



CHINA • YUNNAN



CHINA FOCUS

Xi: Global community should respect voice of developing world

The international community should respect and reflect the will of the people from developing countries as human rights are formulated, President Xi Jinping said, adding that establishing human rights worldwide cannot be achieved without the joint efforts of developing countries.

Xi's comments were made in a congratulatory message to the South-South Human Rights Forum, which opened in Beijing on Thursday.

The two-day forum was convened for the first time and focused on the establishment of human rights for people in developing countries.

More than 300 delegates from over 70 countries and international organizations attended the forum, themed "Building a Community of Shared Future for Human Beings: New Opportunity



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi addresses the opening ceremony of the South-South Human Rights Forum in Beijing, capital of China, Dec. 7, 2017. (Xinhua Photo)

for South-South Human Rights Development".

People in developing countries, more than 80 percent of the world population, have made significant contributions to the development of

human rights, Xi said.

Human rights can and must be promoted only in light of specific national conditions and people's needs, Xi said, calling on developing countries to uphold both

the universality and specifics of human rights and steadily raise the level of human rights protection.

The Chinese people stand ready to work with people in other developing

countries and beyond to advance development through cooperation, promote human rights through development and build a community with a shared future, the president said.

Xi's message read that following a people-centered development philosophy, the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government have always placed people's interests above all else and worked hard to meet people's desire for a better life and improve respect for and protection of the fundamental rights of the Chinese people.

The development blueprint outlined at the 19th CPC National Congress will give a strong boost to human rights development in China and make new and even greater contributions to the progress of mankind, according to the message.

(China Daily)

TRAVEL

China-Asean touring rally reaches Vientiane, promotes tourism

The 2017 China-ASEAN International Touring Assembly, also the China-ASEAN Journalists Rally arrived in Vientiane, Laos on December 13, to promote tourism.

Participants and staff of the touring rally visited famous scenic spots including Pha That Luang and the Triumphal Arch. Walking along the streets of Vientiane, one can see Chinese tourists speaking in different dialects. Therefore, there are also Chinese restaurants, sign in Mandarin and tour guides speaking Chinese everywhere.

"The number of Chinese tourists to Laos this year almost doubled over last year to reach 800,000." Lao tour guide Mone said in fluent Chinese. More and more Chinese folks traveling to Laos are also driving economic growth in the country.

Lu Yiwen, head of the touring rally, met with the leading official from the Lao sports authority and introduced tourism resources in Guangxi. This is the 11th rally to Laos since its inception in 2006, said Lu Yiwen. The rally has greatly enhanced the friendship between the two countries and intensified bilateral exchanges and cooperative efforts in tourism, trade and other fields.

The 18-day rally will travel to ten ASEAN countries, covering some 10,000 kilometres.

(By Lin Xin)

COOPERATION

China, Laos expected to further cooperate in finance

The 2017 Boao Forum for Entrepreneurs was held December 12 in Boao, south China's Hainan Province. Yao Bin, chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Laos and the Lao Kritaphong Group, said the two countries should follow up and accelerate their shared strategic cooperation in their financial sector in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative.

"The financial industry is underdeveloped in Laos, with inadequate strength and few products. It is mainly restricted to loans. The financial services currently available cannot meet the financing needs of Lao enterprises," Yao Bin explained.

In 2016, Yao's company obtained support from Chinese banks. Its diplomatic compound project got the first ever non-financially guaranteed loan from the ICBC branch in Vientiane. Meanwhile, the Yunnan branch of China Credit

Insurance provided a loan guarantee. Collectively, these loans totaled 50 million US dollars, a case showing how Lao businesses can obtain Chinese financial support.

"The golden period for the rapid development of the Lao economy has come. Strategic cooperation between Laos and China in the financial field should also be ready to help the country seize new opportunities," he said.

In order to speed up bilateral financial endeavors, Yao Bin put forward some specific proposals. First, he said a unified liquidation and settlement system between commercial banks in Laos should be established. Second, he argued, standards and institutional mechanisms for Belt and Road credit ratings should be set forth. His final idea was to build a market system for international bonds along the Belt and Road.

