

# Integrating Into “the Belt and Road Initiative” Deeply to Promote the High-Quality Development of “Maritime Silk Road” Core Area

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**Abstract**—In recent years, as the core area of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Fujian has made great achievements in promoting infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade and people-to-people bond. In the new era, Fujian should focus on the construction of pivot cities, the construction of "Silk Road Maritime" platform and Yuanhong International Food Industrial Park, and deeply integrate into "the Belt and Road Initiative" to promote the high-quality development of "Maritime Silk Road" Core Area from the aspects of infrastructure connectivity, capacity cooperation, financial security, people-to-people exchanges and mechanism innovation, etc.

**Keywords:** “the Belt and Road Initiative”, “Maritime Silk Road” Core Area, high-quality development

## I. INTRODUCTION

In March 2015, the state issued the "The Vision and Actions of Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road", proposing to support Fujian in building the core area of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. In November 2015, Fujian released the "Plan for the Construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Core Zone in Fujian Province". In June 2018, Fujian issued the "Implementation Plan for Pilot Innovation-driven Development of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Core Area in Fujian Province". In December 2018, Fujian proposed to implement seven landmark projects for the building of "Maritime Silk Road" Core Area. From the above plans, it can be clearly seen that Fujian is fully integrated into "the Belt and Road Initiative" and promoting the construction of "Maritime Silk Road" Core Area.

## II. DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF THE "MARITIME SILK ROAD" CORE AREA

### A. Infrastructure connectivity has been accelerated

1) *Expanded sea lanes:* Through the integration and optimization of coastal port shoreline resources, accelerating the construction of key port areas, and issuing policies to support the development of shipping enterprises, 181 berths over 10,000 tons have been built. The key port areas have

been equipped with 100,000 to 300,000 ton deep water channels and built seven off-shore railways. In 2018, Fujian's ports handled 558 million tons of cargo, with a year-on-year increase of 7.3% Xiamen port has become the 14th largest container port in the world, and Fuzhou has accelerated the construction of an international deep-water port.

2) *Encrypted air channels:* The construction of Fuzhou and Xiamen "Maritime Silk Road" gateway hub airports has been strengthened. In 2018, international routes such as direct flights from Fuzhou to Paris were opened, with a passenger throughput of 49.45 million, up 14.6 percent year on year.

3) *Improved joint transport channels:* The railway and highway networks have been strengthened. The China-Europe and Central Asia International freight trains have been opened, and 176 China-Europe freight trains were opened in 2018. sea-railway combined transportation and water and water transfer business continued to expand.

4) *Constantly improved Information channels:* Steady progress has been made in the construction of "digital Fujian", with the establishment of Fuzhou's national Internet backbone direct connection point. And the Channel 1 Cable Cross the Straits is known as the first nonstop submarine cable of "Three Direct Links" between the two sides.

### B. Trade facilitation has been improved

1) *Carefully cultivating platforms for economic and trade cooperation:* Fujian has held the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Expo and the 20th Cross-strait Trade Fair, the China International Fair for Investment and Trade and the Publication of Fujian Brands in the Maritime Silk Road, etc.

2) *Actively yet prudently guiding enterprises to invest overseas:* By the end of 2018, there had been 2,594 newly approved outbound investment enterprises in Fujian province, with a total investment of US \$32.3 billion. Zijin Mining has become one of China's largest overseas resource reserves and production of minerals, with a potential value of nearly one trillion yuan. A group of "going global"

private enterprises has emerged represented by Fuyao Group, Texhong and Billion Industrial Holdings Limited. Nine overseas economic and trade cooperation parks, including the China-Kenya Economic and Trade Cooperation Park, the China-Cambodia Industrial Park, Cambodia and the Fudong Industrial Park in Vietnam, were included in the statistics of the Ministry of Commerce.

3) *Actively carrying out two-way trade:* Fujian province has carried out the activity of "Hundreds of Exhibitions and Thousands of Enterprises" to promote the export of competitive products, while vigorously organizing enterprises to participate in the expo to expand imports actively. In 2018, exports from Fujian to countries and regions along the "Belt and Road" reached 238.28 billion yuan, with an increase of 7.82%, and imports reached 156.34 billion yuan, with a growth of 15.35%.

4) *Deepening maritime economic cooperation:* Fujian has been developing ocean-going fisheries in an orderly manner. By April 2019, Fujian had sent 603 ocean-going fishing boats abroad and set up nine overseas bases, boosting the employment and income of local residents. The scale its ocean-going fishing and overseas aquaculture both ranked first in China. The province has successfully hosted such international events as the Fuzhou International Fisheries Expo, the Xiamen International Ocean Week, the Pingtan International Forum on Island Conservation and Development, and the China-Island Countries Ocean-related Ministerial Roundtable, etc.

