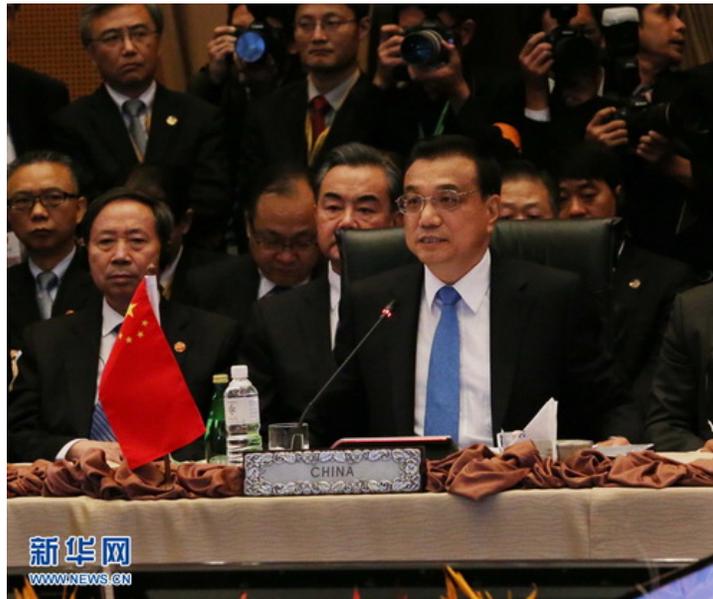


## Remarks by H.E. Li Keqiang Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China At the 18th China-ASEAN Summit

2015/11/22



Kuala Lumpur, 21 November 2015

Prime Minister Najib,  
Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to meet you again this time in Kuala Lumpur. I wish to thank Prime Minister Najib and the Malaysian government for the thoughtful arrangements. I look forward to further deepening China-ASEAN friendship and cooperation through this meeting, and I am ready to have in-depth exchange of views with you.

China and ASEAN countries are good neighbors enjoying geographical proximity and cultural affinity. We are also good partners pursuing common development through close collaboration. Our dialogue relations have traveled an extraordinary journey since they were established 24 years ago. It is heartening to see growing mutual political trust and deepening practical cooperation between the two sides over these 24 years. In recent years, we have accelerated the building of the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, implemented the 2+7 cooperation framework, and forged a sound momentum of China-ASEAN relations featuring shared future, integrated interests and close emotional bond. Our relations have gone far beyond the bilateral scope to become a major cornerstone underpinning peace, stability and development in East Asia.

Steady progress has been made in China-ASEAN relations since we met last year. We have completed our consultations on the *Action Plan to Implement the Joint Declaration on China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity 2016-2020*, held events under the China-ASEAN Year of Maritime Cooperation, and hosted in China the first informal meeting of China-ASEAN defense ministers as well as the first Ministerial Dialogue on Law-Enforcement and Security Cooperation. Despite sluggish growth in global trade, our two-way trade reached 379.2 billion US dollars in the first ten months of this year. Stock investment in both ways has exceeded 150 billion US dollars, and more than 180,000 of our students have studied in each other's countries. Tourist flows between the two sides is expected to top 20 million by the end of this year. And thanks to the joint efforts of China, ASEAN countries and others, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will soon be up and running. All these developments have added fresh impetus and new dimension to China-ASEAN relations.

We are happy to see that the ASEAN Community will soon be launched. It will be a milestone in the ASEAN integration process and will mark a new level of cooperation in our region. China has always regarded ASEAN as a priority in its neighborhood diplomacy. We firmly support ASEAN's integration and community-building efforts, and support ASEAN centrality in regional cooperation. Next year will mark the 25th anniversary of our dialogue relations. China stands ready to work with ASEAN countries to strengthen political mutual trust, deepen practical cooperation in business, culture and other fields, and strive for a closer China-ASEAN community of shared future. This will open up even brighter prospects of peace, stability, development and prosperity for our region.

Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation and thanks to Thailand, the previous country coordinator for China-ASEAN relations, for its contribution to promoting all-round friendship and cooperation between China and ASEAN. China looks forward to working with Singapore, the new country coordinator, to make new progress in China-ASEAN relations.

Dear Colleagues,

Next year will be the 25th anniversary of dialogue relations and also the first year of a new five-year action plan for our strategic partnership. At this important juncture, it is necessary for us to draw experience and inspirations from past cooperation and chart the course for our future relations.

**– We need to enhance political mutual trust in order to strengthen the foundation for cooperation.** Political trust is as important to China-ASEAN relations as a root to a tree: the deeper the root goes, the stronger the tree will grow. As neighbors, China and ASEAN countries are as close as lips and teeth. We must treat each other with respect and as equals. Peaceful development and harmonious coexistence serves our common interests. As we all believe, a peaceful and stable environment is the prerequisite for regional prosperity. We need to work together to make sure that this consensus of ours stand the test of history and practical circumstances, and serve as the basis for further deepening trust between us.

