

Voice of Friendship stems from
Shi Jing (Book of Songs).

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Front Cover: On Nov 14, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena met with CPAFFC President Lin Songtian and his entourage.

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Chinese Vice-President Wang Qishan attends reception commemorating 100th anniversary of birth of Cambodian King Father Norodom Sihanouk

Zhang Min

On Sept 15, a reception commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Cambodian King Father Norodom Sihanouk, which was co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Cambodian embassy in China, was held at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

The King Father died in 2012 and was succeeded by his son.

Chinese Vice-President Wang Qishan, Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni and Queen Mother Norodom Monineath Sihanouk attended the reception.

Wang and King Norodom Sihamoni addressed the attendees.

Wang met beforehand with King Norodom Sihamoni and Queen Mother Norodom Monineath Sihanouk.

In his speech, Wang said that it is with great reverence that we jointly commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of King Father Norodom Sihanouk and deeply cherish the memory of this great man, who made major contributions to Cambodia's independence, China-Cambodia friendship and world peace.



Noting that the King Father is recognized as the beloved father of Cambodian independence, Wang praised him for having devoted his life to the cause of national independence, peace and progress. Sihanouk participated in the launch of the Non-Aligned Move-

ment to enhance mutual understanding among countries and promote world peace and development, winning him wide praise in the international community.

Wang called King Father Sihanouk a great friend who is deeply re-

spected by the Chinese people. He met Premier Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference, which opened a new chapter in friendly China-Cambodia exchanges. He defied Western threats and established diplomatic relations with China, demonstrating his independent character and courage. He got along well with successive Chinese leaders and made indelible contributions to the cause of China-Cambodia friendship. The Chinese people will always remember him.

Wang said that in the new era, the leaders of the two countries visit each other as often as relatives. In 2016, President Xi Jinping exchanged visits with King Norodom Sihamoni, and in 2020 he conferred the Friendship Medal on Queen Mother Norodom Monineath Sihanouk. He met and spoke with Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen 12 times, charting the course for the ongoing traditional friendship between China and Cambodia.

“Our two countries have taken the lead in building a community with a shared future, promoted high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, firmly supported each other’s core interests and worked together to safeguard international equity and justice,” Wang said.

As President Xi said, “The friendship between China and Cambodia demonstrates to the world true friendship between countries and peoples. It is a story that will be told for thousands of years as we build a community with a shared future for mankind.”

Next year marks the 65th anniversary of the establishment of China-Cambodia diplomatic ties, Wang noted. “Standing at a new historical start-

ing point, it is believed that with the joint efforts of both sides, the China-Cambodia friendship will blossom with greater splendor and bilateral relations will continue to grow in vitality, bringing more benefits to the two peoples.”

King Norodom Sihamoni noted in his speech that King Father Norodom Sihanouk is the most beloved of the Cambodian people’s leaders. The King Father devoted his life to the country, Buddhism and the Cambodian people and always regarded the people as his children as he made great achievements. He forged beautiful friendships with successive Chinese leaders and strengthened solidarity and cooperation between the two countries.

Cambodia thanks the Communist Party of China, the Chinese government and Chinese people for always holding friendly feelings toward Cambodia, for providing great support and assistance to the Cambodian people over the years and for helping Cambodia safeguard justice, truth, independence and territorial integrity in realizing national peace, unity and all-around development, King Sihamoni said.

At present, he said, Cambodia is making steady progress, maintaining domestic political stability and improving its international reputation. The Cambodian people highly appreciate that under the wise leadership of President Xi, China has achieved a great victory, made rapid development and grown in international prestige.

“The Cambodian people, the Cambodian government and the royal family will never forget the profound kindness that successive Chinese leaders and the great Chinese people have always shown to the King Father, the

Queen Mother and me,” King Sihamoni said.

“On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the King Father’s birth, I hope the friendship, solidarity and cooperation between the two peoples will be handed down from generation to generation.”

About 130 guests attended the reception, including Gu Xiulian, vice-chair of the Standing Committee of the 10th National People’s Congress and president of the China-Cambodia Friendship Association; Deng Li, China’s vice-minister of foreign affairs; Fu Ying, vice chair of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee; Song Yanchao, vice-director of the Joint Military Cooperation Committee of the Central Military Commission; Zeng Yixin, vice-chair of the National Health Commission; Prince Norodom Chakrapong and Princess Norodom Arunrasmy of the Cambodian royal family; Khek Sysoda, Cambodia’s ambassador to China; as well as representatives from relevant departments and units, friendly individuals and overseas students.

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian presided over the reception.

Participants watched a video entitled *Golden Promises*, which was produced by the China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration. Chinese and Cambodian friends and overseas students performed the songs *Miss China* and *Meet Tonight*, which were composed by King Father Norodom Sihanouk. Students from Beijing Foreign Studies University majoring in the Cambodian language performed the traditional Cambodian dance *Southern Red Beans*, which was well received by both Chinese and foreign guests. ■

Symposium held in Beijing to commemorate 100th anniversary of birth of Cambodian King Father Norodom Sihanouk

Wang Lei

On Sept 15, a symposium commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Cambodian King Father Norodom Sihanouk, co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Cambodian Embassy in China, was held at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse. The king died in 2012 and was succeeded by his son.

Seventy participants attended the symposium, including China's Gu Xiulian, vice-chair of the Standing Committee of the 10th National People's Congress and president of the China-Cambodia Friendship Association; Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC; Fu Ying, vice-chair of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee; Khhek Sysoda, Cambodian ambassador to China; and former Chinese diplomats to Cambodia, friendly individuals on both sides and people who once worked and served King Father Norodom Sihanouk in China. Yuan Mindao, vice-president



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian attends and delivers a speech.

of the CPAFFC, presided over the symposium.

Gu Xiulian noted in her speech that King Father Norodom Sihanouk

had fought for and devoted his life to Cambodia's independence, territorial integrity, national reconciliation and social and economic development.

He was honored as the father of Cambodian independence and a national hero, deeply respected and loved by the Cambodian people. He was also a staunch supporter of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement. He made outstanding contributions to world peace and development and human democracy and progress and is respected around the world.

“King Father Norodom Sihanouk had a special relationship with China,” Gu said, “He was an old and good friend of China and the Chinese people. The traditional friendship he carefully cultivated with the older generation of Chinese leaders — such as Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai — has become deeply rooted in the hearts of the two peoples, laying a solid foundation for long-term development of friendly bilateral relations. China and the Chinese people will always remember, respect and thank King Father for his indelible contribution to the establishment and cultivation of China-Cambodia friendship.”

Gu noted that, at present, under the strategic guidance and personal care of the two countries’ leaders, the China-Cambodia comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership has continued to consolidate and develop. China has always regarded Cambodia as a strategic partner and an ironclad friend, attaching

great importance to developing friendly and cooperative relations.

“Our two sides should carry forward traditional friendship and deepen political mutual trust,” Gu continued. “We should synergize our strategies to deliver greater benefits to our peoples. We should strengthen people-to-people ties, cement popular support for our friendship, carry forward traditional friendship with sincerity and passion, deepen friendly exchanges and practical cooperation in various fields and work for the building of a community with a shared future of strategic significance.”

Khek Sysoda said that in his life-long endeavors to achieve national independence, safeguard territorial integrity and promote the country’s development, King Father Norodom Sihanouk was always close to the hearts of the people. The Cambodian people will never forget his efforts to bloodlessly rid Cambodia of French colonial rule and his outstanding contribution to the cause of national reunification and the realization of peace, stability and prosperity of Cambodia in the 1950s and 1960s.

Khek Sysoda continued: King Father and the older generation of Chinese leaders and the Chinese people jointly initiated Cambodia-China relations through solidarity, friendship and cooperation.

In 1955, during the Bandung

Conference, the King Father and Premier Zhou Enlai became immediate friends — a relationship that continued to grow.

In 1956, before Cambodia and China had established formal diplomatic relations, the King Father visited China for the first time by invitation and was accorded the highest courtesy by the Chinese government.

Two years after that first visit, Cambodia and China established formal diplomatic ties (July 1958).

The King Father paid many official visits to China thereafter and lived in China for many years, which has greatly enhanced the friendship between the two countries and laid a solid foundation for the development of friendly bilateral relations.

In November 2020, President Xi Jinping conferred the Friendship Medal on the Queen Mother Norodom Monineath Sihanouk, adding a new chapter to the traditional friendship.

At present, Khek Sysoda said, under the wise leadership of King Norodom Sihamoni and Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, the Cambodian side firmly adheres to the legacy of the King Father and is determined to make the Cambodia-China friendship even stronger. The two countries have always firmly supported each other at the regional and international levels.

A number of representatives of both sides spoke at the symposium,

including Fu Ying, vice-chair of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee; Zhou Bingde, niece of Premier Zhou Enlai; Fu Xuezhong, former Chinese ambassador to Cambodia; Tang Tianqing, deputy chief physician at Beijing Hospital; Wang Yan, head of the reception staff of Diaoyutai State Guesthouse; Yem Netharith, representative of the Cambodian ambassador to China; Cheav Rumdas, defense attaché of the Cambodian embassy in China; and Dai Zhigang, president of Khmer Times newspaper (Beijing bureau), among others.

They paid high tribute the glorious life and noble character of King Father Norodom Sihanouk, who made unremitting efforts to safeguard Cambodian independence, national liberty and his people's happiness.

They recalled the traditional friendship that was initiated and nurtured by the King Father and the older generation of Chinese leaders and stories of how China-Cambodia friendly relations were promoted by the King Father and generations of Chinese leaders.

They shared their experiences of working and serving the King Father as they witnessed and advanced the cause of China-Cambodia friendship.

They spoke highly of King Father Sihanouk's great contribution to peace and development in Cambodia and the world. They talked about

the great achievements of the China-Cambodia comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership and the building of a China-Cambodia community with a shared future. And they foresaw a bright future of win-win cooperation and common development between the two countries.

Lin Songtian gave the concluding speech in which he said that China attaches great importance to the traditional friendship and special relationship between China and Cambodia. Over the past half-century, the traditional friendship has weathered the test of time and become stronger.

At present, Lin noted, rapid changes unseen in a century and the COVID-19 pandemic are overlapping, and world peace, stability, development and prosperity are facing headwinds and countercurrents. He said, "We highly appreciate ASEAN countries, including Cambodia, for maintaining their strategic resolve and political vision, firmly standing on the right side of history and upholding regional peace, stability, development and prosperity. We appreciate that they have always been committed to safeguarding their own interests and the common interests of the region, and explicitly rejecting coercive pressure by countries outside the region to take sides."

The 21st century is the century of Asia, and there is a new historic opportunity for China and Cambodia to com-

prehensively deepen their traditional friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation, Lin said.

"We should continue our traditional friendship and become partners with mutual respect. We should deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and become partners for common development. We should expand cultural and people-to-people exchanges and become partners in mutual understanding."

Both China and Cambodia are East Asian countries, Lin continued. "We will carry forward the harmonious coexistence of Eastern civilization and wisdom, and tell the stories of traditional friendship between King Father Sihanouk and the older generation of Chinese leaders, as well as stories of strengthening friendly exchanges and the mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Cambodia in the new era. We will promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges in various fields and build our common spiritual bond. We will firmly maintain the common values of mankind and enhance amity and mutual understanding between peoples."

The atmosphere of the symposium was solemn and warm. Speeches of the participants were vivid, touching and filled with strong feelings of friendship between China and Cambodia. ■

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Gunawardena meets Lin Songtian and his party

Huang Xiaowei

On Nov 14, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena met with CPAFFC President Lin Songtian and his entourage at the prime minister's office. They had constructive exchanges and reached broad consensus on deepening China-Sri Lanka friendly relations, building a high-quality model for intensive development under the Belt and Road Initiative and addressing the foreign exchange shortage and food security problems.

Qi Zhenhong, Chinese ambassador to Sri Lanka; Anura Dissanayake, secretary to the Sri Lankan prime minister; and Sugeeswara Senadhira, the prime minister's media adviser, also attended the meeting, as reported by Xinhua News Agency, Phoenix TV and local Sri Lankan media.

Lin described the achievements China has made since the start of reform and opening-up and the great changes in the new era over the past decade. He highlighted the important outcomes and significance of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

Lin said the most important outcome of the congress was that Xi Jinping was re-elected as general secretary of the CPC Central Committee

and noted that the theoretical, practical and institutional innovations of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era had been written into the Constitution of the CPC.

The congress not only laid out a blueprint for China to fully build a modern socialist country and advance national rejuvenation but also made important arrangements for safeguarding world peace, promoting development and prosperity and building a community with a shared future for mankind, Lin said, adding that it will bring new opportunities to other countries, especially to Sri Lanka and other developing countries.

Gunawardena praised the important outcomes of the 20th CPC National Congress and said that the vision of people-centered development and common prosperity put forward by President Xi Jinping has created a new realm of socialism. Under President Xi's leadership, he said, China has achieved the poverty reduction target of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 10 years ahead of schedule, creating an amazing development miracle.

Sri Lanka and China enjoy a time-honored friendship, Gunawardena

continued. More than 1,600 years ago, the eminent Chinese monk Fa Xian studied Buddhism in Sri Lanka and left a good story of friendly exchanges. The Rubber-Rice Pact signed 70 years ago opened the door to friendly exchanges between the two countries and created a model of South-South cooperation. Sri Lanka is heartily grateful to China for its long-term support and assistance and looks forward to deepening friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation with China to achieve independent and sustainable development, Gunawardena said.

Lin thanked Gunawardena and his parents for their important contributions to the cause of China-Sri Lanka friendship, noting that his visit was his first overseas trip as president of the CPAFFC. He chose Sri Lanka as one of the stops of the visit because of the traditional bilateral friendship.

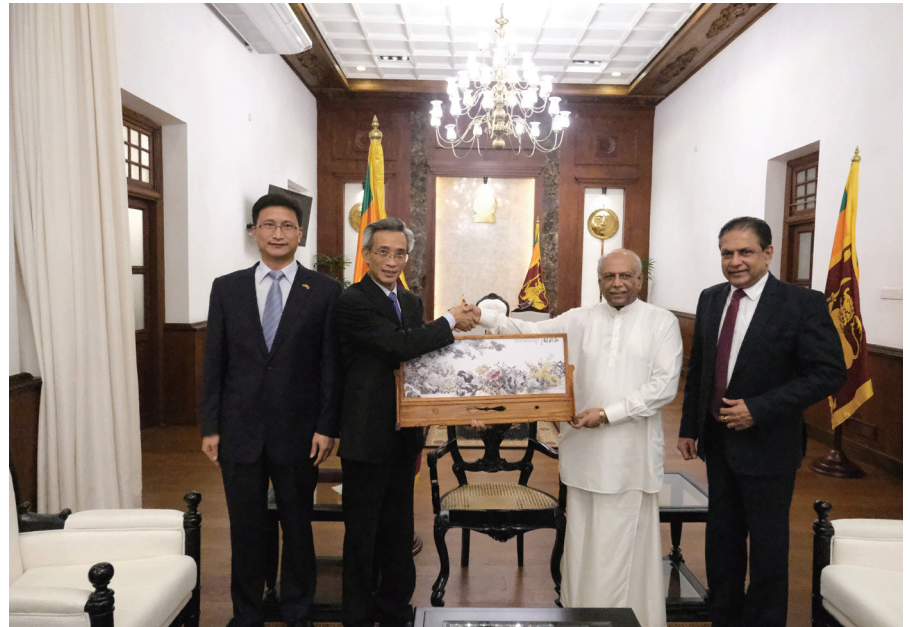
Lin said that Sri Lanka is a priority destination of the Belt and Road Initiative. Large-scale infrastructure projects such as Colombo Port City, Hambantota port and industrial park, the Southern Expressway, Norocholai Coal Power Station and Hambantota International Airport have been completed and launched.

Sri Lanka has a sound foundation

for development, abundant human and natural resources, outstanding geographical advantages, kind and hard-working people and the full support of China as a sincere, reliable and responsible partner, Lin said. He added that the Chinese side is ready to give priority to mutually beneficial industrial and production cooperation with Sri Lanka in such areas as processing and manufacturing, fisheries, agriculture and tourism, and will help Sri Lanka enhance its capacity for entrepreneurship, income generation, foreign exchange, promotion of industrial development through infrastructure construction and sustainable and intensive infrastructure development through industrial cooperation. In this way, China will jointly help create high-quality demonstration countries in which the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative is effective, he said.

Lin said that for more than 400 years Western colonizers exploited the local cheap labor and plundered raw materials but did not contribute to sustainable development in Sri Lanka. China will not follow the old path of Western colonialism and is committed to investing in Sri Lanka for the benefit of the people and achieving win-win cooperation and common development.

The CPAFFC will mobilize people-to-people diplomacy, Lin said, and send retired experts and young poverty alleviation volunteers to Sri Lanka after the COVID-19 pandemic to help improve local development plans and promote poverty reduction. It is hoped that Sri Lanka will further



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian (2nd left) takes a photo with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena (2nd right).

improve its laws on special economic zones, provide preferential policies to attract foreign investment, negotiate and sign free trade agreements as soon as possible, create a better business environment and attract companies from China, India and the United States to invest in the country.

Gunawardena agreed with Lin's concept of synergizing industrial cooperation and promoting the intensive development of infrastructure. He thanked Lin for his valuable suggestions and exciting cooperation proposals.

Currently, Gunawardena said, Sri Lanka is in a particularly difficult period, and the development ideas and priority areas described by Lin are exactly

what Sri Lanka urgently needs. The Sri Lankan side attaches great importance to Lin's suggestions on improving policies, laws and bilateral free trade agreements, and it is willing to actively learn from China's successful experience in reform and opening-up, as well as poverty alleviation. The Sri Lankan side looks forward to carrying out vocational education cooperation with China, strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation in tourism, agriculture, fisheries, industrial processing, manufacturing, chemicals and petrochemicals and other fields. Sri Lanka wants to transform the bilateral friendship into tangible results of cooperation as soon as possible, Gunawardena said. ■

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian speaks to Sri Lankan Parliament

Pei Xingchen

On Nov 15, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, delivered a speech entitled "Chinese Modernization and China-Sri Lanka Common Prosperity" to the Sri Lankan Parliament. He introduced the significance and important outcomes of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the course of China's reform and opening-up and the great achievements and successful experience and inspiration of China-style modernization.

He also spoke of the China-Sri Lanka Belt and Road cooperation and industrial capacity cooperation, which has helped Sri Lanka achieve industrialization and has solved temporary problems such as foreign exchange shortages, food shortages and heavy foreign debt. The help resonated positively.

Nearly 60 participants attended the event, including Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, speaker of the Sri Lankan Parliament; Maithripala Sirisena, former president of Sri Lanka and chairman of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party; Namal Rajapaksa, president of the Sri Lanka China Parliamentary Friendship Association; Wimal

Weerawansa, leader of the National Freedom Front and chairman of the Supreme Lanka Coalition; Vasudeva Nanayakkara, leader of the Democratic Left Front; and Qi Zhenhong, Chinese ambassador to Sri Lanka. Members of the 15 ruling and opposition parties in the Sri Lankan Parliament also attended and had friendly interactions with Lin.

In his speech, Lin described China's basic national conditions and development process with three key phrases: "old but young", "large amount but small per capita" and "underdeveloped but full of hope".

He noted that last year, under the leadership of the CPC, the Chinese people won their battle against poverty as scheduled, achieved the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, created the two miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability, effectively solved the three major global problems of pollution, corruption and absolute poverty and lifted more than 1.4 billion people out of absolute poverty. The Chinese people's millennial dream has come true and human suffering from famine, poverty, war, homelessness and major epidemics has ended, making the im-

possible possible.

The recent 20th CPC National Congress mapped out the goals, tasks and major policies for the development of the CPC and the country in the coming five years and beyond. It identified and laid out comprehensive plans for the central task of comprehensively building a socialist country with Chinese characteristics through Chinese modernization and comprehensively advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Lin emphasized that the most important outcome of the congress was the re-election of General Secretary Xi Jinping by a unanimous vote, which is of great and far-reaching significance to China and the world. To build a better world, Xi has put forward a vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind and three ways to realize it.

Currently, Lin said, as the world suffers turmoil involving many intertwined changes, Sri Lanka's national development is facing temporary difficulties, including foreign exchange and food shortages. A friend in need is a friend indeed, and Sri Lanka is a priority for high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. It was among the first countries

to respond to and benefit from the Belt and Road Initiative. Today, large-scale infrastructure projects such as the Colombo Port City, Hambantota port and industrial park, the Southern Expressway, Norocholai Coal Power Station and Hambantota International Airport have been completed and launched. There is an urgent need to attract foreign enterprises to invest in Sri Lanka, launch industrial production and tourism cooperation and boost the industrialization of the country to generate entrepreneurial income and crack the problems plaguing the country.

