

PRC Agreements with Foreign Countries

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Abbreviations

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| BBC PF | BBC Monitoring Global Newslite - Asia-Pacific Political File |
| RMRB | Renmin Ribao (People's Daily), Beijing |
| Xinhua | Xinhua News Agency (Beijing), chin. |
| XNA | Xinhua News Agency (Beijing), engl. |

Afghanistan (Mar 24)

BEIJING, March 24 (Xinhua) - China and Afghanistan took new steps to further strengthen economic and trade links as new agreements were inked regarding aid, tax reduction and training.

Chinese President Hu Jintao and visiting Afghan President Hamid Karzai witnessed the signing of three documents on economic and technological cooperation, favourable tariffs for Afghan exports to China and training programmes. ... China's economic assistance to Afghanistan can be dated back to the the mid 1950s when the two countries established diplomatic links. Chinese engineers built a number of hospitals and water conservancy projects around the Central Asia country. The most well-known project is a large dam some 40 kilometres away from Kabul. Since 2002, China has given more than 900 million yuan (130 million US dollars) in aid for the rehabilitation of Afghanistan. And last year, China announced it would provide an additional 75 million US dollars of aid to Afghanistan over the next five years. ...

Two way trade between the two countries has been growing rapidly in recent years, reaching 155 million US dollars in 2008. Starting from July, 2006, China has applied zero tariffs on 278 items of export products from Afghanistan. China Metallurgical Group Corp. has invested in Aynak copper mine in Afghanistan. Implementation of this project helped create job opportunities for thousands of local people. China and Afghanistan share a common border. Besides economic links, the two countries have expanded cooperation in other areas in recent years, including the fight against the three evil forces of terrorism, extremism and separatism. (XNA, 24 Mar 10)

Antigua and Barbuda (Mar 18)

ST JOHN'S, Antigua, CMC - Antigua and Barbuda and the People's Republic of China have signed two economic and technical cooperation agreements, paving the way for the completion of a number of infrastructural projects around the country. Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer and China's ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, Chen Ligang, signed the two agreements totalling 50m Yuan (US7.3m dollars). ... Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the

People's Republic of China, David Shoul, explained that the first agreement for 20m Yuan (US2.9m dollars) is in the form of an interest-free loan to be used within five years from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010. He noted that the second agreement for 30m Yuan (US4.4m dollars) is in the form of a grant. ... Antigua and Barbuda is due to commence payment on the interest free loan in instalments within 10 years from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2029. (Caribbean Media Corporation news agency website, Bridgetown, 19 Mar 10, in BBC PF, 22 Mar 10)

Bangladesh (Mar 18)

Beijing, March 18 (Xinhua) - China and Bangladesh agreed to set up closer ties of comprehensive cooperative partnership.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and visiting Bangladeshi Prime Minister Shaykh Hasina reached the agreement after their talks in Beijing. ... The two prime ministers witnessed the signing of four bilateral documents on economic and technological cooperation, preferential loans, bridge building and natural gas cooperation. ... (XNA, 18 Mar 10)

Belarus (Mar 25)

HELSINKI/MINSK, March 25 (Xinhua) - Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping arrived in Finland Thursday afternoon for an official visit after his tour in Belarus. ... Earlier in the day in Minsk, Xi held separate talks with Belarusian Prime Minister Sergei Sidorsky and parliament speakers over bilateral relations and efforts to further exchanges between the legislatures of the two countries. ... After their meeting, Xi and Sidorsky witnessed the signing of a series of cooperation agreements between financial institutions and enterprises from both countries, with a total worth of 3.4bn US dollars. ... (XNA, 26 Mar 10)

Cambodia (Mar 19)

SIEM REAP, Cambodia, March 19 (Xinhua) - Chinese Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu left here on Friday, ending his three-day official visit to Cambodia at the invitation of Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Office of the Council of Ministers Sok An. ... During his stay here, Hui held talks with Prime Minister Hun Sen and Sok An. ... Meanwhile, Hui Liangyu, together with Sok An and Deputy Prime Minister Yim Chhay Ly, attended the signing ceremony of agriculture, communications cooperation agreements. Cambodia is the first leg of Hui's five-nation visit which will also take him to the Laos, Palestine, Israel and India. (XNA, 19 Mar 10)

Cameroon (Mar 24)

... Sino-Cameroon relations have been given fresh impetus at the state house in Yaounde. The governments of China and Cameroon have sealed deals on eight agreements in the areas of agricultural investment, training in new technologies in the postal services in Cameroon as well as in the forestry domain. The deals were concluded this afternoon during talks between President Paul Biya

and Jan Qin Ling [Jia Qinglin]. ... The government of China has also awarded Cameroon a non-interest loan of 50 million Yuan, that is about FCFA 32bn [over 7m US dollars]. ... (CRTV Television, Yaounde, 24 Mar 10, in BBC PF, 29 Mar 10)