(Xinhua)

CONNECTIVITY

Flights from Lijiang to Kuala Lumpur take to the air

Hu Xiaorong

Lucky Air had its first international flight between Lijiang and Kuala Lumpur December 12. It is the fourth international route that Lijiang airport has opened this year, following others to Seoul, Singapore and Bangkok.

The flights to Kuala Lumpur will be flown by A320s every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Flight 8L839, from Lijiang to Kuala Lumpur, departs at 10:15am and arrives at 2:25pm. Flight 8L840, from Kuala Lumpur to Lijiang, departs at 3:30pm and arrives at 7:30pm.

After the opening of the Lijiang to Kuala Lumpur route, travellers from Lijiang and surrounding areas can reach Malaysia's capital in four hours. The flights will be a much faster option compared with previous transit flights via Kunming, Bangkok or Chiang Mai.

NEWS IN PICTURE



Lancang-Mekong arts festival held in south Yunnan

Artists perform at the 2017 Culture and Arts Festival of Countries in the Lancang-Mekong River Basin which opened in Xishuangbanna, the southernmost part of Yunnan Province on Dec.12. (Photo by Dai Zhenhua)



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CHINA • YUNNAN



LMC

China, Mekong countries to deepen cooperation

Senior foreign affairs officials from China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam on Friday agreed to deepen pragmatic cooperation to benefit their people.

At the third Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) foreign ministers' meeting held in Dali, southwest China's Yunnan Province, they decided to implement the consensus reached by their leaders to promote more cooperative projects and build a community with a shared future of peace and prosperity among Lancang-Mekong countries.

The Lancang-Mekong River is a natural link between the six countries.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn co-chaired the meeting. Lao Foreign Minister Saleumxay Kommasith, Union Minister for International Cooperation of Myanmar U Kyaw Tin, Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai and Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Binh Minh attended the meeting.

The foreign affairs officials congratulated on the progress made in some key areas including connectivity, industry capacity, cross-border economic cooperation, water resources, agriculture and poverty reduction.

They agreed that LMC has evolved from its nurturing period into the growing period, and all member countries should make greater efforts to advance economic and social development, and narrow development gap, and support the ASEAN community



Foreign ministers from China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam pose for a group photo during the third Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) foreign ministers' meeting in Dali, southwest China's Yunnan Province, Dec. 15, 2017. (Xinhua Photo)

building.

They agreed to synergize LMC with the development strategies of each member country, the Belt and Road Initiative and the relevant development programs of ASEAN.

(Xinhua)

INTERVIEW:

Yunnan is gateway of LMC

"Yunnan Province is the gateway to countries in the Mekong sub-region as it borders most Mekong countries. It is a perfect province of China which would work closely with the Mekong countries," said Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR.

Saleumxay said this at an interview with Yunnan

reporters at the backdrop of the 3rd Lancang-Mekong Cooperation foreign ministers' meeting in Dali, Yunnan Province.

GATEWAY is the word Saleumxay mentioned most frequently in the interview. "Economically, Yunnan is a big market for Laos and other Mekong countries, and because of its proximity to the area Yunnan can provide a connectivity hub for Mekong countries to connect with other provinces in China."

Yunnan is a beautiful place. "Since the plane was about to land, I observed the magnificent scenery of Dali: blue sky, mountain and the beautiful Er'hai Lake, which are combinations of everything that every city in the world would like to have," said Saleumxay.

He added Laos has a lot of tourists coming from China, particularly from Yunnan Province, and a number of Lao tourists also visit Yunnan to enjoy the beautiful sceneries in Dali, Kunming, Jinghong.

"In the framework of Lancang-Mekong Cooperation, education is one of the area that Mekong countries and China will continue to expand."

Saleumxay said around 1,000 Lao students are studying in Yunnan, adding China helps improve health-care services and hospital facilities in Laos and other Mekong countries.

