asset for the present and future generations. They add richness to life, make it meaningful and ensure that the great saga of life progresses harmoniously, unfettered from the fear of extinction.

Excellencies,

Bamboo is being cultivated in the fertile valleys and riverine forests of the tropical regions since ancient times. It is difficult to imagine any other crop with such diverse utility for humankind in many spheres of life. Bamboo is employed as a food item; an important construction material, for making musical instruments, paper and pulp, and many other uses in different industries. [As a result of the modern technological developments, the use of bamboo has now permeated to the new industries including biological sciences, medicine and aesthetics.]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our world today is facing the spectre of climate change which poses an existential threat to humanity's survival. This calamity indeed is the result of fast depletion of our forest resources engendered by human greed and lust. Faced with such cataclysm, our salvation lies in restoring nature to its pristine form and aggressively expand forest coverage.

Here again, bamboo whispers solution to us!

As a natural sink, bamboo forests can absorb a large volume of carbon emissions. Bamboo's wider application across many industries is helping to protect precious timber resources from depletion thus maintaining a balance in terrestrial ecosystem.

Distinguished Guests,

Pakistan has accelerated national efforts to create a green miracle. Prime Minister Imran Khan's Clean and Green Initiative resonates with President Xi's vision of a "*blue skies, green mountains and clear water*".

This year in June, Pakistan joined the international community as global host for celebrating the “World Environment Day-2021”. This event was an international acknowledgment of Pakistan’s endeavours for increasing its forest coverage, halt and reverse biodiversity loss and restore natural ecosystems. In order to deepen our joint efforts for preserving biodiversity, Pakistan has also proposed a ‘Leadership Alliance for Eco-system Restoration’ during the Climate Change Conference of Parties being held in Glasgow.

We have launched a 10 Billion Tree Tsunami afforestation Project across the country and set in motion the policies to make 60% of our energy from clean resources and shift 30% of road transport to electric vehicles by 2030. The 10 Billion Tree Project, in particular, has won global recognition by adding 350,000 hectares of trees through tree plantation and regeneration. It has helped to make Pakistan a global pioneer in forest restoration by combining community participation, green job creation and strong political commitment with community participation, green job creation.

We are hopeful that supported by its membership of INBAR, Pakistan would succeed in expanding national coverage of bamboo forests as well.

Dear Friends,

I would like to conclude my speech by quoting Zheng Xie, the famous Qing dynasty poet and painter. In one of his memorable poems, he illustrates the traits of bamboo which are as relevant today as they were centuries ago. I quote:

*The bamboo clings firmly to the mountain steep
In the chasm of rock it plants its root so deep
In spite of all beats, it stands still, not bending low
Whether from east, west, south or north the wind does blow*

I sincerely wish that reflecting true traits of bamboo as depicted by Zheng Xie, INBAR would stand tall, withstand all challenges in its path and continue its selfless service to humanity.

I thank you all!