

Hainan making itself known through international tourism

By opening its ports to trade and tourism, and establishing cooperative relationships with neighboring countries, the island province is at center of China's global development initiative, **Ma Zhiping** reports.

Hainan will continue opening itself up to the world and fully involve itself in the country's Belt and Road Initiative to expand cooperation and exchanges with neighboring countries and regions for greater development.

As the country's only pilot province for innovation of the trade in services business model, Hainan will continue to open its tourism, education, culture, medical and healthcare sectors as a new destination for international cooperation, said Liu Cigui, Party chief of Hainan province, when addressing the recent seventh provincial congress of the Communist Party of China.

He said Hainan will make full use of the preferential policies granted by the State — including the offshore duty-free policy, opening of air traffic, visa-free entry and offshore finance — to raise the level of the service sector and build the island into a world-class international tourist destination.

“Under the Belt and Road Initiative's framework, Hainan hopes to explore practical cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' members in tourism and a number of related sectors and develop a South China Sea tourism economic rim,” said Liu.

Hainan was selected by the State in 2010 to develop into an international tourist destination by 2020.

As planned, Liu said Hainan is expected to attract more than 80 million tourists annually by 2020, including 1.2 million from overseas. Total annual tourism revenue will surpass 100 billion yuan (\$14.51 billion) in the same period.

He said more than 2 million overseas Chinese with ancestral roots in Hainan are living in Southeast Asia. This historical link has ensured close people-to-people contact and cultural exchanges between Hainan and ASEAN members.

As part of its efforts to engage in the Belt and Road Initiative, the Hainan provincial government has conducted feasibility studies on developing a free trade zone with ASEAN members.

Tropical Hainan boasts many of the country's best ecological conditions.

It is China's largest special economic zone, the only provincial-level international tourism island and a pivotal point on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.

The Belt and Road Initiative was proposed by the Chinese government in 2013, covering countries and regions across Europe, Asia and Africa.

Holiday paradise

The main target for Hainan in the next five years is to build a beautiful new environment with economic and social prosperity.

It will become a pleasant home for Hainan's residents, a four-season garden and a holiday paradise for Chinese and overseas tourists, according to Liu.

The province's tourism authorities said sea tours, forest trips and campsites for self-driving tourists are all parts of the new services developed to meet tourists' diversified needs. A total of 100 towns and 1,000 villages with unique historical, cultural or natural features will be developed before 2020 to enrich visitors' experiences on the island.

Development of these projects is creating a large number of opportunities for investment for both Chinese and overseas investors.



Clockwise from top: **King of Cambodia** Norodom Sihamoni (right) meets with medical volunteers from Hainan in January, in a move to help the country's cataract patients. **A forum** on the economic cooperation of islands along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is held in Boao in March. **The cruise ship terminal** in Sanya has received 540 ships and nearly 1 million tourists to date. **More than 500 artists** from 23 countries and regions perform at an international tourism festival in Hainan in November 2016.

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Liu Cigui, Party chief of Hainan

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“We will uphold the strategy of building a sound ecological environment. Ecology is the most powerful advantage and most valuable capital of Hainan, any projects that will pollute or destroy the local ecosystem will be

banned. We want to attract the best investments with the best resources,” said the Party chief.

Hainan is upgrading its infrastructure and promoting integrated development of land, sea and air transportation systems.

Expressways will link all local counties. Construction of sea-view highways circling the island and 5G information networks is underway.

In addition, Hainan will continue to provide quality services to the Boao Forum for Asia and other international events such as the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Island Economy Forum, the China-ASEAN Governors and Mayors Dialogue and the Roundtable Conference on China-Africa Cooperation, making Hainan an important platform for international exchanges.

During the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2017 in March, Liu made three proposals concerning Hainan's cooperation with ASEAN members in tourism and education.

He said that air and sea transport infrastructure will be upgraded. Hainan has 52 international air routes, including 14 connecting the island to ASEAN countries. More direct air routes will be opened and ports expanded to make the island into a regional transport hub and logistics center.

His second proposal is to develop a “South China Sea

tourism economic rim”. As an international tourism island, Hainan hopes to cooperate with ASEAN countries in policy, marketing, information sharing and professional training. It also expects to develop tourism routes and products with Silk Road characteristics and open international cruiser routes between Hainan and ASEAN members.

He also proposed increased educational and cultural exchanges. Hainan's universities have established cooperative ties with 36 universities in Southeast Asia. As of the end of 2016, more than 2,300 overseas students were studying in Hainan. Future projects will highlight joint research programs on tropical agriculture, oceanic industries, tourism and tropical medicine as well as language education.