#### *C. The people-to-people bond has been tightened*

1) *Promoting cooperation on cultural tourism:* The large-scale dance drama "Dream in the Sea of Silk" was performed at the headquarters of the United Nations, the headquarters of the European Union and around the world. The "Gulangyu Island, a Historic International Settlement" has succeeded in its application for the list of world heritage; even projects including "The Southern Music of Fujian" have been included in the list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity; the joint terraces in Youxi has been selected in the "Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems". And the cruise lines from Fujian to six Southeast Asian countries have been opened.

2) *Expanding cooperation in education:* Xiamen University Malaysia has been set up and put into operation, attracting more than 4,000 students from 17 countries and regions. Fujian province assisted Nigeria and other countries in building online education service platforms. It has cooperated with foreign universities to hold 21 Confucius institutes and 52 Confucius classrooms. It has made great efforts to train overseas Chinese language teachers and send Chinese language teachers to the Philippines.

3) *Strengthening health cooperation:* Fujian University of Traditional Chinese Medicine has built an overseas Chinese medicine center in the Philippines. Fujian province

has been continuing its efforts to deepen health cooperation with Thailand, France, Britain and Germany. It also continues to provide high standards of medical assistance to Botswana and Senegal.

4) *Cooperation between sister cities:* In 2018, Fujian established sister-city (sister-province) relationships with the Cebu Province of the Philippines to promote cultural exchanges between Fujian and relevant cities (provinces) of the countries and regions along the Maritime Silk Road.

5) *Focusing on overseas Chinese affairs:* Fujian province maintains regular contact with Fujian-rooted associations overseas and in Hong Kong and Macao. The comprehensive service platform for finding roots of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia has been built, and the service has achieved initial results. With the Overseas Association of Fujian Province, Overseas Exchange Association of Fujian Province, Fujian Overseas Chinese Enterprises Association and World Fujian Youth Federation as bridges, the province promotes the development of Chinese and overseas Chinese businesses at home and abroad. It has held the World Fujian Origin Entrepreneurs Conference, the World Fujianese Fellowship Conference, the Conference for Friendship of Overseas Chinese Association, the Forum of Fujian Overseas Chinese Leaders of Countries Along "the Belt and Road" on the 40th Anniversary of the Reform and Opening Up, Theme Forum on "Fujian Entrepreneurs Embracing Responsibility in 'the Belt and Road Initiative'", and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Youth Development Forum and Forum for Young Elites in Fujian and Hong Kong.

### III. THE FOCUS OF PROMOTING THE HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE "MARITIME SILK ROAD" CORE AREA

#### *A. Building strategic pivot cities*

In "the Belt and Road Initiative", Fuzhou, Xiamen and Quanzhou are on the list of Coastal strategic pivot cities. Fuzhou is an important gateway of the Maritime Silk Road. In accordance with the requirements of the 2018-2020 action plan for Fuzhou's integration into the Maritime Silk Road Core Area, Fuzhou should fully give play to the role of strategic pivot, expand cooperation with countries and regions along the Maritime Silk Road, especially Japan and South Korea, ASEAN, Africa and the EU in various fields, to build strategic comprehensive logistics hub, export-oriented manufacturing base and important cultural cooperation base. Xiamen should give full play to the role of service outsourcing demonstration city, and actively expand outsourcing market of "the Belt and Road Initiative" service by relying on its 7 service outsourcing industrial parks. Based on the education advantages of Xiamen University of Technology in Applied Engineering Technology, it has established various training institutions and promoted the establishment of China-ASEAN engineering technology training center. Quanzhou is the pilot area of the Maritime Silk Road. It should constantly promote the "Development Plan for Quanzhou to Build the 21st Century Maritime Silk

Road Pilot Zone", give full play to the advantages of the private economy and Islamic culture, so as to enhance the level of openness and cooperation with countries and regions along "the Belt and Road".