**– We need to promote integrated development in order to achieve common prosperity and win-win cooperation.** China and ASEAN countries have our respective development strengths and, as such, could complement each other well. Our combined GDP is close to 13 trillion US dollars, or nearly 60% of Asia's total. Our trade, investment and industrial cooperation has become ever closer, making our interests inseparable and interdependent. The establishment of the China-ASEAN FTA has lent new impetus to our common development. It also serves as a fine example of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation among developing countries.

**– We need to expand common interests and seek common ground while setting aside differences in order to narrow differences.** Despite different national conditions, China and ASEAN countries are equally committed to economic development and betterment of people's lives. None of us want to see the sound development momentum at home or in the region be put in jeopardy. It is only natural that differences may arise in state-to-state interactions. What is crucial is to recognize that our common interests far outweigh our differences, and that we could properly manage and handle such differences. Through centuries of cultural and people-to-people exchanges, countries in East Asia have developed the wisdom and the time-honored tradition of seeking common ground and setting aside differences through dialogue and consultation. For China-ASEAN cooperation to sustain and succeed, we should skillfully use our traditional wisdom of harmony in diversity and resolving differences through peaceful means, and promote inclusiveness, mutual learning and win-win cooperation.

In the early 15th century, Zheng He (or Cheng Ho), a famous Chinese navigator, led the world's largest fleet on seven expeditions to the Western Seas. He passed through the Malacca Strait five times, and went as far as reaching the shores of over 30 countries and regions in Asia and Africa. Instead of blood and fire, plundering and colonialism, he brought with him Chinese porcelain, silk and tea as well as friendship and goodwill from the Chinese people. Since then, for six hundred years until today, this stretch of water has always enjoyed peace, stability and freedom of navigation.

In recent years, the question of the South China Sea, a dispute that should be resolved by countries directly concerned through negotiation and consultation, has been played up and described as an issue of peace, stability and navigational freedom. Some countries from outside the region have even taken a high profile in their intervention in the South China Sea. China sees this as doing no good to anyone. Now that global economic recovery remains difficult, East Asia is regarded as one engine driving global growth. Should regional hot-spot issues get prominent and become the source of tension, it will affect the expectation of investors and of people both within and outside the region. The fact is that freedom of navigation enjoyed by countries in the South China Sea in accordance with international law has never run into problem, and that peace and stability in the South China Sea needs to be upheld by all sides working for peace together.

China is committed to the peaceful settlement of the South China Sea dispute through negotiation and consultation. The DOC signed in 2002 made important contribution to ensure peace in the South China Sea over the last decade. The parties should continue to fully and effectively implement the DOC, resolve disputes through negotiation, manage differences in a constructive manner, increase political mutual trust, and deepen practical maritime cooperation. China will work with ASEAN countries to strive for an early conclusion of a COC on the basis of consensus. Together with our ASEAN friends, we have the confidence to make the South China Sea a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation for the benefit of all countries in the region.

Dear Colleagues,

Right now, the world economy as a whole lacks momentum in recovery. While East Asia continues to lead the world in growth, it also faces considerable downward pressure. Both China and ASEAN countries are now at a crucial stage of development. It is imperative that we deepen our cooperation to boost development at home. China is formulating its 13th Five-Year Plan. To achieve the general goal of building China into a country of moderate prosperity in all

respects, we will adopt a new development approach featuring innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development. This will offer new opportunities of development cooperation with both our neighbors and countries around the world. On ASEAN's part, the ASEAN Community will soon be built, and the pressing task is to expedite development and raise people's livelihood. In the coming five years, China will work with the ten ASEAN countries to seize the rare opportunity and synergize our development strategies. In so doing, we could reach an even higher level of development, attain the goal of completing the East Asia Economic Community by 2020, and promote enduring peace and prosperity in East Asia. With this in mind, I wish to make the following proposals:

**First, we need to further strengthen institution-building for China-ASEAN cooperation.** To advance our cooperation on a mature track, we need to implement well the third five-year action plan and the 2+7 cooperation framework and ensure the success of the commemorative summit for the 25th anniversary of China-ASEAN dialogue relations next year. Earlier this month, the first Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting was successfully held in China. The LMC process it has launched will complement and work in tandem with existing sub-regional mechanisms and play an active part in promoting overall development of the sub-region and regional cooperation in East Asia. To support ASEAN community-building, China will scale up grant assistance to less-developed ASEAN members and support ASEAN in narrowing the development gap among its members. China will also continue discussion with ASEAN to explore the signing of a treaty of good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation. This will provide the legal guarantee for the long-term development of our relations, and will send a positive signal to the world that development in the region is stable and foreseeable.