Lin shared China's experience and achievements in attracting foreign investment, creating jobs, earning foreign exchange and generating income in the process of reform and opening-up, saying that Sri Lanka has a sound foundation for development based on rich human and natural resources, outstanding geographical advantages and a kind-hearted and hardworking people. Moreover, with the solid social foundation of China-Sri Lanka traditional friendship and the full support of China as a sincere, reliable and responsible partner, and with all conditions ripe for an economic take-off, the "pearl of the Indian Ocean" should shine with new light.

The Chinese side is ready to give priority to mutually beneficial industrial cooperation with Sri Lanka in such areas as processing and manufacturing, fisheries, agriculture and tourism, and help Sri Lanka enhance its capacity for entrepreneurship, income generation, foreign exchange bringing-in and

industrial development through infrastructure construction and sustainable and intensive industrial cooperation to translate the traditional friendship between China and Sri Lanka into practical results that benefit the people.

Lin described successful cases of production capacity cooperation between China and African countries, saying that Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Congo-Brazzaville are pilot and demonstration countries for production capacity cooperation. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Ethiopia had achieved double-digit GDP growth for 10 consecutive years, which illustrates that China is a good and reliable partner. China is investing in the future of countries rather than creating debt traps, which is quite different from the colonization, exploitation and plunder brought by Western countries and the short-term loans, such as sovereign bonds, which they offered.

At present, Lin said, China has signed 19 free trade agreements with other countries/regions, greatly enhancing free trade and investment. The CPAFFC is ready to mobilize people-to-people diplomacy and the willingness of friendship cities on both sides to promote industrial alignment and production capacity cooperation between China and Sri Lanka.

Lin expressed hope that the Sri Lankan side will enact a law to attract foreign investment as soon as possible, push for the signing of free trade agreements as soon as possible, create a better business environment and attract companies from China, India and

the United States to invest and do business in the country.

He also identified some priority directions for cooperation and how to better translate the traditional friendship between China and Sri Lanka into tangible results of practical cooperation between the two peoples through people-to-people diplomacy. This includes closer personnel exchanges, strengthened capacity building, promotion of mutually beneficial cooperation and deepening of friendship-city exchanges.

Lin's speech received a warm response from the audience. Members of Parliament interacted with Lin one after another. Afterward, Shehan Semasinghe, the state finance minister, and Dilum Amunugama, minister of investment promotion, had in-depth exchanges with Lin — along with other members of the body — on the early introduction of a foreign investment protection law, promoting the negotiation and signing of bilateral trade agreements and debt issues. They looked forward to visiting China as soon as possible, hoping to witness with their own eyes the great achievements of China's reform and opening-up — especially in the past 10 years of the new era. They want to experience firsthand the beautiful life brought by industrialization to the Chinese people and learn from China how to attract foreign investment, enhance business, build foreign exchange and income, promote investment and help the Sri Lankan people live a better life. ■

Lin Songtian receives warm brotherly welcome in Pakistan

Pei Xingchen

On Nov 9, CPAFFC President Lin Songtian and his party were invited to visit Pakistan and received a warm brotherly welcome in Islamabad. They met with Mirza Afridi, deputy chairman of Senate and Zafar Uddin Mahamood, special assistant to the prime minister.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, additional foreign secretary, met with and entertained the delegation. Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, secretary general of the Pakistan China Friendship Association Khyber, drove two hours to attend the meeting. Pang Chunxue, charge d'affaires of the Chinese embassy in Pakistan, was also present.

Lin thanked the Pakistani Foreign Ministry for the invitation and warm reception. He noted that China and Pakistan are good friends, good partners and good brothers. The ironclad friendship between the two countries is widely known in China and has put down deep roots in the hearts of the Chinese people, he said.

In recent years, Lin said, despite changes in the international landscape and domestic situations, the two countries have always supported and helped each other and firmly upheld each other's core interests.

Not long ago, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif paid an official visit to China upon invitation, becoming the first foreign head of government to visit China after the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

Lin told his host that he chose Pakistan as the first country to visit in his capacity as CPAFFC president. He said the visit had three objectives:

First, to demonstrate the China-Pakistan ironclad friendship. Second, to implement the important consensus reached by the two countries' heads of state at the people-to-people level. Third, to synergize mutually beneficial cooperation and translate the ironclad friendship into tangible results that benefit the people and promote

win-win cooperation and common development.

The visit shows that the Chinese side attaches great importance to deepening people-to-people friendship and cherishes the brotherly friendship between the two sides, Lin said.

Lin had in-depth discussions with various people in key areas and directions of China-Pakistan cooperation, noting that Pakistan is an important hub along routes of the Belt and Road Initiative and one of the earliest BRI responders and biggest beneficiaries.

He said he was pleased to see that the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor had been completed.

"It will become an important bridge connecting mountains and oceans, bringing people together and guiding the mutually beneficial cooperation," he said.

China's successful reform and opening-up over more than four

decades fully demonstrates that long-term national development plans, preferential industrial development policies and efficient and convenient government services are the keys to attracting foreign investment, he said.

Lin pledged that the CPAFFC will mobilize the resources of friendship cities, associations, social organizations and individuals and leverage the advantages of people-to-people diplomacy to promote bilateral cooperation in such priority areas as personnel exchanges, capacity building, local cooperation, poverty reduction, green development and digital economy, to translate the China-Pakistan friendship into more tangible

results.

Lin shared his feelings and thoughts on attending the 20th CPC National Congress and described the process and important achievements of the congress. He said the most important political outcome was the re-election of General Secretary Xi Jinping at the helm of the country's voyage toward high-quality development, which is the primary goal of both the Party and State, along with the modernization of the country. The theoretical, practical, and institutional innovations of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era were written into the Constitution of the CPC, providing

the fundamental basis for the CPC to lead the people in working together to achieve common goals and tasks.

Lin noted that the congress put forward a series of new ideas, concepts, inferences, tasks and measures. It drew up a blueprint for China's endeavor to build a modern socialist country and strive for national rejuvenation. It also charted the course for world peace, stability, development and prosperity and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. It will bring new opportunities to all countries in the world, especially developing countries, including Pakistan, he said.

Mirza Afridi warmly received Lin and his entourage in his official resi-



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian (5th left) takes photo with Chinese and foreign guests.

dence. Based on his own experience, he talked about his understanding of the ironclad friendship between Pakistan and China. He said that Pakistan and China are not only brothers but also family members. The relationship between the two countries is unbreakable and unparalleled, unique in the world, he added.

He said he had visited China several times and witnessed with his own eyes the country's speed of economic and social development. China owes its remarkable development achievements to the leadership of the CPC and the hard-working and courageous Chinese people, he said. He told his guests that the Pakistani side is ready to strengthen communication with the CPAFFC to improve the business environment at the legislative level and hopes that the CPAFFC will encourage and attract more Chinese enterprises to invest in Pakistan.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch met with and extended hospitality to Lin and his party at Pakistan's Foreign Ministry. She said the recent 20th CPC National Congress was a great success and of far-reaching global significance, adding that she believes the Chinese people, under the leadership of the CPC, will achieve their second centenary goal as scheduled or even ahead of schedule.

She praised the unique high-level relationship of Pakistan and China, noting that Pakistan was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with China and that China had created a miracle of socialism under Western rules. Despite the fact that some Western countries do not accept



Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, additional foreign secretary of Pakistan, met with and entertained the CPAFFC delegation.

China's rapid development, Pakistan will always firmly support China and stand with the Chinese people, she said. She also expressed gratitude to the CPAFFC for its generous assistance in raising funds and goods worth 126 million yuan for Pakistan's flood victims.

The relief efforts were timely and helpful, Baloch said, adding that it is a vivid example of the ironclad brotherly friendship between Pakistan and China. The Pakistani side is deeply moved by it, she said.

Zafar Uddin Mahamood spoke highly of the CPAFFC's historical status and practical role, recalling with pleasure the indissoluble bond forged

with the CPAFFC when he worked and lived in China. He said, Pakistan and China have always stood firmly together in the era of revolutionary war and peace building.

The Pakistani side highly appreciates the tremendous development China has made over the past four decades of reform and opening-up, and warmly congratulates it on the successful 20th CPC National Congress, he said. Pakistan would like to act as an "understanding China" forum and take the initiative to promote the spirit of the 20th CPC National Congress, so as to enhance mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples. ■

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian makes speech in Pakistan about 20th CPC National Congress

Liu Chang

On Nov 9, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, delivered a speech at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, introducing the major achievements of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, focusing on the history, successful experience and inspiration of China's reform and opening-up and Chinese modernization.

More than 50 senators from four parties, including the Pakistan Muslim League, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F, Pakistan People's Party and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, as well as former Pakistani ambassadors to China, think tanks and scholars, attended the event.

Khalid Mahmood, chairman of Board of Governors of the ISSI, hosted and met with Lin and his entourage before the speech, which resonated strongly with the Pakistanis.

Lin also had candid and in-depth



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian delivers a speech at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.

discussions with his Pakistani hosts on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and practical cooperation between the two countries.

He used three succinct phrases

— “old but young”, “large amount but small per capita” and “underdeveloped but full of hope” — to introduce China's basic national conditions and development process. He focused spe-

cifically on the historic achievements and changes China has made under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core, since the 18th CPC National Congress in implementing the new development philosophy and successfully addressing the three major global challenges of extreme poverty, environmental pollution and corruption.

Lin highlighted the significance and important achievements of the 20th CPC National Congress, calling the gathering a milestone meeting that was held at an important juncture, as China has successfully realized its first centenary goal and is moving toward the second.

The congress had three major outcomes, Lin said, the most important being the re-election of Comrade Xi Jinping as general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and the inclusion of the theoretical, practical and institutional innovations of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era in the CPC's Constitution. He said it "ensures that the giant ship of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will brave wind and waves and forge ahead toward its set goals".

"Moreover," Lin continued, "it has outlined the central task of comprehensively building a socialist country with Chinese characteristics through Chinese modernization and comprehensively advancing the great

rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and has drawn up a blueprint for Chinese modernization.

"It is also a solemn declaration of China's firm resolve to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Chinese modernization will not only benefit the Chinese people but will also bring new choices and opportunities to people around the world."

Lin introduced three fundamental reasons for China's "two miracles" of rapid economic development and long-term social stability.

First, China has adhered to the leadership of the CPC and the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics to ensure that the fruits of development are shared by all the people.

Second, China has followed the basic State policy of reform and opening-up, pursued innovative development, and kept reforming ideas, legal systems and institutional mechanisms that do not adapt to the market economy. It has formulated preferential policies, improved legal guarantees and facilitated the flow of personnel and capital. It has created special economic zones and conducted pilot and free trade zones.

Third, China sticks to the path of peaceful development, firmly upholds world peace and promotes the common development of the world through its own development. To build a better world, General Secretary Xi Jinping has put forward the vision of build-

ing a community with a shared future for mankind, along with three ways to realize this vision and promoting win-win cooperation and the common development of China and the rest of the world.

Lin also discussed how to better translate the traditional friendship of China and Pakistan into tangible, practical cooperation between the two peoples through people-to-people diplomacy. He suggested conducting closer personnel exchanges, strengthening capacity building, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation and deepening friendship city exchanges.

Muhammad Talha Mahmood, federal minister of States and Frontier Regions; Saleem Mandviwalla, former minister of finance; Sohail Mahmood, former foreign secretary; and Ziad Alahdad, former chief of the World Bank Office in Turkey and Romania, spoke highly of the significance of the 20th CPC National Congress. They said they expected that Lin's visit would promote synergy between governments, localities and enterprises in the two countries and translate the Pakistan-China traditional friendship into tangible and practical cooperation, with early results and more achievements.

Mushahid Hussain, chairman of Senate Defense Committee, made the concluding speech. He highly commended the CPAFFC for its historic contribution to Pakistan-China rela-

tions, saying that President Lin's speech made him feel that a strong leadership core, forceful execution, the policy of reform and opening-up and the foreign policy of peaceful development have been of decisive significance to China's development miracle.

Masood Khalid, former ambassador of Pakistan to China, said that China is committed to pursuing win-win cooperation and common development. The China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor is a vivid example of China's traditional wisdom of "teaching people how to fish rather than giving them loads of fish", he said. "Its significance goes far beyond ordinary economic and trade investment. It is an important window from which to learn about China's successful experience in reform and opening-up."

Haroon Sharif, former chairman of the Board of Investment, said that the Chinese modernization proposed

by the 20th CPC National Congress is very exciting. He expressed his hope that both countries' industrial parks will be better connected and that both sides' enterprises can better dock with each other. He said the cooperation in vocational education will be strengthened, so that Pakistan's advantages in resources and human capital will be better transformed into industrial advantages and development advantages. ■



Chinese and foreign guests have in-depth exchanges on related topics.

Chinese, Pakistani media interview CPAFFC President on 20th CPC National Congress

Pei Xingchen

On Nov 10, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, held a news conference at the Chinese embassy in Pakistan. He was interviewed by five Chinese media outlets — Xinhua News Agency, China Radio International, Economic Daily News, China Economic Net and Phoenix TV — along with 15 Pakistani media outlets, including Pakistan Broadcasting Corp, Pakistan Television Corp, the Associated Press of Pakistan, Dawn, the Express Tribune and Pakistan Observer.

Lin shared his views on the significance and important achievements of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the continuity of China-Pakistan traditional friendship, the deepening of China-Pakistan mutually beneficial cooperation and other issues of media interest. Media reports from all sides have been extensive and positive.

On the significance and major achievements of the 20th CPC National Congress, Lin called it “a very

important congress held at a crucial moment in the development cause of the CPC and the country”. He noted that the report delivered by General Secretary Xi Jinping to the congress is a political declaration and program of action for the CPC to unite and lead all Chinese people in comprehensively building a modern socialist country, realizing the second centenary goal and comprehensively promoting the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through a Chinese-style modernization.

The most important outcome of the congress, Lin said, was that Xi Jinping was re-elected as general secretary of the CPC Central Committee. He has steered the course of China's high-quality development and modernization drive, and ensured that the giant ship of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will ride the wind and waves with steady and lasting progress.

The theoretical, practical and institutional innovations of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese

Characteristics for a New Era have been written into the Constitution of the CPC, which, Lin said, has provided the fundamental basis for the CPC to lead the people in working together to achieve common goals and tasks.

He said the congress made clear the central task of comprehensively building a socialist country with Chinese characteristics through Chinese modernization and comprehensively advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It drew up a blueprint for Chinese modernization and put forward a series of new ideas, concepts, decisions and measures.

Lin said, the 20th CPC National Congress has not only mobilized and deployed China's efforts to achieve the second centenary goal but has also charted the way forward in the endeavor to promote world peace, stability, development and prosperity and build a community with a shared future for mankind. It also expressed a firm resolve to this end. This will bring new opportunities and options to various countries, especially the vast number

of developing countries including Pakistan, and is of profound global significance.

Lin told the journalists that he had chosen Pakistan as the first stop of his overseas travels in his capacity as CPAFFC president. He said the visit has three objectives:

First, to demonstrate the ironclad friendship of China and Pakistan. This brotherly friendship between the two countries is rooted in people's hearts, he said. Pakistan has always spoken out for China on issues concerning China's core interests and major concerns. It also gave the Chinese people full support during the Wenchuan earthquake and the outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan, which the Chinese people will never forget.

Last year, under the leadership of the CPC, the Chinese people completed the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects on schedule, enabling over 1.4 billion people to realize their 1,000-year-old dream of lifting themselves out of poverty and ending human suffering, such as famine, poverty, war, homelessness and pandemic disease. China is willing and able to share opportunities and experiences with its ironclad brothers for common development and a better life for the people of both countries, he said.

Second, to implement the important consensus reached by heads of the two countries at the people-to-people level. President Xi attaches great importance to developing China-Pakistan



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian was interviewed by Chinese and Pakistani media outlets.

relations and calls for accelerating the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid an official visit to China upon invitation, becoming the first foreign head of government to visit China after the successful holding of the 20th CPC National Congress. This fully embodies the special friendship and strategic mutual trust between China and Pakistan. The purpose of Prime Minister Sharif's visit was to promote the implementation of the important consensus reached by the heads of the two countries at the people-to-people

level, to further enhance mutual understanding and affinity between the two peoples and to translate the ironclad China-Pakistan friendship into concrete outcomes that benefit the people.

Third, to promote win-win cooperation and common development between China and Pakistan. Pakistan is an important hub along the routes of the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as one of the initiative's earliest responders and biggest beneficiaries. As one of the six proposed corridors, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has begun to build a large number of infrastructure facilities, industrial parks and logistics centers. It is urgent to promote

industrial and production capacity cooperation between the two sides.

A key purpose of the visit was to make a field survey of local resources, including the business environment and development needs, and to provide services for Chinese enterprises to invest and start businesses in Pakistan and help them align their moves with the local policies, laws and government services. It was also to help Pakistan attract foreign investment, connect its industries, create jobs, foreign exchange and tax revenue at an early date, and help the two peoples become participants, contributors and beneficiaries of the China-Pakistan ironclad friendship.

Lin said that although his visit was short, the gains were huge. It is a learning visit that links ideas and promotes mutually beneficial cooperation. He said he was deeply impressed by several points.

First, he has witnessed true friendship between China and Pakistan. The CPAFFC delegation has received brotherly hospitality from the Pakistani government and people, which fully demonstrates the incomparable friendship between the two peoples. Facts have shown that he was right to choose Pakistan as his first stop on his overseas trip as president of the CPAFFC, he said.

Second, he has felt the Pakistani people's spirit of struggle and firm determination to pursue common development. Eradicating absolute poverty and achieving common development is

the common aspiration of all Pakistani people. All parties in Pakistan are eager to learn from China's development experience to achieve sustainable development. He said he believed that with the joint efforts of both sides, the Pakistani people will develop and get rid of poverty.

Third, he sees broad prospects for mutually beneficial cooperation. Pakistan is rich in natural and human resources and is the fifth-most-populous country in the world. China is Pakistan's largest trade and investment partner, and the two economies are highly complementary and have huge potential for cooperation. As a flagship project of the BRI, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the first to be implemented and achieve result in Pakistan. It is becoming a new engine for accelerating regional economic development and a bond of shared interests for common development.

Regarding how to better translate China-Pakistan traditional friendship into practical results, Lin noted that the CPAFFC is a national people's organization engaged in people-to-people diplomacy. Relying on the strength of friendship cities, friendship associations, social organizations and friendly individuals, it is committed to enhancing mutual understanding and affinity among the peoples of different nations. The CPAFFC will work with the Pakistani side to do as follows:

First, conduct frequent personnel exchanges and enhance mutual understanding and friendship. The CPAFFC

will build more platforms for exchanges and cooperation and promote exchanges in key areas such as parliaments, local governments, youth, think tanks and media, to enhance mutual understanding and friendship.

Second, strengthen capacity building and promote sustainable development. The CPAFFC will carry out special capacity building activities by inviting in and going global to help Pakistan improve its development plan and legal guarantees, optimize preferential policies, improve the effectiveness of government services and enhance its ability to attract foreign investment.

Third, promote mutually beneficial cooperation and achieve common development. Focusing on Pakistan's advantages in resources and location, the CPAFFC will help local governments in Pakistan hold investment promotion meetings, facilitate cooperation with Chinese enterprises and encourage more Chinese enterprises to invest in Pakistan.

Fourth, use resource advantages and deepen cooperation between friendship cities. China and Pakistan now have 18 pairs of friendship cities. The CPAFFC is ready to enrich the content of friendship-city cooperation, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and work for the establishment of more friendship cities and maintaining their complementarity and cooperation potential. ■

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian leads international delegation to Ningxia to tell China stories

Liu Chang

From Sept 5 to 8, CPAFFC President Lin Songtian led a delegation comprising members from 24 countries across all five continents to the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, including four ambassadors to China and several diplomats, heads of multinational companies in China, journalists from four foreign media outlets and six youth leaders of international students.

The delegation attended the Second China (Ningxia) International Wine Culture and Tourism Expo, witnessed the successful practice of Chinese President Xi Jinping's thought on ecological civilization and new development concepts and held a symposium entitled "China in My Eyes — A Trip to Ningxia".

The trip was one of the CPAFFC's brand activities in innovative public diplomacy to tell the story of China in the new era. It had the following four characteristics:



The symposium "China in My Eyes — A Trip to Ningxia" was held.

First was to listen carefully. The delegates attended a special industry promotion meeting in Ningxia and listened to leaders of the region and

heads of departments introducing Ningxia's new industries, new plans, new achievements, new visions and new opportunities.

Second was to make a field visit. The delegation visited Ningdong Energy and Chemical Base, Minning town, Xige Winery, Zhongguancun West Cloud Base and Shapotou Desert Research and Experimental Station of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

They witnessed four miracles: the purple miracle, in which Ningxia has developed its world-renowned wine industry on barren land; the golden miracle, in which Minning town has turned dry sand into “golden sand” that has lifted its residents out of poverty; the green miracle, in which the people of Ningxia people have worked to build a green Great Wall, creating a green miracle with people advancing and sands retreating; and the dazzling miracle, in

which Ningxia is committed to implementing the new development concept, integrating into the new development pattern and making innovations for high-quality development.

