

GBA takes lead in Chinese modernization



Area's high-quality development widely acclaimed by intl conference guests

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Participants in the 2024 Understanding China Conference gave a thumbs-up for the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

As one of the most dynamic and innovative areas in China, the GBA is taking the lead in promoting Chinese modernization. Its development path was in the spotlight when Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, played host to the three-day international conference, which concluded on Wednesday.

Zhang Chuanwei, board chairman of Mingyang Group headquartered in Zhongshan, Guangdong province, has his own success story to share. Mingyang specializes in the development and operation of new energy, related machinery research and production, and engineering technology and services.

When he started the company more than 30 years ago, there were just seven staff, Zhang recalled. "Thanks to China's unwavering commitment to reform and opening-up, and thanks to the great practice of Chinese modernization, the clean energy produced by Mingyang nowadays can cater to a city of 25 million people, equivalent to the size of Guangzhou, for 20 years."

The business of his company covers dozens of countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas and Oceania, he added.

China's new energy industry, especially technological equipment for the sector, has taken a development path from following overseas peers to outpacing them, and the country is now the world's largest manufac-



Posters line a major road in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, to advertise the 2024 Understanding China Conference, which was held in the city from Monday to Wednesday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

turer and installer of new energy machinery, Zhang noted.

Some 80 percent of global solar energy installation technology and equipment, and 50 percent of the world's wind power technology and equipment come from China. The country has become an important driver of the global energy development transformation, he said.

The company is determined to promote energy conservation and emissions reduction, create a world-class offshore energy belt for the GBA, and make its contribution to Chinese modernization that achieves harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, he said.

Wang Tong, member of the expert committee of China Southern Power Grid, said that with the concept of green development, China, especial-

ly the GBA, has made substantial progress in the field of new energy, demonstrating the country's resolute commitment to promoting green, low-carbon and sustainable development.

China is focused on building a new energy-supply system to support its modernization, contributing "Chinese wisdom" to the world for common prosperity, Wang said.

Chen Yongkang, deputy head of the Guangdong Department of Justice, said the province has issued regulations to promote sci-tech innovation, and will advance local legislation in more areas, such as the low-altitude economy, artificial intelligence and big data, to help provide an innovation-friendly environment for tech-driven businesses.

Vu N. Duong, director of the Air

Traffic Management Research Institute at Nanyang Technological University of Singapore, said China is at the forefront of the low-altitude economy, especially in the GBA, which along with the entire country has huge development potential.

The GBA has a long-term advantage in trade, which provides a solid foundation for the development of the low-altitude economy, he added.

The economic aggregate of the 56,000-square-kilometer GBA has been on the rise since its outline development plan was released more than five years ago, with the figure surpassing 14 trillion yuan (\$1.92 trillion) in 2023.

At a seminar during the Understanding China Conference, guests said that the GBA is a strategic pivot of the new development pattern, a

demonstration area for high-quality development and a leading area for Chinese modernization.

Guo Yuewen, secretary of the Party group of the Guangdong Academy of Social Sciences, said that in recent years, Guangdong has leveraged the driving role of the development of the GBA, focusing on promoting creative and leading reforms at a higher starting point.

The four major cooperation platforms of Hengqin, Qianhai, Nansha and Hetao have introduced thousands of original reform measures, with a focus on rule alignment and mechanism integration. Hundreds of reform and innovation experiences have been promoted at the national, provincial, and municipal levels.

A widespread transport network is now in operation after major infra-

structure projects were completed. That witnessed a closer bond and a growing flow of passengers and goods in the GBA.

The Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link's traffic volume exceeded 10 million vehicles in 118 days since its opening at the end of June. Since the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge was put into use in October 2018, the number of inbound and outbound road passengers has reached more than 60 million. The area's combined port throughput ranks first in the world, with Guangzhou Port, Shenzhen Port and Zhuhai Port, among others, joining the ranks of the large ports each handling at least 100 million metric tons of goods.

Guangzhou Port and Shenzhen Port have opened container routes linking more than 300 ports in more than 120 countries and regions.

Seven airports are in service across the GBA. With the commissioning of more aviation infrastructure projects, it is estimated that the airport network in the GBA will have an annual passenger throughput of 420 million by 2035.

