

The 13th China-South Asia Business Forum

Theme: "Shaping Future Together --- Industrial Cooperation of Mutual Opening

(China and South Asia countries work together to share information and open market to each other, focus on industrial cooperation to create a better development and future for China and South Asia.)

Speech by Ms. Bhawani Rana

President,

Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI),

at the 13th China-South Asia Business Forum

on June 14, 2018, Wyndham Hall, Hotel Wyndham Grand Plaza Royale Colorful Yunnan
Kunming, People's Republic of China

Chair of the Ceremony Mr. M. Ismail Ghazanfar, Vice Chairman of Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce & Industries,

His Excellency Humayoon Rasaw, Minister of Ministry of Commerce of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,

Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry,

Distinguished Leaders and Government Officials from China

Mr. Zhang Wei, Vice Chairman of CCPIT

Distinguished Leaders of SAARC CCI

Distinguished leaders and officials of the CCPIT

Distinguished Business Leaders from South Asia and China,

Friends from media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon!

It is indeed a great honor for me to address such a distinguished audience at the 13th meeting of China South Asia Business Forum. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the organizers of this meeting namely Government of Yunnan Province, CCPIT and SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the warm hospitality.

In this era of globalization, cooperation rather than competition is emerging as a key component to move in line with global economic order. In order to reap maximum benefit together from the dynamism of economic activities, we need to forge closer ties through cultural and people to people exchanges. Another way of shaping future engaging youths through exchange programmes between nations and extend cooperation in education, science and technology, culture and tourism that can be linked from China to South Asian nations.

The path is clear to make all related individuals winners. Reaping synergies between the nation's economic activities is the most beneficial and peaceful way of socio-economic development, whereas nations co-exist being complementary to each other, creating unity in diversity which can be intensified through Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) initiated by China.

Increasing deepened connectivity through BRI in addressing development challenges is what Chinese policy makers are looking for that helps China and South Asia countries to work together to share information and open market to each other, focus on industrial cooperation to create a better development and future for China and South Asia.

The meeting theme of "Shaping Future Together – Industrial Cooperation of Mutual Opening" is that all South Asian Countries need to work in deeper understanding to exchange goods and services between nations that give additional compliments to our emerging nations in South Asia as whole.

If we compare the growth of China and India, India's growth is going to registered 7.3 in 2018 end from earlier 6.8 per cent while China's growth rate is expected to stand at 6.2 per cent, according to the OECD 2018 economic outlook report. In this context, China's initiative through BRI is a stimulus to the South Asia countries and other 60 plus countries across the world. It can be termed as a key component to move on industrial cooperation together through connectivity and partnership in a new millennium.

We need to be more proactive through partnership in creating new opportunities and improving ways of doing business, in order to shape the future of humanity based on sharing of prosperity. In this context, the opening of markets for each other is the key towards the path of peaceful development.

South Asia, as a region, is a significant market on its own. But, despite its potential, the region is still struggling to pickup economically, due to lack of sufficient infrastructure development, connectivity and economic and financial integration. Lack of policy harmonization, among the nations, is another hindrance to the actual integration of SAARC as an economic group.

South Asian countries have tremendous potential which need to be tapped, and move forward with a shared vision, working jointly for the inclusive growth of the region. SAARC region, with its more than 1.7 billion people which is 21% of the world population, boasts of more than US\$9.9 trillion of per purchasing power parity GDP, and the inherent capacity to become a formidable and economic powerhouse.

We, SAARC countries, endowed with both natural and human resources are blessed with vibrant youth population. We need to reap our demographic dividends and resources for our advantage. We need a collective effort and enduring partnership to convert our resources into wealth for mutual benefit. Shared prosperity must be our common objective and strategic goal.

In order to achieve this, one important area to be focused is the industrial cooperation among SAARC nations, as well as with China. Emphasis is needed on increasing intra-regional flow of funds for investment, as well as deepening of trade synergies among SAARC countries. It is equally important opening of markets so that free flow of investment, technology, goods, services, human resources, and movement of people in general, could take place.

In order to drive the regional economic growth, regular contacts among the private sector through platforms such as: SAARC Business Conclaves and China-South Asia Business Forum has become of paramount importance.

I am delighted and confident that there will be a good sharing of experiences, knowledge, perspectives for way forward, for unleashing shared prosperity through economic integration and industrial cooperation.

In order to broaden the economic engagement between SAARC countries and China, FNCCI is ready as ever to provide complete support and remain fully committed towards fulfilling its role for this vital purpose. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), forwarded by China, embodies the spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit, as the four guiding principles.

On May 12, 2017, Nepal has formally become a partner in BRI. As a landlocked country that aspires to become a land-linked country, Nepal's top priority is connectivity, not only physical connectivity but connectivity through information highways/resource mobilization with a new vigor that helps to motive private sector investments.

Along with the opportunities arising out of BRI, most of the South Asian nations such as Nepal, face new challenges, mostly in its lack of competitive strength, investment capacity, and small production base, and supply side constraints. Nepal needs investment in industries which can utilize the newly opened vistas of connectivity. Having already signed bilateral transit agreement with China, Nepal expects to have market access to around 70 countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt and The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

The surge in inbound tourism, and investment in tourism infrastructure, will create new jobs in service industry sectors. We need to attract investment and joint co-operations in areas such as, urban and infrastructure development, energy, agro-processing industries and manufacturing sectors, and innovative areas of production. I, on behalf of FNCCI and private sector of Nepal, take this opportunity to invite all fellow businessmen and investors present here to invest in this country of unexplored opportunities.

It is need of the hour to access funding and financing from OBOR related financing institutions such as: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Silk Road Fund, China Development Bank, EXIM of China, and New Development Bank, along with financing from various multilateral financing institutions, in projects that will boost industrialization of this region.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize here that it is high time we work together with trade and investment partners, so as to create win-win situation, in the spirit of mutual learning and shared prosperity. Concerted efforts are needed for 'free and fair trade', and for flow of investment. An open, fair and nondiscriminatory multilateral trading system is crucial to cope with the challenges and to promote investment, providing meaningful and substantive market access opportunities as well as enhancing productive capacities.

I would also like to inform here that starting June 19, Rt. Honourable Prime Minister of Nepal Mr K P Sharma Oli is visiting China. During the visit, we have planned to hold meeting between two countries' business delegates and discuss important investment and trade potentials in the presence of Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister.

Before concluding, I would like to express once again my deep appreciation to the organizers of this important meeting for giving me valuable opportunity to express a few words. I believe that the ideas shared and networks established from this meeting will help to chart out our shared future, with the help of opening up new markets and industrial cooperation.

Thank you.

In Solidarity!