

Leading A New Landscape of Inclusive Development with Tourism

- Address by Wang Yang, Vice Premier of People's Republic of China

At the 7th T.20 Ministers' Meeting

(May 20, 2016, Beijing)

Distinguished Secretary General Taleb Rifai and Deputy Secretary General Wu Hongbo, Ladies and gentlemen,

It's a great pleasure to gather with old and new friends at the T.20 Ministers' Meeting that is held in China for the first time. On behalf of the Chinese government, I would like to extend my warm welcome to guests from all over the world and my gratitude to everyone that has actively participated in and supported the activities of The Chinese 2016 G20 Host Year.

The first World Conference on Tourism for Development concluded in great success yesterday. More than 900 representatives from nearly 100 countries, regions and international organizations gathered in Beijing and exchanged views on promoting peace and development with tourism, and the Beijing Declaration released at the conference expressed the strong wish of all parties to jointly promote the inclusive and sustainable development of global tourism industry. Premier Li Keqiang gave an important speech at the conference, in which he clearly set forth the policies and guidelines on China's tourism reform and development and put forth a new initiative to advance international tourism cooperation. His speech drew extensive resonances and created a favorable atmosphere for the meeting today.

The T.20 Ministers' Meeting is an important platform for G20 members to strengthen tourism cooperation. Since the first meeting was held in 2010, all parties, upholding openness, innovation, mutual benefits and win-win cooperation, have done a lot in visa facilitation, tourism investment and cooperation, international tourism statistics, tourism education and training, and communication in tourism and trade policies. Tourism communication and cooperation among G20 members has

expanded in the past six years, during which the number of inbound tourists increased from 660 million to 830 million person times and international travel income increased from USD747 billion to USD920 billion.

The rapid expansion of tourism industry has not only bolstered the economic recovery in G20 members, but also contributed to their employment, business creation and poverty alleviation. Especially in China, poor population is mostly distributed in former revolutionary bases, areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, remote and border areas and poverty-stricken areas, where industrial and agricultural development is restricted by many factors but tourism development has unique advantages. In 2015, Chinese countryside tourism received 2 billion person-time tourists and registered total travel expenses of RMB1 trillion, about 20 million people worked for countryside tourism reception, operation and services, and more than 70 million farmers benefited from this industry. Countryside tourism has lifted more than 10 million poor people out of poverty in the past five years.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The deep-going aftermaths of the international financial crisis are still at work, world economic recovery has seen many twists and turns, unemployment rate remains high in many countries, and poverty elimination remains the biggest challenge for us all. This year's T.20 Ministers' Meeting is in the theme of "Sustainable Tourism - An Effective Tool for Inclusive Development", which echoes perfectly with the theme of this year's G20 Summit - "Towards an Innovative, Invigorated, Interconnected and Inclusive World Economy". It reflects all parties' recognition of the position and role of tourism industry and also their expectations for inclusive development. Taking this opportunity, I want to share with you my expectations for this meeting.

First, enlarge the pie of tourism market. All G20 members are large tourism markets with rich tourism resources, whose outbound travel expenses exceeded USD980 billion in 2015, accounting for 80% of the world total, and their inbound tourists accounted for 70% in the world. 19 of the top 20 busiest airports in the world

are in G20 members. For China, 120 million person-time Chinese people travelled abroad last year, who contributed to the world economic recovery by spending more than USD200 billion overseas. G20 members should further relax visa policies, simplify entry/exit formalities, open more direct flights and tourism charters, improve policies on customs clearance of goods, shopping tax exemption and rebate and currency exchange, and support enterprises to jointly develop tourism products, so as to enlarge the pie of tourism market. We welcome all countries to carry out various forms of tourism promotions in China.

Second, promote tourism investment and cooperation. G20 members have different endowments, some having capital, technology and managerial experience while others having vast market and rich tourism resources. Compared with other service sectors, tourism boasts the widest consensuses and largest potential for investment and cooperation. We welcome tourism enterprises from all countries to invest in China in a number of areas, including theme park, tourism equipment manufacturing and comprehensive exploitation of tourist attractions. We also support capable Chinese tourism enterprises to invest in hotel, scenic area and other infrastructure projects in foreign countries to improve their tourist reception capability. I hope you can pool together your wisdom at this meeting, identify difficulties in and tap areas for investment and cooperation.

Third, exchange experience in tourism development. Many G20 members have developed tourism industry and rich experience in market development, product innovation, tourism resource protection, travel safety and market regulation. As a late comer, Chinese tourism industry has weak links in the development and regulation of tourism market, and is willing to learn and draw on the successful practices of other countries. After many years of explorations, China has gained some experience in Internet Plus Tourism, lavatory revolution, all-terrain tourism and countryside tourism, and is willing to share it with you all. At this meeting, I hope we can fully exchange our good practices and experience in the spirit of complementarity and mutual learning, and jointly enhance the tourism development level.

Fourth, share in the results of tourism development. Boosting economic growth is an important mission of G20, but making the economic growth benefit everyone is the fundamental goal. G20 members are in different development stages and some of them have a large poor population and face great pressure in the employment for women, youths and farmers, so we have to take the path of inclusive development. Featuring a low employment threshold and a demand for labor forces at all levels, tourism industry is an effective instrument for promoting development and social inclusiveness because it is not only suitable for young entrepreneurs, but also provides job opportunities for women, farmers, the elderly and laid-off workers. I hope this meeting can focus on the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), considering the concerns of developed countries while setting store by the appeals of developing ones, attaching equal importance to the present growth of tourism industry and its future sustainability, not only finding the way to lead economic prosperity with tourism, but also proposing the plan to promote employment and poverty alleviation through it. The Chinese government attaches great importance to international tourism cooperation and is willing to make contributions in that area. Premier Li Keqiang announced yesterday that China will launch 50 international tourism cooperation projects in the next five years and provide trainings for 1,500 foreign tourism professionals in China.

Ladies and gentlemen,

My responsibility in the State Council lies in tourism and agriculture, so I pay close attention to the time of farming. Today is the Lesser Fullness of Grain of the 24 solar terms, which means wheat grain begins to plump up but isn't ripe yet. The tourism cooperation within G20 is also in the stage of Lesser Fullness with a bumper harvest on the horizon. With the joint efforts of all G20 members, I believe we will reach extensive consensuses at this meeting and G20's tourism cooperation will bear bountiful fruits in the future!

Thank you!