

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Masood Khalid “Promoting the construction of CPEC to build China-Pakistan Community of shared destiny” at CIIS on 14 October, 2016.

Distinguished guests,

Ni Hao and Asalam o Ailikum

It is my singular honor to address this august gathering of intellectuals and scholars and share my thoughts on a very important topic “Promoting the construction of CPEC to build China-Pakistan Community of shared destiny”. I am grateful for China Institute of International Studies for their hospitality and efforts for organizing the event.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Pakistan-China friendship is **one shining lamp** that has weathered all storms and continues to be an anchor of stability in a world buffeted by headwinds of one kind or the other. The ties between the two countries are beyond the realm of normal diplomatic ties. We have been perfectly described as ba-tie i.e. iron brothers.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The year 2016 is the **65th Anniversary** of establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan .This is indeed a momentous occasion; a moment to rejoice on our shared accomplishments; to celebrate the true friendship between our two peoples; to take inspiration and draw strength from our common ideals and goals.

The historic visit of President Xi to Pakistan last year has given this relationship a new impetus in which Pakistan-China relationship were elevated to the **All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership**, enriching the **Pakistan-China Community of Shared Destiny** and ensuring the perpetual continuity in Pakistan-China friendship from generation to generation

Ladies and Gentlemen

President Xi Jinping has inspired not only the people of China, but also the developing world, with his visionary enunciation of the "**Chinese Dream of**

National Rejuvenation". We share this vision of peace and prosperity for the region and welcome his emphasis on engaging with China's neighboring countries in a spirit of win-win cooperation.

President Xi's One Belt, One Road Initiative has been described as "the most significant and far-reaching initiative that China has ever put forward." Five major goals are defined within a broad framework of connectivity and cooperation: policy coordination; facilities connectivity; unimpeded trade; financial integration; and people to people exchanges and contact.

As Xi Jinping mentioned in his speech to the BOAO Forum, the Belt and Road will "*promote inter-civilization exchanges to build bridges of friendship for our people, drive human development and safeguard peace of the world*".

Ladies and Gentlemen

As a country located at Southern node of the Silk Road Economic Belt and along the Maritime Silk Road, Pakistan recognizes that dividends of this vision are unparalleled, both in scale and potential.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor being a flagship project of OBOR will serve as vital bridge connecting the "Silk Road Economic Belt and "Maritime Silk Road". **The 1+4 cooperation format** of CPEC with priority areas of (i) developing and operationalizing Gwadar Port on modern lines (ii) building infrastructure, (iii) creating energy and trade corridor for China through Pakistan and (iv) enhancing Chinese investment in Pakistan through construction of Industrial Parks and Special Economic Zones. For China, CPEC will further promote a peaceful neighbourhood, . For Pakistan, it will help tap our natural and human resource for our economic development.

Now let me touch on the domestic context of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. **Pakistan's Vision 2025** seeks to position itself from a lower middle income country to high middle income country by achieving the target per capita GDP of \$4200. In order to achieve this goal and create employment opportunities for new entrants into the labor force, it aims to target a growth rate of 8 percent between 2018 and 2025 with single digit inflation. The Vision has other macroeconomic targets as well. It seeks to increase exports from the present \$25

billion to \$150 billion, tax-GDP ratio to 16-18 percent, investment rate in the range of 22-25 percent of GDP through domestic saving of 18-21 percent and foreign saving of 3-4 percent of GDP in the long run.

With a population of over 200 million, Pakistan is at the trijunction of important regions. It is endowed with enormous potential. Our people are diligent and hard working. Pakistan's Vision 2025 therefore expects China, which now has the pressure of rising wages, a strong potential source of financing development, improving technology, upgrading labor skills and finding export markets to build partnerships with Pakistan to achieve win-win situation for both countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen

CPEC provides the opportunity for Chinese companies to take advantages from key sectors of agriculture, textiles, minerals, gemstones, marble and stoneware, leatherwear, food processing, sports goods and surgical instruments of Pakistan. It is a win-win proposition as the profit margin on business is quite high and the Government of Pakistan offers liberal incentives for foreign investment. There are already over 13000 Chinese citizens working in Pakistan and more and more Chinese companies are exploring Pakistan's market. Our bilateral trade is almost US \$ 19 billion and is growing. For the protection and safety of Chinese friends, the government of Pakistan has raised a special force

Ladies and Gentlemen

The projects under CPEC are now making steady progress. The energy projects are working ahead of their timelines. The corridor with multiple passages is aimed at directly benefiting the socio-economic development of Pakistan, especially the western and north-western regions and providing effective connectivity to Gwadar Port. Under the Long Term Plan of CPEC as well, both sides are committed that the fruits of the development of this corridor should benefit all areas of Pakistan consistent with scientific planning parameters.

Ladies and Gentlemen

To build the China-Pakistan Community of shared destiny, people to people exchanges play an important role. According to the framework agreement of CPEC signed in 2013, these exchanges are the important component of the project. I am

happy that the two sides are now learning each other's language. These people will not only be instrumental in the projects of CPEC but will mitigate any negative vibes against the CPEC. Similarly, there are frequent exchange of scholars, government officials and academics who are further building bridges of friendship at the grass root level. With the security situation improving in the country, the tourism can play significant role in people to people contact and Pakistan has remarkable potential in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen

There is a famous Chinese saying "*Destiny brings people together no matter how far apart they may be*"

The construction of CPEC is the remarkable opportunity given to the people of Pakistan and China to further strengthen the bond of friendship and brotherhood to build the China-Pakistan community of shared destiny.

I once again thank the organizers that have put such a marvelous act together.

Zhong pa youyi wan sui.

XieXie (Thank you)