#### *B. Building the "Silk Road Maritime" platform*

"Silk Road Maritime" is a new brand and a new platform of international integrated logistics service established by Fujian province. The goal of it is to build dense packing shipping net, improve the level of port logistics services, promote seamless connection of the China-Europe express trains, through in-depth promotion of cooperation and exchanges between ports, shipping and logistics enterprises in countries along the "Maritime Silk Road", relying on the construction of Xiamen Southeast International Shipping Center so as to build a new channel for international trade along the "Maritime Silk Road" that will drive development along the coast, radiate the inland, and connects with Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao. Since the launch of the "Silk Road Maritime" on December 24, 2018, the transport volume has increased rapidly, and the first trial has yielded remarkable results. By March 20, 2019, the two batches included in the "Silk Road Maritime" have completed 215 voyages on 34 routes, with a container throughput of 179,900 teu, up 11.8 percent from the same period in 2018. Fujian should accelerate the construction of "Silk Road Maritime" platform, establish "Silk Road Maritime alliance" and build the "Silk Road Maritime" brand. In this way, it can attract more routes to be included in the "Silk Road Maritime" brand, establish and improve the route system, promote the port and shipping enterprises to go global, and so as to optimize the network layout of the "Silk Road Maritime".

#### *C. Constructing the Yuanhong International Food Industrial Park in Fuqing*

Yuanhong Investment Zone, the predecessor of Yuanhong International Food Industrial Park in Fuqing was an open project signed by Xi Jinping, then secretary of Fuzhou Municipal Party Committee with Lin Shaoliang, a famous overseas Chinese leader, when he led a delegation to visit Indonesia in 1991. After years of development, the park has formed a leading industry featuring grain, oil and food, and actively started the planning and construction of Yuanhong International Food Industrial Park. In the future, it is necessary to actively promote the construction of Yuanhong International Food Industrial Park in Fuqing and the "Global (Yuanhong) Food Digital Economy Industrial Center" in cooperation with JD.com in accordance with the standards of Yiwu Small Commodity Collection Center in Zhejiang and Nan'an Shuitou Stone Distribution Center; the "Global Public Service Platform for Food Display and Trading" (mainly promoting B2B, B2C and bulk food futures exchanges), source cooperation of bulk food supply chain (major producer, origin and supplier), and the chain storage (over 1 million tons) and trading market. It is necessary to set up Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation to solve the financial settlement of cross-border transactions. Through three periods of development and construction, efforts should be made to build the park into a "professional, innovative,

green and open" food park, ASEAN overseas Chinese industry (food) base, pilot of the supply-side reform of the food industry, food quality and safety demonstration park and China's largest food material import and export trading center that covers the functions of "living, traveling, traveling, shopping and entertainment".

#### IV. THE COUNTERMEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTING THE HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT OF "MARITIME SILK ROAD" CORE AREA BY DEEPLY INTEGRATING INTO "THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE"

##### *A. Promoting the connectivity of facilities so as to raise the level of joint contribution and shared benefits*

1) *Efforts should be made to strengthen the network of air routes and the construction of airport corridors:* It is necessary to strengthen the construction of the airline hub of the "Maritime Silk Road" gateway, and strive to start construction of the second phase expansion project of Fuzhou airport and the Xiamen New Airport. It is also important to support Xiamen airlines and others in expanding the national air routes jointly built by countries along "the Belt and Road" encourage airlines to set up base companies in Fujian, and speed up the improvement of air routes from Fujian to hub cities in Southeast Asian, American and Australia.

2) *Efforts should be made to encrypt sea lanes and improve access to port areas:* It is necessary to vigorously cultivate passenger and freight sea routes and promote the agglomeration of shipping logistics elements. Relying on the core areas of Xiamen port and Fuzhou port, efforts should be made to strengthen the construction of port areas, expand the supply of goods, and clear customs at ports, improve the service level of port and logistics, and build the brand of "Silk Road Maritime".

3) *Promoting multimodal transport:* It is necessary to promote multimodal transport of sea-rail, railway and air rail, increase the operational efficiency of the China-Europe (Xiamen) express train and the Fuzhou Express Train, and further expand the supply of goods in Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

4) *Building digital infrastructure at a high level:* It is necessary to actively promote the building of an information corridor between Fujian and ASEAN countries and build a national southeast information network hub facing the world.

##### *B. Focusing on market development and strengthening international cooperation on production capacity*

1) *Promoting the construction of key demonstration parks for international cooperation:* Efforts should be intensified to connect with and dock the Federation of Economic Organizations of Japan, Japan External Trade Organization and other organizations in the economic circle, introduce Japanese enterprises or other organizations to promote the development of the park, and make in-depth

discussion on the cooperation project of "the Belt and Road Initiative" international cooperation demonstration zone in Fuzhou, contributing to the early implementation of cooperation projects. Explorations should be made to construct the "China-Indonesia Double-Park", using the "China-Malaysia Double-Park" model built by Guangxi Province and Malaysia for reference. It is necessary to take Yuanhong Investment Zone in Fuqing as the carrier to build "China-Indonesia Food Industrial Park", plan to build "Yuanhong (Indonesia) Sub-park", and promote mutual participation, cooperation and joint construction, benefit sharing between the two countries and two parks.

