

**Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - 17 November 2022**

Honourable Mr. Wang Lei,  
Director of Bureau of International Cooperation,  
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin,  
Former Under Secretary-General for the United Nations,  
Suraikiari Sathirathai, Board Member of BOAO Forum for Asia.

Pan Jianhua,  
Member of Academic Divisions of the  
Chinese Academy of Social Science.

Excellency Raja Nushirwan,  
Ambassador of Malaysia.

Distinguished Guests,

A very Good Morning and Dajia Hao

It is my immense pleasure to participate in the China Social Sciences Forum.

I would like to voice my sincere appreciation for the important work that CASS is doing to advance the cause of sustainable development and for encouraging discourse on these very important topics. I would also like to congratulate the organizing committee for planning and executing today's event successfully.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For almost three years now, Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically reshaped our lives, changed the way we work, teach and do business. There was a serious impact on economies and societies. The challenges that we are grappling with today are unprecedented, multi-dimensional and multi-sectorial.

We have seen additional pressure on developing countries. The inequalities have already widened, the gap between rich and poor has increased and millions of people have gone below the poverty line.

It also impacted our efforts to achieve UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That's why UN SG Antonio Guterres called for "rescuing the SDGs".

However, it's not all bad news.

Here I would recall the famous opening lines of the seminal masterpiece *A Tale of Two Cities* written by Charles Dickens, where he said "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

I believe that this is equally relevant today.

Yes, we have seen some worst time and severe challenges. Surely, the time is for introspection, reflection and action. But at the same time, we are also living in an era of immense prosperity, technological revolution, innovation. Within an year, we were able to develop vaccine for Covid-19, which is implemented.

So, what is required is a global response, global solidarity and global cooperation.

Many initiatives around the world like today's forum are enabling us to engage in constructive discussions about the opportunities that we have, and the ways to address the new challenges and how to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In this regard, the GDI launched by President Xi last year is a timely and much-needed initiative that aims to bring together whole of humanity together for inclusive, sustainable and truly global solutions for uplifting the lives of people and to realize the 2030 Agenda.

From the beginning of the launch of GDI by the President Xi last year, Pakistan has been the earliest and an active supporter of the initiative. Let me share here some key points to highlight what our two countries have done together to embrace this concept and for its implementation through some concrete actions.

Firstly, Pakistan was one of the pioneering member of the Group of friends of GDI in New York and played an active role to give it a more concrete shape in realizing its main goal and timely achieving UNSDGs.

Secondly, during the visit of our Prime Minister in February this year to Beijing, Pakistan reaffirmed its support to GDI which was also reflected in the Joint Statement issued after the visit.

Thirdly, during the recent visit of our Prime Minister earlier this month, we signed an MOU under which Pakistan was identified as a priority partner under GDI to carry out cooperation in the areas of education, health, climate change and poverty reduction.

Fourthly, China and Pakistan launched four new corridors namely; Green Corridor, Health Corridor, Digital Corridor and Industrial Corridor; all these four are amongst the key areas identified for international cooperation under GDI.

One of the priority areas under GDI is poverty reduction. This is also a key goal of SDGs. We admire China for lifting 800 million people from absolute poverty; this is a modern day miracle and serves as an inspiration for developing countries. The Government of Pakistan is also under its Benaizr Income Support Programme is focusing on the poverty alleviation in the country. We have also proposed to set up a Center of Excellence of Poverty Alleviation under the SCO Framework.

Climate change is another key area under GDI. For us in Pakistan it has assumed great importance especially after the recent devastating and unprecedented climate induced floods. This issue has assumed an urgency for all of us. Today, it is in Pakistan, tomorrow it can be some other country. So we welcome GDI's focus on climate change and we hope that the decisions taken in the COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh would be implemented especially to help the developing countries to face and cope with the natural disaster.