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Pre-recorded Keynote Speech

***Forum on China-ASEAN Technology Transfer and Collaborative Innovation
(FCATTCI)***

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to speak at the *Forum on China-ASEAN Technology Transfer and Collaborative Innovation*. I extend my sincere congratulations to the Government of the People's Republic of China for hosting this significant and timely event. Today, science, technology, and innovation (STI) are pivotal drivers of economic growth and development. They fuel breakthroughs across industries, enhancing connectivity, productivity, efficiency, and global competitiveness. Investments in STI elevate economies' global value chain participation, attracting cutting-edge technologies, top-tier talent, and high-tech industries. Focusing strategically on STI ensures our position at the forefront of global markets and secures sustained economic progress in a rapidly changing world.

China's rise as a high-tech superpower is one of the most transformative developments of recent decades. By leveraging its vast human resources, enabling policy frameworks, and extensive investments in R&D, China has emerged as a leader in fields like 5G technology, biotechnology, renewable energy, and quantum computing. This technological prowess has fueled the next phase of China's economic development, propelling it beyond the role of the world's manufacturing hub into a leader in advanced technologies, and also reshaping the contours of international trade, investment, and technological cooperation.

ASEAN countries are also positioning themselves to build innovation-driven economies. With over 60% of the population under 35, ASEAN has a vast reservoir of young, tech-savvy, and entrepreneurial talent. This dynamic workforce, coupled with our integration into global supply chains, solidifies ASEAN as a vital hub for global trade and a prime destination for investment. Recognizing innovation's transformative power, ASEAN governments are prioritizing STI in their development strategies, fostering innovation-friendly environments through policy support, infrastructure development, technology transfer, and collaborative innovation systems.

Hence, this Forum is particularly timely as it seeks to advance Science, Technology, and Innovation exchanges and technology transfer under the ASEAN-China Plan of Action 2021-2025. It aligns with the recent commitment from the 12th ASEAN-China Joint STI Committee Meeting to strengthen research and development cooperation among our nations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The imperative to advance ASEAN-China technology transfer and collaborative innovation is rooted in our economic interdependence. China and ASEAN are each other's largest trading partners, with trade volume reaching USD 911.7 billion. This mutually beneficial relationship is projected to continue its upward trajectory, with growth forecasts of 4.6% in 2024 and 4.7% in 2025 for ASEAN and 5 percent in 2024 and 4.5 percent in 2025 for China.

This positive outlook underscores the need to intensify economic exchanges and collaboration, including in technology transfer. Expanding these initiatives will help us capitalize on emerging technologies and create new growth avenues, ensuring our partnership remains at the forefront of global innovation and economic development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

ASEAN and China have developed a structured framework for STI collaboration, including scientific exchanges, joint research initiatives, and technological partnerships. This approach has fostered innovative solutions aligned with our unique needs through effective technology transfer.

This year, we've made significant progress by shortlisting five areas of cooperation under the inaugural ASEAN-China Joint Research Projects. Initiatives like the China-ASEAN Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition and the ASEAN-China Workshop on Building Human Capital in Technology Transfer and Commercialization have also been implemented.

To unlock the full potential for STI collaboration, we must establish robust mechanisms for seamless technology and expertise exchange. Developing technology parks, incubators, and innovation centers, and fostering business partnerships between ASEAN and China are key steps. At the recent 12th ASEAN-China Joint STI Committee Meeting, the proposal of creating a dedicated fund for STI cooperation was discussed. If realized, this fund would be a crucial enabler for STEM initiatives and enhance meaningful people-to-people exchanges between ASEAN and China.

Another area of importance to ASEAN and China is supply chain resiliency. As we increasingly prioritize the de-carbonization of supply chains, there is significant potential for both ASEAN and China to collaborate in developing innovative technologies that support these sustainability goals. For instance, we could jointly advance technologies that enable companies to integrate waste into their supply chains, thereby reducing reliance on landfills and fostering a circular economy.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lastly, I would like to emphasize two pivotal areas where our collaboration could make a significant impact: harnessing innovation to drive sustainability and advancing artificial intelligence (AI). China now boasts some of the world's most advanced AI technologies, driven by a robust eco-system of research, development, and application across various industries. In clean energy, China is a dominant force, leading in the production and deployment of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power. Most notably, China has emerged as the global leader in the electric vehicle market, spearheading the global transition towards a more sustainable and technologically advanced future.

ASEAN is committed to these transformative sectors as well. For AI, the recent ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science, Technology, and Innovation (AMMSTI) endorsed a Ministerial Statement on AI, aiming to boost regional prosperity. Projections suggest that AI could potentially boost the ASEAN economy by 10 to 18%, or approximately USD 1 trillion, by 2030. The focus on AI is demonstrated in the Forum's side event dedicated to AI Cooperation with ASEAN.

Given this dynamic backdrop, I am pleased to note that China and ASEAN are now exploring new STI cooperation areas, especially emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), clean energy, electric vehicles, and the blue economy. Deepening collaboration in these fields will significantly advance our shared goals of innovation and sustainability.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The synergy between economic growth, sustainable development, and STI creates a powerful feedback loop. Economic growth drives STI investment, leading to innovations that spur further economic activity. Simultaneously, STI enables sustainable solutions, supporting long-term environmental health and resource availability. This dynamic interplay ensures that economic, environmental, and social progress reinforce each other.

I hope this Forum will continue to harness these synergies and lay the foundation for key initiatives that bring ASEAN and China closer together. Let us foster greater cooperation in technology transfer and innovation and build a sustainable future for our region in the spirit of friendship and cooperation.

Thank you.