Third was to carry out exchanges and interactions. Lin Songtian accompanied the delegation all the way and explained in person. He dined and discussed matters with foreign diplomats to China, heads of multinational companies, foreign journalists and youth leaders of international students.

Fourth was to generate resonance. All the foreign guests said the trip presented a true picture of Ningxia and China and helped them truly understand the great thoughts of “achieving socialism through hard work” and

“green is gold”.

Ningxia’s miraculous development has proved once again that any dream can come true in China and that through solidarity and concerted development efforts on we can make the impossible possible.

At the symposium, focusing on the three key words — “Where”, “How” and “Why” — Lin shared with the foreign guests his thoughts and feelings about the trip. He explained Ningxia’s development course, path and fundamental reasons for its success, saying that the region’s development miracle is the epitome of China’s development miracle.

Over the past four decades and more, China has pursued reform and



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian takes a poho with Chinese and foreign guests.

opening-up, kept pace with the times and created a development miracle that has attracted worldwide attention. There are many important inspirations from China's experience. The following important factors deserve further consideration:

First, strong leadership is the key. Leadership includes key elements such as ideology, development vision, policy support, government services and scientific and technological support. Strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core and scientific guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is the fundamental cause of China's historic changes and achievements over the past decade.

Second, solidarity, stability and common prosperity are fundamental. Common prosperity is the essential requirement of socialism. It is the historical choice and common pursuit of the Chinese people to uphold the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Only by adhering to the leadership of the Communist Party of China can we ensure that the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics will not change and will achieve national solidarity, social stability and economic prosperity.

Third, unity and hard work is the premise. All Chinese people are committed to the same goal of eradicating poverty and pursuing common development. They have pooled their

wisdom and sweat to foster invincible strength for the Chinese nation and have pushed forward the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Fourth, peaceful development, inclusiveness and opening-up are the guarantee. China is committed to peace, openness and common development. It is friendly to all other countries in the world and strives for win-win cooperation and common development. China's approach is very different from the Cold War mentality and practices of the "you lose, I win" model of zero-sum games, with which the United States and the West are obsessed.

All delegation members expressed gratitude for the CPAFFC's organizing the trip to Ningxia. They thanked President Lin for accompanying them and explaining things in person. The trip gave them a more real and objective understanding of Ningxia and western China.

Fernando Lugris, ambassador of Uruguay to China, said the trip to Ningxia had given him a deeper perspective of China's vast size and wealth, its historical and cultural diversity and its past, present and future.

Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, ambassador of Mauritius to China, said Ningxia had completed "four remarkable feats" that impressed him most. Ningxia is remarkable for its wine industry and culture, for its achievements in poverty alleviation, for its emerging industries and for its experience in successful development.

Palitha Kohona, ambassador of Sri Lanka to China, said he was amazed by Ningxia's "three developments" — its industrial development, digital development and innovation.

Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, ambassador of Nepal to China, said, "I have learned a lot from this trip, seeing strong leadership, sound policies, complete planning and people's hard work, which are all worth learning in other developing countries."

Islam Mohammad Saiyedul, a Bangladeshi PhD candidate from Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics and a freelance writer, said the beauty of Ningxia lies in the solidarity and innovation of its people.

"As President Lin said, 'through solidarity and concerted efforts we can make the impossible possible.' I believe this is the secret of China's successful development," he said.

Youth leaders and diplomats from Africa and Russia in the delegation all agreed that this trip had given them a deeper understanding that China "turns the impossible into possible miracles". They could better comprehend President Xi Jinping's important statement about "achieving socialism through hard work".

"Youth represents the future," they said. "We should draw wisdom and strength from the miracles China has created, dare to say no to the impossible and work together to build a better world." ■

13th annual meeting of China-Iran friendship associations a success

Gong Xu

On Aug 23, the 13th Annual Meeting of Friendship Associations of China and Iran and the China-Iran Friendship Provinces/Cities Dialogue was held online. It was jointly hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the China-Iran Friendship Association and the Iran-China Friendship Association. The theme of the meeting was "Win-win Cooperation and Common Development: Future-oriented China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership".

Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC; Chang Hua, Chinese ambassador to Iran; Li Peixing, vice-governor of Gansu province; Wang Daoxi, vice-chairman of the Ningxia Hui autonomous region; Lyu Laisheng, executive vice-mayor of Xi'an; Alaaddin Boroujerdi, chairman of Iran-China Friendship Association; Mohammad Keshavarzadeh, ambassador of Iran to China; Omidian, deputy governor of Qom province; and Ebrahimi, deputy mayor of Isfahan municipality, attended the meeting and delivered speeches.

Sixteen speakers, including for-

mer ambassadors of the two countries; leaders of eight provinces and cities of China and Iran, including Beijing and Tehran; as well as academic experts, had candid, friendly, constructive and in-depth exchanges and reached broad consensus on two topics — "Cultural exchanges and people-to-people connectivity" and "Friendship-city cooperation and common development".

More than 60 participants, including council members of the friendship associations of both countries, representatives of friendship provinces and cities and journalists, attended the meeting online.

Participants spoke highly of the traditional friendship between China and Iran, saying that the two countries, with their time-honored and splendid civilizations, have made important contributions to the development and progress of human civilization through exchanges and mutual learning and that they are complementary.

Both sides agreed that since the establishment of diplomatic relations half a century ago, China-Iran relations have been developing continuously

and the traditional friendship has become stronger.

In recent years in particular, under the strategic guidance of the heads of the two countries, the China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership has been steadily upgraded by overcoming difficulties and challenges regardless of external interference.

In the face of bullying and unilateralism, the two sides have always supported each other on each other's core interests and major concerns and firmly upheld world peace, equity and justice, as well as the common interests of themselves and other developing countries.

Against the COVID-19 outbreak, China and Iran have stood together and helped each other. This vividly illustrates that "a friend in need is a friend indeed" and sets a good example of solidarity and cooperation in the joint fight against the pandemic.

Participants agreed that both countries had been victims of Western colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism. As emerging markets, both China and Iran shoulder the common

mission of national development, rejuvenation and world peace.

The Belt and Road Initiative launched by President Xi Jinping initiated the rejuvenation of the ancient Silk Road, and the China-Iran 25-year Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement mapped out a comprehensive plan for friendly cooperation between the two countries.

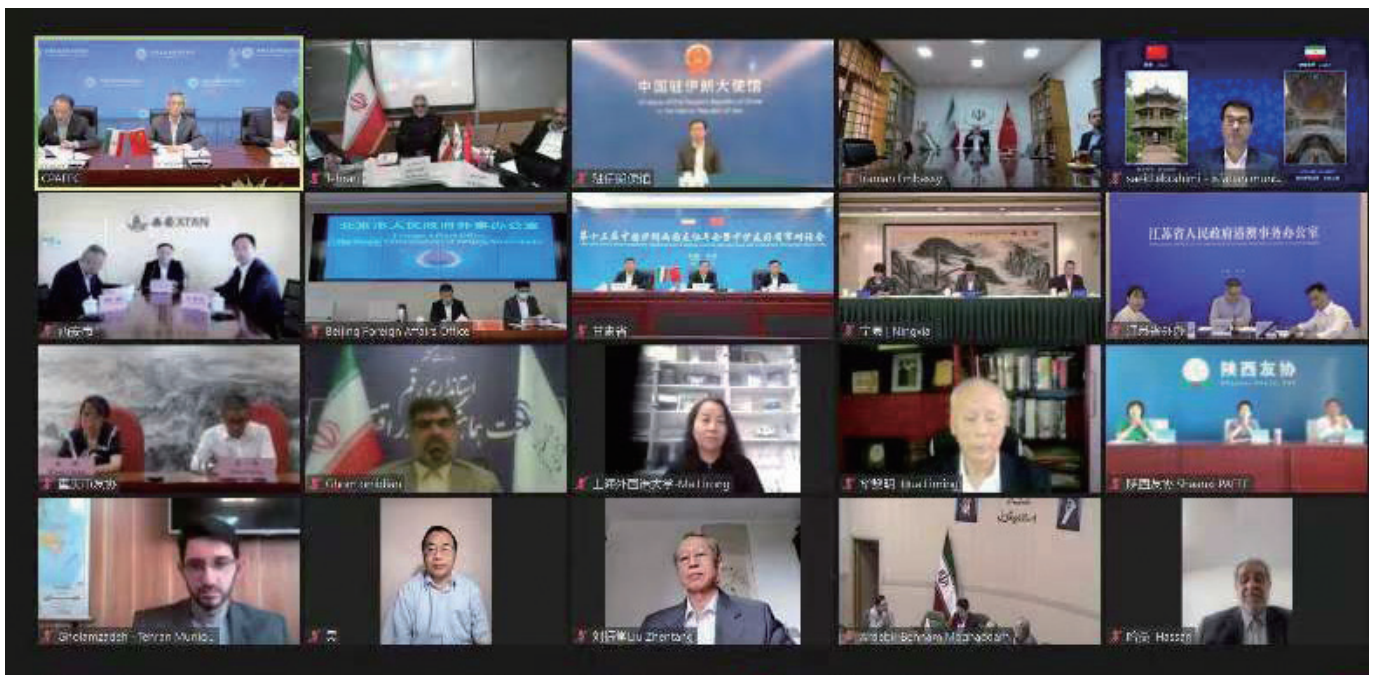
Iran is an important country along the route of the Belt and Road Initiative. Both countries should strengthen strategic coordination and enhance people-to-people exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in culture, education, youth, women, media think

tanks, investment and trade, energy, finance, science, technology, infrastructure and production capacity. The two sides should promote mutual understanding and amity between the peoples and jointly push high-quality Belt and Road cooperation to achieve win-win results and common development.

Participants affirmed the success of the China-Iran people-to-people exchange mechanism through holding the annual meeting for 13 consecutive years.

They expressed hope that friendship associations and friendship cities in both countries would carry on the spirit of the ancient Silk Road and take

the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Iran 25-year Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement as opportunities to launch new missions and make new achievements in people-to-people diplomacy. The two sides should also stimulate new driving forces, deepen all-around exchanges, enhance mutual understanding and take innovative steps to promote friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between friendship provinces and cities to further consolidate the basis for friendship with regard to their national interests and public support. ■



13th Annual Meeting of Friendship Associations of China and Iran and the China-Iran Friendship Provinces/Cities Dialogue was held online.

Reception marks 50th anniversary of normalization of China-Japan diplomatic relations

Li Kun

On Sept 29, a reception marking the 50th anniversary of the normalization of China-Japan diplomatic relations was held at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the China-Japan Friendship Association.

Ding Zhongli, vice-chairman of

the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, and Tarumi Hideo, Japanese ambassador to China, addressed the reception.

Toshihiro Nikai, former secretary-general of the Japan Liberal Democratic Party; Kono Yohei, former speaker of the House of Representatives and president of the Association for the Promotion of International Trade, Ja-

pan; and Noda Takeshi, president of the Japan-China Society, sent video messages of congratulations.

Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, presided over the reception.

Nearly 200 guests attended the reception, including Qian Hongshan, vice-minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee; Sheng Qiuping, vice-minister of



Commerce; Lin Yi, vice-president of All-China Women's Federation; Major General Xing Hongbo of the Military Legal Research Institute of the Academy of Military Sciences; Wu Jianghao, assistant foreign minister; and a host of others, including representatives of former Chinese ambassadors to Japan, Chinese ministries, members of the Chinese organizing committee for the 50th anniversary reception, other Chinese people-to-people organizations, enterprises, media outlets and think tanks, diplomats of the Japanese embassy in China, delegates from the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in China, Japanese enterprises in China and overseas students.

Ding Zhongli noted that the day marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of China-Japan diplomatic relations. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang had just exchanged congratulatory messages with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and proposed that the two sides take the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties as an opportunity to jointly build China-Japan relations that meet the demands of the new era.

Ding said, "We are gathered here to commemorate this important moment and the Japanese side is also holding commemorative activities in Tokyo. On this occasion, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and sincere tribute to the people from all walks of life of both countries who have contributed to the normalization

of China-Japan diplomatic relations and the development of bilateral relations."

Ding said that 50 years ago, the older generation of leaders of both countries, with remarkable strategic vision, extraordinary political wisdom and great political courage, made the important decision to normalize China-Japan diplomatic relations, opening a new chapter in the history of China-Japan relations and exerting a major and far-reaching impact on the peace and development of the two countries, the region and the world at large.

Over the past five decades, Ding said, the China-Japan relationship has forged ahead despite ups and downs and achieved remarkable progress.

Politically, China and Japan have reached four political documents and a four-point principled consensus, which have served as the political foundation for the continuous development of China-Japan relations.

In the economic and trade field, the mutually beneficial cooperation has given a strong boost to the two countries' respective development, and the two sides are important cooperative partners to each other.

On people-to-people exchanges, the two countries have achieved fruitful results in cooperation at the local level, in culture, education, media and youth.

Fifty years later, Ding continued, the world is experiencing changes unprecedented in a century. Economic globalization is facing adverse trends

and the COVID-19 pandemic is lingering. China-Japan relations are facing increasingly severe disturbances and challenges and have arrived at an important juncture where we either advance or we fall back.

As important countries in the region and the world, Ding said, it is the destiny and interests of the two countries and peoples to live in good neighborliness and promote regional development. It is also the original aspiration and the responsibility of both countries.

Ding pointed out three things that we should do:

First, we should keep a strategic and long-term perspective and firmly maintain the right direction of bilateral relations. We should believe in China-Japan friendship, abide by the principles of the four political documents and safeguard the political foundation of both countries. We should implement the important points of agreement reached by leaders of the two countries, proceed from our respective national interests and the common interests of the region, remove interference and push forward bilateral relations on the right track.

Second, we should deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and expand common interests. We should seize new development opportunities brought by regional cooperation, such as the coming into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the Belt and Road Initiative and lead integration of regional coop-

eration in Asia. We should continue to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in economic and trade investment, trade in services, advanced manufacturing, digital economy, green low-carbon, medical health, and a third-party market, so as to create new growth areas for economic growth, make the pie of common interests bigger and seek high-quality integrated development.

Third, we should strengthen people-to-people exchanges and mutual learning to expand and consolidate public support for our friendship. We should build more platforms for exchanges, mobilize friendly forces from all walks of life and carry out people-to-people and cultural exchanges between friendship cities, localities, youth, media and think tanks, so as to promote mutual understanding, closeness and amity between our peoples and ensure steady and lasting development of our friendly relations.

Ding finally stressed that people should set high aspirations and not evade difficulties. As President Xi Jinping has pointed out, “The long-term, sound and stable development of China-Japan relations serves the fundamental interests of the two peoples and is also the common expectation of the region and the international community.”

Going forward, Ding said, our two sides should grasp the general trend of world development, stay true to our original aspirations and act on them. We should work together to build China-Japan relations that meet the demands of the new era and write

a new chapter in the cause of peace, friendship and cooperation.

Tarumi Hideo recalled that 50 years ago, leaders of Japan and China signed the China-Japan Joint Statement in Beijing, which normalized diplomatic relations. It was their far-sighted strategic thinking and fearless political courage that made this political decision, which was the prelude to a new history of Japan-China relations. Japan and China are neighbors that cannot be moved away. For our two countries, Hideo said, as neighbors who both value peace, the only alternative is peaceful coexistence. He expressed hope that the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations would be a new starting point for “constructive and stable Japan-China relations”.

Toshihiro Nikai said, “One generation plants the trees in whose shade another generation rests.” Thanks to the normalization of diplomatic relations cultivated by our predecessors 50 years ago, our younger generations are able to enjoy the benefits. Fifty years later, we should revisit our original aspiration to normalize diplomatic ties, think about and discuss the future of Japan-China relations in a serious and calm way and chart the course and prospect of ties for the next 50 years with strong decisiveness and action.

Kono Yohei noted that, with the understanding and support of the two peoples since the normalization of bilateral relations 50 years ago, friendship organizations of both countries have been working hand-in-hand and are actively committed to maintaining

and promoting the continuous development of bilateral relations. Going forward, he said, we are ready to work with the Chinese side to stand on the crest of the tide with stronger determination and make unremitting efforts to build a better future of Japan-China relations.

Noda Takeshi said the four political documents, including the China-Japan Joint Statement, had played an important role in building and developing peaceful and stable Japan-China relations. After 50 years, it is still the foundation of Japan-China friendship. The Japan-China Society, he said, is ready to work with the Chinese side to continue to uphold firm beliefs, provide unique people-to-people friendship, expand communication channels, enhance mutual understanding and affinity and contribute to the continuous development of Japan-China relations.

At the reception, the Principal Quartet of the China Philharmonic Orchestra and the Shen Kong Children's Choir of Beijing Jinfan Concert Hall presented wonderful performances, including the quartet *Deep Love*, *Japanese Masterpieces*, the children's chorus *Red Leaves* and *Jasmine Flower*. Their performances were melodic with sincere emotions, showing the beauty of harmony between man and nature, and expressing the deep call and genuine wish for friendship and peace. It won rounds of applause from the guests in a warm, friendly atmosphere. ■

Reception held in Beijing marking 30th anniversary of China-ROK diplomatic relations

Zhou Xiaodan

On Aug 24, a reception marking the 30th anniversary of China-ROK diplomatic relations, co-hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the embassy of the Republic of Korea in China, was held at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

Wang Yi, Chinese state councilor and foreign minister, and Chung Jaeho, ROK ambassador to China, read out congratulatory letters exchanged between Chinese President Xi Jinping and ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the ROK. They also gave speeches.

Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, presided over the reception.

About 200 participants attended the event, including Zhang Ping, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress and chairman of the China-ROK Future Committee; Deng Li, vice-foreign minister of China; Wang Chao, president of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs; Lin Yi, vice-president of the All-China Women's Federation; Zhang Baoqun, deputy director of the Central Military Com-



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian attends and delivers a speech.

mission's Military Cooperation Office; Han Meilin, China-ROK cultural exchange ambassador; and relevant Chinese ministries, universities, diplomats of the ROK embassy in China, people from ROK enterprises and institutions in China and media representatives of both countries.

Wang Yi noted that President Xi Jinping reviewed in the congratulatory letter the achievements China and the ROK had made in developing relations over the past 30 years. Xi pointed out four valuable experiences — foresight,

mutual respect and trust, win-win cooperation and openness and inclusiveness, Wang said, noting that they “provide fundamental guidance for the long-term development of China-ROK relations and are of great significance for the times”.

Wang noted that 30 years ago, with a farsighted strategic vision, China and the ROK broke the ice of the Cold War mentality and formally established diplomatic relations, opening a new chapter of cooperation targeting the future. Over the past three decades,

the political mutual trust between the two countries has continued to deepen. The two sides have achieved a “triple jump” in the positioning of relations and officially became strategic cooperative partners through frequent and smooth exchanges at all levels.

Trade volume has grown from around \$5 billion to over \$360 billion, two-way investment has exceeded 100 billion and production and supply chains have become deeply integrated, creating a community of shared interests.

People-to-people and cultural exchanges have been flourishing, with more than 10 million mutual visits made in ever-growing mutual affinity.

The two sides are committed to maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, working for a political settlement of the issue, and have maintained close cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations, G20, APEC and ASEAN-China-Japan-ROK dialogues.

Wang pointed out that the world is undergoing rapid changes unseen in a century. China and the ROK were, are and will remain neighbors, good friends and good partners. He suggested that both countries do as follows:

We should always stick to our original aspiration of respect and trust for one another. In the face of the changing international landscape, both sides should cherish the achievements of cooperation since the establishment of diplomatic ties, carry forward the valuable experience accumulated, stay focused, eliminate disturbances, respect each other’s social systems and development path, accommodate each

other’s core interests and major concerns and work hard to maintain the political foundation of China-ROK relations.

We should always pursue mutual integration, connectivity and common development. We should synergize our development strategies; speed up the completion of the second phase of Free Trade Agreement negotiations; deepen cooperation in high-tech manufacturing, big data and the green economy; and achieve high-quality integrated development. We should jointly oppose “decoupling and chain breaking”, safeguard the free trade system and maintain the integrity, security, stability, unimpeded flow, openness and inclusiveness of the production-supply chain.

We should always know each other and go hand in hand. We should strengthen exchanges between local governments, think tanks, media and people-to-people organizations; promote cooperation in youth, culture, education and sports; coordinate epidemic prevention and control; and facilitate personnel exchanges, so that the tree of friendship will be deeply rooted in the hearts of our two peoples.

We should always adhere to justice and work together for peace. We will firmly uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, practice true multilateralism, advance the political settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue and jointly address regional and global challenges, thus injecting stability and positive energy into the turbulent world.

Wang stressed that although the

road is long and strewn with hazard, as long as we forge ahead all the way, the future will be full of hope. ROK Foreign Minister Park Jin once quoted a saying of Confucius in his remarks on China-ROK relations: “A gentleman gets along with others, but does not necessarily agree with them.” We can also add another saying of Confucius: “A gentleman’s faith makes him.” Despite our two countries’ differences, we appreciate and respect each other, and on this basis we have built a more stable, tough and long-term trust and cooperation. This is the gentlemen’s way of getting along.

