1. **INTRODUCTION**

This is a brief report on the 2016 International High-Level Dialogue on Ecological and Environmental Cooperation under the Framework of the Belt and Road Initiative held on 11-12 December 2016 in Shenzhen, the People’s Republic of China.

The 2016 International High-Level Dialogue was hosted by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People’s Republic of China and the People’s Government of Shenzhen Municipality, and jointly organised by : the China-ASEAN Environment Cooperation Center (CAEC) ; China Center for Shanghai Corporation Organisation (SCO) Environmental Cooperation ; Human Settlements and Environment Commission of Shenzhen Municipality ; and the People’s Government of Shenzhen Longgang District.

Representatives from ASEAN Member States (except Malaysia and Singapore), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), WWF International, the Belt and Road Countries, and the government and business representatives from the People’s Republic of China, attended the Meeting.

Brunei Darussalam was represented by :

1. Haji Shaharuddin Khairul bin Haji Anuar

Acting Director

Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation

Ministry of Development

1. Sarimah binti Haji Awang

Senior Executive Officer

Ministry of Development

The Agenda of the High-Level Dialogue is as attached in **Appendix 1**.

* 1. **THE INTERNATIONAL HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE**

The International High-Level Dialogue began with an opening ceremony and inauguration of the ‘Belt and Road’ Environment Technology Exchange and Transfer Center, and the Initiative on Corporate Environment Responsibility Fulfillment for building the Green ‘Belt and Road’.

At the ceremony, *Mr. Zhai Qing*, the Vice Minster of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, China made an opening remark. This was followed by remarks made by *Mr. Erik Solheim*, the Executive Director of UNEP, and *Mr. Xu Qin*, the Mayor of the Shenzhen Municipal Government respectively.

Consequently, the International High-Level Dialogue was divided into three (3) sessions :

* Session 1 : Enhance policy dialogue for building a green Belt and Road Initiative
* Session 2 : Forging the platform for jointly building a green Belt and Road
* Session 3 : Performing corporate social responsibility in building the green Belt and Road

**2.1 Session 1 : Enhance Policy Dialogue for Building a Green Belt and Road**

This session looked at the goals and development of the Belt and Road Initiative, opportunities to forge closer economic ties, deepen cooperation and expand development space between Asia, Europe and Africa.

In this context, China had taken proactive roles to communicate and consult countries along the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance infrastructure connectivity, industrial and trade investment, financial cooperation, cultural exchange, and ecological and environmental cooperation. China had also strengthened its bilateral cooperation through several MOUs, projects and various regional and international expos and forums.

At the national level, China is actively encouraging the participation of its local companies to participate in infrastructure construction and investment in countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as providing government support to boost the local economy through assistance and employment while at the same time, enhancing the people-to-people bond and encouraging them to undertake social responsibilities in the protection of the biodiversity and environment.

China also opens-up the Belt and Road Initiative to the ASEAN Member States, including Brunei Darussalam, to foster socio-political relationship and bilateral cooperation, as it sees a huge potential in infrastructure development, the cross-border ecological, environmental, trade and economic cooperation. This, in their view, is very much aligned with the ASEAN Member States vision for ASEAN Community i.e. to create a common economic, political-security and socio-cultural region.

**2.2 Session 2 : Forging the Platform for Jointly Building Green Belt and Road**

This session looked at how the Belt and Road Initiative can be a regional and international platform for ecological and environmental protection.

The Belt and Road Initiative provides an avenue not only for technology transfer, but also the exchange of information and knowledge, as well as research and development amongst the countries along the Belt and Road Initiative. It also requires an integrated support from the government and the non-government sector at the national and local government level. At the regional and international level, inter-governmental cooperation and non-governmental institutions participation, such as the CAEC and the SCO, play an important role in jointly building and sustaining the platform for the Belt and Road Initiative.

This session also listened to presentations made by various country representatives, including Brunei Darussalam. Brunei Darussalam’s presentation is attached in **Annex 2**.

Brunei Darussalam highlighted that, through ASEAN, it views Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) as a vital part of its foreign trade policy to maximise the potentials of free and open trade for its people in the ever-globalising world. The engagement of the FTAs is an important step in ensuring that its people, goods, services and investments have continued access to a wider market around the world.

Brunei Darussalam therefore recognised that the Belt and Road Initiative is an important opportunity for ASEAN and for Brunei Darussalam too, to expand and strengthen the areas of cooperation in ecological and environmental protection and management as well as economy and trade. Through ASEAN, it stands ready to work and strengthen in the areas of cooperation that will bring mutual under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Brunei Darussalam shared brief information on its economy and its efforts on the protection of the environment including : instilling the sense of environmental stewardship amongst its youth in various environmental programmes ; its national commitment to protect the rainforest as a carbon sink to reduce the impact of climate change through the Heart of Borneo Initiative ; and, integrating environmental dimensions in development projects (early stages i.e. planning) that has potential impact to the environment through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements as laid out in the Environmental Protection and Management Order 2015.

