



CHINA • YUNNAN



REPORTER'S OBSERVATION

7th China-S and SE Asia Think Tank Forum held in Kunming

Editor's Note: On June 12th, the 7th China-South and Southeast Asia Think Tank Forum was held in Kunming. Over the past seven years, it has become an important way for think tanks in

China to strengthen multi-party dialogues and carry out cooperative decision-making consultations with similar counterparts in South and Southeast Asian countries. This issue will provide a

glimpse of the forum, so you can understand more about China's cooperation with South and Southeast Asia from the perspective of think tank experts.

The 7th China-South and Southeast Asia Think Tank Forum opened in Kunming on June 12th. Over the past seven years, the forum has become the most important event in connecting China (Yunnan) and South and Southeast Asian countries. It has the largest number of participants, covers the widest range of topics and yields the most fruitful results.

The forum was held with the theme of "Join Hands for a Shared Future—Construction of a Community of Shared Future for China and South and Southeast Asia". It celebrates the idea and consensus and actively integrating into the open world economy while pragmatically promoting mutual exchanges and cooperation.

The 200-plus participants from 19 countries are representatives of important think tanks in various countries, as well as highly influential experts in the field of research and decision-making consultation. The forum attracted think tank experts from Australia, New Zealand and Germany. At the inaugural ceremony of the Centre for Pakistan Studies, Chinese (Kunming) Academy of South and Southeast Asian Studies, Muhammad Tipu, Pakistani Consul Gen-



The inauguration ceremony of Centre for Pakistan Studies, Chinese (Kunming) Academy of South and Southeast Asian Studies held during the think tank forum

eral to Chengdu, described the centre as a flagship cooperation project. It will facilitate the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, he said.

The forum's keywords include "community of shared future for mankind", "Belt and Road Initiative", "connectivity in five aspects", "economic corridor" and "poverty eradication". The forum focuses on five key areas, namely, sub-regional cooperation and economic corridor construction, cultural exchanges and people-to-people connectivity, cooperation between China and the Indian Ocean region, open development

and experience sharing, and building Yunnan into a pivot of China's opening up to Southeast and South Asia. These areas not only cover sub-regional cooperation, economic corridor construction, economic and trade cooperation, cultural exchanges and people-to-people connectivity, but also involve previously unexplored topics such as mutual opening between China and South and Southeast Asia, poverty eradication, cross-border security, media cooperation, water resource management, ethnicities and religions, 5G technology and artificial intelligence.

The forum, at which 123

experts delivered speeches, also received more than 100 submitted research papers. These papers cover all key areas and hot issues concerning practical cooperative strategies between China and South and Southeast Asia. They also pointed out the problems faced by such cooperation, as well as the assistance needed, while discussing associated prospects and common goals.

The forum commended ten of the research papers for the first time. The organizers will compile and publish a collection of the research papers so the public can learn more about the forum.

VIEWPOINT

He Zukun: Think tanks are important forces for B&R building

The 7th China-South and Southeast Asia Think Tank Forum kicked off in Kunming on June 12th. At the opening ceremony, He Zukun, dean of the Yunnan Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, delivered a keynote speech entitled *Think Tanks Are Important Forces for Building the Belt and Road*. Focusing on how think tanks should promote and implement the results of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, He raised four questions that aroused attention and resonated with the gathered think tank experts and scholars.

Firstly, according to He Zukun, we should make building the Belt and Road an important practical platform for creating a community of shared future for mankind, while showing the direction forward for promoting pragmatic cooperation between China and South and Southeast Asia. We should aim high and look far while building the Belt and Road. In a study of the Belt and Road Initiative, the most fundamental question for think tanks is to look at the initiative correctly. This is also the basic premise of interpreting and studying the initiative. Facts have proved that the Belt and Road Initiative has been proposed for the sake of the world, as well as the common development of all countries.

Secondly, we should jointly study in depth the major practical issues concerning the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative in South and Southeast Asia. This is accomplished partly by providing ideas for promoting pragmatic cooperation between China and South and Southeast Asia. For example, in the building of the Belt and Road, we should study how to achieve common high-quality development, enhance connectivity and facilitate the creation of an economic corridor in the region.

Thirdly, we should jointly study the important issues of cooperation mechanisms and platform construction, and propose pragmatic rules and standards for promoting the

building of a community with shared future between China and South and Southeast Asia. We should bring into play the role of various nations, companies, industry associations and other entities in order to strengthen cooperation in terms of research and applications of technical standards among the involved countries. For example, for the key areas of cooperation between China and South and Southeast Asia, we should promote mutual recognition of industry standards.



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Fourthly, we should jointly explore ways to enhance people-to-people bonds and strengthen popular support for pragmatically promoting the building of a community with shared future for China and South and Southeast Asia. We should seek to further improve the level of these people-to-people exchanges, while actively building a bridge for mutual learning among different civilizations. This can be accomplished by strengthening exchanges and cooperation in various fields such as think tanks, press, education, culture, technology, sports, tourism and health. Finally, we should strive to eliminate examples of past estrangements due to misunderstandings, misinterpretations and misjudgments, and write more exciting stories for the Silk Road.

VOICE

Impressive results of sub-forums

The 7th China-South and Southeast Asia Think Tank Forum consists of five sub-forums. These concern sub-regional cooperation and economic corridor construction, cultural exchanges and people-to-people bonds, cooperation between China and the Indian Ocean region, open development and experience sharing, and building Yunnan into a pivot of China's opening up to South and Southeast Asia.

Professor Lee Laito of Mae Fah Luang University in Chiang Rai, Thailand, reported the results of the sub-forum on sub-regional cooperation and economic corridor construction. He said, Yunnan is actively engaged in building the Belt and Road. While improving the "hardware" of connectivity across five aspects, the province should pay more attention to the "software" by increasing pragmatic coopera-



International scholars on the think tank forum

tion with ASEAN nations and those in South Asia. He described the China-Laos Economic Corridor, by turning Laos from a landlocked country into a land-linked country, has benefited the Lao people.

Ma Jiali, director and senior professor of the Center for International Strategic Studies, China Reform Forum, reported the results of the sub-forum on cultural exchanges and

people-to-people bonds. "I have participated in the China-South and Southeast Asia Think Tank Forum since its first session. Seven years on, the forum has achieved a lot in terms of promoting cultural exchanges and people-to-people bonds," Ma said.

Ren Jia, counselor of the Yunnan provincial government, and former dean and researcher at the Yunnan Academy of So-

cial Sciences, reported the results of the sub-forum on cooperation between China and the Indian Ocean region. Among the 19 scholars who spoke, some innovatively observed the governance of India from the perspective of the Indian election, which is worth learning from. Meanwhile, they shared their insights on the restoration and protection of cultural monuments after the earthquake in Nepal.

Cheng Mingyu, director of the Center for Strategic Studies on the Belt and Road Initiative at the Malaysian University of Tunku Abdul Rahman, reported the results of the sub-forum on open development and experience sharing. "In the present digital era, e-commerce can help us better integrate. China's 5G technology and artificial intelligence can help us make greater progress," he said.



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