Chung Jae-ho noted in his speech that the two governments three decades ago signed a joint communique on establishing diplomatic relations. Today, guests of both countries come to celebrate the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties. The past three decades are not only a history of growth and development in ROK-China relations but also a process in which bilateral relations have overcome many difficulties and continued to mature.

The new ROK government will, in the spirit of mutual respect, continue to deepen the bilateral strategic cooperative partnership, further expand common interests and usher in a new era of cooperation in line with the principles specified in the Joint Communique on the establishment of diplomatic ties.

At the reception, artists and children from China and the ROK gave wonderful performances, creating a harmonious atmosphere of friendship between the two peoples, which won praise from all sides. ■

Germany committed to strengthening, not weakening, cooperation with China

Zhang Ji

On Sept 15, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, met via video link with Markus Ferber, president of the Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany and a member of the European Parliament.

Lin first thanked the foundation for its long-term commitment to developing friendly and cooperative China-Germany relations and expressed appreciation for its contribution to China's vocational education, rural development and poverty alleviation in the western region over the past four decades. He also expressed his willingness to strengthen communication and coordination between the two organizations and give full play to friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in nongovernmental sectors. He proposed to deepen exchanges and cooperation in people-to-people communication, green and high-quality development, digital economy and industrial intelligence to benefit the two peoples.

Lin noted that China and Germany had established diplomatic relations 50 years ago. Since then, guided by the strategic vision and political wisdom



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian delivers a speech via video link.

of the two countries' leaders, friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields has yielded fruitful results, he said. China has been Germany's largest trading partner for six consecutive years, with bilateral trade volume exceeding \$235.1 billion last year, up 22.5 percent year on year.

At the same time, Germany is the European Union's largest direct investor in China. From January to

July 2022, Germany's investment in China increased by 23.5 percent year on year. In 2021, sales of BMW, Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen vehicles in China accounted for 40 percent of their global total. China-Germany relations have become a model of bilateral relations that transcend different social systems, ideologies and cultural values, and they have delivered tangible benefits to the two peoples.

Lin noted that state-to-state relations should serve the fundamental interests of each country and benefit both peoples. Europe's strategic independence and economic development and prosperity serve the fundamental interests of the people of all European countries, he said.

Thanks to the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Europe freight trains have reached 200 cities in 24 European countries, enabled land connectivity between Asia and Europe and brought a high-speed rail network connecting the two countries and major cities in the region. The BRI has provided infrastructure connectivity for China and Germany and China and Europe to promote mutual investment, trade and people-to-people exchanges and to build a closer community of shared interests.

As the world's second-largest economy and a huge market, China has become an important force for safeguarding equality, justice, peace and security and is an important engine for economic recovery and common development in today's world.

Germany, China and the EU should continue to uphold the principle of mutual respect and win-win cooperation and proceed from their respective fundamental interests and the common interests of the two peoples to achieve peaceful coexistence, win-win cooperation and common development.

Lin noted that in mid-October the Communist Party of China would hold its 20th National Congress to summarize the past and plan for the future. China's commitment to high-quality

development, opening-up at a higher level and modernization to achieve common prosperity for all its people will bring unprecedented opportunities for win-win cooperation and common development for China, Germany and Europe.

Markus Ferber spoke highly of China's tremendous achievements in economic and social development. Thanks to reform and opening-up, he said, China has achieved rapid development in economy, science and technology, and that the technological conversion rate is among the highest in the world.

Over the past 40 years, Ferber continued, the CPAFFC and the Hanns Seidel Foundation have carried out friendly cooperation in various fields, showing that the two sides share common ideas and aspirations, take joint actions to meet common challenges and safeguard common interests. The two organizations have made positive contributions to deepening German-China and EU-China cooperation. It is hoped they will further deepen friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two sides.

Ferber considered China an important and indispensable partner for Germany. Germany is likewise committed to strengthening cooperation with China, not weakening it.

He said that in the face of the turbulent international situation, the German economy has reduced excessive dependence on one side or the other. It aims to diversify its supply chains and ensure long-term economic stability, rather than reduce exchanges and

cooperation with China. Germany's commitment to supply chain diversification will bring new opportunities for strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries. Over the past five decades, the successful maintenance of bilateral ties shows that a friendly and mutually beneficial cooperative relationship between the two countries serves the common interests of both sides and benefits mankind.

Ferber said that even though Germany and China differ in their political systems and cultural values, they share a broad range of common concerns and interests — for example in helping Africa maintain peace and stability to achieve independent and sustainable development. The Hanns Seidel Foundation has numerous cooperative projects in Africa and looks forward to working with the CPAFFC to support Africa's development.

The two sides also had candid, friendly and in-depth exchanges on the international situation and regional hot spot issues of common concern, and they reached broad consensus. They agreed that the world is facing global challenges such as COVID-19, climate change, economic recession and a widening gap between rich and poor. China, Germany and the EU should work together to address these issues and create a better future for mankind.

The foundation is one of the six major political foundations in Germany. It belongs to the Christlich Soziale Union and is headquartered in Munich. ■

CPAFFC President Lin Songtian delivers video speech at opening ceremony of 2022 World Manufacturing Convention

Fan Lili

On Sept 20, the 2022 World Manufacturing Convention successfully opened in Hefei, Anhui province.

Zheng Shanjie, secretary of the Communist Party of China's Anhui provincial committee; Wang Jiangping, a member of the Party group and vice-minister of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology; and Zhang Wei, a member of the CPC Shanghai Municipal Committee's Standing Committee and vice-mayor of Shanghai, delivered speeches at the opening ceremony.

Christian Wulff, president of the Global Alliance of Small and Medium Enterprises, and Wang Shouwen, deputy secretary of the Party Group and an international trade negotiator and vice-minister of the Ministry of Commerce, delivered video remarks.

Wang Qingxian, deputy secretary of the CPC Anhui committee and governor of Anhui province, presided over the opening ceremony.

Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, was also invited to give a video speech.

Lin said that President Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the development of the manufacturing industry, and has made it clear that "the manufacturing industry is the lifeline of the national economy". Xi's remark has pointed out the direction, goals and path for China to upgrade itself from a large manufacturer to a powerful manufacturer. The rapid rise of emerging markets and developing countries represented by China has contributed 80 percent of world economic growth in the past two decades and become a key force in maintaining world peace and promoting global economic recovery.

Lin noted that China's manufacturing industry has made indelible contributions in the global fight against COVID-19, to the world's management of the global crisis and to the security and stability of global supply and industrial chains. This contribution deserves praise from people around the world, he said.

According to the United Nations, during the COVID-19 pandemic China's share of the world's total industrial product exports increased from 13 percent in 2019 to 15 percent in 2021,

becoming a ballast stone and "lifeline" to stabilize the world's capacity for handling epidemic prevention and industrial production and to meet people's daily needs, Lin said.

He told the meeting that China is fully implementing a new vision of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development, and is committed to opening-up at a higher level and to development of high quality. Such high-end, intelligent and green development will add momentum to the high-quality development of the global manufacturing industry.

Lin said that Anhui province is one of the regions with the most active economic development, the strongest innovation ability and the best business environment in China. It has leaped from a province dominated by traditional agriculture to one with manufacturing and intelligent industries. Its high-speed and high-quality development has become the epitome of successful transformation and development for China's manufacturing industry and a window showing China's implementation of its new development concept.

“As a national organization engaged in people-to-people diplomacy,” Lin said, “our association stands ready to promote friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between Chinese and foreign local governments, friendship cities, enterprises, think tanks and other people-to-people organizations, as well as people from all walks of life. We will provide impetus for cooperation in the third market of the manufacturing industry and contribute to win-win cooperation and common development in all countries.

The 2022 World Manufacturing Convention was jointly hosted by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Commerce, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, the Chinese Academy of Engineering, the Development Research Center of the State Council, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, the CPAFFC, China Association of Small and Medium Enterprises, the Global Alliance of Small and Medium Enterprises and the Anhui provincial government.

Centered on the theme “Manufacturing Industry Makes a Better World”, the convention held 38 activities, including museum tours, thematic events, simultaneous forums and exhibitions both online and offline. It aims to build a bridge for innovation and development of global manufacturing industry and create space for expanding cooperation.

About 540 participants attended the opening ceremony. ■

2022 BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum held successfully

Pei Xingchen

On Sept 20, the 2022 BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Government Cooperation Forum was hosted successfully by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the China International Friendship Cities Association and the People’s Government of Fujian province.

About 250 participants from 123 provincial and municipal governments of BRICS countries, representatives of eight friendship organizations, diplomatic envoys of relevant countries and people from various social circles attended the forum online or in person.

Participants had an in-depth discussion on the theme “Solidarity and Cooperation for Common Development” and offered suggestions for jointly addressing global challenges and creating a bright future of BRICS

cooperation. This demonstrated the solidarity and cooperation of BRICS countries and sent a positive signal to the world about safeguarding peace and stability and promoting common development.

The forum was an important event within the framework of the BRICS Year of China.

Shen Yueyue, vice-chair of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of China, attended the meeting and made opening remarks. Ivan Melnikov, first deputy chairman of the State Duma of Russia, addressed the forum via video link.

Zhao Long, governor of Fujian province; Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC; Siyabonga C. Cwele, South Africa’s ambassador to China; and Siddharth Chatterjee, UN Resident Coordinator in China, attended and

gave speeches.

Lidio Lopes, president of the National Union of Legislators (UNALE), Brazil; Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, minister of Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs of South Africa; and Kuharuk Ruslan, president of the Union of Russian Cities (URC), delivered video speeches.

Yuan Mindao, vice-president of the CPAFFC, presided over the forum.

Shen Yueyue stated that in the spirit of BRICS openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation, BRICS countries hope to build a closer, more comprehensive and solid partnership and continue to deepen mutual trust and mutually beneficial cooperation. It not only benefits the BRICS countries and peoples, but has also made important contributions to safeguarding

world peace and promoting global development.

The concept of “BRICS Plus” cooperation proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping has become a consensus among emerging markets and developing countries to carry out South-South cooperation and achieve win-win results, Shen said, adding that the concept meets the shared expectations of all parties.

Shen said that strengthening cooperation between international friendship cities and local governments is an important measure to make state-to-state relations work. It brings benefits to the peoples, enhances friendship and deepens cooperation for common development.

We should give full play to the advantages of our international friend-

ship cities and local governments in cooperation in the following ways, Shen said.

First, we should be partners in solidarity and cooperation to jointly address global risks and challenges. We should pursue dialogue rather than confrontation, partnership rather than alliance, win-win cooperation rather than a zero-sum game, and we should firmly uphold international equality and justice.

Second, we should be partners in innovative development to promote the sustainable, high-quality development of BRICS cooperation; accelerate mutually beneficial cooperation in personnel training, technology R&D and new digital infrastructure; and deliver more benefits to our peoples with scientific and technological innovation.



Chinese and foreign guests attend the forum online or in person.

Third, we should be partners of inclusiveness and mutual learning to consolidate the social foundation for friendship between our peoples, strengthen the bonds of peace and friendship and jointly usher in a better future for mankind.

Ivan Melnikov noted that the world is in a period of upheaval and transformation, and BRICS countries should make good use of the friendship cities cooperation channel. He laid out three points:

First, we should foster an atmosphere of mutual trust and friendship and respect other countries' right to choose their own development path.

Second, we should focus on scientific and technological innovation to drive the high-quality development of BRICS friendship cities through innovation.

Third, we should give consideration to environmental protection and create a green and healthy ecological environment for future generations.

Zhao Long said that Fujian province had made great efforts to promote high-quality development, to open up to the outside world at a higher level and to deepen exchanges between friendship cities. Fujian has established 120 pairs of friendship provinces and cities in 46 countries, further expanding its "circle of friends". Fujian is ready to work with BRICS partners to deepen project cooperation, improve institutional guarantees, expand partner networks and deepen people-to-people exchanges to contribute more to

people's well-being.

Lin Songtian noted that the BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum was initiated by the CPAFFC in 2011 as an institutional mechanism to implement the important consensuses reached at the BRICS Summit. It has become an important platform for BRICS friendship cities and local governments to enhance mutual understanding, deepen cooperation, establish friendship ties, learn from each other and seek common development.

Lin pledged that the CPAFFC will continue to play its role as an important platform to deepen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation with local governments, especially friendship cities, in various fields, promote solidarity and cooperation among BRICS peoples, better serve the building of high-quality partnerships between BRICS countries and contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Siyabonga C. Cwele said, "Local governments are important for developing bilateral relations. We need all parties to deliver results from practical cooperation and translate friendly relations into tangible outcomes for the real benefit of our two peoples. Next year, South Africa will take over the BRICS chairmanship from China. We look forward to working with BRICS partners to deepen cooperation for the benefit of BRICS countries and other developing countries."

Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma called

the BRICS mechanism "an important platform for sharing development opportunities and resources," saying that the outcomes of the forum will benefit the peoples of BRICS countries and the world. The South African government, he said, attaches great importance to exchanges and cooperation with the local governments of other countries, especially BRICS countries, to further enhance their capacity for independent and sustainable development.

Siddharth Chatterjee quoted UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, saying that only international cooperation can overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, climate crisis, growing inequality and spread of hatred. The UN Development System Agencies in China, Chatterjee said, are ready to work with all parties, including BRICS countries, to promote partnerships, expand areas of practical cooperation and make greater contributions to accelerating the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and realizing the common development of all countries.

Lidio Lopes introduced the unremitting efforts of the UNALE to promote exchanges of Brazilian states with the world. He said that "solidarity is strength" and much needed because the COVID-19 pandemic is raging across the world, aggravating the imbalance of industrial development in various countries and negatively affecting the education of youth. At this difficult time, he said, it is all the more important for countries to seek

common ground while shelving differences, work together and contribute to addressing the common challenges facing mankind.

Kuharuk Ruslan said the global crisis respects no borders, and no country can stay aloof. In the face of risks and challenges, all countries should treat each other as equals with solidarity and sincerity, jointly oppose hegemonism and expand the path of win-win cooperation through developing partnerships. Only in this way, the URC president said, can people not only respect one's own culture but also appreciate the culture of others for the prosperity of human civilization.

At the thematic meetings, participants from different countries had in-depth exchanges and discussions on two subtopics, "Friendship Cities Cooperation and Green Transition Development" and "Open Innovation and Digital Development". They shared their respective development concepts and successful practices.

Mao Weiming, governor of Hunan province, Liu Duo, vice-mayor of Shanghai municipality, Zhang Xin, vice-governor of Guangdong province, and Huang Wenhui, mayor of Xiamen, Fujian province, introduced their international friendship cities' exchanges. They affirmed the positive role played by international friendship cities in the process of further opening-up at local level. They expressed willingness to take the forum as an opportunity to deepen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation among



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian delivers a speech at the forum.

friendship cities and local governments in green, low-carbon development, scientific and technological innovation, economic and trade exchanges, people-to-people exchanges and other areas.

Orlov Vasily, governor of Amur Region, Russia; Romeu Zema, governor of the State of Minas Gerais, Brazil; Felicity Links, manager of trade and investment promotions in the department of the economic development and tourism of the Northern Cape provincial government in South Africa; Atul Dalakoti, executive director of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry; and Rishav

Gupta, chief executive officer of Indore Smart City Development Limited in India, made positive comments on the constructive role of the forum in promoting exchanges and cooperation among friendship cities and local governments. They said the forum meets the shared expectations of BRICS countries and is in line with the themes and goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They looked forward to closer contact and cooperation with the CPAFFC and making new and greater contributions to deepening people-to-people friendship, local exchanges and cooperation. ■

Solidarity, cooperation and common development is the right way for the world

— Lin Songtian gives news briefing

Chen Ke

On Sept 20, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, held a news briefing on the significance and outcomes of the BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum and the Dialogue of Local Governments between China and Emerging Markets and Developing Countries at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. He was interviewed by 11 media outlets including China Media Group, People's Daily Online, China Daily, China News Service, Global Times, ThePaper.cn, Beijing Daily and Phoenix TV.

On the significance and outcomes of the BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum, Lin noted that the forum — which was initiated and launched by the CPAFFC in 2011 — is an institutional mechanism to implement the important consensus reached at the BRICS Summit. It has become an important plat-

form for BRICS friendship cities and local governments to enhance mutual understanding, deepen cooperation, establish friendship ties, learn from each other and seek common development.

Lin said that since its establishment 16 years ago, the BRICS cooperation mechanism has always been a force upholding justice and promoting progress toward a future-oriented world, guided by the principles of mutual respect, seeking common ground while shelving differences and committed to win-win cooperation and common development. It has become an important and constructive force safeguarding world peace, propelling economic growth, advancing global governance and promoting democracy in international relations.

Noting that this year is the BRICS "Year of China", Lin said the forum had been well-received by representatives of 123 provincial and municipal governments and eight friendship organizations in BRICS countries. He not-

ed that Shen Yueyue, vice-chair of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, had taken time out of her schedule to attend the forum and delivered a speech, and Ivan Melnikov, first deputy chairman of the State Duma of Russia, addressed the forum via video link.

Participants from home and abroad had an in-depth discussion on the theme of "Solidarity and Cooperation for Common Development" and reached broad consensus. They agreed on what should be done in the following four aspects:

First, we should uphold true multilateralism, promote the common values of mankind, implement the Global Security Initiative and safeguard world peace.

Second, we should firmly uphold international equity and justice, adhere to the principles of extensive consultation, joint contributions and shared benefits, and make the global governance system and international order

more fair, equitable, balanced and beneficial for all.

Third, we should work together for cooperative development, leverage the advantages of local governments — especially friendship cities — actively participate in high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, implement the Global Development Initiative, and commit ourselves to win-win cooperation and common development.

Fourth, we should continue deepening cultural and people-to-people exchanges, promoting mutual learning among different civilizations and enhancing mutual friendship and trust among the peoples of all countries.

Lin pledged that the CPAFFC, as a national organization engaged in people-to-people diplomacy, will continue to make the BRICS Friendship Cities and Local Governments Cooperation Forum an important platform, further promote friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields between local governments — especially between friendship cities — and enhance solidarity and cooperation among the peoples of BRICS countries. In this way, the CPAFFC will better serve the building of high-quality partnerships among BRICS countries and contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

On the main considerations and expected effects of the Dialogue of Local Governments between China and Emerging Markets and Developing

Countries advocated by the CPAFFC, Lin mentioned four key points:

First, the “rise in the East and fall in the West” is the general trend. It refers to the rapid rise of emerging markets and developing countries represented by BRICS countries, which have contributed more than 80 percent to global economic growth and have become a decisive force driving the changes unseen in a century. Despite some countries still clinging to a Cold War mentality — unwilling or afraid to recognize reality and trying to incite ideological confrontation and bloc antagonism — strengthening solidarity and cooperation and seeking common development is the only right choice for emerging markets and developing countries to jointly cope with global challenges, chaos and crises.

Second, “look to the East” has become a wide consensus. After more than 40 years of hard work, China has created the “two miracles” of rapid economic growth and long-term social stability. It has not only won the battle against poverty on schedule and completed the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects but has also accumulated successful development experience and is ready to share its development opportunities and valuable experience with other countries without reservation.

Facing profound changes unseen in a century, Chinese President Xi Jinping has put forward a series of new concepts, new thoughts and new

measures, such as building a community with a shared future for mankind. These initiatives have been well received by all parties and point to a better future for the world. “Look to the East” has become a global consensus.

Third, our proposal meets the expectations of all parties. In order to do that and promote South-South cooperation, our association promoted the Dialogue of Local Governments between China and Emerging Markets and Developing Countries. It received a positive response from 138 provincial and municipal governments and 14 friendly organizations from 18 countries across five continents. Among them, about 280 participants, including 15 provincial and ministerial leaders and 17 municipal leaders, attended the dialogue.

Fourth, “solidarity, cooperation and common development” is the right way for the world. Participants from various countries had in-depth exchanges around the theme of “solidarity, cooperation and common development”, especially on safeguarding world peace, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation at local levels, deepening people-to-people exchanges and promoting common development. These exchanges will inject positive energy into the chaotic and crisis-ridden world and contribute to enhancing understanding, deepening cooperation, establishing friendship ties and mutual learning and seeking common development. ■

Dialogue of local governments from China, new market economies and developing countries held successfully

Zeng Guangming

On Sept 20, the Dialogue of Local Governments between China and Emerging Markets and Developing Countries was held successfully at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. It was hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the China International Friendship Cities Association and the People's Government of Fujian province and co-organized by the Xiamen Municipal People's Government.

About 280 participants, including officials of 138 provinces and municipalities from 18 countries and representatives of 14 friendship organizations from 18 countries on five continents, attended the dialogue in person or online.

