

Lima meeting will generate more action on Asia-Pacific cooperation

By Zhong Sheng from People's Daily

Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend the 24th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Lima, Peru from November 19 to 20, a meeting that comes on the 25th anniversary of China's accession into APEC. Over the past 25 years, China has grown as an important leader in APEC cooperation.

Looking back at the ties between China and APEC over the last 25 years, there are three moments that are endowed with symbolic significance.

1991 marked China's official accession to APEC, after which the country sped up its integration into the Asia-Pacific region and international systems.

In 2001, China, for the first time, hosted the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting as a presidency. Then, it was the largest and most high level international meeting China had hosted since its founding.

The 9th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting held in Shanghai also brought unprecedented attention for China. A report from the Australian APEC Study Centre lauded "The story of APEC is the story of the rise of Asia. And today that is the story of the rise of China".

In 2014, Beijing became the second Chinese city to host APEC meetings, during which transitional, historical and ground-breaking outcomes were achieved. During this summit, APEC agreed to build the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), pointed out a growth path of innovation and reform and enacted the APEC Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025.

Even though APEC members agreed to mark FTAAP construction as a long-term vision in 2006, substantial progress was not made on the agreement for several years. Thanks to China's promotion, all economies at the 2014 Beijing summit finally adopted the Beijing Roadmap for APEC's Contribution to the Realization of the FTAAP, agreeing to build FTAAP as soon as possible based on existing free trade arrangements after completing the collective strategic studies.

As a major step for realization of FTAAP, the collective strategy studies have made fundamental progress, and policy suggestions drawn from the study are expected to be submitted during the Lima meeting.

FTAAP construction will raise regional economic integration to a new level and bring extensive

benefits to the economies on both coasts of the Pacific. A report from the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) indicated that the FTAAP will boost the world economy with a generous gift of \$2.4 trillion if it is to be completed by 2025.

China has made great contributions to Asia-Pacific development and APEC construction in the past 25 years. Evidence shows that the international community's attitude toward China's performance in APEC has shifted from doubts at the very beginning to today's acknowledgement and admiration.

Both APEC and China have undergone earth-shaking changes in terms of size and influence. The young APEC 25 years ago has grown into the highest-level and most influential economic cooperation mechanism with the widest coverage in the Asia-Pacific region, while China has developed from an explorer in the path of Asia-Pacific economic cooperation to an important propeller and leader in regional economic integration.

Though many changes have occurred, some things remain unchanged. APEC still carries a mission to lead, coordinate and promote regional and global development, while China has been pursuing an open, inclusive, win-win cooperation with other Asia-Pacific economies based on its reform and opening-up policy.

Thanks to China's efforts as a host, the recently-concluded G20 Hangzhou Summit reached consensus on boosting the world economy and depicted a splendid blueprint toward an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive economy. This consensus shares the same participle with China's goal to deepen pragmatic cooperation and achieve common development with other APEC members.

Whatever the occasion or platform, China will always spur development of other partners by its own development, in a bid to inject faith and catalyst in the economic development and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and even the world.

It still takes several steps to get there no matter how near a place, and it takes real action to finish the work no matter how small the task. More effort is needed to implement the APEC spirit of the Beijing summit as well as the consensus reached during the G20 Hangzhou Summit.

As the Lima meeting draws near, the world expects APEC to act as pioneer, leader and forerunner in Asia-Pacific and global cooperation. China, upholding the ideals of win-win cooperation and a community of common destiny, will encourage stakeholders to make decisive calls and down to earth action.