**2.3 Session 3 : Performing Corporate Social Responsibility in Building the Green Belt and Road**

The Secretary General of the China Environment Service Industry Association, All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce presented a keynote on the perspectives of the Belt and Road Initiative from the business community.

The session also listened to presentations by high-level representatives from China’s local enterprises i.e. the Vice President of China National Nuclear Corporation ; the Quality, Security and Environment Department, Sinopec Group ; Vice President of Everbright International ; and, the Vice President of Shenzhen Energy Corporation.

In general, the business community recognised that the government should play a leading role to promote industrial and trade investment in the Belt and Road Initiative. The establishment of the Silk Road Fund (USD 40 billion) and the Asian Infrastructure Bank (USD 100 billion) by the Chinese government, helped support and finance the local companies to overcome the institutional challenges, domestic overcapacity and barriers to investments, in undertaking infrastructure projects along the Belt and Road Initiative.

In comparison to other foreign countries, the business community in China does not have an impressive list of corporate social responsibility and may not uphold existing international standards of environmental protection, human rights and governance.

Many are still influenced by their own domestic practices that may not be compatible with the host country, if they were to ‘go-out’ into the Belt and Road Initiative.

In this respect, the business communities looked at the government as the lead role to help strengthen and incentivise the business communities to help overcome these deficiencies, and ensure a sustainable and conducive environment for the business communities to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative. The business communities highlighted that there is a need for policy coordination with respect to the laws and regulations to avoid malpractices overseas, and training in corporate governance to improve their image and reputation, as well as guidance to risk control and management before venturing their businesses abroad. This is due to the fact that different countries impose different policy background, mechanisms and practices.

**3.0 SITE VISIT : SHENZHEN URBAN PLANNING VENUE**

A site visit was made to the Shenzhen Urban Planning Venue in Linhuashan Park.

The visit entailed Shenzhen’s urban development into a world-class city, with a prosperous economy, a stable and safe society, an attractive environment, and a rational spatial layout with a comprehensive infrastructure provision.

Shenzhen was formally designated as a Municipality in 1979 and as the Shenzhen Economic Zone in 1980.

Shenzhen underwent three development phases of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Comprehensive Master Plan i.e. 1986-2000 Master Plan, 1996-2010 Master Plan, and 2010-2020 Master Plan.

The city’s first comprehensive master plan (1986-2000) adopted the urbanization of industry and comprehensive development. It targeted a population of 1.1 million people and an area of 123 km2 by the year 2000. The master plan determined the band of development clusters into six sections stretching from the east to the west i.e. Shatoujiao, Luoho, Shangbu, Futian, Shahe and Nantou. The development also included a road traffic system comprising three main traffic arteries and the Shenzhen Airport in Fuyong.

The city’s second comprehensive master plan (1996-2010) brought Shenzhen’s outer districts into its purview. It targeted a population of 4.3 million people with and area of 480 km2 by the year 2010. The master plan integrated the western, central and eastern sections of the city and determined the locations of the Shenzhen North Railway Station.

The city’s third comprehensive master plan (2010-2020) transformed Shenzhen into a ‘national economic center and international city’. This iteration of the plan emphasized development principles of putting people first and reducing the volume of expansion, as well as the development goals of building a low carbon and an environmental-friendly city.

Over the past three decades, Shenzhen has accelerated and eventually transformed into a world-class city with an integrated air, land and water transportation facilities.

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

The International High-level Dialogue provided an opportunity to gain an in-sight on how other countries perceive the Belt and Road Initiative.

It was an opportunity to learn and appreciate the developments of ecological and environmental protection undertaken by countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, in relation to economy and trade, through information and knowledge sharing in the country presentations.

The Belt and Road Initiative is an ambitious strategy to boost economic cooperation and investments amongst more than 64 countries across the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa respectively. Established in 2013, it comprises the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, with the aim of building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa along the ancient Silk Road routes.

China has taken many proactive steps in realising the strategy through : strengthening communication among countries on economic development strategies and regional cooperation along the Belt and Road Initiative ; providing financial support and investments in infrastructure developments ; improving the domestic and regional economic and trade facilitation ; and strengthening people-to-people exchanges amongst its learning institutions and institutions of countries along the Belt and Road Initiative.

Like other ASEAN Member States, Brunei Darussalam through ASEAN, will stand ready to work and continue to strengthen cooperation in environmental protection, sustainable development and management of land and water resources, biodiversity conservation as well as address transboundary challenges, and strengthen dialogue and cooperation in the international climate change and other environment-related negotiations.

Prepared by :

Haji Shaharuddin Khairul bin Haji Anuar

& Sarimah binti Haji Awang

22 December 2016