Ali Al Dhaheri, ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to China; Siyabonga C. Cwele, ambassador of South Africa to China; Hassane Rabehi, ambassador of Algeria to China; and Siddharth Chatterjee, UN coordinator in China, attended the dialogue and gave speeches. Sabino Vaca Narvaja, ambassador of Argentina to China, sent in a video address.



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian speaks at the dialogue.

The dialogue aims to implement the “BRICS Plus” cooperation concept put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Xiamen Summit in 2017 and the important consensuses reached at the BRICS Summit in June 2022. It was organized to build a platform for dialogue between Chinese local governments and those from emerging

market economies and developing countries, to enhance friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation and to promote win-win cooperation and common development.

The dialogue had broad representation, with sub-sessions in 75 cities in nine provinces of China and 15 provinces and 39 cities in 17

foreign countries.

Zhou Naixiang, governor of Shandong province, Guo Ningning, executive vice-governor of Fujian province, Sun Shougang, executive vice-governor of Henan province, Wang Yixin, vice-governor of Heilongjiang province, Zhao Haishan, vice-governor of Hubei province and 15 other provincial and 17 municipal leaders attended the dialogue, on site or online.

Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, delivered a welcome speech. Yuan Mindao, vice-president of the CPAFFC, presided over the dialogue.

Lin welcomed and thanked Chinese and foreign guests for their active response and broad participation. He said the world is changing at a faster pace, and the “rise in the East and fall in the West” has become an irreversible global trend. At present, Lin said, the world is facing a grave and complex international situation and global challenges. It is both timely and critically important that emerging markets and developing countries work together for common development.

Lin called people-to-people friendship “an important foundation and source of strength for state-to-state relations”. He expressed hope that the dialogue would serve as a new mechanism for deepening exchanges and cooperation between China and local governments in emerging market economies and developing countries, especially between friendship cities, to promote win-win cooperation and common development.

Guo Ningning said Fujian

province will take the opportunity of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and play a radiating role as the core area of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Fujian will strengthen resource sharing and work together for early implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to build a better future for mankind.

Ali Al Dhaheri told the gathering that the United Arab Emirates, as a beneficiary, advocate and defender of multilateralism, has actively strengthened exchanges and cooperation with other countries under the principles of the UN Charter and is ready to continue strengthening cooperation with China and other BRICS and developing countries to promote global sustainable development.

Siyabonga C. Cwele commended the dialogue for providing an important platform for strengthening South-South cooperation. He noted that China is Africa’s largest trading partner and that South Africa will continue supporting closer cooperation with emerging markets within the BRICS mechanism to promote peace, stability, prosperity and development at home in the region and beyond.

Hassane Rabehi spoke highly of Algeria-China relations. He said he appreciates the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping, as well as China’s important leading role in the BRICS mechanism. Algeria looks forward to joining the BRICS mechanism at an

early date and contributing to global development, he said.

In his video address, Sabino Vaca Narvaja expressed Argentina’s strong desire to join the BRICS cooperation mechanism at an early date. He said that as the rotating chair of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) for 2022, Argentina is ready to deepen friendly exchanges and cooperation between local governments to benefit more people.

Siddharth Chatterjee praised the important contribution made by BRICS and other emerging markets and developing countries in safeguarding the international order based on international law. He also expressed the readiness of the UN Development System to provide technical support and experience sharing for South-South cooperation and promote the early realization of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In the sub-session on “Cultural Exchanges and People-to-people Connectivity”, Zhou Naixiang, governor of Shandong province; Wang Yixin, vice-governor of Heilongjiang province; Ilsur Metshin, mayor of Kazan; Russia; Taj Yasin, vice-governor of Central Java, Indonesia; Valiyara Bhaskaran, secretary-general of the India China Friendship Association; and Angela Santos, acting president of the Brazil and China Friendship Association, introduced their achievements in development and people-to-people diplomacy.

They said there is great potential for people-to-people cooperation and

exchanges. At present, the international situation is grim and complex, so it is important to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in food security, energy, finance and digital transformation — in particular to enhance people-to-people ties — so that the fruits of development truly benefit people.

In the sub-session on “Resource Sharing and Interconnected Development”, Sun Shougang, executive vice-governor of Henan province; Zhao Haishan, vice-governor of Hubei province; Basikopo Makamu, a member of the Executive Committee for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlement and Traditional Affairs of Limpopo province, South Africa; Mohsen Iravani, director-general of Investment Promotion of the Esfahan Governor General Office of Iran; and Mbengue Assane, president of the Federation of China-Africa Friendship Associations, shared their achievements and experience in local development.

They said the goal of developing friendly and cooperative relations is to improve people’s well-being. It is their wish to further deepen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation with local governments of emerging market economies and developing countries.

At the dialogue, Yuan Mindao read out the Chair’s Statement of the Dialogue of Local Governments between China and Emerging Markets and Developing Countries.

Participants all spoke highly of the dialogue, which was initiated by the Chinese side.

Chair’s Statement of the Dialogue of Local Governments between China and Emerging Markets and Developing Countries

On Sept 20, the Dialogue of Local Governments between China and Emerging Markets and Developing Countries was held in Beijing in an online and offline format. Initiated by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Dialogue was attended by officials of 138 provinces and municipalities from 18 countries, including China, South Africa, Brazil, Russia, India, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Argentina, Georgia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Japan, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia, Ethiopia, and Senegal, Ambassadors of South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria to China, UN Resident Coordinator in China and representatives of 14 friendly organizations.

Under the theme “Solidarity and Cooperation for Common Development”, participants had in-depth discussions and reached broad consensus on promoting friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation among local governments and on global development issues of common interest.

Participants agreed that localities and people are the source of support and strength for the cause of friendship. Local governments, friendship cities in particular, are the mainstay for deepening international cooperation. They expressed appreciation to

the Chinese side for holding the Dialogue of Local Governments between China and Emerging Markets and Developing Countries, which constitutes a multilateral platform in response to the common needs and aspirations for peace, development and cooperation of the countries concerned. The Dialogue, which took place at the right time, has injected positive energy into a volatile world.

Participants agreed that the rise of emerging markets and developing countries as a group is a historical inevitability. These countries have become an important force in safeguarding world peace and promoting common development. In the face of multiple challenges, including geopolitical conflicts, continued spread of COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, solidarity and cooperation for common development among emerging markets and developing countries not only serves the interests of the countries concerned but also represents the only correct choice.

Participants expressed their willingness to take this dialogue as an opportunity to maintain exchanges and cooperation and work together to translate the friendly relations among local governments, friendship cities in particular, into fruitful results beneficial to

the people. To this end, we will do the following:

First, resolutely safeguard world peace. We will jointly implement the Global Security Initiative, uphold the universal values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom, make our due contribution to the peace, harmony, development and prosperity of the world and the building of a closer community with a shared future for mankind.

Second, firmly uphold fairness and justice. We will uphold extensive consultation, joint contributions and shared benefits in global governance, focus on the demands and common interests of emerging markets and developing countries, practice true multi-lateralism and work to make the global

governance system and international order more fair, equitable, balanced and beneficial for all.

Third, make joint efforts for future development. We should take full advantage of the complementary strengths of the diverse industrial structures and resources of different local governments, friendship cities in particular, to pursue high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, implement the Global Development Initiative, focusing on priority areas such as poverty alleviation for common prosperity, urban governance, digital economy, green innovative development, capacity building, with a full view to achieving the independent and sustainable development of emerging markets and developing countries.

Fourth, continuously deepen peo-

ple-to-people and cultural exchanges. We will further promote exchanges and cooperation between local governments in the fields of culture, education, tourism, public health, etc., enhance mutual learning between different civilizations, serve as a bridge and a binding force to enhance mutual understanding, friendship and trust among people of all countries, so as to enhance the “connectivity of the heart” among people.

Participants expressed appreciation to the Chinese side for initiating the Dialogue of Local Governments between China and Emerging Markets and Developing Countries and agreed to support the further strengthening of this platform and make it an institutionalized mechanism. ■



“Chinese People for Pakistani Brothers and Sisters” — Ceremony for flood relief in support of Pakistan held in Beijing

Fang Ying

On Sept 25, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the China-Pakistan Friendship Association and the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development held a donation ceremony for flood relief in support of Pakistan.

Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, Sha Zukang, president of the China-Pakistan Friendship Association, Moin ul Haque, Pakistan's ambassador to China and representatives of major donors attended and delivered speeches.

Li Xikui, vice-president of the CPAFFC and chairman of the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and

Development, presided over the ceremony, which was attended by Jiang Jiang, vice-president of the CPAFFC; Zhang Yangbin, deputy secretary-general of the CPAFFC; heads of various departments of the CPAFFC; representatives of donors; diplomats from the Pakistani embassy in China and journalists from domestic and foreign media — about 100 people in total.

Starting in June this year, Pakistan has been hit by severe floods, which have resulted in heavy casualties and property damage. At the request of the Pakistani side, the CPAFFC wasted no time organizing a flood relief activity under the theme of “Chinese People

for Pakistani Brothers and Sisters”. It has received positive response from people in all walks of life in China.

As of today, the association has raised 10.37 million yuan in cash and 114 million yuan worth of supplies from 15 provinces and cities. There are 18 pairs of friendship cities with Pakistan, 24 friendship organizations, 13 enterprises and hundreds of caring individuals.

Of the donations, money and materials worth 26.66 million yuan were raised by 15 provincial Chinese people's friendship associations with foreign countries. Another 23.79 million yuan in money and materials were



Ceremony for flood relief in support of Pakistan was held successfully in Beijing.

mobilized by nine social organizations and institutions, and that of 86.1 million yuan was donated by 13 caring enterprises.

The scale of the effort and the resulting donations this time are unprecedented in the history of the CPAFFC's foreign exchanges.

Representatives from nine provincial-level entities, including Beijing, Tianjin, Shaanxi, the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, Henan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, Chongqing, Shanghai and Liaoning made speeches on site or via video link. They unanimously expressed their condolences and good wishes to the Pakistani people. They expressed confidence that the Pakistani people would overcome the disaster and rebuild their beautiful homeland at an early date. They looked forward to deepening friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation by promoting high-quality development between friendship cities and contributing to the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

Long Yuxiang, executive chairman of the China International Cultural Communication Center, Deng Jihai, executive chairman of the International Green Economy Association, Geng Jing, chairman of the China Huaxia Cultural Heritage Foundation, and other heads of friendly organizations and institutions, said in their speeches that "Pakistan is our ironclad brother" and that at this difficult time they were willing to do their part to help those affected by the flood and extend brotherly friendship to the Pakistani people to tide over difficulties together.

Representatives of major do-

nors, including Qiao Feng, chairman of the China Sea Inspection Investment Group; Zhang Huarong, chairman of the Huajian Footwear Group; Liu Ruiqi, founder of the Heng Yuan Xiang Group; Kou Ligu, chairman of Li Guo Group; Lu He, chairman of the Jilin Brand Agricultural Product Development Co., Ltd.; Feng Zhimin, director of the Office of Chairman of Jia Duo Bao Group; and Jiang Xiguang, sales director of Chenguang Stationery Beijing, agreed in their speeches that Pakistan is an ironclad friend of China. The two countries have long shared weal and woe and helped each other. The Chinese enterprises, they said, will continue to pay close attention to Pakistan's post-disaster reconstruction and are willing to deepen mutual understanding and trust and explore long-term mutually beneficial cooperation.

As co-host of the event, Sha Zukang, chairman of the China-Pakistan Friendship Association, praised the CPAFFC and various social circles for their generous assistance to Pakistan. He said the donations are of great significance and a vivid portrayal of the ironclad friendship between the two countries, which have always supported each other and worked together in times of adversity. Pakistan has always given China firm support on issues concerning China's core interests, which the Chinese people will never forget. When Pakistan encounters difficulties, China will undoubtedly lend a timely helping hand.

Sha noted that the world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century. Consolidation of the traditional friendship between China and Pakistan is the anchor for regional peace

and stability and conducive to world peace and development.

Lin Songtian outlined the main considerations and the overall situation behind the people-to-people relief operation and pointed out its significance. He said that China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners.

"Our ironclad friendship has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the two peoples and become a household name," he said, adding that the friendship had not only withstood international vicissitudes and changes in both countries' domestic situations but had grown ever stronger, "setting an example of state-to-state relations for the international community".

Lin said that when Pakistan found itself in difficulty, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang immediately sent messages of sympathy. The Chinese government lost no time in taking emergency steps to help. The CPAFFC wasted no time in setting up an emergency task force for donation coordination and a direct communication mechanism with the Pakistani embassy in China. The CPAFFC also organized its staff to take the lead in making donations, and spared no effort to mobilize all walks of life in China, including friendship associations and friendship organizations in 18 cities that have friendship-city relationships with Pakistan, as well as other caring enterprises and individuals. The scale, efforts and results of the donation this time are unprecedented in the history of the CPAFFC's foreign exchanges, Lin said.

He noted that the association took its major action to mobilize people-to-people resources in support of an iron-

clad friend for three main reasons:

First, to demonstrate that the Chinese people have interpreted through concrete action the China-Pakistan ironclad friendship in times of adversity, as well as the solid public and social foundation of the friendship;

Second, to show the world once again that cherishing friendship and reciprocating an act of kindness has always been the fine tradition of the Chinese people. For every kindness it receives, China will return many times more. Whoever is kind and friendly to the Chinese people will receive understanding and sympathy in return;

Third, these actions are in keeping with the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind, fully demonstrating that whenever Chinese leaders initiate a plan, the people take action to follow.

“We are convinced that under the strong leadership of the Pakistani government and with great support from the international community, including China, the people of Pakistan will be able to defeat the disaster, rebuild their homes and achieve a great recovery,” Lin said.

Lin expressed special gratitude to Li Hongzhong, secretary of the CPC Tianjin Municipal Committee, for giving instructions on relief in support of Pakistan. He also thanked the friendship associations of 15 provinces and cities, including Henan, Shaanxi, Ningxia, Beijing, Shanghai, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Guangxi, Chongqing, Hubei, Shandong, Sichuan and Qinghai for actively mobilizing various resources to help Pakistan. He was grateful that CPFA President Sha Zukang had wast-

ed no time in mobilizing the CPFA council members and relevant units to help Pakistan. He expressed heartfelt thanks to 13 enterprises, nine social organizations and all the philanthropists and kindhearted people who have made selfless contributions to the relief activity.

Lin announced that Pakistan will be the first country he will visit in his capacity as CPAFFC president. He will lead a delegation to Pakistan this year, hoping to gain a deeper understanding of all the endowments and needs of the Pakistani side, as well as the priority directions and areas for future friendly exchanges and win-win cooperation.

Lin looks forward to discussing with Pakistani friends how to further bring people-to-people diplomacy resources and advantages into full play and deepen and expand win-win cooperation between Chinese and Pakistani friendship cities, friendship associations, social organizations, think tanks — enterprises and youth in particular — for high-quality development. This will better mobilize Chinese people-to-people resources, support the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, help Pakistan achieve sustainable development and translate the China-Pakistan ironclad brotherhood into more fruitful results through win-win cooperation for common development, bringing more benefits to the two peoples.

On behalf of the Pakistani government and people, Ambassador Moin ul Haque sincerely thanked the CPAFFC, the CPFA and the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development for mobilizing and for

the generous donations from various social circles. He said affectionately that the relief operation efficiently organized and implemented by the CPAFFC was timely and effective, and the results were beyond imagination.

Facts have once again proved that Pakistan and China are absolutely unique ironclad brothers. It is a vivid demonstration of the friendship between the two countries that has deeply touched him and all Pakistanis, Haque said.

He said that after his country was hit by the severe floods, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang immediately sent messages of sympathy. The Chinese government, State-owned enterprises and the Chinese people generously donated money and goods to Pakistan for flood relief, making great contributions to its timely disaster relief and post-disaster reconstruction.

“We will never forget the timely support and generous assistance of our Chinese friends,” Haque said. “It is our firm belief that with the great support from the international community, including China, we will be able to defeat the disaster and rebuild our homes as soon as possible. We welcome Chinese enterprises and other sectors of society to continue to care for and support Pakistan’s post-disaster reconstruction. We hope that President Lin will encourage more Chinese enterprises and people to participate in Pakistan’s economic and social development and help it achieve sustainable development.” ■

A friend in need is a friend indeed

— Lin Songtian gives joint interview on donation for flood relief in support of Pakistan

Liu Chang

On Sept 25, Lin Songtian, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, held a news briefing at the CPAFFC compound. Jointly interviewed by journalists from nine Chinese and foreign media outlets — People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency, China Media Group, Xinhua Net, China News Service, Beijing Daily, The Paper, Phoenix TV, and Home and Abroad News Press, Lin shared his opinions on the significance and fruitful results of the "Chinese People for Pakistani Brothers and Sisters" flood relief aid to Pakistan.

Lin noted that since June this year Pakistan has been hit by severe floods, causing heavy casualties and property damage.

"When our ironclad friends are in difficulty, the Chinese government and people share their pain and sorrow," Lin said, noting that Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang immediately sent messages of sympathy to Pakistan. The Chinese government lost no time providing relief supplies valued at 400 million yuan. The CPAFFC immediately organize a donation for flood relief in support of Pakistan, which received an unimaginable response from all walks of life in society.

Lin said that the association has raised 10.37 million yuan in cash and 114 million yuan worth of relief materials — totaling 125 million yuan — from 15 provinces and cities that have 18 pairs of friendship-city relations with Pakistan, 24 friendship organizations, 13 enterprises and hundreds of loving individuals.

The scale of efforts and results of the donation this time is unprecedented in the history of the CPAFFC's foreign aid. The significance is as follows:

First, it vividly illustrates the ironclad brotherly friendship between China and Pakistan. Disasters are ruthless, but friends care. A friend in need is a friend indeed. Seeing Pakistan in difficulty, the Chinese government and people are empathetic. The severe floods in Pakistan agonized the hearts of the Chinese government and hundreds of millions of Chinese people.

Upon learning of the disaster, friendship cities, friendship associations, enterprises, institutions, individuals and other people-to-people diplomacy sectors of China responded to the initiative of the CPAFFC and demonstrated the ironclad brotherhood between China and Pakistan through concrete action. This shows the profound public support and social foundation of the China-Pakistan friendship.

Second, it fully demonstrates the noble character of the Chinese people, which values friendship and justice. The Chinese people will never forget that in the international arena, when it comes to issues concerning China's core interests and major concerns, Pakistan has never been absent in standing up and speaking up for China, or in resolutely upholding both the common interests of our two countries and developing countries, and fairness and justice in the world. The Chinese people will never forget that when the devastating earthquake struck Wenchuan in 2008, Pakistan's government and people donated the last tent in its strategic reserve to the disaster area. The Chinese people will never forget that when Wuhan was ravaged by a sudden outbreak of COVID-19 in January 2020, the Pakistani government and all sectors of society gave everything they had and sent a special plane to Wuhan with donated masks and other urgently-needed anti-epidemic materials. Cherishing friendship and reciprocating acts of kindness have always been the tradition of the Chinese people. For every drop of kindness it receives, China will return with a fountain of favor. Whoever is kind and friendly to the Chinese people will receive understanding and sympathy in return.

Third, it is a move to practice the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind. We live in a community with a shared future. At present, the COVID-19 pandemic, monkeypox, floods, drought and other disasters have been looming one after another. Only through solidarity and cooperation can mankind overcome the difficulties together. Chinese President Xi Jinping has put forward the important vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, and contributed China's proposal to building a better world, which has been widely acknowledged by the international community. The donation is a vivid demonstration of people-to-people efforts to put this important idea into practice. It fully demonstrates that whenever the Chinese leader initiates a plan, the people follow up with concrete actions.

Remarking on the fruitful results of the flood aid to Pakistan, Lin said that upon learning of the floods, the CPAFFC took four swift actions to help:

First, it immediately sent letters of sympathy to the Pakistani people.

Second, it set up an emergency task force for donation coordination.

Third, it established a direct communication mechanism with Pakistan's embassy in China.

Fourth, it mobilized all walks of life in China, including local friendship associations that have friendship-city relations with Pakistan, Chinese enterprises and hundreds of loving people to help.

Lin noted that the CPAFFC is a national people's organization engaged

in people-to-people diplomacy. Its main work involves friendship cities, friendship associations, friendly organizations and friendly people. Its main responsibility is to leverage the strengths of people-to-people diplomacy, mobilize resources from non-governmental sectors, promote friendship and cooperation between the Chinese people and people around the world, enhance amity and mutual understanding among peoples of different nations and serve the country's overall diplomacy.

"A friend in need is a friend indeed," Lin continued. "The donation initiated by our association received a positive response from four friendly forces and sent warmth and strength to the Pakistani people."

First, friendship cities lent a helping hand. There are 18 pairs of friendship cities between China and Pakistan. Those in China responded to the initiative of the CPAFFC and donated a total of 26.66 million yuan in cash and materials from 15 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. Li Hongzhong, secretary of the CPC Tianjin Municipal Committee, gave instructions to help the Tianjin People's Friendship Association collect more than 10 million yuan of urgently needed supplies for Pakistan in the shortest possible time.