**Second, we need to upgrade our economic and trade cooperation at a faster pace.** We need to move speedily to deliver outcomes in our negotiations for an upgraded China-ASEAN FTA, improve trade facilitation through simplified customs procedures, upgraded Rules of Origin and improved operational procedures, and strive to bring our two-way trade to one trillion US dollars by 2020. We need to deepen cooperation on investment promotion and facilitation, create a stable, favorable and transparent business environment, expand trade in services, and carry out economic and technological cooperation in agriculture, fishery, forestry and other fields. We need to speed up and conclude as early as possible RCEP negotiations to lay the groundwork for a better regional FTA system and ultimately achieve regional economic integration.

**Third, we need to synergize China's Belt and Road Initiative with the development strategies of other countries in the region.** While advancing the Belt and Road Initiative, China wishes to fully harness the China-ASEAN Connectivity Cooperation Committee, and take an active part in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. Land connection is the foundation of overall connectivity. We should promote the Pan-Asia railway links and strive to begin construction for such major projects as China-Thailand and China-Laos railways within this year. It is our hope that a trilateral transport facilitation agreement with Laos and Thailand will be signed as soon as possible, and we are ready to discuss a transportation facilitation agreement with ASEAN. Information connectivity is also a major part. China is ready to set up with ASEAN a cooperative mechanism among our Computer Emergency Response Teams and jointly develop the China-ASEAN Information Port. We may make full use of such platforms as the AIIB, the Silk Road Fund and the China-ASEAN Investment Cooperation Fund. China will set aside 10 billion US dollars for phase II of the China-ASEAN special infrastructure loan to finance relevant projects.

**Fourth, we need to explore global cooperation on production capacity.** Most ASEAN countries are pursuing industrialization and urbanization, which will generate strong demand for infrastructure and manufacturing capacity. China has a complete industrial system, offers quality and relatively low-cost equipment and products, and is strong in engineering construction and supporting services. It is well-positioned to support ASEAN countries in building infrastructure and upgrading equipment manufacturing. We may give full play to our respective strengths, and promote production capacity cooperation in infrastructure, construction machinery, electricity, construction materials, communications, industrial parks and other fields. In pursuing such win-win cooperation, the government may provide a platform while the market may play a leading role with the participation of the private sector. China wishes to make ASEAN countries important partners of production capacity cooperation, and explore with ASEAN countries concrete cooperation in the time to come.

**Fifth, we need to jointly elevate our security cooperation.** Security cooperation is imperative for both sides to meet global challenges. It is also an important way to enhance mutual trust. China hopes to see the current informal defense ministers' meeting being institutionalized at an early date, and wishes to explore with ASEAN a direct line between our defense authorities. We may step up cooperation in non-traditional security fields such as cross-border crime, counter-terrorism and disaster management. China proposes that the China-ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Law-Enforcement and Security Cooperation be institutionalized. Discussion may be held regarding setting up a China-ASEAN law-enforcement academy in due course. China will be happy to provide 2,000 training opportunities for law-enforcement agencies of ASEAN countries in the next five years.

**Sixth, we need to promote sustainable development in the region.** The China-ASEAN Year of Maritime Cooperation gives us an opportunity to further advance maritime cooperation. China suggests that the Forum on Maritime Science and Technology and Environment Protection between China and Southeast Asian countries be held on a regular basis, and efforts be made to build a China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Center. China will host the first China-ASEAN Agricultural Cooperation Forum next year. We will strengthen cooperation with ASEAN on agricultural capacity-building to jointly safeguard regional food security. We also hope that the two sides will adopt the *China-ASEAN Strategy on Environmental Cooperation 2016-2020*, set up a platform to share environmental information, explore a China-ASEAN partnership for ecologically friendly urban development, and jointly pursue green development.

People-to-people exchange and cultural cooperation helps cement public support to take our relations forward. It is incumbent upon us to carry forward the long tradition of friendship and cooperation, and advance practical cooperation in education, science, technology, culture, health, youth, tourism and the media. We have agreed that the year 2016 will be the China-ASEAN Year of Education Exchange, and China proposes the holding of a second Education Ministers' Roundtable Conference under its framework. In the next three years, China will increase the number of government scholarships for ASEAN countries by 1,000 on the basis of existing scholarships. The two sides may jointly support building a China-ASEAN College of Marine Sciences. China wishes

to establish with ASEAN countries an exchange mechanism between our tourism departments. China proposes the holding of the first China-ASEAN Health Cooperation Forum next year.

Dear Colleagues,

China-ASEAN cooperation faces broad prospects and rare opportunities. Given the global economic challenges and grave counter-terrorism situation, it is important for China and ASEAN countries to work together and send a powerful message to the world that we will jointly uphold regional peace and stability and promote economic growth. China will continue to live in harmony with ASEAN countries, promote our common prosperity, and make new contribution to peace and development in East Asia and the world at large.

Thank you.

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