Iraq (Apr 01)

Baghdad, 1 April: The Iraqi government signed in Beijing an agreement with the Chinese government to write off 80 per cent of Iraq's debts due for China, according to a Foreign Ministry press release. "Iraqi Finance Under-Secretary Fadih Nabi Uthman signed for Iraq while the secretary of the committee of companies indebted Iraq signed for China," read the statement as received by Aswat al-Iraq news agency. "The agreement was signed in light of memorandums of understanding signed by Iraqi President Jalal Talabani during his visit to China in June 2007," it added. ... (Aswat al-Iraq, Arbil, 2 Apr 10, in BBC PF, 3 Apr 10)

Japan (Mar 15)

Tokyo, March 15 Kyodo - Japan and China signed a memorandum to fight copyright piracy through regular talks and personnel exchange, under which Japanese officials say they expect Beijing to increase crackdowns on the pirating of Japanese movies, music and other works. Officials of China's State Copyright Bureau and the Japanese Cultural Affairs Agency exchanged the document with in the morning. With the accord, "Distribution of legitimate products is expected to blossom and help promote cultural exchange" between the two Asian neighbours, a Japanese official said. The Chinese official said the accord's signing was a historic turning point. The two countries acknowledge that cooperation in the field will benefit both sides and consequently the world economically, according to the memorandum. Under the diplomatic arrangement, the two sides will take turns hosting an annual meeting to discuss copyright issues, exchange and train government personnel to set up a system for the creation and protection of copyright, and organize a symposium on the subject. The memorandum takes effect for five years, and will be extended automatically for another five years unless either party notifies the other not to do so at least 60 days before the expiration date. Five sessions had been held to negotiate the partnership until last October, since initial bilateral talks on the Japanese and Chinese agencies met for bilateral talks on the matter in 2003 in Tokyo. (Kyodo News Service, Tokyo, 15 Mar 10, in BBC PF, 16 Mar 10)

Laos (Mar 20)

VIENTIANE, March 20 (Xinhua) - Lao Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh said that Laos is ready to work with China to promote the bilateral comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

Bouasone made the remarks when meeting with visiting Chinese Vice Premier Hui Liangyu, who arrived in Vientiane on Friday for an official visit to Laos. ... Hui held talks with Lao Deputy Prime Minister Somsavat Lengsavad on Saturday and attended signing ceremony

for cooperation projects between the two countries on economy, technology and agriculture. (XNA, 20 Mar 10)

Namibia (Mar 25)

WINDHOEK, March 25 (Xinhua) - China and Namibia pledged to work more closely to upgrade their relationship and strengthen cooperation in all fields, as they celebrate the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relationship. The pledge came after talks between China's top political adviser Jia Qinglin and Chairman of the National Council of Namibia Assert Kapere here on Thursday afternoon. ... After the talks, Jia and Kapere witnessed the signing of a series of economic deals. In the following days, Jia will attend a reception marking the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Namibia diplomatic relationship. Namibia is the second leg of Jia's 10-day African tour, which has already taken him to Cameroon. He will visit South Africa next week. (XNA, 26 Mar 10)

... During Jia's visit to Namibia, the two countries signed five bilateral agreements. ... (XNA, 28 Mar 10)

Russia (Mar 20)

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia, March 21 (Xinhua) - China and Russia have pledged here to further interregional cooperation with each other and signed a series of cooperation deals. Governor of Russia's Primorsky Territory Sergey Mikhaylovich Darkin and visiting Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping met here Saturday and exchanged views on the development of bilateral ties and cooperation between neighbouring regions of the two countries. ... Later in the day, China and Russia signed 15 cooperation documents totalling 1.6 billion US dollars covering economic, technological, energy and infrastructure cooperation. The agreements were signed after Xi held a meeting on strengthening China-Russia interregional cooperation, known as the symposium on China-Russia Ussuriysk economic and trade cooperation area. ... Russia is the first leg of Xi's four-nation Europe tour, which will also take him to Belarus, Finland and Sweden. During his stay in Russia, Xi, who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, will meet Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, and Putin, who is also chairman of the ruling United Russia party, and State Duma Chairman Boris Gryzlov.