Second, friendship associations offered generous help and acted swiftly. Sha Zukang, president of the CPFA, mobilized the CPFA council members, including the China International Cultural Communication Center, China Huaxia Cultural Heritage Foundation, International Green Economy

Association and Jia Duo Bao Group, among others, to raise a total of more than 12.63 million yuan in supplies for Pakistan.

Third, friendly organizations made gracious donations. Nine social organizations and academic institutions collected 23.79 million yuan in cash donations and materials. Among them, the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development raised 10.11 million yuan through existing funds and online public fundraising. In addition, the foundation mobilized enterprises to donate large amounts of materials and funds.

Fourth, friendly people were philanthropic, and loving enterprises fulfilled their social responsibilities. Thirteen enterprises, including China Sea Inspection Investment Group, Hua Jian Group, Inner Mongolia Yidong Technology Co, Li Guo Group, Heng Yuan Xiang Group, Jilin Brand Agricultural Product Development Co. and Chenguang Stationery Shanghai, donated a total of 86.1 million yuan in cash and materials.

"It is our firm belief that the warmth and love from China will converge into solid strength to assist our Pakistani friends in fighting the flood disaster and to boost their courage and confidence to overcome the difficulties and carry out post-disaster reconstruction," Lin said. "We are even more convinced that under the strong leadership of the Pakistani government, and with the great support from the international community, including China, the people of Pakistan will defeat the disaster, rebuild their homes and achieve a great recovery." ■

Unveiling ceremony of a new monument of China-DPRK Friendship Tree held in Beijing

Department of East Asian Affairs

On the morning of Sept 28, the unveiling ceremony of a new monument — the China-DPRK Friendship Tree — was held at the Red Star Collective Farm in Beijing. It was jointly hosted by the Chinese People's As-

sociation for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the China-DPRK Friendship Association and the embassy of Democratic People's Republic of Korea in China.

Lin Songtian, president of the

CPAFFC, and Ri Ryong Nam, DPRK ambassador to China, delivered speeches and jointly unveiled the new monument. Liu Jianbo, deputy secretary of the CPC Committee and general manager of Beijing Nanjiao Farm,



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian (right) and DPRK ambassador to China Ri Ryong Nam jointly unveil the new monument.

spoke on behalf of the management and maintenance unit for the China-DPRK Friendship Tree.

About 50 people attended the unveiling ceremony, including representatives of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing Foreign Affairs Office, Beijing Municipal Forestry and Parks Bureau, Daxing District People's Government of Beijing Municipality, Beijing Capital Agribusiness & Food Group Co, Beijing Nanjiao Farm, the DPRK embassy in China and other relevant units of both countries.

Yuan Mindao, vice-president of the CPAFFC, presided over the ceremony.

Lin first extended warm congratulations on the successful transplantation of the China-DPRK Friendship Tree and the unveiling of the new monument. He also thanked the Beijing Committee of the CPC and the People's Government of Beijing Municipality, as well as relevant units, especially the Beijing Nanjiao Farm and people who have made a positive contribution to the event. He said the China-DPRK Friendship Tree is a symbol of the everlasting friendship between the two peoples. To jointly protect and foster the friendship tree is a concrete embodiment and inevitable requirement of carrying on and developing the traditional friendship between the two countries.

Lin noted that China and the DPRK attach great importance to the

transplantation of the friendship tree. Since last year, under the guidance of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the strong support of the CPC Beijing Committee and the People's Government of Beijing Municipality, the CPAFFC has maintained close communication with the DPRK embassy in China. Through repeated research, scientific demonstrations, careful design and implementation with the Beijing Foreign Affairs Office, Beijing Municipal Forestry and Parks Bureau, Beijing Capital Agribusiness & Food Group Co, and Beijing Nanjiao Farm, the tree was successfully transplanted to the new site in the spring.

Since then, the Beijing Nanjiao Farm has carried out careful and scientific maintenance, actively promoted the surrounding landscape construction and supporting green planting project and completed the project on schedule with high quality. It is an important outcome of China-DPRK solidarity and cooperation. With concrete actions, the two sides have injected new impetus into their bilateral traditional friendship.

Lin said the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK had become stronger with time. In the new era, China-DPRK relations have achieved new development. Chinese President Xi Jinping and DPRK General Secretary Kim Jong-un met five times in the two years before the COV-

ID-19 pandemic. They reached a series of important consensuses on drawing a blueprint for the development of relations between the two parties and countries and enriching the connotation of China-DPRK friendship in the new era, firmly safeguarding the common interests of the two countries and peoples and making important contributions to peace and development of the region and the world at large.

Lin said, "Both China and the DPRK are socialist countries under the leadership of the Communist Party. Our shared ideals, beliefs and goals constitute an unbreakable spiritual bond of China-DPRK friendship and an inexhaustible source of strength for the constant consolidation and development of China-DPRK relations. As a good neighbor, comrade and brother, China is sincerely pleased with the new achievements the DPRK has made in developing its economy, improving people's livelihoods and fighting the pandemic, and believes that the DPRK will surely achieve even greater achievements."

Lin pledged that the CPAFFC stands ready to work together with the DPRK and fully implement the important consensuses reached by leaders of the two parties and countries.

"Focusing on carrying forward the traditional friendship, the association will actively promote mutually beneficial cooperation between the local governments and peoples of the two countries in agricultural development,

rural revitalization and ecological progress, and help the DPRK transform “clear waters and lush mountains” into “mountains of gold and silver”, so that China-DPRK traditional friendship will bring more benefits to our two countries and peoples,” Lin said.

Ri Ryong Nam expressed heartfelt thanks to the CPAFFC and other Chinese units for long-term meticulous maintenance of the DPRK-China Friendship Tree and painstaking efforts for the successful completion of the new site. He said, “it is of great significance to jointly hold the unveiling ceremony of the new monument of the DPRK-China Friendship Tree at the historic moment when China and the DPRK celebrate National Day and the CPC is about to hold its 20th National Congress.”

Ri noted that the Beijing Nanjiao Farm is one of the places where DPRK-China traditional friendship flourishes. The new site of the DPRK-China Friendship Tree provides a new base for carrying forward and continuing the traditional friendship between the two countries. He expressed the hope that the farm would continue to take care of it and make the garden of DPRK-China friendship more beautiful and prosperous. “May the DPRK-China Friendship Tree, as a symbol of bilateral friendship and the unbreakable DPRK-China traditional friendship remain vibrant and everlasting,” he said.

Ri said that under the strategic guidance of the two countries’ leaders,

bilateral relations had been developing in various fields and the friendship between the two peoples had deepened. The DPRK is willing to consolidate and develop relations with China in accordance with the will of the heads of the two parties and countries and make positive efforts to fulfill their respective socialist causes.

“Under the strong leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping, the Chinese people have made continuous achievements on the new journey of building a modern socialist country in an all-around way, and the DPRK side is as pleased as it is over the great achievements of its own. We believe that the Chinese people will welcome the 20th CPC National Congress with outstanding achievements,” Ri said.

Liu Jianbo noted that the Beijing Nanjiao Farm is one of the earliest State-owned farms established in the People’s Republic of China. On Oct 30, 1955, Chairman Mao Zedong inscribed “Vision Planning of Red Star Collective Farm” for the farm.

The Beijing Nanjiao Farm is a window of communication for China’s agricultural diplomacy. On Aug 11, 1960, the farm was named “Red Star China-DPRK People’s Friendship Commune” and established friendship-farm relations with a DPRK farm named “Tak Am DPRK-China Friendship Cooperative Farm”. Over the past six decades, the friendship farms of the two sides have written a glorious chapter in friendly exchanges.

Liu said that starting from last year, under the guidance and support of relevant parties, the Beijing Nanjiao Farm had carefully organized implementation and maintenance of the tree transplanting plan in strict accordance with the agreement between China and the DPRK, and successfully completed the tree transplanting task as scheduled.

“In the future, we will live up to the mission and take good care of the tree, and make new contributions to promoting the traditional friendship between the two countries,” Liu said.

After the unveiling ceremony, representatives of both sides watered the China-DPRK Friendship Tree and took a group photo.

The China-DPRK Friendship Tree is a white bark pine planted by Kim Il Sung, general secretary of the Workers’ Party of Korea and president of the DPRK, along with Ye Jianying, vice-chairman of the CPC Central Committee, in the courtyard of the Red Star China-DPRK People’s Friendship Commune (now called the Beijing Nanjiao Farm) on April 20, 1975, as a symbol of the enduring friendship between the people of China and the DPRK.

As agreed by both sides, the China-DPRK Friendship Tree was transplanted to the Red Star Collective Farm in March 2022. The tree is now growing well, with lush foliage and pleasant surrounding landscape, demonstrating the fruits of the united efforts of China and the DPRK and their broad vision for the future together. ■

Cuban government confers Order of Solidarity on CPAFFC

Chen Kuanghuai

On Nov 1, the embassy of Cuba in China held a grand ceremony to confer the Order of Solidarity on the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries on behalf of the Cuban government.

Lin Songtian, president of the CPAFFC, attended the ceremony. Cuban Ambassador to China Carlos Miguel Pereira presented the order to Lin and made a speech.

Fernando González, president of Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples, delivered a video message.

Former Chinese ambassadors to Cuba, representatives of relevant departments, institutions and enterprises, as well as people from the Cuban embassy in China and relevant institutions attended the event, totaling nearly 100.

Pereira said the CPAFFC has maintained close exchanges with its Cuban and foreign counterparts over the years, making important contributions to enhancing friendship between the two peoples and deepening bilateral relations. China has always firmly supported Cuba in its just struggle to

safeguard its sovereignty and oppose blockades. When Cuba was in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the hurricane disaster, China provided it with vital supplies.

The Cuban people are grateful for that, and Cuba will further strengthen cooperation with the CPAFFC, continuously deepen bilateral exchanges and cooperation in cultural and local government areas and constantly enhance solidarity and friendship between the two peoples.

González said that the CPAFFC is



CPAFFC President Lin Songtian (2nd left, back row) and Cuban ambassador to China Carlos Miguel Pereira (3rd left, back row) take a photo with the young performers.

well-deserving of the Order of Solidarity. The Cuban government fully recognizes the unremitting efforts made by the CPAFFC over the past six decades to safeguard world peace, develop people-to-people diplomacy, enhance mutual understanding and strengthen solidarity and cooperation. The Cuban side is convinced that the successful convening of the CPC National Congress will lead the Chinese people to achieve greater political, economic and social development as they strive for the realization of the second centenary goal.

After receiving the Order of Solidarity, Lin gave a speech of appreciation on behalf of the CPAFFC. He said, "Successive Chinese leaders, especially General Secretary Xi Jinping, have attached great importance to the development of China-Cuba relations. For a long time, China and Cuba have understood each other in striving for their national independence and liberation and in building socialism with local characteristics. China and Cuba have always fought side by side in maintaining national sovereignty, security and dignity, in opposing hegemonism and power politics and in safeguarding world equity and justice and the common interests of the two countries and other developing countries.

"China and Cuba have provided each other with valuable and firm support in the fight against COVID-19 and other natural disasters and in the new journey of jointly building the Belt and Road for win-win cooperation and common development. The two countries have set a good example for

South-South solidarity and cooperation."

Lin noted that the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was successfully held not long ago and attracted worldwide attention. He said the congress was a very important meeting held at a crucial moment for the Party and the country in the development cause.

General Secretary Xi's report comprehensively summarized the work of the Party over the past five years and the great changes of the past 10 years of the new era. It set out the goals, tasks and major policies for the development cause of the Party and the country in the new era on a new journey. It drew up a new blueprint, put forward new thinking, new conclusions, new tasks and new measures, and laid out a comprehensive strategic plan.

Lin noted the most important political outcome of the congress was the re-election of General Secretary Xi Jinping, who is steering a course toward high-quality development and modernization of the Party and country, and ensures that the great wheel of national rejuvenation will not falter, stray or stall.

Another important outcome is that the important theoretical, practical and institutional innovations of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era have been written into the Party Constitution, providing the fundamental basis for the whole Party to lead the people in concerted efforts to achieve common goals and tasks.

Lin said, "Both China and Cuba

are socialist countries led by the Communist Party. We are committed to the people-centered socialist path suited to our national conditions, share the same political beliefs and shoulder the common mission of developing production, eradicating exploitation and poverty and ensuring that all our people live a happy life. We are also victims of US and Western hegemony and power politics and are staunch defenders of world peace and justice.

"The Chinese side stands ready to work with the Cuban side to fully implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two parties and countries, give better play to the positive role of local governments, businesses, think tanks, media and youth and strengthen cooperation in experience sharing and capacity building, mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

"To promote the development of the socialist cause of both countries, we will make new efforts to promote China-Cuba relations to bring more benefits to the two peoples and achieve common development."

The Order of Solidarity was created by the Cuban Council of Ministers in December 1979. It aims to recognize institutions and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the solidarity of the Cuban people, to the friendship between Cuba and all peoples, to the support of the cause of peace and socialism for mankind and to the fight against imperialism, colonialism, fascism, racism and any form of exploitation. ■

CPAFFC Vice-President Li Xikui attends 2022 Tang Xianzu International Drama Exchange Month

Gan Qianyi Hou Mengwei

On Nov 10, the 2022 Tang Xianzu International Drama Exchange Month — jointly hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the Jiangxi Provincial People's Government and the China Theatre Association — opened in Fuzhou, Jiangxi province.

Liu Qibao, vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee, delivered a video address at the opening ceremony.

Yao Zengke, chairman of Jiangxi Provincial CPPCC, along with Li Xikui, vice-president of the CPAFFC, and Xia Wenyong, secretary of Fuzhou Municipal Committee of the CPC, attended the meeting and delivered speeches. Shahbaz Khan, UNESCO representative in China, and Matt Moody, British consul-general in Guangzhou, sent video remarks. Ahn Younggi, deputy consul-general of the Republic of Korea in Wuhan, was pres-

ent at the event in Fuzhou.

Chen Xiaoping, vice-governor of Jiangxi province presided over the opening ceremony.

The theme of the event was "Pursue the Classics and Meet in Fuzhou".

More than 400 Chinese and foreign guests from the United Kingdom, Spain, Russia, the ROK and other countries attended the event on site or online.

Liu Qibao noted that the 20th National Congress of the CPC had created an ambitious blueprint for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization. China will continue to uphold the common values of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom, respect the diversity of world civilizations, deepen exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations, and promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

After years of development, Liu

said, the Tang Xianzu International Drama Exchange Month has become an important platform for local governments at home and abroad to promote urban development through cultural exchanges.

Liu stressed three points:

We should carry forward fine traditional culture, highlight the values of the classics and promote a cultural spirit that transcends time and space, transcends countries and is of timeless charm and contemporary value, so that people of all countries can enjoy a richer spiritual life.

We should respect the diversity of cultures, enrich achievements of human civilizations, and transcend estrangement, clashes and feelings of superiority through harmonious coexistence of civilizations. Only then will the garden of world civilizations become more colorful.

We should promote cultural exchanges and mutual learning, build

bridges of friendship between China and other countries and enhance mutual appreciation, mutual trust and understanding through learning from one another. We should work together to tackle various global challenges and usher in a brighter future with a shared destiny.

The CPAFFC's Li Xikui said that both Chinese Opera and Western drama are treasures and living fossils of Eastern and Western cultures and part of the common wealth of mankind. The intercultural dialogue and exchanges between Chinese and Western operas, represented by the Tang Xianzu International Drama Exchange Month, play an important role in promoting the coexistence of diverse civilizations and enhancing mutual understanding between Chinese and foreign people.

Li said the CPAFFC will continue to promote mutual learning among civilizations and friendship between peoples, pave the way for more friendly people-to-people exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between China and other countries and contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Yao Zengke said Jiangxi province will hold a series of activities, including the Tang Xianzu International Drama Exchange Month, to actively integrate into the national strategy of the Belt and Road Initiative and make positive contributions to promoting Chinese drama culture globally, deepening exchanges and mutual learning among world civilizations and jointly



CPAFFC Vice-President Li Xikui addresses the opening ceremony.

building a community with a shared future for mankind.

Shahbaz Khan noted that the intangible cultural heritage of humanity can enhance people's sense of identity and continuity and connect people to the past, to each other and to the world. It is the emotional bond of a community with a shared future for mankind. UNESCO will fulfill its cultural mission and work closely with all parties to protect the cultural heritage of mankind, Khan said.

Matt Moody said that Shakespeare and Tang Xianzu are two of the greatest drama writers in world history. They have built a bridge between Stratford and Fuzhou through culture and established a special connection

between the UK and China.

"Gold is easy to come by; a bosom friend is hard to find," Moody said. It is believed that the friendship between the two sides will continue to deepen and be renewed in such exchange activities.

The event will last until December, during which there will be a series of activities, including the 2022 China (Fuzhou) Tang Xianzu Academic Symposium, the International Drama Art Summit Forum, the Tang Xianzu Meets Shakespeare dialogue between Fuzhou and Stratford, a carnival, classic drama performances and the visit of foreign diplomats and consulates in China to Fuzhou. ■

CPAFFC Vice-President Jiang Jiang attends opening ceremony of Hubei-New Zealand Week

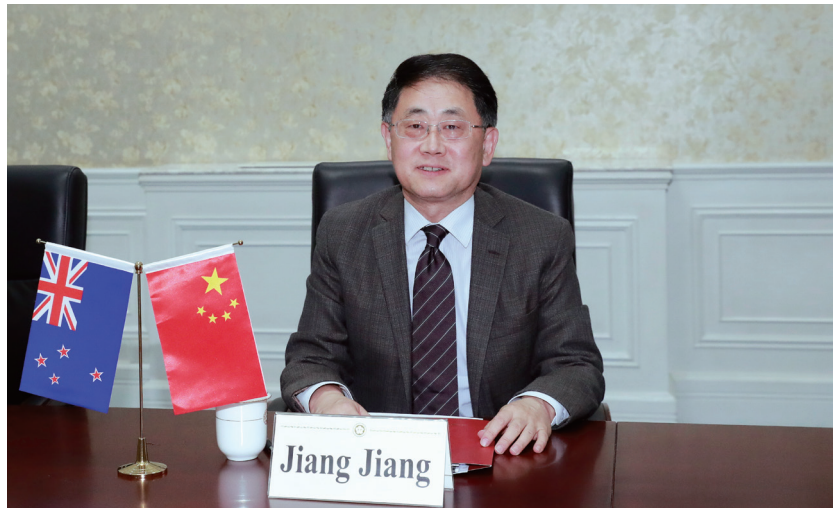
Liu Yi

On Nov 14, Jiang Jiang, vice-president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, attended the opening ceremony of Hubei-New Zealand Week and delivered a speech via video link. The event commemorated the 50th anniversary of China-New Zealand diplomatic relations and the 125th anniversary of the birth of Rewi Alley.

Jiang spoke highly of the substantial development of China-New Zealand relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties 50 years ago. He paid deep tribute to Rewi Alley, who had made important contributions to promoting mutual understanding, trust and friendship between the two peoples.

Jiang said, "We should learn from and carry forward Rewi Alley's internationalism and pursuit of truth and justice, his selfless dedication to serving the people through hard work and his broad-minded qualities of safeguarding world peace and promoting international friendship."

Jiang noted that not long ago, the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was successfully held. The congress outlined a new blueprint for development of Chinese modernization, which will open up broader space for win-win cooperation between China and New Zealand



CPAFFC Vice-President Jiang Jiang addresses the opening ceremony.

and other countries. The CPAFFC will work with the New Zealand side to build more and stronger bridges of friendship, cooperation and development and jointly create an even brighter future of China-New Zealand relations.

Zhao Haishan, vice-governor of Hubei province, and Clare Fearnley, New Zealand's ambassador to China, attended and addressed the opening ceremony. Xie Feng, vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, sent written remarks. Relevant departments, universities, friendship organizations of Hubei province and New Zealand and representatives of overseas students and relatives of Rewi Alley attended the event

on site or online.

The event was co-hosted by the CPAFFC and the Hubei Provincial People's Government. A number of activities were conducted. These included the Hubei-New Zealand Sister Cities Virtual Dialogue, a light show on landmark buildings near the Yangtze and Han rivers, the Dialogue on Cooperation in Science and Education between Wuhan University and New Zealand, livestreaming of pre-recorded videos under the theme "Following Footsteps of Rewi Alley in Honghu Lake to Honor the Spirit of Internationalism", children's paintings themed "The Same White Clouds and a Shared Blue Sky" and other activities. ■

CPAFFC Vice-President Yuan Mindao attends World Estuarine Cities Conference for Cooperation and Development

Geng Zifeng

On Nov 10, the World Estuarine Cities Conference for Cooperation and Development, co-hosted by the Shandong Provincial People's Government and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, was successfully held in Dongying, Shandong province.

