Address at the First China-Belgium Innovation Dialogue on the 30th of March

Huang Wei, Vice-minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology

Brussels, March 30, 2017

1. Greeting

(09:10-09:15)

Esteemed Zuhal Demir, Belgian State Secretary for Science and Technology,

Esteemed Ambassador Qu Xing,

Honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning everybody!

I am very happy to be here in beautiful Brussels to take part in the First China-Belgium Innovation Dialogue. I would like to offer the best wishes and greetings of the Ministry of Science and Technology to representatives of both our governments, scientific research institutions and industry sectors present!

Belgium is one of the most open countries globally, and it was also one of the first countries to have developed technical cooperation and technology transfers with China. 30 years ago, it was Belgians who first brought large international high tech companies such as Janssen and Beyer to China, and Xi'an Janssen and Shanghai Beyer have become household names in China, both of these being model examples of the successful involvement in China of high-tech foreign companies in technological cooperation.

In recent years, there have been many occasions where the governments of our two countries have acted jointly, and we have already established a comprehensive partnership of friendly cooperation, with relations between our countries at a historic high point. There have been excellent developments in terms of scientific and technological innovation between China and Belgium. Since 1979 when a scientific and technological cooperation agreement was first signed between the governments of China and Belgium, our two nations have jointly established shared scientific and technological cooperation committees on 19 occasions, signing more than 60 separate scientific and technological cooperation agreements, and have instigated more than 400 inter-governmental scientific and technological cooperation projects, involving 100s of universities, research institutes and companies, this in turn involving exchanges and cooperation between 1000s of scientific and technological personnel and involving agriculture, energy, remote sensing, biotechnology, medicine, the environment, information technology, new materials and many other advanced fields.

Just now, State Secretary Zuhal Demir mentioned that there has been non-stop cooperation in scientific and technological innovation between China and Belgium for almost 40 years. Currently, cooperation between our nations is moving gradually away from inter-government cooperation towards cooperation between the government and private resources, and is also moving away from fundamental scientific research towards the entire chain of research and innovation, shifting away from single direction technology transfers towards joint training of personnel and development of

technology, in addition to moving away from temporary negotiating mechanisms towards high-level mechanisation and transformation of the mechanisms involved technology transfers, thus providing a major impetus to actual cooperation between China and Belgium.

In June 2015, when President Xi Jingping met King Philippe of Belgium when he visited China, China was in the process of implementing a drive to expand and develop innovation, and there were a number of areas where the interests of both our nations coincided, involving the active development of new models of high-added value cooperation in terms of high-end technology, which would strengthen shared innovation, research and development. It has been as a result of this that we are all here together under one roof, to share our thoughts on cooperation over scientific and technological innovation, which will provide new meaning to the relationship of friendly cooperation in terms of comprehensive cooperation between China and Belgium.

Let me just say again, I would like to thank everyone for the support that they have provided in terms of scientific and technological cooperation between China and Belgium, and therefore I would like to take this opportunity to wish the First China-Belgium Innovation Dialogue every success!

2. Introduction to China's scientific and technological innovation policies and current developments

(09:20-09:30)

Esteemed Zuhal Demir, Belgian State Secretary for Science and Technology,

Esteemed Ambassador Qu Xing,

Honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning everybody!

Currently, there have been fundamental changes in terms of global scientific and technological innovation and the chain of development; the introduction of new breakthroughs in science and technology and the chain of productivity have accelerated the rate of advances, and the demand for innovation grows greater by the day. In September last year, the G20 summit in Hangzhou in China, agreed the "G20 Blueprint on Innovation Growth", revealing a plan for action in terms of innovation, which provides a consensus for sustainable development. Each country will continue to enhance scientific and technological innovation, and ensure a policy climate that encourages scientific and technological innovation, creating conditions which will be helpful to all innovative ventures, and which will provide an impetus to ensure a sustainable and all-inclusive future based on scientific and technological innovation.

In recent years, the Chinese government has paid a lot of attention to scientific and technological innovation, and has made many breakthroughs. In 2016, overall expenditure in R&D in China was predicted to be 1.544 trillion Yuan, thus accounting for 2.1% of GDP. This involved basic research of which multi-DOF quantum teleportation, iron-based high critical temperature superconductors and induced pluripotent stem cells are representative, large scale manufacturing technology of which high speed rail, nuclear power and large aircraft are representative, aero spatial technology of which passenger carrying space craft, moon exploration projects and the Beidou navigation system are

representative, and large scientific installations, of which the 500 metre diameter radio telescope, the Spallation Source, Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility and the subterranean 2500 metre dark matter underground science lab are representative, impressive in both local and international terms, while a number of achievements have been at the cutting edge of international science.