Since 2018, major transportation infrastructure projects such as the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong high-speed rail and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge have been completed. The operational and under-construction rail transit mileage in the GBA now exceeds 5,400 kilometers.

When it comes to scientific and technological innovation, the GBA is home to two national laboratories, 30 key national-level laboratories, 430 key provincial-level laboratories, and other laboratory platforms, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Guangzhou sci-tech cluster has ranked among the best worldwide for five consecutive years.

Environmental protection is another focus of regional cooperation. Hong Kong and Macao continue to improve their cooperation mechanism for ecological protection with Guangdong under the framework of "one country, two systems", implementing a "shared protection and shared benefits" model.

Media group assembles expert voices for GDToday Think Tank

By YUAN SHENGGAO

A media think tank established by Nanfang Media Group in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, is expected to play an important role in strengthening international communication.

Huang Can, editor-in-chief of Nanfang Media Group, said the establishment of GDToday Think Tank at the 2024 Understanding China Conference in Guangzhou on Wednesday is another important measure for his group to build a more effective international communication system and promote the transformation of media think tanks.

"It will help gather wisdom and deepen smart media cooperation to provide international solutions for the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and Guangdong province," Huang said.

GDToday Think Tank will help the world explore and discover opportunities in China while helping domestic enterprises and Chinese culture to go global, he said.

Huang said GDTT will be able to contribute its unique wisdom and strength to the world's understanding of China and China's integration into the world.

Cao Wei, deputy secretary-general of the China Institute for Innovation and Development Strategy, said he believes GDTT will consolidate the resources of international communication think tanks, enrich the "toolbox" of Guangdong's international communication industry and help to build a multichannel and "three-dimensional" external communication pattern.

He said his institute was honored to be invited to participate in the Global Bay Area Think Tank Alliance which was established on Wednesday to deepen cooperation in intelligent media, work hand in hand with mainstream media, complement each other's advantages, and jointly improve international communication efficiency.

Zhao Yang, editor-in-chief of GDToday, said GDToday is committed to providing accurate and timely news in multiple languages to glob-



Nanfang Media Group launches its GDToday Think Tank during the 2024 Understanding China Conference in Guangzhou, Guangdong, on Wednesday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

al readers, including English, Portuguese and French.

GDToday will organize cultural activities to tell the stories of China, the GBA and Guangdong to the outside world and become a bridge connecting China and foreign countries in the following months, he said.

At the inaugural ceremony, the think tank issued certificates to experts, scholars and consultants who will contribute their wisdom and experience to developing the think tank.

After the inaugural ceremony of GDTT and the media alliance, an international communication seminar on "Understanding the Greater Bay Area" was organized. The seminar focused on the topics of New Opportunities for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in a Changing World and Interpreting China's Opportunities in a Changing World.

Former Ethiopian president Mulatu Teshome said during the seminar that understanding the GBA is integral to understanding China's development process, modernization, and its reforms and opening-up. "The opening of China and the modernization of China have brought a very good opportunity to (the) GBA to trade with the world, to interact with the world," he said.

It has also given the rest of the developing world easy access to Chi-

na and opportunities to attract investment from China and to trade with China, he added.

John Milligan-Whyte, executive chairman of the America-China Partnership Foundation, said that GDTT can become the world's leading think tank in working out how the economic growth of the United States and China can be sufficiently aligned for them to peacefully coexist.

Yves Leterme, former prime minister of Belgium, said the world economy is not a zero-sum game. He added that, based on lessons from the past, the solution is not to stay behind tariffs but to engage in competition, and work together with regions all over the world to gain a better future.

He pointed out the initiative to establish GDTT is part of the solutions for the future.

Jusuf Wanandi, co-founder of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, said that regional institutions such as GDTT will play a key role in studying and forecasting new global development trends, while contributing to the advancement of Asia.

GDToday Think Tank is a media-driven think tank established by Nanfang Media Group. It is playing a pivotal role in the group's efforts to drive the integrated development of GDToday, an international media organization.