Zhang Qingli, vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; Li Ganjie, secretary of the CPC Shandong Provincial Committee; Ge Huijun, chairman of the Shandong CP-PCC committee; Yuan Mindao, vice-president of the CPAFFC; Stjepan Mesic, former president of Croatia; Subbotin Aleksandr Mikhailovich, former deputy prime minister of Belarus; and representatives of international organizations attended and addressed the conference, on site or online.

Yuan Mindao noted that at the 20th CPC National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping solemnly reiterated to the international community that China will unswervingly follow the Chinese path of modernization, which not only develops itself but also benefits the world. At the opening ceremony of the fifth China International



CPAFFC Vice-President Yuan Mindao attends the activity.

Import Expo, Xi, who is also China's president, said: "We should commit ourselves to openness to meet development challenges, foster synergy for cooperation, build the momentum of innovation and deliver benefits to all. We should steadily advance economic globalization, enhance every country's dynamism of growth and provide all nations with greater and fairer access to the fruits of development."

Yuan observed: "This will provide more opportunities and huge potential for deepening exchanges and cooperation between China and other countries in various fields."

He noted that the estuary of the

Yellow River is the confluence of river civilization and marine civilization and an important window for the Chinese nation to open up to the world and head toward the future. He said cities play an important role as hubs for the mankind's life and production. They are also important vehicles for friendly exchanges between peoples, mutual learning among civilizations and mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation, he remarked.

In 2021, President Xi gave important instructions during his visit to Dongying, which, Yuan said, pointed the right direction for the ecological protection and high-quality develop-

ment of the Yellow River Delta, giving the river's estuary an unprecedented mission and opportunity.

Yuan suggested that estuarine cities can strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the following three aspects:

First, stay on the right course and stay in the same boat. In the face of challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, climate change and sluggish economic recovery, all parties from China and the world should maintain confidence, work in solidarity and jointly safeguard world peace, stability and development.

Second, maintain mutually beneficial and practical cooperation. It is hoped that estuarine cities of other countries will actively participate in local exchanges and cooperation with China, especially in sharing their experience and practices in ecological protection and high-quality development, so as to bring tangible benefits to the people of all cities.

Third, learn from each other and deepen friendship among civilizations. The CPAFFC will carry out people-to-people and cultural exchanges and actively build new channels and platforms for cultural dialogue and integration to lay a solid public support foundation for state-to-state relations.

Yuan pledged that the CPAFFC will work with all parties to leverage the advantages of people-to-people diplomacy to further promote exchanges, build consensus and deepen friendships among world estuarine cities, while contributing wisdom and strength to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. ■

3rd China-Italy Friendship Cities Cooperation Dialogue held successfully

Wang Zeyu

On Nov 23, the 3rd China-Italy Friendship Cities Cooperation Dialogue hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries was successfully held via video link.

More than 100 participants attended the dialogue online, including Zhao Yide, governor of Shaanxi province; Yan Dong, vice-president of the CPAFFC; Zheng Xuan, charge d'affaires of the Chinese embassy in Italy; Federico Antonelli, director of Italian Cultural Institute, embassy of Italy in Beijing; and representatives from Italy China Link, OpenGate China, the Italian OBOR Institute and 35 China-Italy friendship provinces/states and cities.

Speeches were made by repre-

sentatives from Chinese provinces and cities including Shandong, Shanghai, Chengdu, Nanjing, Suzhou, Ningbo, Jinzhong and Jingdezhen, and people from Italian provinces and municipalities in the Emilia Romagna region, as well as Treviso, Como, Milan, Venice, Florence, Bologna and Faenza.

Zhao said that Shaanxi province is willing to work with local governments in Italy to promote high-quality development under the Belt and Road Initiative; strengthen cultural and artistic exchanges and youth exchanges; uphold the concept of equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness; and jointly promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Yan said, "Friendship-city ex-

changes are an important force in boosting China-Italy relations.”

To date, the two sides have established 86 pairs of friendship provinces/states and cities and conducted fruitful exchanges and cooperation on the economy, trade, culture and tourism. Yan suggested that both sides focus on practical cooperation to deliver tangible results and benefits to the two peoples.

“It is important to promote people-to-people exchanges so that more people can participate in, benefit from and support China-Italy cooperation,” he said. “We should carry forward the spirit of innovation and spark a new wave of exchanges and cooperation between our local governments.”

He added: “The CPAFFC is ready to take the opportunity of the Year of Culture and Tourism of the two countries this year to serve as a bridge of exchanges between Chinese and Italian local governments and work with all parties to draw up a blueprint for friendship-city exchanges in the new era and contribute to the steady and enduring growth of bilateral friendly relations.”

Zheng, of the Chinese embassy in Italy, noted that China-Italy relations had long been at the forefront of China-Europe relations, and friendship-city exchanges had made a great contribution to this.

“The Chinese embassy in Italy will continue to support various forms

of people-to-people exchanges between the two countries and deepen cooperation between Chinese and Italian provinces/states and cities, so that the two peoples will get closer to each other and cooperate more effectively,” Zheng said.

Federico Antonelli praised the dialogue, saying that Italy and China have carried out productive cooperation between local governments over the years and achieved fruitful results. This year marks the Year of Culture and Tourism between Italy and China.

“The Italian embassy is ready to work with the Chinese side to build bridges for cooperation in various fields and jointly create a better future

for bilateral relations,” he said.

Participants recalled friendships, shared their experiences and put forward ideas for cooperation on topics promoting practical cooperation and enhancing people-to-people ties through friendship-city relations. The atmosphere of the dialogue was friendly, pragmatic and warm.

Xinhua News Agency, People’s Daily and other media outlets gave positive coverage to the event.

The China-Italy Friendship Cities Cooperation Dialogue is an institutional program established by the CPAFFC. The first two sessions were held in Milan and Chengdu in 2017 and 2019 respectively. ■



CPAFFC Vice-President Yan Dong attends the dialogue and delivers a speech.

Friendship organizations and individuals extend warm congratulations on the successful 20th National Congress of the CPC

At the opening of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, friendship organizations and friendly people from various countries sent letters and telegrams to express warm congratulations.

Nguyen Phuong Nga, president of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, and Nguyen Van Tho, president of the Vietnam-China Friendship Association, expressed confidence that under the leadership of the CPC with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, the Chinese people will successfully achieve the goals set forth in the congress and make even greater achievements in building China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, cultur-

ally advanced, harmonious and beautiful.

Uichiro Niwa, president of the Japan-China Friendship Association, a public welfare organization, said, "It is expected that, guided by the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the CPC and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, that China will achieve even greater development, play a bigger role in promoting prosperity and stability in East Asia and push for further development in Japan-China friendly relations."

Mohamed Rasheed, founder and chairman of the China-Maldivian Cultural Association, noted that the Global Development Initiative proposed

by General Secretary Xi Jinping has answered the question of the times, helped the world recover from setbacks and accelerated the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

China has always held high the banner of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit, Rasheed said. "China's advocacy of multilateralism and its contribution to bridging the global governance deficit are commendable."

Nalin Aponso, president of the Sri Lanka-China Journalists' Forum, said, "General Secretary Xi Jinping and other like-minded leaders have provided direction to those who have no say on the world political stage, lest they be coerced and manipulated

by a few powerful people. History has proved that China is our true friend, not just in words, but in actions. We hope that the firm and reliable friendship between Sri Lanka and China will lead to more fruitful cooperation.”

Indrananda Abeysekera, chairman of the Association for Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation, said that it is of great significance to China and the whole world that the 20th National Congress of the CPC was committed to building a community with a shared future for mankind and to building a harmonious, peaceful and developing world in the new era.

Muhammad Ikhlake Usmani, president of the All Pakistan-China Friendship Association, pointed out that “the 20th National Congress of the CPC will map out the path for successful development of the CPC and China. We are convinced that under the leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping, the Chinese people will rally closely around the CPC and achieve the task and goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects, as well as the second centenary goal of national rejuvenation.”

Smail Debeche, chairman of Friendship Association: Algeria-China, noted that General Secretary

Xi Jinping governs the country with sound policies. Under his leadership, Debeche said, China has not only strengthened its domestic solidarity and stability and improved people’s well-being, but also advocated mutual benefit and promoted peace and mutual assistance among different countries. He expressed the hope that under Xi’s leadership China will make greater achievements and realize national development and rejuvenation for the benefit of the world.

Emmanuel Mba Allo, president of the Gabon-China Friendship Association, said, “The 20th National Congress of the CPC is bound to exert a far-reaching influence on China’s future development and its external relations. I pay tribute to the CPC for successfully building China into an economic, scientific, technological and military power in the past 100 years. Our association hopes to work with the CPAFFC to continually consolidate the Gabon-China friendship.”

Ante Simonovic, president of the Croatia-China Friendship Association, former deputy prime minister of the Republic of Croatia and former Croatian ambassador to China, said that the CPC had made remarkable achievements under the leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping. Simon-

ovic said he was confident that the far-sightedness of Chinese leaders will bring more benefits to Chinese society and people all over the world.

Juan Manuel Flores, chairman of the Salvador-China Friendship Association, said, “Under the firm leadership of the CPC, our brotherly country, China, guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, has achieved its first centenary goal and kept growing its international standing and influence. At the same time, we are grateful for China’s commitment to openness and inclusiveness and its mutual respect, solidarity and cooperation with Salvador and other countries.”

The South Africa-China People’s Friendship Association said that since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, General Secretary Xi Jinping has led the Chinese people in making great achievements in the country’s economic and social development. He said he was confident that under the strong leadership of the CPC, the Chinese people will achieve the second centenary goal of building a great modern socialist country in all respects and make great achievements in building socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. ■

CPC National Congress

Jinith De Silva

The Communist Party of China was founded in Shanghai in July 1921 with about 50 members. Now it has grown to a party of more than 96 million members in some 4.9 million grassroots branches throughout China. The CPC is the world's largest political organization with a history of 100 years.

The leaders who assumed office after the People's Republic of China was established in 1949 formulated policies for the well-being of the people. As accepted and appreciated by modern China, the emergence and development of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the outcome of the contribution of Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and Xi Jinping Thought on governance.

In the early 1950s, the CPC introduced a five-year plan system to plan and improve China's economy and society. For this purpose, every CPC National Congress was requested to set out plans and goals for the coming five years based on the needs and wishes of the people.

Data show that since the 18th National Congress of the CPC workers and farmers have continued to account for more than 40 percent of the membership. These members know what the common people need.

The congresses always draft a

plan based on proposals submitted by deputies. The main goal of the 20th National Congress is to build China into a great modern socialist country by 2050.

According to the CPC Constitution, the highest leading organ of the Party is the National Congress and the Central Committee it elects. The Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and its Standing Committee members exercise their functions and powers when the plenary session of the CPC Central Committee is in adjournment.

On Oct 22, the new CPC Central Committee, which has 205 members, was elected during the closing session of the National Congress, held after the normal five-year interval.

At the first plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee on Oct 23, the general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, 24 members of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and seven Standing Committee members of the Political Bureau were elected.

Upon nomination by the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, the plenum approved the members of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee and decided on the composition of the

CPC Central Military Commission.

In addition, the first plenary session of the 20th Central Committee approved the secretary, deputy secretaries and Standing Committee members elected by the first plenary session of the 20th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.

In all of the five-year plans drafted by the CPC, priority has been given to eliminating poverty in China. In 2012 after Xi Jinping became general secretary of the CPC and president of the State, he accelerated the poverty eradication program.

In March 2018, President Xi called upon all State personnel to always put the people first, always serve the people wholeheartedly and always work hard for people's interests and happiness. CPC leaders at all levels have tried hard to improve the living conditions of the people of China.

During the last several decades, China has successfully lifted more than 800 million people in rural areas out of absolute poverty. The year 2020 marked a historic moment for China as it had established the moderately prosperous society in all respects and the battle against poverty had been won under the strong leadership of the CPC with President Xi at the core. China's achievement is unprecedented in the history of human development.

The 20th National Congress of the CPC is an important event not only for the CPC and China but also for the whole world. People have begun to value the new concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind, which was put forward by General Secretary Xi at the CPC National Congress. Under this vision, all the world's resources should be equally shared among all of humanity. The CPC has shown that it wants to work with the international community to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world with lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity.

In 2013, the CPC proposed the Belt and Road Initiative for the benefit of the world. All countries, not just China, have benefited from this initiative. Massive infrastructure construction will take place in countries along the Belt and Road routes, making their economies stronger. With that in mind China has created the Silk Road Fund and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

China has also signed more than 200 cooperation documents for building the Belt and Road with 149 countries and 132 international organizations.

Sri Lanka is one country that has heavily benefited from the initiative, particularly in infrastructure development. Colombo port city, Hambantota port, the Colombo Katunayake Highway, Norocholai Coal Power Plant and Lotus Performance Theater were all

built under the initiative.

The COVID-19 pandemic and domestic economic crisis have brought severe difficulties to Sri Lanka, and its public health system is currently faced with unprecedented challenges. Throughout the pandemic, under the BRI, China has donated large amounts of personal protective equipment, test kits and vaccines to Sri Lanka, helping the country win its battle against COVID-19.

To tackle chronic kidney disease of unknown etiology in Sri Lanka, China handed over the National Nephrology Hospital in Polonnaruwa, the Joint Research and Demonstration Center for Water Technology at the University of Peradeniya and eight kidney disease mobile labs to the Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka and launched operations last year.

Numerous batches of medicine worth 58 million yuan donated by China under its 500-million-yuan emergency humanitarian assistance have already arrived in Sri Lanka and greatly relieved the shortage of medicine.

Moreover, China's biggest aid project so far is a new National Hospital OPD Center in Colombo, which can accommodate 6,000 patients daily. It will be opened soon to the people of Sri Lanka.

Next year marks the 10th anniversary of the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative. China is a major trading partner of more than 140 countries and regions. It is the biggest engine

driving the global economy, contributing about 30 percent of the world's annual growth.

The report delivered by General Secretary Xi at the opening session of the 20th National Congress of the CPC has put quality development in a prominent position. High-quality development needs to be achieved in all areas, including on the economic, social, cultural and ecological fronts. The congress clearly announced high-quality development as the foremost task for building a modern socialist country in all aspects.

The convening of the 20th CPC National Congress was of great significance. It came at a crucial time in which the entire Party and Chinese people from all ethnic groups are embarking on a new journey to build a modern socialist country in all respects and achieve the second centenary goal.

As General Secretary Xi said in the report to the 20th CPC National Congress, "China is committed to building a world of lasting peace through dialogue and consultation, a world of universal security through collaboration and shared benefits, a world of common prosperity through mutually beneficial cooperation, an open and inclusive world through exchanges and mutual learning and a clean and beautiful world through green and low-carbon development." ■

Nanjing embraces the world, join hands for a shared future

— Highlights of 2022 Nanjing International Friendship Cities Exchange Week

Liu Xiaomeng Hao Renzhu

With midsummer lotus flowers in full bloom in Nanjing, the opening ceremony of the 2022 Nanjing International Friendship Cities Exchange Week took place on the afternoon of July 5.

Xia Xinmin, deputy secretary of the Nanjing Committee of the Communist Party of China and mayor of Nanjing, along with Sun Yi, director of the Foreign Affairs Office of Jiangsu Provincial People's Government, attended the ceremony and delivered speeches.

Nearly 50 guests from friendship cities, foreign embassies and consulates, and foreign business associations from 20 countries participated online, including the charge d'affaires of the embassy of Brunei Darussalam in China; the minister of the embassy of the Republic of Seychelles in China; counsellor of the embassy of Nepal in China and consuls general of the UK, Australia, Iran, Pakistan and Austria in Shanghai.

Also attending the conference online were the governor of Khentii Province, Mongolia; the mayor of

Birmingham, England; the mayor of Victoria, Seychelles; the mayor of Melbourne, Australia; and the CEO of Lahore, Pakistan.

Under the theme "Embrace the World for a Shared Future", online and offline guests renewed friendships and cooperation, witnessed the moment as the number of Nanjing's international friendship cities exceeded 100 and wrote a new chapter of cooperation, friendship and progress.

Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu province, is an important central city in the eastern region of China and a mega-city in the Yangtze River Delta. It boasts both a classical heritage and modern industries. With mountains, rivers, forests and urban area as an integral whole, the city is advancing with innovation and openness.

At present, Nanjing is striving to build itself into a hub of international exchanges, building the city brand of "Fascinating Nanjing" and drawing a new picture of urban development. The 2022 Nanjing International Friend-

ship Cities Exchange Week is a timely event that conveys the common aspiration of Nanjing and its international partners for a shared future and demonstrates Nanjing's spirit of openness and inclusiveness.

Expanding circle of friends

In the process of building Nanjing into a hub for international exchanges, the city's international friendship cities have been playing the role of bridges, becoming an important platform for Nanjing to drive the process of opening-up and development to a higher level, as well as to expand international cooperation.

Since the establishment of the first international friendship city relationship in Jiangsu in 1978, Nanjing has actively set up multilateral and bilateral cooperation mechanisms to accelerate the expansion of its international circle of friends. In recent years, Nanjing has earnestly implemented President Xi Jinping's diplomatic thought and his important arrangements for friendship city work. Focusing on the Belt and Road Initiative and

the industrial upgrading of new areas and free trade zones and the needs of economic and social development, Nanjing has constantly consolidated bonds with old friends and actively made new friends.

At the opening ceremony of the 2022 Nanjing International Friendship Cities Exchange Week, Xia Xinmin, deputy secretary of the Nanjing Committee of the Communist Party of China and mayor of Nanjing, signed online the agreements on establishing friendship city relationships with Tsendjav Chogsomjav, governor of Mongolia's Khentii province, and Maureen Cornish, mayor of Birmingham, England.

Letters of intent and memorandums of understanding to establish friendship city relations were signed online with Muhammad Usman, CEO of the Municipality of Lahore,

Pakistan, and David Andre, mayor of Victoria, Seychelles.

So far, the number of Nanjing's international friendship cities at all levels has increased to 101, with its overseas circle of friends covering 54 countries on five continents. The level of internationalization of Nanjing has been continuously raised, and the quality of foreign economic and trade cooperation has been continuously improved.

From one to 101, Nanjing has marched forward on the way of exchanges with international friendship cities. From bilateral to multilateral relations, from official visits to people-to-people exchanges, Nanjing has gradually established a three-dimensional friendship city network with various highlights.

Overall plans serve the overall

situation. Nanjing has put the planning and promotion of its foreign affairs in the Party's and country's overall framework of foreign relations, and has always taken friendship cities as an important means of developing friendship, exchanges and cooperation with foreign partners. The city has been studying and formulating development plans, strengthening top-level design of friendship cities relations, improving the long-term mechanism for exchanges with these cities and consolidating state-to-state exchanges based on the actual results of the friendship city work.

In recent years, Nanjing has intensified its efforts to promote friendship city work and deeply integrated into the Belt and Road construction. It has established friendly relations with 38 provinces and cities along BRI



Launching of 2022 Nanjing International Friendship Cities Week.

routes. The circle of overseas friends has been continuously expanded, the city's internationalization level been improved. The quality of foreign economic and trade cooperation has also been elevated.

In 2018, witnessed by the two heads of state, Nanjing and Brunei's Bandar Seri Begawan renewed the friendship city agreement, which was included in the joint statement of the two countries. In December 2021, a celebration marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Brunei and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of friendship city relationship between Nanjing and Bandar Seri Begawan was held in Nanjing. Brunei Ambassador to China Pehin Dato Rahman attended the event and expressed his vision of deepening China-Brunei cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative and enhancing friendship between the two cities.

In 2019, Nanjing and Kathmandu, Nepal, formally established friendship city relations, with the heads of state of the two countries as witnesses. After Bandar Seri Begawan, Kathmandu became the second capital city to establish friendship city relations with Nanjing witnessed by state leaders and to be listed in the joint statement between the two countries. In 2022, the Nanjing Foreign Affairs Office and Nanjing School of Administration planned and held a training course for Kathmandu's city government officials, building a bridge of mutual understanding and trust between China and Nepal.

New platforms promote people-to-people exchanges. Nanjing and its

international friendship cities take culture as a bridge and have actively built platforms for exchanges. Through various forms of cultural activities and exhibition venues, Nanjing is telling the stories of friendship cities to its citizens and conveying the voice of Nanjing to the international community.

Activities such as the 40th anniversary of the twinning of Nanjing and Florence, as well as the holding of Latin American and Caribbean Region Day, gave Nanjing citizens opportunities to appreciate unique exotic customs and promote friendship between cities through people-to-people exchanges. Nanjing's International Friendship Park and Friendship City Exhibition Hall display scenery of the world, giving citizens a full view of the foreign friendship cities through a walk in the park.

In addition, by producing and sharing multilingual teaching videos on intangible cultural heritage, as well as acrobatics and folk music programs for Spring Festival, Nanjing has added impetus to the city's distinctive cultural brands for "going global", strengthening people-to-people bonds with friendship cities.

