

《Spotlight: China eyes closer cooperation, lasting friendship》

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (L) meets with Laotian President Bounnhang Vorachit in Vientiane, Laos, Sept. 8, 2016. (Xinhua/Wang Ye)

VIENTIANE, Sept. 9 (Xinhua) -- China and Laos, two neighbors that share the same political system, witnessed a great advancement of bilateral ties on Thursday as the two countries signed 20 documents to boost cooperation.

After attending the East Asia Summit in the Laotian capital of Vientiane, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang kicked off his official visit to the landlocked Asian country, expressing readiness to push ahead with major projects in Laos, including the China-Laos railway, economic zones and hydroelectric projects.

Marking the 55th anniversary of bilateral relations, Li and his Laotian counterpart Thongloun Sisoulith signed cooperation documents covering fields ranging from trade and investment to technology and education. The two countries also published a joint communique.

During his talks with Laotian President Bounnhang Vorachit, Li called for closer cooperation in such areas as education and tourism, saying that China and Laos are facing new opportunities for future cooperation.

China, with traditional friendship with Laos, would like to promote their high-level contacts, share their experiences in the governance of their respective countries and deepen pragmatic cooperation, he said.

The premier recalled that the two sides have always respected, treated equally and supported each other since they established diplomatic ties 55 years ago.

During his meeting with Thongloun, Li called for promoting comprehensive strategic partnership with Laos by maintaining close high-level contact, strengthening dialogue and coordination and promoting practical cooperation in various fields.

China and Laos enjoy a high degree of political mutual trust, comprehensive economic cooperation and extensive people-to-people exchanges, which benefit people from two sides and helps maintain regional peace, stability and

development, Li said.

The Chinese premier said that China is willing to align its 13th Five-Year Plan with Laos' 8th Five-Year Plan to promote production capacity and investment cooperation and ensure the launch of the flagship project of a high-speed railway before the end of this year.

The construction of an economic cooperation zone at the Mohan-Boten border crossing point and a comprehensive development zone in Vientiane should proceed, Li said, adding that large projects should play a leading role in trade cooperation and regional inter-connectivity.

China is willing to share experience with Laos in fields such as drawing development blueprints, tourism development and agricultural disaster prevention, Li said. He also pointed out that the two countries should strengthen customs and quality control so as to increase convenience of port customs clearance, improve people-to-people exchanges in cultural, media and educational fields, and promote cooperation in defense and law enforcement in order to maintain regional security and stability.

China is willing to keep close coordination with Laos on international and regional issues, firmly support each other, strengthen close cooperation under multilateral frameworks such as East Asia cooperation and the Lancang-Mekong River Cooperation, so as to bring benefit to people of the two countries and the region, Li said.

During his visit, Li also held talks with National Assembly President Pany Yathotou and laid a wreath at Laos' anonymous martyr's monument.