"I am sure that there will be a number of areas of cooperation between Yunnan cities/prefectures and Lao provinces."

(By Zhang Ruogu Han Chengyuan)

FURTHER READING

Belt & Road changes in the eyes of Lao people

As the Belt and Road Initiative progresses, more and more Chinese tourists and investors choose to travel and spend money in Laos. "Infrastructure in Laos has been greatly improved over the years," said a Lao tour guide surnamed Mone.

Chinese elements are visible in Laos. Along both sides of the road from the airport to the downtown area, one can see many Chinese-language billboards. To better serve Chinese tourists, many Lao tour guides can speak good Chinese. Chinese restaurants are also commonplace and cater to tourists from different places in China.

"In the past, Chinese-language tour guides could hardly find clients. But look at the street now -- Chinese tourists are everywhere," said Mone. Only a few years ago, there were very few Chinese groups traveling in Laos, but now there are dozens every day.

Laos is an important country along the Belt and Road, and has an increasingly close relationship with China. At present, there are around 70 flights between the two countries every week. According to the data from the travel company Ctrip, the number of Chinese tourists going to Laos increased ten times between 2016 and 2017.

Investment from Chinese enterprises in Laos is also ex-

panding steadily. As a result, learning Chinese has become popular amongst Lao business-people. A professor with the Chinese Language Department of Lao National University said there are 250 Chinese majors now, a substantial increase from just ten students a decade ago. "Speaking good Chinese now means good jobs here in Laos." Students majoring in Chinese can choose to work at Chinese companies or as translators and tour guides.

Currently, China has become Laos' largest source of foreign investment and second largest trade partner. Chinese investments in Laos cover mining, hydropower, finance, as well as the development of shopping centres and special economic zones.

At the same time, important infrastructure projects created by the Belt and Road Initiative, such as the China-Laos Railway, are under construction. According to current plans, the railway will be completed by 2021. Mountainous Laos will grow from a landlocked country to a land-linked one.

(Lin Xin, China News)



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NEIGHBOUR

Laos welcomes investment by Yunnan enterprises

Liu Ziyu

The Promotion Session of Investment Projects in Laos was held in Kunming December 9, as a sideline of the Second China-ASEAN Entrepreneurs Forum. Lao representatives explained the current investment environment in their country and invited Chinese enterprises, especially those from Yunnan, to invest.

According to Oudet Souwannawong, president of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Laos enjoys rich natural re-

sources and sound political and social institutions. China is now the largest nation in terms of investment in Laos. Yunnan enjoys geographical proximity to ASEAN countries, and therefore is faced with many opportunities to invest in Laos.

Agriculture represents great investment potential, and Yunnan enterprises have invested in rubber and fruit plantations. "Vegetables from Yunnan are exported to Malaysia and Singapore."

Tee Chee Seng, general manager of an economic devel-

opment park said that the park is willing to provide customs and logistics services for Yunnan businesses so as to send vegetables from Yunnan to the table of more overseas consumers.

Tee Chee Seng said, for example, that Yunnan can choose to process its products in Laos and then sell them in Thailand, all with preferential tariffs. Currently, the economic zone has already established relations with the Chinese province of Guangxi, and is also ready to cooperate with Yunnan to expand to markets in Vietnam,

Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and others.

According to Inthy Deuansavanh, chairman of Inthira Group, young tourists from China are very interested in the natural attractions of Laos. Cooperative efforts between Laos and China in tourism are promising. At the promotion, Luangpaseuth Group briefed a tourism project based in Namtha Province in the hopes of attracting investment from Yunnan.

Mr. Khamphone Vongsanty, Consul General of Laos in Kunming, attended the event and delivered a speech.

NEWS IN PICTURE

Winter cherry blooms in Yunnan



At the beginning of December, Cherry Valley in the Wuliang Mountains of Nanjian Yi Autonomous County is filled with an atmosphere like early spring. The 133-hectare valley features tea plantations and winter cherry blossoms. It has attracted many visitors in recent years.

(Photo by Shi Zhihong)