Two-way empowerment yields mutual benefits and win-win cooperation. Nanjing boasts a rich history and now a surge of innovative vitality has appeared. Since the start of reform and opening-up, Nanjing has been at the forefront of Jiangsu's progress, playing an important role in the construction of the Belt and Road and in the whole country's pattern of development.

In recent years, based on its geographical advantages and resource

endowment, Nanjing has established overseas collaborative innovation centers, built a resource sharing information system called Link Nanjing and set up a new platform for innovative cooperation between cities. Nanjing actively participated in international innovation activities and vigorously promoted the implementation of innovation projects. By actively creating an international business environment and strengthening the construction of international talent communities, Nanjing and its friendship cities have laid a solid foundation for innovation cooperation.

Nanjing helped friendship cities during the COVID-19 epidemic for a shared future. After the outbreak, Nanjing practiced the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, actively participated in global cooperation against the epidemic and provided assistance to its international friendship cities, friends and friendly organizations to the best of its ability by sharing epidemic prevention experience, diagnosis and treatment plans.

It also donated epidemic prevention supplies worth more than 13 million yuan to 123 recipients from 42 countries, regions or international organizations. In April 2020, after learning that descendants of John Rabe, who saved 200,000 Chinese lives from Japanese invaders during the Nanjing Massacre, were in urgent need of epidemic prevention supplies, Nanjing promptly raised medicine, masks, protective gear and other epidemic prevention materials and opened logistics and transportation channels at once. With the assistance of the Chinese em-

bassy in Germany, Nanjing sent the wishes of its people to Rabe's descendants as the supplies were readied.

With these practical actions, the city wrote a beautiful story of "helping each other and standing together through thick and thin", and proved that "friendship that defies geographical distance is stronger than metal and stone".

Pooling resources

In recent years, by taking advantage of such platforms as the Pilot Free Trade Zone, the Golden Autumn Economic and Trade Fair and mutual visits, Nanjing has effectively expanded two-way investment and bilateral trade with international friendship cities. Meanwhile, it has explored various forms of "cloud" activities, which have expanded its opening to the outside world. The Nanjing International Friendship Cities Exchange Week provides an excellent platform for economic and trade, innovation and talent exchanges.

During the event, Nanjing held 35 activities around four themes: industry matchmaking/economic cooperation, collaborative innovation/talent cooperation, cultural/people-to-people exchanges and business environment/internationalization. This was designed to serve the State's overall diplomacy and the city's economic and social development and to share development opportunities with foreign friendship cities and explore a new pattern of mutual benefits and win-win outcomes.

"Cloud" activities add impetus to investment promotion. Instead of being hampered by the epidemic, Nanjing

organized cloud investment promotion and provided cloud services, transforming face-to-face meetings into internet connections to ensure that the investment promotion work did not press the pause button during the epidemic prevention and control period.

During Exchange Week, activities such as the Global Investment Promotion Live by Singapore-Nanjing Eco High-Tech Island, the Sino-Swiss Medical Device Enterprise Online Matchmaking Conference, the 2022 International Association of Business Excellence Nanjing Annual Conference and the Nanjing Economic and Technological Development Zone High-Quality Development Cooperation Exchange Conference, opened their doors to the world, helping Nanjing attract investment and blaze a new path for cooperation.

Innovation drives development. Innovation is the primary driving force for development, as well as the key for realization of a better future. Nanjing has been actively engaged in global innovation and established 31 overseas collaborative innovation centers around the world. The Nexstar Nanjing-Melbourne Joint Innovation and Entrepreneurship Activity, the T20 Nanjing-Milan innovation Activity and the Nanjing Overseas Collaborative Innovation Center Exchange Conference gathered the innovation resources of international friendship cities and accelerated Nanjing's integration into emerging global markets.

Nanjing strives to attract talent to build a "talent highland". Talent is the most important resource. Attracting and retaining international high-end

talent is a key part of the city's internationalization. Seizing the opportunity of overseas talent returning to China, the CPC Nanjing Municipal Committee and Nanjing Municipal People's Government have formulated and issued action plans to support overseas talent innovation and entrepreneurship, initiated the construction of the Brain Bay International Talent Community — the first of its kind in China — and created a new policy plateau and the "first stop" for overseas talent to come to Nanjing for development.

To date, Nanjing has set up 12 overseas talent stations around the world, and the Nanjing Conference on International Exchange and Cooperation for Overseas Chinese Professionals has become one of the three top national platforms for exchanges and cooperation for overseas talent. During the 2022 Nanjing International Friendship Cities Exchange Week, activities such as the overseas talent cloud recruitment meetings and round-tables for talent training were held to help attract and train talent in an effort to actively promote the integrated development of universities and local society, and to create an environment for innovation and entrepreneurship in which residents feel safe, adjacent people feel pleasant and people from afar feel attracted.

Joining hands with the world

The 15th Party Congress of CPC Nanjing Municipal Committee put forward the strategic goal of building Nanjing into a center for international exchanges. Giving full play to its resource endowments and unique

brand, Nanjing strives to polish its four business cards — World Historical and Cultural City, UNESCO City of Literature, International City of Peace and World Famous Sports City. Taking the International Friendship Cities Exchange Week as an opportunity, Nanjing has actively expanded its international network and deepened high-quality exchanges.

Facing the world, Nanjing aims to realize internationalization at an accelerated rate. At the opening ceremony of the 2022 Nanjing International Friendship Cities Exchange Week, foreign envoys, international friendship cities' representatives, business associations and other guests from nearly 20 countries on five continents gathered online to renew friendships and discuss cooperation under the theme of "Embrace the World for a Shared Future". At the opening ceremony, 10 cooperation projects were signed, covering various fields such as cultural and people-to-people exchanges, science and innovation and economy and trade.

The Nanjing Municipal People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries signed memorandums on strengthening friendly and cooperative relations with the Brunei Chinese Friendship Association, Nepal Arniko Association and Austria Chinese Relations Promotion Association, giving full play to their respective complementary advantages and seeking win-win cooperation with friendly organizations of countries along the routes of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Nanjing International Chamber of Commerce signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Serbia

Chamber of Commerce and Industry to deepen the ironclad friendship between China and Serbia through economic and trade cooperation. Industrial parks and enterprises in Jiangbei New Area, Jiangning district and Yuhuatai district have signed cooperation agreements with enterprises from the UK, Germany, Pakistan, Thailand and other countries, opening up cooperation channels in such fields as new-energy vehicles, new medicine, life and health and agricultural imports, while injecting new impetus into Nanjing's efforts to promote the high-quality development of industrial chains.

"LINK Nanjing" builds an international exchange and service platform for friendship cities. The cloud platform was launched at the opening ceremony of Nanjing International Friendship Cities Exchange Week. It is intended to play the four roles of external publicity, investment attraction, experience sharing and policy consultation, as well as to provide the best services for Nanjing to deepen cooperation with international partners, and strengthen two-way links and interaction with friendship cities.

Nanjing.ink was initiated to provide free services in policy interpretation, industry research and technical appraisal for overseas enterprises, products, talent, technologies entities interested in developing and investing capital in China. By offering services to attract resources, the platform strives to pool more high-quality resources for Nanjing's economic and social development.

Focusing on the construction of an international exchange hub and vol-

unteer city, the Nanjing Foreign Language Volunteer Service Association has been established, and the "Woodpecker Campaign" for improving the city's international language environment has been launched to spot errors on public signage in Nanjing. The move aims to improve the internationalization level of urban public services and help build a model city of civility.

By recording development through the camera lens, Nanjing has built a bridge of mutual learning between Chinese and foreign cultures. Nanjing International Friendship Cities Exchange Week has opened up a new channel for the city's cultural internationalization.

Photo activities including the Nanjing Akka City Wall Photo Exhibition: Nanjing and York City Walls and Historical Culture Exhibition; Nanjing-Melbourne Fascinating Wetlands; Homeland of Birds International Photography Contest; Fascinating Nanjing; Nanjing —The Past Ten Years; and the Foreign Friends Photography Contest and Exhibition were held to depict the beauty of culture and ecology through the lens and record the development and transition of Nanjing.

The 2022 Nanjing International Friendship Cities Exchange Week is not only a showcase of the achievements of friendship city exchanges but also an important channel to deepen and expand cooperative relations. Nanjing will take this opportunity to deepen its opening to the outside world, actively build itself into a center of international exchanges and join hands with foreign friendship cities to write a new chapter of mutual benefits and win-win progress. ■

Dr David Iancu: Years of burning passion

He Yan

China, a country far away, had always fascinated Tania Iancu. As a child, it was like entering a fantasy world every time her father, Dr David Iancu, opened a box full of Chinese objects.

As if by magic, her father would pull out a gold medal and told her it had been conferred on him by the Chinese army; or a pair of ivory chopsticks and demonstrated how to use them; or a lion-shaped jade seal and taught her to write the Chinese name “Yang Ku”. There were numerous others in the box, each with a vivid story.

During her childhood, China existed only in Tania’s imagination. It was not until 2004, when she was in her 50s, that she was invited to visit China by the Chinese government. She was thrilled that her childhood dream had come true.

At the end of August that year, her three siblings came from Romania, the United States and Canada to join her in Beijing. For two weeks, they visited places where their father had worked.

Tania realized that her father had not been forgotten by the Chinese people and that she had a responsibility to do something. So she spent two years



David Iancu was in China in 1939.

gathering materials and compiling them into a book largely based on his memoirs, *Dr David Iancu: Nine Years on the Battlefields in Spain and China*, which was published in Romania in 2008.

To the Spanish battlefield

“Most of the young people rejoiced at the news of the great October Socialist Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet state,” Tania quoted her father as saying in the book. “Such

a state, they thought, was the way out. So they began to fight for establishment of this social system. It was against this background that my political career began.”

In April 1910 David Iancu was born in Iasi, a cultural city in Romania. His mother was a seamstress and his father a carpenter. In 1929, he was admitted to the College of Iasi Medicine. Eight years later, he received his Doctor of Surgery degree.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out, Iancu joined the International Column with more than 400 native volunteers. In April 1937, they left Bucharest by train. In the meantime, he recounted, “A ship loaded with volunteers supportive of the Spanish Republican Army left the port of Marseille. Although it was not a long trip to Barcelona, an Italian submarine suddenly appeared at sea, and the ship of volunteers was attacked and sunk, drowning almost all aboard. The survivors said they saw a man catch a piece of wood after falling into the sea. Knowing that there was no chance of rescue, the man began to sing the Internationale and continued to sing with all his strength until he drowned. I was deeply moved by their faith in ideals at the end of

their lives.”

A few days after arrival in Paris, Iancu, along with 25 international volunteers, took a train to Lyon and made his way to the small town of Perpignan. On a moonless night, the volunteers took a steep route over the Pyrenees into Spain.

On a train ride through Barcelona, “We were impressed not only by the scenery, but also by the attitude of the local people. Learning that the international volunteers were taking the train through various stations in the Valenciei region, villagers waited for us with baskets of oranges and threw them into the trunk until we reached Albacete.”

Iancu was assigned to the 13th International Column and moved to Andaluzia. “On July 7, 1937, at dawn on the day the Battle of Brunete began, I set out with the attacking troops. ... Under continuous enemy bombardment, the first aid station worked day and night until the front line was temporarily stabilized. We attacked quickly and within days liberated Canada, Vilanueva, Brunete and several other places. However, the troops also suffered heavy losses. The ambulance drivers had the most laborious task. They had to carry the wounded away whether facing bombs or darkness. They even put their hands on the steering wheels and squealed to relieve fatigue.” ...

“In the hilly region of Romanillos, the mountain roads and surrounding barren land were full of stones, large and small. In the middle of summer, the sun was scorching, and the land was boiling hot. The enemy’s fire was

incessant. It occurred to me for a while that it would be better to be the target of one of the enemy’s shells and be killed than to suffer here. Lying in the open ground, I tried to dig a little pit with my hands, at least to protect my head. Then I saw a rabbit running wild in the rain of gunfire for survival. I suddenly came to my senses. From then on, no matter how difficult the situation was, I never thought of dying again.”

Between battles, Iancu learned about the Marco Polo Bridge Incident from *Mundo Obrero*, the official newspaper of the Spanish Communist Party.

“It was a shock to me. I was convinced that a Republican victory was not far off. After the Spanish people’s victory in the struggle against the Franco regime, part of the volunteers of the International column would go to China to support the Chinese people to drive away the Japanese invaders. Of course, I joined the volunteers supportive of China.”

Iancu was transferred to the Eleventh Column Medical Service. The column set out for the battle position of Teruei.

“There were plenty of medical supplies and soju and hot drinks to keep soldiers warm in the cold weather. There was also no shortage of food, butter, milk powder, cocoa and so on, all shipped from the Soviet Union. Sometimes, there was not enough room in the cave, so we put the wounded inside and slept in the snow on the hillside.”

In late December 1938, the fascist army launched a frenzied counterattack. The International column suffered

heavy casualties, and the remaining troops were reorganized into a mixed column, with the Balkan column, led by Polish physician Dr. Szmuel-Moysze Flato and Iancu appointed as chief physician.

Supporting China’s War of Resistance

In early 1939, Iancu retreated with the Balkan column to France and was imprisoned in a concentration camp. In June that year, in response to the call of the British Medical Aid Society for China, Iancu joined the International medical team for China. On Aug 5, he boarded the seagoing ship *Anias* in Liverpool, England. After six weeks’ sailing, the ship reached Hong Kong in mid-September.

“One evening, we were invited to a dinner hosted by Madame Soong Ching-ling. It was the best dinner we’d had since we left Europe. We could talk about all kinds of topics. Also attending the dinner were representatives of the Communist Party of China. We had the opportunity to learn a lot about China, including the reason why Sun Yat-sen’s widow was exiled. Even though she was a member of the Kuomintang Central Committee, she was not allowed to enter mainland China. Through our conversations, we deeply understood her progressive thoughts, felt her deep love for the Chinese people and sincere gratitude to the people of other countries who have supported the Chinese people’s liberation cause.”

The medical team made a detour through Vietnam and arrived in Liu-

zhou on Oct 7, 1939.

“When we arrived in China, especially when passing through Nanning and Liuzhou, we were warmly welcomed by local residents, especially the young people, middle school students and college students. It was beyond words to describe. They showed a revolutionary zest that immediately reminded us of what we had encountered in Spain. Young people sang Chinese and Soviet revolutionary songs and cheered.”

After trekking for days on a makeshift road, the medical team arrived in Tuyunguan, Guiyang, where the Red Cross Society of China was headquartered, in mid-October. A few days later, they were met by Dr Lin Kesheng.

Before long, Iancu led the medical team to the 30th Division of the Kuomintang’s army. Carrying medical supplies, the porters marched hurriedly for nearly two weeks.

“We’d never walked this far. It was very difficult, without corresponding equipment, we wore thick clothes and boots. My feet were worn out and I could hardly walk. Five or six days later, we climbed to the top of a mountain where there were land mines, and we stopped to rest. The interpreter told me that this was once the Soviet Area, after the CPC set out on the Long March, the enemy destroyed it. We saw on the broken walls CPC slogans and posters. I was shocked by what had happened here.”

After a day’s rest, Iancu changed into straw sandals and finally walked to Xiushui, where the headquarters of

the 30th Division was stationed.

In the summer of 1940, Iancu came to Zhou Enlai’s residence in Chongqing, together with Dr Samuel Moses Flato and Dr George Schoen.

“During the conversation, Zhou Enlai persuaded us that even working for the Kuomintang was a valuable support to the Chinese people and that we should learn to cope with all kinds of difficulties and dangers. Similarly, he said, he also had to cope with various new situations, stay in his post and fulfill the tasks assigned by the CPC.”

“Then everyone expressed understanding and agreed with Zhou’s advice. But I said that it was impossible for me to continue working with the Kuomintang reactionaries, and I wanted to hear from leaders of the Romanian Communist Party. So I immediately sent a letter to Moscow, where some of the RCP leaders were.”

“The letter was addressed to C. Doncea, asking him to pass it on to the party leadership. In the letter, I said, ‘It is better to go back to Romania than to work in the reactionary army.’”

In early October of that year, Iancu received a signed reply from Romanian Communist Party General Secretary Draganov, also known as Boris Stefanov. “It is not the time to discuss returning to Romania,” the letter said. “We should respect the arrangements of CPC leadership and continue to support the Chinese people in their fight.”

In September 1940, Iancu served as the chief physician of a troop on the south bank of the Yangtze River in Yichang, Hubei province.

“In the division hospital, we saw

the wounded lying in the yard with snow on their bodies. Some of them were frozen. The straps on the wounds had not been changed for a week. Those who were still breathing were not treated and cared for, and they did not eat regularly. Officers played cards and gambled. Soldiers washed their officers’ clothes. Despite the difficulties, we found a farmer’s house and treated the sick and wounded who were still alive, cleaning and disinfecting their wounds. Together with several soldiers, I made beds out of bamboo, the most common and abundant building material in the Far East. We also bought straw from the farmers and used it to weave mats to cover the poor sick and wounded.”

Early the next year, Iancu was sent to Mengzi, Yunnan province. On the outskirts of town, the medical team found a small building left by Christian missionaries and built a hospital.

Back to Romania

Iancu often went to the city gate of Mengzi to read Chinese briefings. One day, he read in a newspaper that Germany had launched an attack on the Soviet Union. It was June 23, 1941. Two days after the attack, he wrote to the doctors who were working to assist China.

“My comrades and I never expected that the Hitlerites would attack the Soviet Union so deeply and that the war would last so long. It was also my first disappointment with the Soviet Union reality. Through the letter, we discussed and decided to ask the Soviet Red Army to accept us, to defend the

Soviet Union, to destroy fascism, and to liberate our motherland.

“With Zhou Enlai’s approval, a doctor, in the name of all doctors, contacted Alexandr Paniuskin, Soviet ambassador to Chongqing, and submitted a written request to him.”

“Our representative was warmly received by Ambassador Panikuskin, who offered to pass the letter immediately to the Soviet government. We waited patiently, but nothing came back from the embassy. A few weeks later, a reply came from Moscow. Unfortunately, the reply was negative. The Soviet government felt that by working in China we were also supporting the anti-fascist war against Hitler. The Chinese army resisted and contained a large portion of the German and Japanese allied military forces. In addition, Soviet advisers in the Chinese army were not recalled.”

The news of the Red Army’s retreat made Iancu sad. He donated all his savings when international doctors for China raised money for the Defense of the Soviet Union Fund.

Iancu sympathized with the plight of Chinese peasants. “Hard work brought the peasants a good harvest, but most of the harvest had to be handed over to the landowners, leaving little for themselves. A part had to be submitted to the village officials for taxes or to support the army. I saw many peasants, in the middle of winter, didn’t have a grain of rice. They had no choice but to borrow grain from rich farmers or landowners and become borrowers. In order to pay their debts, they became slaves. Because

of this, the death rate of peasants was quite high.”

In early 1942, after the Japanese occupation of Vietnam, China strengthened its border defense. Iancu was assigned to the Mengzi Mountain Unit in Yunnan province.

“I especially liked to talk to some of the older peasants. They liked to talk about their lives and interesting things happening in the village and other places. They were all very hospitable. Sometimes, when we traveled long distances and had no place to spend the night, the people received us warmly despite their poverty. There was no bed, so they took down their front door, put up two stools, and we got out our sleeping bags and the problem was solved. The people had little to eat, but they cooked porridge, baked sweet potatoes and fried peanuts for us, and served us their own home-brewed baijiu (made from grain and tasting like Romanian plum wine).”

Iancu was infected with typhus.

“For more than two weeks I was feverish and delirious. Fortunately, I was well attended by a female Chinese nurse, the right hand of the medical team. Only after I recovered did I learn that the female nurse had sent from far away for Dr Herbert Baer, a German doctor, to treat me two days in a row.”

After the Japanese December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, at the end of 1942, Iancu and 10 other doctors for China flew over the Himalayas on an American transport plane. They served as liaison doctors for Chinese and American Medical Services and fought in the jungles of Burma until the sur-

render of Japan. In the winter of 1946, Iancu returned to Bucharest, nine years after leaving his motherland.

Time flies. In 2015 — the 70th anniversary of victory of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression — the author of this article was invited by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries to meet David Iancu’s second daughter, Tania Iancu, and his third daughter, Nadia Iancu.

Tania was an architect in Bucharest and Nadia was from Canada. The sisters were well-bred and the elder was refined. The two sisters followed each other like shadows. Whatever the elder sister said, the younger would answer. It was so much fun!

Luo Dongquan, vice-president of the China-Romania Friendship Association, was one of the four Chinese officials who accompanied them. We went to Guiyang to attend the commemoration of International Medical Aid to China and had a good time together.

Recently, Luo Dongquan completed the translation of David Iancu’s memoirs. It fills gaps in relevant information and also provided great help for the writing of this article.

There is a Romanian proverb: “When the water goes, the stone stays.” Tania’s childhood box filled with Chinese objects will be displayed in front of the Chinese people. Tania was deeply moved and gratified by the Chinese people’s appreciation of the international medical aid to China. In her heart, China, a magical land, was a second home to her father. ■