They will exchange views on bilateral relations and other regional and international issues of common concern. Xi is also expected to attend the opening ceremony of the Year of the Chinese Language in Russia as well as the opening of the second round of strategic dialogue between Chinese and Russian ruling parties. ... (XNA, 21 Mar 10)

Russia (Mar 24)

MOSCOW, March 24 (Xinhua) - Visiting Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping reiterated China's wish for closer cooperation with Russia during his meetings with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin,

State Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov and leaders of the ruling United Russia party ... Following the meeting, Xi attended the signing ceremony for a series of documents on bilateral cooperation on economy, technology, and people-to-people exchanges. The total value of the signed business agreements is worth about 6.7 billion US dollars. ... (XNA, 24 Mar 10)

Zambia (Mar 04)

Zambia and China have signed five cooperation agreements in Beijing, which included one relating to partnership in the development of multi-facility economic zones (MFEZs) in Zambia. According to Zambia Development Agency, commerce minister Felix Mutati, signed the economic zones agreement with China Non-ferrous Metal Mining Group Limited (CNMC) officials at a ceremony witnessed by Presidents Rupiah Banda and Hu Jintao. The MFEZ agreement relates to China Non-ferrous Metal Mining Group Limited procuring funding from China under the various lending windows for the establishment of several special economic zones in Zambia. The cooperation would include the financing and construction of the Lusaka sub-zone near the Lusaka International Airport at a cost of US\$100 million. Minister of Finance and National Planning Dr Situmbeko Musokotwane signed an agreement on economic and technical cooperation between China and Zambia for the construction of a national stadium in Lusaka between March 2010 and February 2015. Dr Musokotwane also signed another economic and technical cooperation agreement for financial support to various development projects to be agreed on through consultations between the two countries. Minister of Mines Maxwell Mwale signed an agreement on mining to promote cooperation in the field of geology through cooperative projects and exchange of information and visits on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and win-win results. Minister of Foreign Affairs Kabinga Pande signed an agreement on the executive programme on culture to be implemented between 2010 and 2014. ZDA reports that the agreement on culture would help to strengthen the exchange and cooperation in culture, arts, heritage, education, sports, publication, radio, film and television, among others between the two countries. (The Post website, Lusaka, 4 Mar 10, in BBC PF, 5 Mar 10)

Hong Kong SAR Agreements with the Netherlands (Mar 22)

HONG KONG, March 22 (Xinhua) - A comprehensive agreement for avoidance of double taxation (CDTA) was signed between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The CDTA, applying to taxes on income, will bring a withholding tax rate of zero per cent to a certain group of qualified entities, while leaving others a withholding tax rate of 10 per cent, much lower than the 15 per cent rate currently applicable in the Netherlands.

The agreement also rules that no source taxation will apply to interest payments, as there is no withholding tax for such payments in either party.

Besides, Hong Kong has agreed to limit its withholding tax to 3 per cent.

K. C. Chan, the Secretary of Financial Services and the Treasury of HKSAR and the Minister of Finance of the Netherlands De Jager signed the agreement on Monday.

"I am confident that the agreement will encourage greater flow of investment, technology, talent and expertise between us for the mutual benefit of both economies," said Chan.

He also mentioned that it is the first agreement Hong Kong concludes with an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member country adopting the latest international standard on exchange of information.

De Jager said that the agreement will be a stepping stone towards further increasing mutual investments. (XNA, 23 Mar 10)

Hong Kong SAR Agreements with New Zealand (Mar 29)

Hong Kong and New Zealand have ratified a free-trade agreement that will allow people travelling on business between the two places to stay for up to three months. The deal also provides for co-operation on environmental and labour issues and gives preferential treatment to companies in a range of service sectors, including communications, education, logistics and shipping. New Zealand will also scrap duties on all imports of Hong Kong goods by 2016. Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Rita Lau Ng Wai-lan welcomed the deal at yesterday's signing ceremony. It is significant as Hong Kong's first closer economic partnership agreement with an economy outside China, and paves the way for the negotiation of other, similar bilateral deals. Last year, goods worth almost NZ\$1 billion (HK\$5.45 billion) were traded between Hong Kong and New Zealand, and trade has been growing by 7.5 per cent per year over the past five years. More importantly, New Zealand is banking on the agreement to help foster growth in a number of key service sectors, specifically financial services. (SCMP, 30 Mar 10)

Macau SAR Agreements with Macedonia (Mar 15)

MACAO Macao, March 15 (Xinhua) - The Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) announced that the Republic of Macedonia has exempted holders of the SAR's passport from visa requirements when entering the Balkan country for a stay of maximum 90 days. The announcement was made after the Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Beijing notified the Macao SAR government. The visa arrangement has been in effect since Oct. 1,

2009. On the basis of reciprocity, nationals of the Republic of Macedonia are also exempted from visa requirements when entering the Macao SAR for a stay of maximum 90 days, the SAR government also said in an official statement. For the time being, a total of 79 countries and territories have agreed to grant visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to the Macao SAR passport holders, while nine countries have agreed to grant visa-free access to the Macao SAR Travel Permit holders, according to the SAR government. (XNA, 15 Mar 10)