Of course, ladies and gentlemen,

As you all know, China's economic development is now facing changes, and is entering a stage of rapid transformation, involving structural changes and new norms in terms of the transformation of driving factors; this is a new stage in the progress of China's modernisation. **We need to face up to these "growing pains" and the issues that result from such transformations, in order to ensure that 1.3 billion Chinese are able to enjoy the benefits of modernisation, the only way forward being via scientific and technical innovation**. In order to achieve this, China is applying new concepts in terms of innovation, harmonisation, the environment, openness, and shared development, and this makes sure innovation is at the core of all state development planning, and this now places innovation in pole position in terms of leading development.

We place special emphasis on scientific and technological innovation policy in terms of overall unified planning. Currently, China has only just commenced design of a high level strategic development innovation policy, having issued the "State Strategic Development Innovation Guidelines", which lays down guidelines for creation of an innovative state and technologically advanced nation. This places emphasis on new principles, new designs and new strategies for scientific and technological innovation, while enhancing the overall arrangements relating to the scientific and technological business development realm; this will be responsible for actively creating a new group of innovation guided scientific research institutes and research orientated universities and companies, which will then work together with the various other types of scientific research institutes, universities and corporate research and development bodies, and provide a new basis for excellence in innovation; this will thus ensure that adjustments are made taking conditions into consideration in the routes taken towards innovative development, and allow for the creation of a number of urban and regional centres capable of driving innovation.

We will strive to create an environment of scientific and technological innovation in which everyone can be involved. Innovation is something that everyone can be involved in and which will benefit everybody. In 2016, there were estimated to be a total of 3.81 million persons involved in research in China; there are more than 4200 "public innovation spaces" and there are over 3000 scientific and technological business incubators and over 400 technology accelerators which form the overall incubator service chain, while there are over 400,000 innovation companies and teams, which have created over 1000 listed companies with 1.8 million employees. We are positively engaged in stimulating the activities of all these innovation entities, giving guidance to everyone involved in start-ups and innovation, in order to stimulate both elite and grass-roots innovation, and to ensure a multifaceted, all-encompassing and competitive "micro-innovation" climate, which will ensure that the seeds of innovation that are buried amongst us reach their full potential, allowing innovation to take place to the fullest extent.

We seek to create a scientific and technological innovation chain that encompasses all aspects. Innovation needs fertile soil, and a suitable environment, therefore a unified plan covering the innovation chain, human resources, production, financing and policy is required. We must continue

to concentrate on the development of personnel, with emphasis on knowledge and human resources, in order to effectively reform and complete the elements necessary for training, recruitment, employment, evaluation and encouragement, which will in turn bolster innovation and increase tolerance of failure. Based on mechanisms for bringing together state owned model innovation zones, high tech zones and innovation start-up bases, it will be possible to ensure that all innovators and start-ups have convenient access to the intermediary services, funding support and policy guarantees they require, while ensuring that a strict regimen protecting intellectual property is enforced, thus creating the best conditions for innovation.

We are actively planning scientific and technological innovation cooperation on a global scale. We live in highly innovative times, and this is also the time for cooperation over innovation. China implements a policy of shared benefits in terms of its openness strategies, and with the recent attention to high levels of openness, there is a need to create a more transparent, fair, standardised and predictable open environment for development. We continue to expand and deepen scientific and technological innovation dialogues, deepening the level of international exchange and cooperation, while actively taking part in and generating major international scientific programs and projects, creating a platform for global innovation and cooperation on a larger scale, focusing on major issues involving globalisation, in order to be able to formulate and promote innovation on a global level, and to provide the scientific and technical conditions necessary to overcome the shared obstacles confronting us.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Of course, scientific and technological innovation is a hot topic these days. There is no doubt that Chinese scientific and technological innovation will enrich the citizens of China, but it should also present new opportunities in terms of scientific and technological innovation cooperation between China and Belgium, and provide new meaning to friendly cooperation between China and Belgium.