What they say

Participants in the 2024 Understanding China Conference, which was held from Monday to Wednesday, shared their insights on Chinese modernization and the new development opportunities it provides to the world.

China's policy initiatives and development directions have a profound impact on the world and particularly the emphasis that China opens its doors wider to the Global South, including the least-developed countries, can be seen as inclusive globalization with the notion that no one is left behind. This declaration is a visible step to promote an open world economy and advance the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. The progress of China's modernization will further benefit the developing countries of the Global South. The Belt and Road Initiative has become the most popular public goods in the Global South and the largest platform for international economic cooperation.

Mulatu Teshome, former president of Ethiopia

There is the incoming new US administration, and also this major political fact over the next couple of years will induce the need for a reset of the EU-China relations. We are facing increasingly China's cutting-edge technologies in different domains. The first reaction is to put in place tariff protection. This is not a sustainable solution, so we have to fix this. I think that agreements on technology transfer, and agreements on having real activity on the European continent that lead to job creation in this field, driven by Chinese investment, can be part of a solution. Also in the future, the creation of wealth, the economic growth of China will still be dependent on its capacity to produce and to export to find consumers abroad.

Yves Leterme, former prime minister of Belgium

I think we should trust the next generation, the younger generation. They are better educated than we were. They have better training and better skills today. They have better languages... Fascinating results will be there on the table within the next two decades. We will see them and we should be part of it. To reach the next level of human development, this is at stake,

this is our vision. The global community needs cooperation instead of nationalistic egoism in sharing the results of science, which will fundamentally push for the next round of human development.

Wolfgang Schussel, former chancellor of Austria

The Australia-China trading relationship is hugely important. (It is) globalization, international trade (that are) benefiting people in Australia in a concrete way. I think we should make the case, we should go back to making the case for imports, making the case for trade, making the case against protection.

Bob Carr, former foreign minister of Australia

We live in a world which is extremely interdependent. At the same time, we see a sort of shortage of instruments for regulation of this interdependence. How can we manage it? From my point of view, China suggests to us very interesting ideas about global initiatives, which are about the creation of a new world model that is based on principles of a fair world, ideas of equality of all countries and a common future.

Andrey Bystritskiy, chair of the board at the Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club

Results in the past 40-plus years speak volumes. The opening-up of China works to the benefit of both China and other countries of the world. And this comment applies not only to the past, but also the future. For millennia, in the country's long history, China has welcomed interactions with other countries and civilizations, and contributed to free trade, higher living standards and the engagement of art and cultural exchange.

Leung Chun-ying, vice-chairman of the 14th CPPCC National Committee and former chief executive of Hong Kong SAR

Only by understanding China's reform can we understand China's

present and future. To understand China's new round of reform and development, the best approach is to understand "Chinese modernization". Whether facing sanctions or disengagement, China will be steadfastly committed to the path of peaceful development and rejects both the pursuit of military alliances and arms races to compete for world hegemony, as well as the approach of bullying smaller nations and establishing so-called spheres of influence.

Zheng Bijian, founding chairman and director of the academic committee at the China Institute for Innovation and Development Strategy

If we can raise the urbanization rate of the household registration population to approximately the same as that of the permanent resident population, it will mean that China's urban-rural dual structure will undergo a qualitative change. This will be the time when urban civilization and civil society will formally start to develop, form and gradually mature in China... Chinese society and culture with an agricultural civilization as the background, will gradually be reshaped, reformed, radically changed and even replaced by urban civilization and civil society.

Huang Qifan, executive vice-chairman of the academic committee of CIIDS and former Chongqing mayor

I attended this year's Shanghai International Import Expo and saw many US investors, particularly from agriculture. China still has room for further opening-up. Although the economy is growing a little bit slowly, it is still growing. Our middle class is still growing in size. We still have a lot of potential, particularly in this Greater Bay Area. I live in Shenzhen, an innovative city. There are a lot of difficulties from the United States, a lot of innovations are going on. I think those ideological minds, those hawks really underestimate the capability of China.

Zheng Yongnian, a renowned Chinese scholar

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To learn more about Guangdong, China's prominent economic hub, and to stay informed about the latest GBA developments, scan the QR codes to download the GDToday app or visit the website

