

Build a New Bridge of China-Ecuador Friendship and Cooperation

Xi Jinping

President of the People's Republic of China

At the invitation of President Rafael Correa, I will pay a state visit to Ecuador, the first visit by a Chinese President to Ecuador since our two countries established diplomatic ties. I will bring with me the good will of the Chinese people and their best wishes for an ever-growing bilateral relationship, and I hope my visit will help build a new bridge of friendship and cooperation connecting our two countries.

Ecuador will be the first stop of my upcoming trip to Latin America. The alluring "Republic of the Equator" is famous for its majestic Andes Mountains, vast and enigmatic Amazon rainforest, mesmerizing Pacific coast rich in natural resources, and the living museum of evolution of life, the Galapagos Islands. Living in harmony with nature, the Ecuadorian people work hard in pursuit of a better life. And the country is making robust progress in its development.

As a Chinese saying goes, "Even mountains and seas cannot distance people with common aspirations." China and Ecuador share a close bond of friendship despite the long distance between us. Last April, when Ecuador was hit by a strong earthquake, the deeply sympathetic Chinese government and people rushed to the aid of the Ecuadorian government and people. Chinese companies and Chinese communities in Ecuador stood shoulder to shoulder with the local people in the rescue and relief operations, writing a new chapter of China-Ecuador friendship.

I am glad to learn that ECU911, the public security services system equipped and built by Chinese companies, played a vital role in the rescue and relief efforts. As the command and control center, ECU911 effectively processed a massive amount of information and sent instructions without delay, thus saving numerous lives and preventing further damage. As Ecuador's sincere friend, China will take an active part in post-disaster reconstruction and help people in quake-hit areas rebuild their homes and get their life back to normal at an early date.

Both China and Ecuador are developing countries with similar historical experience and shared development goals. Over the past 36 years since our two countries established diplomatic relations, we have forged deep political trust and friendship through mutual understanding, mutual support and mutual assistance. China firmly supports Ecuadorian people in exploring a development path suited to their national conditions. It also supports Ecuador in diversifying its economy and playing an active role in regional and international affairs.

China views and grows its relations with Ecuador from a strategic and long-term perspective. In January 2015, President Rafael Correa and I announced the establishment of a strategic partnership between the two countries, giving a fresh and strong boost to our political trust and strategic cooperation. Since then, we have carried out fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation across the board featuring more dimensions, wider areas and larger scales.

Trade ties continue to grow rapidly, with China becoming Ecuador's third largest trading partner. Two-way trade reached US\$ 4.1 billion in 2015, quadrupling in just ten years and promising huge, untapped potential. In addition to high-quality Ecuadorian bananas and prawns that have already entered the Chinese market, we look forward to having more local specialties and high value-added products from Ecuador to increase variety in the Chinese market.

Investment and financing cooperation is growing exponentially. Ecuador is a top destination for Chinese investment and financing in Latin America. Chinese investment and financing in Ecuador

has exceeded US\$10 billion, supporting several hundred projects including major infrastructure projects such as the Coca Codo Sinclair hydropower plant, seven other hydropower plants and a dozen highways. Once up and running, these projects will equip Ecuador with a powerful locomotive and engine to propel its development further. We appreciate Ecuador's trust in Chinese companies, equipment and technologies.

People-to-people and cultural exchange has been vibrant, as evidenced by the growing interactions and cooperation in culture, education, health, sports and justice. We have presented cultural performances and exhibitions in each other's countries. Such showcase of each other's cultural essence has been warmly welcomed by our people. As a result, more and more Chinese tourists aspire for opportunities to visit Ecuador.

High-tech cooperation is another highlight of our bilateral cooperation. In 2013, Pegaso nanosatellite was successfully launched aboard a Chinese rocket. China is heartily glad about being able to help Ecuador realize its satellite dream. Having learned from its own development experience that science and technology is a primary source of productivity, China understands Ecuador's pursuit of prosperity through advance in science and technology. It has offered support with concrete actions, including by sending eight scientists to participate in the Prometheus program, opening a joint research lab in the Yachayi intelligence city, and holding the meeting of China-Ecuador Mixed Commission of Scientific and Technological Cooperation and the China-CELAC Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation.

Our friendship is also reflected in productive multilateral coordination. China commends Ecuador's commitment to an independent foreign policy of peace and to upholding justice in defiance of power politics. China appreciates its cooperation with Ecuador on major international issues such as UN reform, climate change and sustainable development, and applauds Ecuador's active efforts, in its capacity as CELAC rotating presidency and a member of Quartet, to promote the development of China-CELAC Forum and the overall cooperation between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries.

China-Ecuador relations enjoy solid political trust, converging interests and broad space for cooperation. With all these favorable conditions, our strategic partnership is poised to grow in an all-round way. I look forward to having in-depth exchanges with President Correa and friends from various sectors of Ecuador to take China-Ecuador relations to a new height.

We shall be good partners treating each other with sincerity and trust. Our two sides need to look at and promote bilateral relations from a strategic height, keep to the right direction of development and ensure sustained, sound and steady growth of the relations. On issues concerning each other's core interests and major concerns, our two sides need to understand and firmly support each other and safeguard the right to independent development.

We shall be good partners for common development. Development is what matters. China is implementing its 13th Five-Year Plan while Ecuador is advancing its National Development Plan (2013-2017). We need to seek complementarity between our respective development strategies and between our industrial chains, and deepen and upgrade practical cooperation in wider areas. China will carry out production capacity cooperation with Ecuador, increase technology transfer, and help Ecuador build greater capacity of independent development.

We shall be good partners enjoying ever-lasting friendship. Both China and Ecuador boast fine cultural heritage. We need to facilitate personnel flows in both directions and expand exchange in culture, education, health, sports, tourism, media and justice to cement popular support for bilateral ties. The future belongs to the young people. We need to prioritize youth exchanges and make sure that China-Ecuador friendship will be carried forward from generation to generation.

We shall be good partners for South-South cooperation. The world is undergoing profound and complex changes. Developing countries, China and Ecuador included, need to step up cooperation and jointly rise to challenges. China congratulates Ecuador on its forthcoming

chairmanship of Group of 77 in 2017. Our two sides need to maintain close communication and collaboration, coordinate positions on major international and regional issues, and jointly safeguard the interests of developing countries. China will work with Ecuador and other Latin American and Caribbean countries to further develop China-CELAC Forum and expand China's cooperation with the region.

Another Chinese saying reads, "When brothers come together, there is nothing they cannot achieve." In the new circumstances, China will join hands with Ecuador to build a strong bridge for our two peoples to scale up friendly exchange and take our relations to a higher level.

(Source: People's Daily)