

Address by Ding Xuexiang at the Opening Ceremony of 23rd China-ASEAN Expo and China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit

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Ding Xuexiang, Vice Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

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Honorable Leaders,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

Good morning. In the golden autumn with the fragrance of osmanthus, it is a great pleasure to join you in Nanning, Guangxi for the opening ceremony of the 23rd China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) and China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (CABIS). Themed on “CAFTA 3.0 Opportunities, Better Life,” the Expo and the Summit have great relevance. On behalf of the Chinese government, I would like to express warm congratulations on the opening of the Expo and the Summit and extend a hearty welcome to all distinguished guests.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to the building of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA). In November 2021, at the Special Summit to Commemorate the 30th Anniversary of China-ASEAN Dialogue Relations, President Xi Jinping proposed launching a new round of upgrades to the CAFTA at an early date, enhancing the level of trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and expanding cooperation in new areas like digital economy and green economy, which has

尊敬的各国领导人，

各位嘉宾，

女士们，先生们，朋友们：

大家上午好！金秋时节，丹桂飘香。很高兴同大家相聚广西南宁，共同出席第23届中国－东盟博览会暨中国－东盟商务与投资峰会开幕式。本届博览会、峰会以“共享3.0机遇，共创美好生活”为主题，具有重要现实意义。首先，我谨代表中国政府，对本届博览会和峰会的召开表示热烈祝贺！对各位嘉宾的到来表示诚挚欢迎！

中国政府高度重视中国－东盟自由贸易区建设。2021年11月，习近平主席在中国－东盟建立对话关系30周年纪念峰会上，提出尽早启动中国－东盟自由贸易区3.0版建设，提升贸易和投资自由化便利化水平，拓展数字经济、绿色经济等新领

charted the course for promoting the higher-level development of the CAFTA.

We have traveled an extraordinary journey in building and developing the CAFTA. In November 2002, the two sides signed the Framework Agreement on China-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Cooperation, officially launching the building of the CAFTA. In January 2010, CAFTA 1.0 was completed as scheduled, which realized zero-tariff access at a large scale and opened up a new chapter in advancing China-ASEAN economic and trade cooperation. In October 2019, the 2.0 Upgrade Protocol fully entered into force, which focused on expanding opening up in the service sector and market access for investment, and took our economic and trade cooperation to a new level. In November 2022, China and ASEAN officially launched negotiations on CAFTA 3.0, with a view to fostering a more inclusive, modern, comprehensive, and mutually beneficial CAFTA. With the concerted efforts of both sides, the CAFTA 3.0 Upgrade Protocol has been formally signed. At present, the two sides are going through their respective legal procedures and expediting its entry into force and implementation.

Since its completion, the CAFTA has enjoyed steady operation and produced fruitful outcomes. Our trade has grown robustly. China has remained the largest trading partner of ASEAN for 17 years running, and ASEAN has been China's largest trading partner for six consecutive years. In 2025, our trade exceeded US\$1 trillion, increasing by 18 times compared with that of 2002. Our investment cooperation has continued to deepen, with two-way cumulative investment exceeding US\$510 billion. A number of major cooperation projects have made solid progress. The China-Laos railway has helped transform Laos from a landlocked to a land-linked country, and the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway in Indonesia has put in place a fast lane of development. The industrial and supply chains have been deeply integrated. Steady progress has been made in the China-Malaysia and China-Indonesia "Two Countries, Twin Parks" projects and the construction of the China-Laos Cross-Border Economic Cooperation Zone, and the cross-border network for division of labor has been improved. The people's well-being has been enhanced—economic and trade cooperation has created a large number of jobs and broadened channels for raising people's income, delivering tangible benefits to all our peoples. With the development of the CAFTA, the two sides now witness a daily average of more than 100,000 mutual visits, and mutual understanding and affinity has become increasingly solid.

Over the years, the CAFTA has strongly promoted regional economic integration and development, and become an important platform for the two sides to build a community with a shared future. Under the changing and turbulent international circumstances, this region has maintained peace,

域合作，为推动自贸区向更高水平发展指明了方向。

中国－东盟自贸区的建设发展，走过了很不平凡的历程。2002年11月，双方签署《中国－东盟全面经济合作框架协议》，正式启动自贸区建设。2010年1月，中国－东盟自贸区1.0版如期建成，大范围实现零关税，开启中国－东盟经贸合作大步向前的新篇章。2019年10月，2.0版升级议定书全面生效实施，着重扩大服务领域开放和投资市场准入，推动双方经贸合作迈上新台阶。2022年11月，中国与东盟正式启动3.0版谈判，着力打造更加包容、现代、全面和互利的中国－东盟自贸区。经过双方共同努力，3.0版升级议定书已经正式签署，目前正在各自履行法律程序，推动尽早生效实施。

