

**Speech by Ambassador Masood Khalid on the launching of
“Annual Report of CASS-RDI 2016” on 20 March 2017
Topic “Potential Cooperation between China and Pakistan”**

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my singular honor to address this august gathering of Chinese Government Officials, intellectuals, academics and scholars. I would like to express my gratitude to Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Research and Development Institute for inviting me on launching of “Annual Report of CASS-RDI 2016” and share my thoughts on the topic “Potential Cooperation between China and Pakistan”.

I would especially like to congratulate Madam Zhao Baige for her earnest efforts in not only making CASS-RDI a successful think tank for promoting Belt and Road Initiative but also strengthening research base for smooth implementation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. As the Chinese proverb goes

“There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than a true friend”

Your contribution ...Madam...in bringing the two countries closer is highly commendable and is indeed manifestation of true friendship.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The cooperation between China and Pakistan is a tale of goodwill, pragmatism and a model relationship between the two countries and nations. The 66 years of Diplomatic relations have with stood the springs and autumns of geopolitics and have been reinforced with every challenge and unprecedented support offered by each other. This multidimensional relationship encompasses the fields of politics, economics, science & technology, defence and people-to-people relations. The popular expressions ‘Ba-tie’ and “friendship higher than Himalayas and deeper than ocean” are not just words but manifestation of historical cooperation between the two

countries. Today, when Pakistan is celebrating 70 years of Independence, we are proud to have friend like China who has always stood with the people of Pakistan.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The spirit of win-win cooperation and peaceful co-existence are the Chinese Characteristics, which are recipe for mutual economic growth and shared development. “Chinese Dream of National Rejuvenation” and “One Belt, One Road” Initiative are the symbols of Chinese philosophy and visionary enunciation of President Xi Jinping. More and more countries are now joining the initiative for mutual benefit. There is famous Chinese saying

*Give man a fish and he will eat for a day,
Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime*

The initiative will benefit the lives of billions of people living in the OBOR regions by letting the countries achieve the goal of sustainable development by improving livelihood, industrial development, economy and financial support structure. Through infrastructure development, economic integration and regional development across the Eurasian continent and now extending to Africa through sea route, the initiative will revive the global economy. The expected high-level participation of more than 50 countries in a summit being organized under Belt and Road Initiative with Pakistan as one of the leading participants in May 2017 in Beijing shows the trust international community reposes in China as a reliable development partner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are proud that when China first looked into the global arena for OBOR Initiative, it found Pakistan as ever a trusted partner. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has synergized with already established strategic, political and military cooperation with China by adding economic dimension to the partnership and bringing it to the forefront. During the historic visit of President Xi Jinping to Pakistan in 2015, agreements and

projects worth 46 Billion US \$ related to CPEC were signed. It is during this visit, the status of the relationship was elevated to an “All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership”, enriching the ‘Pakistan-China Community of Shared Destiny’

Ladies and Gentlemen

As a flagship project of One Belt, One Road, CPEC also stems from the understanding that increased connectivity is the best way to secure peace and prosperity for our peoples. For implementation of 1 + 4 format of CPEC, the commitment of our leadership is evident from the steady progress of the different projects under CPEC. The corridor with multiple passages is aimed at directly benefiting the socio-economic development of Pakistan, especially the smaller provinces. 2017 has been marked, as a year of comprehensive implementation of CPEC as many of early Harvest Projects are expected to come online this year.

To extend the cooperation under CPEC, the two sides are in the process of identification and finalization of potential sites in all provinces for establishment of Special Economic Zones alongside the corridor. Each economic zone will target specific products and services based on the availability of local raw material, work force and other such factors. Chinese companies can take advantage from this win-win cooperation by investing further in key sectors of agriculture, textiles, minerals, gemstones, marble and stoneware, leatherwear, food processing, sports goods and surgical instruments of Pakistan.

Under Pakistan’s Vision 2025, Government aims to rise from lower middle-income country to high middle-income country by achieving the target of per capita GDP of \$4200. The long term Plan of CPEC and Pakistan’s Vision 2025 go hand in hand to boost our economic cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The bilateral trade between the two sides is also booming and has reached almost US \$ 19 billion now. The second phase of Free-Trade Agreement is likely to complete this year. This FTA aims at easing out

market access and streamlining process for better trade between the two countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In the education sector, the level of engagement and cooperation between the two countries has witnessed substantial increase. Over a period, China has become one of the most favorite destinations for Pakistani students in the world. At present, there are over 18,000 students enrolled in various universities and other institutions of higher learning across China. The Urdu Departments in various Chinese Universities as well as Confucius Institutes in Pakistan are imparting language skills, which will further bring the people of two countries closer to each other.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The multifaceted strategic and political cooperation of the two countries is stronger than ever. The two sides are coordinating at multi-lateral and regional fora and support each other's position on key issues. As an all-weather friend and strategic partner, Pakistan fully supports China's position on core issues of its national interest. Pakistan and China are cooperating in regional peace and stability by fighting against the forces of terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The scope of cooperation between China and Pakistan is enormous and is our joint responsibility to infuse more energy and synergy in our brotherly relations for the prosperity and progress of our people.

Zhong ba youyi wansui
Long live Pak-China Friendship

Xie Xie
Thank you