2) *Focusing on expanding market in countries along "the Belt and Road"*: It is important to support the development of new trade models and new forms of business, encourage export enterprises to set up or acquire trading companies in countries related to "the Belt and Road", support the establishment of comprehensive pilot zones for cross-border e-commerce, and expand trade channels.

3) *Supporting competent enterprises in actively yet prudently investing overseas*: It is necessary to guide the overseas distribution of steel, nonferrous metals, building materials, textiles, engineering machinery, and electric power.

4) *Raising the level of maritime cooperation*: Efforts should be made to accelerate the development of research and development bases such as the China-ASEAN maritime cooperation center and the Third Institute of Oceanography, State Oceanic Administration, and deepen maritime cooperation with ASEAN. It is necessary to orderly promote the development of offshore fishing bases, encourage the development of trans-oceanic fishing resources in the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean as well as in West Africa, Southeast Asia and south Pacific island countries, so as to build an industrial chain of offshore fishing.

#### *C. Improving financial security and strengthening project financing support*

1) *Giving play to the role of financial institutions as the main channel*: It is necessary to enlist the support of policy-oriented and development-oriented financial institutions and commercial banks, such as the China Development Bank, the Export-Import Bank of China and the China Export & Credit Insurance Corporation, and encourage financial institutions to expand financing channels for enterprises and projects, so as to provide capital support of foreign exchange for enterprises that go global.

2) *Well using relevant funds of "Silk Road Maritime"*: It is necessary to give full play to the role of Fuzhou overseas Chinese mother fund, Xiamen "Silk Road Maritime" investment fund and Softbank Fund for the "Belt and Road" Initiative, and strive for the support of the Silk Road fund

and other funds to guide all kinds of capital to help the construction of projects related to the "Silk Road Maritime".

3) *Promoting the openness and innovation in the financial sector*: Relying on the pilot free trade zone, innovations in cross-border financing and offshore RMB loans by banking institutions should be supported. It is necessary to implement the policy of opening the financial sector wider to the outside world, and attract wholly foreign-funded banks, Chinese-foreign joint venture banks and branches of foreign banks to set up in Fujian.

#### *D. Deepening people-to-people and cultural exchanges to build a stronger foundation for closer ties between the peoples*

1) *Deepening international cooperation in education*: It is necessary to support the expansion of exchange student training and encourage Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools with internationally renowned institutions. The international cooperative education program jointly set up by Tianjin University and the National University of Singapore in Fuzhou should be supported, so as to attract more students from countries along the "Belt and Road", especially ASEAN countries, to further their study.

2) *Strengthening cooperation on cultural tourism*: With the help of 11 overseas promotion centers in Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries, the efforts of internationally promoting Fujian Tourism should be intensified.

3) *Building overseas propaganda positions*: The development of Chinese headlines, Middle East headlines and other well-known new media should be supported to expand information sources and coverage, so as to meet the needs and thinking habits of local audiences in strengthening external publicity and thus do a good job in telling the stories of "Silk Road Maritime" and Fujian province.

#### *E. Strengthening institutional innovation and enhancing the ability to provide services*

1) *Establishing a regular communication mechanism*: The focus should be improving cooperation mechanisms with countries and regions along the routes in investment protection, finance, taxation, customs and personnel exchanges, in order to set up new consulates and visa centers in Fujian.

2) *Improving the cooperation mechanism between sister cities*: In coordination with national diplomacy, it is necessary to promote the establishment of sister cities in the overseas Chinese gathering area, production capacity cooperation zone and overseas interest concentration area of Fujian, and promote the coverage of sister cities at provincial level in all ASEAN countries (except Singapore and Brunei).

3) *Building a security risk prevention mechanism*: It is necessary to timely transmit the guidance documents for

investment in different countries issued by national ministries and commissions, guide enterprises to "go global" in order, compliance and safety, encourage enterprises to carry out safety risk assessment of overseas projects, and strengthen the safety risk prediction and response of projects.

#### V. CONCLUSION

As the only "Maritime Silk Road" Core Area in the country, Fujian has made great achievements in integrating the "Five Links" into the construction of "the Belt and Road Initiative" and ranks the second place in the international participation degree in the initiative. In the new period, Fujian will concentrate its efforts and integrate resources to promote the high-quality development of the "Maritime Silk Road" Core Area.

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