

Working Together to Build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

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Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Heads of International Organizations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

In this lovely early summer when everything is full of life, I wish to welcome all of you, distinguished guests representing over 100 countries, to Beijing to attend this important forum on the Belt and Road Initiative. Today we witness a gathering of great minds. I hope that by pooling our collective wisdom and engaging in open discussion, we will further develop the Belt and Road Initiative, one of this century's most significant projects, so that it will bring benefit to people across the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

Over 2,000 years ago, our ancestors, trekking across vast deserts and open plains, opened the Silk Road, a transcontinental passage connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa. Our ancestors, navigating rough seas, opened up a maritime Silk Road of sea routes linking the East with the West. These ancient silk routes opened windows of

friendly engagement among nations, adding a new chapter to the history of human progress. The thousand-year-old "gilt bronze silkworm" displayed at China's Shaanxi History Museum and the Belitung shipwreck discovered in Indonesia bear witness to this period in history.

Spanning thousands of miles and years, the ancient silk routes embody a spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit; this spirit has become a valued legacy of human civilization.

- Peace and cooperation. In around 140 BCE during China's Han Dynasty, royal emissary Zhang Qian, left the Han capital of Chang'an. He and his retinue traveled westward on a mission of peace and opened an overland route linking the East and the West, a daring undertaking which came to be known as Zhang Qian's journey to the Western Regions. Centuries later, in the years of the Tang, Song, and Yuan dynasties, both land and sea silk routes burgeoned, with great adventurers such as China's Du Huan, Italy's Marco Polo, and Morocco's Ibn Batutah, leaving