



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT MALAYSIA  
THE HONORABLE DATO' SRI LIOW TIONG LAI**

**7TH WORLD CHINESE ECONOMIC SUMMIT (WCES)  
“THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE: WHAT’S IN IT FOR ASIA &  
EUROPE?”**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2015  
THE SAVOY, LONDON**

**(To advise on salutations)**

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. We live in a globalised world and I am sure you will agree, one that offers us a wealth of opportunities.
2. As leaders, politicians, policy makers and captains of industry, we are people in the driving seat.
3. What we do with these opportunities will certainly impact history.
4. We must allow for growth and prosperity to be shared between countries and economic blocks.
5. China’s Belt and Road initiative is the solution that will bring Asia and Europe closer, driven by greater connectivity.
6. This is most certainly the age of Asia, with large parts of the continent enjoying exceptional growth and prosperity.
7. As China breaks new ground with the Belt and Road initiative that promises economic integration and regional cooperation, we come closer to achieving truly inclusive growth not just for Asia but for the rest of the world.

8. It is not only timely, it is necessary.

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

9. Two thousand years ago, the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa were linked by routes of trade and cultural exchange known as the Silk Road.

10. While we can reflect on past achievements, it is the future that we need to focus on and this is what I will be addressing today.

11. After all, the future influences the present just as much as the past.

12. In the next ten years, we will have the rewarding yet demanding task of realising the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road – collectively known as the Belt and Road initiative.

13. This is what will fortify not only the bond between Asia and China, but equally importantly, China and Europe.

14. In the same collaborative spirit of the original Silk Road, China's new focus will continue to pursue peace, cooperation and development, while striving for shared economic prosperity.

15. The Belt and Road initiative covers 65 countries and 4.4 billion people.

16. This belt-road strategy will see Chinese companies building roads, railway lines, ports and power grids badly needed in many parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

17. This, in turn, will involve financing that will make the Yuan a global currency.

18. Beyond Asia, the Belt and Road initiative will see the creation of multiple economic corridors essentially connecting the Euro-Asia landmass.

19. Essentially, this economic belt will bring together China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe.

20. It will link China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia.

21. This belt will also connect China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean.

22.(The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, the second component of the Belt and Road initiative, will run from China's coast to Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean on one route, and from China's coast through the South China Sea to the South Pacific.)

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

23.Clearly business opportunities, in addition to heightened cooperation between nations are going to rise significantly.

24.It will become one of the largest infrastructure projects ever undertaken, rivalling the post-War reconstruction efforts.

25.Think of it, the prospects are immense and Asia and Europe will certainly stand to gain.

26.No one should miss out this golden opportunity as China's plan for a new Silk Road will require infrastructural investments of USD160 billion and will, in time, generate annual trade volume exceeding USD2.5 trillion.

27.In fact, the establishment of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a great enabler for the Belt and Road initiative, driving development from a funding perspective.

28.Businesses, be it large, small or medium must be proactive in seizing business opportunities generated by China's Belt and Road initiative or risk being phased out from the market.

29. It is not an exaggeration to say that if businesses do not pay attention to the far-reaching implications of this regional economic development by China, they would not only lose business opportunities but also find their markets eroded.

30.These are amazing opportunities for talent, for companies and for individuals across Asia and Europe.

31.This future is achieved due to China's position as a major economic powerhouse.

32.More importantly, it is premised on peace and mutual prosperity between nations.

33.Peace and stability are necessary to create a conducive environment for growth.

34. I would like to note that throughout China's thousands of years of history, it has never been an aggressive nation.
35. A clear indicator of China's peaceful rise and approach is how it interacts in world affairs.
36. A good example is when President Xi Jinping announced during the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of China-France relations: "China the lion has awakened, but it is a peaceful, amicable, and civilized lion".
37. 中国这头狮子已经醒了，但这是一只和平的、可亲的、文明的狮子。 - 2014年3月27日习近平主席在中法建交50周年纪念大会上的讲话。

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

38. While this project is being spearheaded by China, it is important for the global community to be jointly involved in building it.
39. Here in the UK, when Chinese Premier Xi Jinping recently visited, I understand a significant partnership was seen in terms of UK's EDF Energy reaching an agreement with China General Nuclear Power Corporation or CGN for a £18 billion nuclear power plant at Hinkley Point, Somerset.
40. Further to this, cooperation between China and Europe is gaining significant momentum particularly within the Belt and Road initiative.
41. A good case in point is the Poland-China Belt and Road Memorandum; China-Hungary Railway Memorandum of Understanding and many other initiatives that are underway.
42. The ties between China and Europe with the Belt and Road initiative will certainly be rejuvenated and improved.
43. I am confident infrastructure, security cooperation, economic opportunities, and enhancement of connectivity and trade opportunities will grow between China and EU.
44. Above all, it is my hope that these various levels of cooperation will result in much greater political trust fostering improved cultural understanding between Europe and Asia.

