

*The second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation continued on April 27 at Yanqi Lake International Convention Center with a roundtable discussion by the heads of delegations.*

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev delivered a speech at the event.

“Issues of international and regional connectivity have always been pressing for Central Asia, including our country that has no direct access to seaports. Uzbekistan supported the Belt and Road Initiative from the start, the implementation of which is an important factor in sustainable development of our countries”, – Shavkat Mirziyoyev said.

The President of Uzbekistan welcomed the adoption of the Joint Communiqué of the roundtable discussion and expressed confidence that promoting regional cooperation will actively contribute to the achievement of common goals, will open up new sources of economic growth, and ultimately boost the living standards of peoples of the region’s countries.

The President forwarded a number of initiatives to uplift the transport and logistics potential of Central Asia, provide for food security through green economy, shore up tourism, jointly address environmental problems and other pressing issues.

The significance of disclosure of the transit potential of the Central Asian region and development of an economic corridor China – Central Asia – West Asia was noted. Great prospects here open up with the launch of the motor passageway Tashkent – Andijan – Osh – Irkeshtam – Kashgar. Uzbekistan – Kyrgyzstan – China and Mazar-i-Sharif – Kabul – Peshawar railway projects are of strategic importance. It also seems economically feasible to establish a through tariff for rail transportation along the route Ports of the Yellow Sea – Central Asia – Europe.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev drew attention to the development of green economy and introduction of cutting-edge technologies and advanced solutions aimed at achieving food security in agriculture.

Noting that overcoming the adverse environmental consequences of the desiccation of the Aral Sea is a common task, Shavkat Mirziyoyev invited parties to join in the activities of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as in creating a zone of environmental innovation and technology in the Aral region.

Distinct proposals for promoting tourist exchange and contemplating joint programs and products under the brand “Silk Road” were voiced.

Uzbekistan’s President also expounded on Afghanistan. Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted in particular that the establishment of peace in that country would contribute not only to its economic recovery, but also help generate new sources of growth in Central and South Asian region. The Head of the state pointed out that these and other related issues will be discussed at the next Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) this fall in Tashkent.

“Our historical and cultural heritage, similarity of objectives and challenges we face, as well as the unity of our aspirations allow us to look to the future with optimism. Ultimately, our peoples should truly feel the positive effects of our joint efforts”, – Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted.

The Uzbek President’s vision and initiatives received remarkable attention and interest among the audience.

Issues of development of land and sea routes, opening major economic corridors aimed at expanding trade relations and mechanisms of interstate cooperation were discussed at the forum. It was noted that this requires the integration of transport, logistics, energy and telecommunications infrastructures, the coordination of macroeconomic policies, the elimination of barriers to trade and investment, the strengthening of industrial cooperation.

As it was noted, the format of joint consultations, joint building and joint use on the path to creating a common economic space has been established in Belt and Road project. The basis of this initiative is openness, the search for new sources of long-term development using a green economy and innovation, the joint implementation of major infrastructure projects.

It was noted that expanding access to foreign markets, strengthening international cooperation in intellectual property protection, increasing exports of goods and services, improving macroeconomic policy coordination contribute to accelerating the global economic process.

From Eurasia to Africa, America and Oceania, jointly building the Belt and Road opened up new space for the growth of the global economy, created a new platform for international trade and investment, expanded new practical activities to improve global economic governance, contributed to an increase in welfare of peoples of different countries. Belt and Road has become a common path to new opportunities and prosperity.

At the media briefing, the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping noted that leaders of participating countries and international organizations held in-depth discussions on boosting connectivity to explore new sources of growth, building closer partnerships and promoting implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Extensive consensus was reached on promoting high quality Belt and Road cooperation. The leader's views are reflected in the Joint Communiqué adopted by consensus at the leader's roundtable. It covers a number of projects that will be jointly implemented within the framework of Belt and Road cooperation. The leaders shared the view that Belt and Road cooperation has created opportunities for common prosperity. "We enriched the Concept of Belt and Road cooperation and jointly reaffirmed our commitment to its high quality development. Interested countries are welcome to join us", said Xi Jinping.

It was emphasized that heads of state set clear priorities for Belt and Road cooperation and decided to strengthen all-round and multilateral cooperation, continue to promote land, sea and air connectivity, develop high quality, sustainable, affordable, inclusive and accessible infrastructure, as well as advance the development of economic corridors and economic trade cooperation zones. Enterprises are the main players in this process. This will make the projects more sustainable and create fair environment for foreign investors.

A total of 283 practical outcomes were reached, including both governmental cooperation agreements and initiatives, during the preparatory process and the holding of the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Business representatives signed project cooperation agreements worth over 64 billion US dollars. All of this shows that Belt and Road cooperation is in sync with the times, widely supported, people-centered and beneficial to all.

Thereupon, the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation has ended.

*(Source: UzA)*