

Forge ahead into the future for progress and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific

Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of China
At Session I of the 24th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting

Lima, 20 November 2016

Your Excellency President Kuczynski,
Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to join you here in the beautiful city of Lima for a discussion on the important subject of Asia-Pacific cooperation. I wish to start by expressing my sincere appreciation to President Kuczynski and the government of Peru for their preparation for this meeting. We expect this meeting to contribute to enhanced Asia-Pacific cooperation.

Currently, the world economy still finds itself in profound adjustment, with weak recovery and more divergent growth. Economic globalization has encountered setbacks, as evidenced by sluggish international trade and investment and rising protectionism. At the G20 Hangzhou Summit last September, the blueprint for strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive world economic growth was drawn. It embodies the spirit of partnership to jointly rise to challenges as well as the commitment to common development. As an important arena of the world economy, the Asia-Pacific is home to infinite hopes and also shoulders major responsibilities. APEC is a pioneer, leader and trailblazer of economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and the world at large, playing an important role in the economic development of the Asia-Pacific and beyond. Faced with new circumstances and challenges, we need to take vigorous measures, leverage the role of the Asia-Pacific as a growth engine and work for an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive world economy.

First, we need to stay committed to taking economic globalization forward. Now that economic globalization has entered a phase of adjustment, some people have become skeptical and others more hesitant. However, one ought to recognize that economic globalization represents the general trend of our times, as it meets the need for progress in productivity and serves the interests of all. Instead of coming to a stop because of the temporary difficulties, we need to continue our involvement in economic globalization. What is important is to combine it with our respective development practices, strive to ensure equity and justice, and steer it towards a more inclusive and mutually beneficial direction. We need to make it clear to the world with action that the commitment of the Asia-Pacific to economic globalization is unchanged and its confidence undiminished.

History has proven that protectionism will get nowhere. Eight years ago, at the critical juncture of our response to the international financial crisis, APEC leaders expressed in Lima their unanimous opposition to protectionism. Two years ago, we in Beijing solemnly reaffirmed our standstill commitment on protectionist measures. At this crucial stage of Asia-Pacific development, we need to work together for win-win outcomes, oppose all forms of protectionism and inject positive energy into economic globalization.

Second, we need to stay committed to increasing openness in the Asia-Pacific economy. Openness is the driving force for growth in the Asia-Pacific. We need to support the multilateral trading regime, prioritize trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and reinvigorate trade and investment. We need to effectively address the fragmentation of regional trade agreements, advocate openness and inclusiveness, and avoid close-door policy and exclusiveness.

Two years ago in Beijing, we launched the process to build a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP). With the concerted efforts of various parties, the collective strategic study has been smoothly completed this year, marking a new phase in FTAAP development. To build the FTAAP

will never be an easy task. It requires long-term efforts. We need to stick to our agenda and take more effective actions to realize the FTAAP at an early date, thus bringing about an Asia-Pacific economy with greater openness.

Third, we need to stay committed to breaking bottlenecks in regional connectivity. According to traditional Chinese medicine, pain is relieved with improved blood circulation. Connectivity will ensure smooth flow of blood in the Asia-Pacific economy. We need to take more collective and individual actions to implement the Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025 adopted in Beijing and promote connectivity in infrastructure, institutions and personnel flows. We need to have a multi-dimensional connectivity network and build a well-connected Asia-Pacific community.

China is making progress with the Belt and Road initiative. Featuring extensive consultation, joint participation and shared benefits among partners in the region, this initiative will contribute to enhanced connectivity in the Asia-Pacific. China will seek synergy in development strategies and cooperation initiatives with relevant parties so as to realize common development.

Fourth, we need to stay committed to blazing new trails in reform and innovation. Reform and innovation is vital for sustained prosperity. We need to prioritize reform and innovation, advance economic structural reform, and create impetus for the Asia-Pacific to lead the world economy. Targeted and effective measures are required to address crucial issues. We need to implement the Services Competitiveness Roadmap and deepen cooperation in the service sector to make up for this long-standing inadequacy. We need to seize opportunities in the new round of technological and industrial revolution and develop new growth areas in the internet and digital economy, blue economy and green economy.

Thanks to the strong support of member economies, the first APEC High-Level Urbanization Forum was successfully held in Ningbo, China, last June and adopted the Ningbo Initiative, charting the course for a new type of urbanization in the Asia-Pacific.

Colleagues,

Over the past 25 years since it joined the APEC, China has given priority to opening up to the Asia-Pacific. As the 2020 deadline of Bogor Goals draws near, we need to be more forward-looking in our cooperation and build consensus for a cooperation vision with a longer time frame. With a focus on development, China will work with other parties to increase openness, pursue regional economic integration and connectivity, advance reform and innovation, and jointly write an exciting chapter of Asia-Pacific cooperation.

Let us deepen Asia-Pacific partnership, pursue win-win cooperation and prosperity through openness and connectivity, and keep forging ahead to create an even brighter future for our region.

Thank you.

(Source: People's Daily)