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

45. Living in the age of Asia, as Chairman of ASEAN this year, Malaysia plays a leading role in shaping the future direction of the region and its relationship with the rest of Asia.
46. ASEAN is the seventh largest economy in the world and in 2014, its GDP increased by 4.6% annually and in real terms it has reached USD2.57 trillion.
47. Over the next decade, ASEAN is expected to expand between 4.5 to 5%.
48. Growth rates of this nature are hard to come by, particularly in this day and age.
49. This growth is underpinned by the fact that ASEAN boasts a fast-growing consumer market of over 600 million people.
50. Malaysia is proud of the fact that we were the first ASEAN nation to establish diplomatic ties with China.
51. This was an important milestone in the beginnings of China's economic reform as it first started to open up to the world.
52. This year marks 41 years of China-Malaysia ties.
53. When Malaysia established diplomatic ties with China 41 years ago, I assure you, we were driven by a keen sense of pragmatism.
54. It is this pragmatism that has won Malaysia the honour of being China's largest trading partner in ASEAN for six consecutive years since 2008.
55. Malaysia looks forward to building more meaningful and long-lasting economic relationships in the region as well as across the various economic groupings such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).
56. Once completed, RCEP will link the 10 ASEAN member countries with China, South Korea, Japan, India, Australia, and New Zealand.
57. This will enable deeper economic cooperation and facilitate trade throughout the region, creating a significant economic bloc.
58. In 2014, total trade of RCEP economies amounted to US\$ 10.8 trillion, comprising 28.4 % of global trade.
59. In the ten years post 2001, trade between ASEAN and China grew to USD \$400 billion.

60.China plays a crucial role in economic integration, as the largest trading partner for the majority of Asian countries.

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

61.I would like to share some recent successes that are bearing fruit under the Belt and Road initiative.

62.This is across the wider ASEAN and China region.

63.Closer home in Malaysia, we have successful collaborations with industrial parks in China.

64.The Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park is one tangible example of a superb collaborative effort.

65. To date, this project has received billions of ringgit in investment.

66.We have also pursued a sister port memorandum of understanding, that has been signed between one of Malaysia's ports (Kuantan Port) with the Qinzhou Port.

67.A similar sister port arrangement is also kicking off in the state of Malacca in Malaysia, which was in fact, part of the original Silk Road.

68.The fact is that this belt-road initiative will have long-term economic and business impact on Malaysia.

69.More importantly, these initiatives represent the creation of thousands of jobs as a result of sustainable public-private partnerships.

70.These investments are real and they are long lasting.

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

71.China's commitment to regional growth is evident in the capital it has poured into various infrastructure projects.

72.Again quoting Malaysia, cooperation with the China Communications and Construction Company and China Harbour Engineering saw the completion of Southeast Asia's longest bridge in one of our states in Malaysia known as Penang.

73.This is further evident with the 5,000km Singapore-Kunming Rail Link, which I am sure will benefit Asia greatly.

74.These developments will open new horizons for job creation, talent development, investment and above all mutual cooperation between nations.

75.The European Union, which enjoys high connectivity, will serve as a model for ASEAN as we pursue these transport infrastructure projects.

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

76.We are living through a transformative era, one that requires us to go back to the drawing board and rethink the way we are used to doing things.

77.Events such as this that promotes economic integration and cross-border cooperation are integral if we are serious about making a change for the greater good of our citizens.

78.I would like to thank ASLI, led by Tan Sri Michael Yeoh and his team for organising the 7th World Chinese Economic Summit which follows on from last year's very successful edition held in Chongqing, China.

79.I urge participants in this conference, to heighten your role in the Belt and Road initiative and be prime movers in this push to bring Asia and Europe closer together in this age of Asia.

80.Thank you

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