

Chair's Statement
of the Sub-National Cooperation Thematic Forum
of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

Beijing, 18 October 2023

On 18 October 2023, the Sub-National Cooperation Thematic Forum was held in Beijing during the 3rd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Hosted jointly by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the People's Government of Beijing Municipality, the Thematic Forum welcomed the participation of officials of 34 provinces and municipalities and representatives of 43 friendly organizations from 19 countries.

Focusing on the theme "Sub-national Cooperation for Common Development", the participants had friendly and in-depth discussions and reached extensive consensus on conducting friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation among local governments under the Belt and Road Initiative and on global development issues of common interest.

Commending the fruitful achievements made by the Chinese and foreign local governments in forging friendship city ties, people-to-people exchanges and economic and trade cooperation since the launch of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF), the participants agreed that the Sub-National Cooperation Thematic Forum, which brought tangible benefits to the peoples of the countries involved, has become one of the most dynamic and influential activities under the BRF.

Participants agreed that the Belt and Road Initiative, which follows the historical trend of economic globalization, aims to enhance connectivity and common prosperity of the world and promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. In the past 10 years, the Initiative has demonstrated strong resilience and vitality, continuously providing new opportunities and impetus for the development of the countries involved, and has become a widely welcomed international public good and a platform for international cooperation.

Participants agreed that localities and the people are where the friendship is rooted. Local governments, friendship cities in particular, are important participants and beneficiaries of the high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and also the mainstay for enhancing people-to-people bonds of the countries involved. It is of great significance for the Chinese side to actively respond to the urgent call of local governments across the world for deepening mutually beneficial cooperation and stepping up common development, by setting up the Sub-National Cooperation Thematic Forum as a multilateral cooperation platform.

Participants expressed their willingness to take this event as an opportunity to maintain dialogues and cooperation based on the Silk Road spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit, and work together to translate the friendship among local governments, friendship cities in particular, into fruitful outcomes to benefit the peoples. To this end, we propose the following:

First, adhere to the people-centered philosophy of development. We will promote humanity's common values of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom, focusing on the well-being and common

interests of peoples of all countries. We will advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation to achieve more deliverables that could better benefit the people, so as to make local governments' due contribution in safeguarding world peace, enhancing common development and promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Second, enhance both the quantity and quality of local cooperation. We will actively promote the establishment of more partnerships among local governments based on complimentary strengths and industrial linkages. We will further utilize the complementary of local industrial structure and resources, and prioritise areas such as poverty alleviation and development, urban governance, digital economy, green innovative development and capacity building, to achieve win-win cooperation and common development.

Third, continuously deepen people-to-people and cultural exchanges. We will further promote exchanges and cooperation among local governments in areas such as culture, education, tourism, youth and public health, enhance mutual learning between different civilizations, and serve as a bridge and tie to enhance mutual understanding, friendship, trust and affinity among peoples of all countries so as to consistently expand and consolidate the interest basis and public support for bilateral relations.

Participants expressed their appreciation to the hosts for their contributions in organizing a successful forum, and stood ready to continue to support further augmentation of this platform as an institutionalized mechanism.