中国－东盟自贸区建成以来，一直稳健运行，取得丰硕成果。双边贸易蓬勃发展。中国连续17年稳居东盟第一大贸易伙伴，东盟连续6年成为中国第一大贸易伙伴，2025年双边贸易总额突破1万亿美元，比2002年增长了18倍。投资合作持续深化。双向投资累计超过5100亿美元，一批重大合作项目扎实推进，中老铁路助力老挝从“陆锁国”变成“陆联国”，印尼雅万高铁铺就发展快车道。产业链供应链深度融合。中马、中印尼“两国双园”项目和中老跨境经济合作区建设稳步推进，跨境分工网络日益完善。民生福祉不断改善。经贸合作创造大量就业岗位，拓宽居民增收渠道，给双方民众都带来了实实在在的好处。在自贸区发展带动下，目前双方平均每天有十多万人员往来，相知相亲的民意基础越来越牢固。

这些年，中国－东盟自贸区有力推动区域济融合发展，成为双方命运共同体建设的重要载体。在变乱交织的国际形势下，本地区保持和平稳定和繁荣发展，政治互信更加巩固、开放合作

stability, prosperity, and development, consolidated political trust, deepened openness and cooperation, facilitated connectivity, and tightened people-to-people bonds. This is a testament to the important role of the CAFTA and sets a stellar example for fellow Global South countries to realize common development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

Looking back, we have gained fruitful results; looking ahead, we need to move forward hand in hand. After coming into effect, the CAFTA 3.0 Upgrade Protocol will forge greater synergy with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and inject enduring impetus into economic development in the region. Now, I wish to make four proposals on how to build a higher-level CAFTA.

First, we should advance a comprehensive improvement of opening up in the region. Tailored to the characteristics and needs of this region, the 3.0 Upgrade Protocol has incorporated high-standard trade and economic rules, explored ways to build more robust cooperation frameworks and institutionalized arrangements, and will provide stronger institutional support for regional cooperation and development. We should deepen cooperation in standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment, strengthen institution building in competition, consumer protection, and micro, small, and medium enterprises, and move faster toward an integrated regional market that is open, inclusive, and rules-based. China will expand high-standard opening up, expand market access, and open up more areas, particularly in the service sector. We will share development opportunities with ASEAN and promote deep regional economic integration and long-term and stable development.

Second, we should upgrade cooperation in trade and investment. Together, China and ASEAN member states have a quarter of the world's population, and a combined economic output of US\$23 trillion. We have diverse resources and our industries are highly complementary. The two sides have set higher-standard commitments and arrangements for trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, demonstrating our confidence and determination for jointly tackling challenges in international trade and economy. We should practice true multilateralism, further expand and deepen economic and trade cooperation, and work together to safeguard stable and smooth industrial and supply chains in this region and beyond. China has a complete industrial system and a vast market. We are ready to leverage these advantages, increase two-way investment cooperation with ASEAN, import more fine products from ASEAN countries, and make our cooperation outcomes better benefit people in the region.

Third, we should deepen and cement cooperation in emerging areas. Extending high-standard opening up and

不断深化、互联互通越发便利、人文纽带日益拉近，中国－东盟自贸区发挥了重要作用，为全球南方国家实现共同发展树立了成功的典范。

女士们、先生们、朋友们！

回首过去，已是硕果累累；展望未来，还需携手共进。中国－东盟自贸区3.0版升级议定书生效实施后，将同《区域全面经济伙伴关系协定》

(RCEP) 形成更为强劲的“双轮驱动”，为区域经济发展注入源源不断的新动能。下面，围绕建设好更高水平的中国－东盟自贸区，我愿提出4点建议。

第一，推动区域开放水平全面提升。3.0版升级议定书立足地区特点和需要，借鉴国际高标准经贸规则，探索建立更为完善的合作框架和机制化安排，将为区域合作发展提供良好制度保障。我们要深化标准、技术法规、合格评定等领域合作，健全竞争和消费者保护、中小微企业等领域制度，加快建设开放、包容、以规则为基础的区域一体化大市场。中国将扩大高水平对外开放，以服务业为重点扩大市场准入和开放领域，同东盟共享发展机遇，促进区域经济深层次一体化和长期稳定增长。

第二，推动贸易投资合作提质升级。中国和东盟人口占全球四分之一、经济总量超过23万亿美元，资源禀赋各异，产业互补性很强。双方对贸易投资自由化便利化作出更高水平的承诺和安排，体现了携手应对国际经贸挑战的信心和决心。我们要践行真正的多边主义，进一步拓展经贸合作深度和广度，共同维护地区和全球产业链供应链稳定畅通。中国愿发挥完整产业体系、超大规模市场等优势，加强双向投资合作，进口更多东盟优质产品，让合作成果更好造福地区人民。

第三，推动新兴领域合作走深走实。将高水