“Hainan can become a tourist transfer center for China and ASEAN. This role will need further infrastructure improvements such as hotels, aviation and logistics. The development will boost the growth of a huge tourism industrial chain in Hainan and ASEAN countries,” said Li Renjun, a professor with the Hainan Institute of Industrial Economy under Hainan University.

New opportunities

Many countries and regions have recognized the opportunities brought about by the Belt and Road Initia-

tive in their cooperation with Hainan.

“Fiji enjoys advantages in fishing and tourism and will seek closer ties with Hainan,” said Semi Koroilavesa, minister for fisheries of Fiji.

“Palawan and Hainan are neighbors with just a ‘swimming pool’ between us,” said Jose Alvarez, governor of Palawan in the Philippines during a recent visit to Hainan. He expressed his intention to establish further cooperation with Hainan.

“We are developing our tourism by upgrading airports, expressways and harbor facilities. We can have win-win cooperation in the fields of tourism, agriculture, science and transportation,” said the governor, who has signed a letter of intent on cooperation with Hainan.

He said he expects much from the opportunities and benefits of cooperation.

Chi Fulin, head of the China Institute for Reform and Development, said Hainan has very favorable geographical advantages. It has many opportunities but needs to be more innovative in developing competitive service products.

By the end of April, Hainan province had established friendly ties with 52 overseas cities. The growing circle of friends is promoting in-depth development of Hainan's international exchanges with the world and adding diversified cultural elements to international tourism on the island.



Staff members work at a SEACO container yard in China. HNA acquired SEACO, one of the world's largest container leasing companies, in 2011.

HNA to create air passage to boost interconnectivity

By MA ZHIPING
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We will coordinate with our overseas partners to open more air routes and create ‘an air passage’ for international interconnection.”

Gao Jian, chief operating officer of HNA

HNA Group — the parent company of China's biggest private commercial airline, Hainan Airlines — will open more international routes to serve the country's Belt and Road Initiative, according to Gao Jian, chief operating officer of HNA.

“As a participant of the Belt and Road Initiative, HNA is making investments focusing on aviation tourism, modern logistics and financial services on a global basis, and is actively promoting cultural exchanges between the East and West,” said Gao.

He said HNA strives to be a strong air service provider for the Belt and Road Initiative.

“We will coordinate with our overseas partners to open more air routes and create ‘an air passage’ for international interconnection.”

Haikou-based HNA is operating 200 international air routes, including 14 linking to Europe and 12 connecting to North America. The group has 1,250 aircraft, running about 1,200 domestic and international flights to more than 270 cities and serving about 100 million passengers each year.

The company, ranking 353 in the 2016 Fortune Global 500 list, is increasing international routes to cope with growing market demand.

“We will do our best to provide strong support to the development of Hainan as an international tourist destination and a strategic pivot on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road,” said Gao.

Gao said the 24-year-old HNA Group is building aviation hubs in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, which will serve Central Asian countries; in Fuzhou, which will serve the region's cross-Straits needs; and in Beibu Bay, which will be a hub linking China and Southeast Asia.

“HNA will accelerate cooperation with countries and regions along the initiative's routes in building logistics parks, hub airports and feeder airports, and promote tourism, trade, financial services and technological innovation,” said Gao.

“We will promote the development of international aviation hubs in Hainan, turning Haikou and Sanya into international transfer terminals that link China with Southeast Asia and Australia.”

To date, Hainan province has three airports — the Haikou Meilan International Airport, the Sanya Phoenix International Airport and Boao Airport. A new airport is under construction by HNA in Sanya at the southern tip of Hainan Island. Aviation logistics parks are being launched around these airports.

HNA is also developing domestic logistics chains in cities such as Tianjin and Xi'an. These efforts are part of its goals to establish a world-class logistics brand.

“We plan to make more investments overseas and acquire more quality resources to further internationalize our business structure and improve our services for Belt and Road regions.”

By acquiring and restructuring overseas aviation companies such as Blue Eagle Airlines, Brazil Blue Airlines and Ghana Airlines, HNA is introducing advanced international air services and standards into the Chinese market. Its acquisition of world-leading container leasing companies — SEACO and Cronos — and aircraft leasing companies such as Avolon and Hong Kong Aviation Capital have added more momentum for HNA's expansion plans.

HNA's international tourism industry chain is also growing quickly, covering all six basic businesses including food, accommodation, transport, travel, shopping and entertainment.

In practicing its corporate social responsibilities, the group launched a program in 2004 that has helped more than 6,500 impoverished cataract patients worldwide with eye surgery.



HNA employees in Dublin, Ireland, help to refurbish the local Christian Brothers' School.